



Child Protection Policy

2023 - 2024

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Other related policies	Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2023) / Behaviour Policy / Staff Code of Conduct / Online Safety Policy / Medical Needs Policy / Safeguarding Protection Policy / Complaints Policy / Data Protection Policy / Whistleblowing Policy

Version History Log for this document

Version	Date Published	Details of key changes from previous version
2	September 2023	Update Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023
1	September 2022	New Policy – supersedes all previous versions

Introduction

The health, safety and welfare of all our children is of paramount importance to all the adults who work in our school. Our children have the right to protection, regardless of age, gender, race, culture or disability. They have a right to be safe in our school.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone's** responsibility. All staff play a critical role in recognising potential concerns of abuse and taking prompt action to prevent concerns from escalating. It is important that all relevant agencies involved in safeguarding children co-operate together for the benefit of the child. Early information sharing is vital for effective identification and assessment, and to provide appropriate help for children and their families. Therefore, staff are expected to report any concerns they may have regarding a child's welfare immediately with the designated safeguarding lead and not keep it to themselves. The school is committed to safeguarding and it aims to create a culture of vigilance.

Duty to Refer

All staff members who have a concern about a child's welfare have a duty to refer immediately, whether it is known to have occurred or is suspected. No member of staff has the right or responsibility to withhold information or to respect a child's/young person's wish for confidentiality.

At West Thurrock Academy, Mrs J Pitcher is the designated safeguarding lead and in her absence the any member of the designated safeguarding team Mr S. Proctor, Miss E. Power or Ms A. Marcham. The nominated Governor for Safeguarding is Mrs S. Stronach.

All staff and Governors are aware of the safeguarding procedures, receive regular training and have total commitment to child protection. Children's self-awareness is raised through Personal, Social and Health Education, to encourage them to talk and share their thoughts and feelings. All staff try to ensure that children keep safe, remain healthy and can say "NO".

West Thurrock Academy encourages partnership between home and school; however, in order to fulfil our responsibilities effectively we ensure that our approach is child-centred. This means that at all times we consider what is in the best interests of the child. This may mean that in some instances parents are not informed or consulted first by the school regarding safeguarding concerns involving their child. When safeguarding concerns are reported to outside agencies, procedures are adhered to and subsequent decisions and actions are made by the appropriate agencies.

Guidelines

Staff are in contact with children all day and can detect possible abuse. Voicing concerns does not necessarily lead to initiation of procedures. The criteria for referral is '*reasonable suspicion*' and under the Children Act, 1989, this definition has been extended to include '*or may suffer in future*'.

When reporting a concern or suspicion, the designated child protection leader/senior leader will follow The Southend, Essex and Thurrock Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures 2022 and the Department of Education's statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' September 2023.

Procedure for Disclosures

If a child discloses abuse or staff are suspicious, do:

- Listen carefully;
- Clarify concerns;
- Make accurate notes using the child's words;
- Report **immediately** to the designated Safeguarding Lead or the Headteacher if she is not available;
- Tell the child that they have done the right thing by telling you and offer reassurance about how the child will be kept safe.

Things **not** to do:

- Do not ask the child leading questions;
- Do not use your own words to describe events;
- Do not promise the child confidentiality;
- Do not investigate;
- Do not interview the parents.

It is very important in these cases that prompt and correct procedures are followed under The Southend, Essex and Thurrock Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures 2022 Guidelines.

Significant Harm

The threshold for statutory intervention is Significant Harm, whereby a child's development is or is likely to be severely impaired. This harm needs to be attributable to the care offered by parents / carers. This can be through acts of commission, for example physical abuse, or by omission, for example by failing to protect a child from the threat of violence.

Children Act 1989

Children at Risk (Section 47)

The Local Authority **shall make enquiries** where there is **reasonable cause to suspect** that a child or young person living in the area is suffering or is likely to suffer **significant harm**.

The reporting teacher will be told of any further action taken i.e. Social Service referral, monitor etc. If the reported case is taken up and investigated by an external agency, then any meetings, case conferences or action taken will be followed through and the teacher concerned informed.

A list of children who have been referred is kept by the school. This includes all children, who, for whatever reason, need to be monitored. Staff are kept informed of any child in their class who is monitored.

All staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) with regard to any concerns about female genital mutilation (FGM); however, there is a specific legal duty on teachers. If a teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must report this to the police.

Categories of Child Abuse

Abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another. Staff are aware of the indicators of abuse and neglect, including exploitation and are able to identify children who may be in need of help or protection. All staff are aware of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm and of environmental factors which may impact on a child's welfare and safety and understand safeguarding in the wider context (contextual safeguarding).

Abuse

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused by other children or adults, in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Staff are also aware that abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse.

Safeguarding Issues

All staff have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking and or alcohol misuse. Deliberately missing education and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos can be signs that children are at risk. Other safeguarding issues all staff will be aware of include:

- Child Sexual exploitation
- Child Criminal exploitation
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Mental Health
- Peer on peer abuse (Child on child)
- Serious violence
- Domestic abuse
- Radicalisation and extremism
- Honor Based Violence and Forced Marriage

Further information around these topics including definitions and indicators can be found in the safeguarding policy.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy.