

## **CHILD PROTECTION**

(Revised October 2010)

### **Policy and Staff Guidance**

#### **BACKGROUND**

##### **THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD**

The United Kingdom agreed to be bound by the Convention in 1991 wherein it is stated (in Article 19) that children have

*“the right to be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation including sexual abuse by those looking after them.”*

Article 3 provides that

*“when organisations make decisions which affect children, the best interests of the child must be a primary consideration.”*

In setting out these procedures for Harmony Hill Primary School in accordance with guidance from the DENI document Pastoral Care in Schools CHILD PROTECTION we take the view that

***The overriding concern of every adult associated with Harmony Hill Primary School must be the safety and wellbeing of every child who is placed in the school’s care.***

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Through our teaching of personal, social and health education and citizenship we aim to develop appropriate attitudes in our children and make them aware of the impact of their decisions on others. We help children to learn about the risks of possible abuse by helping them to recognise welcome behaviour in others and acquire the confidence and skills they need to keep themselves safe. The staff have adopted a Code of Conduct which is attached to this Policy.

#### **2. RESPONSIBILITIES**

##### **2.1 GOVERNORS**

Ultimate responsibility for ensuring that appropriate child protection measures and procedures are in place rests with the Board of Governors.

Mrs M Potter was appointed designated Child Protection Governor in January 2006. She received training for this position in November 2010 along with Rev D Knox, Chairman of the Board of Governors.

## **2.2 PRINCIPAL**

- a. In the event of an allegation, suspicion or instance of child abuse, the Principal will:
  - i. Consider the report received from the Designated Teacher.
  - ii. Ensure that appropriate procedures are implemented, including the immediate safeguarding of a child considered at risk.
  - iii. Decide on the needs for a referral, either informal or formal to Social Services, to the SEELB's Designated Officer and to other agencies as appropriate.
  - iv. Inform parents as and when appropriate.
- b. The Principal will also have responsibility for:
  - i. Initiating vetting procedures for new staff, volunteer helpers etc.
  - ii. Responding to issues under the School's Complaints Procedure.

## **2.3 DESIGNATED TEACHER/DEPUTY DESIGNATED TEACHER**

- a. The Designated Teacher for Child Protection matters is Mrs A Steele. The Deputy Designated Teacher is Mrs R Speers.
- b. The Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teacher are responsible for:
  - i. Receiving concerns and reports from staff on possible or actual instances of child abuse.
  - ii. Collating details of such reports or concerns.
  - iii. Informing the Principal.
  - iv. Reviewing child protection policy and procedures annually.
  - v. Disseminating information.
  - vi. Liaising with outside agencies.

## **2.4 TEACHING/NON-TEACHING STAFF**

- a. All staff have a duty to:
  - i. Be alert for signs of actual or suspected abuse or neglect.
  - ii. Report concerns to Designated Teacher (or Deputy).

- iii. Keep a brief written record of details.
- iv. Ensure their professional conduct is prudent and leaves no grounds for misinterpretation in relation to child protection.
- v. See back of Policy for details of the different types of abuse.

### **3. RECOGNISING SIGNS OF ABUSE**

Staff in schools are well placed to observe symptoms in pupils eg changes in appearance, behaviour, demeanour etc which **may** be due to child abuse. Appendix 1 contains details on categories of abuse and related symptoms. It is important to remember that any such symptoms may be due to other reasons eg medical, etc. However, the best interests of the children require that concerns about the possibility of abuse or neglect should not go unreported.

#### **ALL CONCERNS AND REPORTS MUST BE REPORTED.**

**In the absence of Mrs A Steele and Mrs R Speers contact Mr H Greer or Mr L Stirling.**

### **4. RESPONDING TO A CONCERN OR REPORT**

- 4.1 A member of staff, in talking to a child who has disclosed information or who is a victim of abuse, should bear in mind the following:
- a. Listen and accept information calmly. Avoid over-reaction or a response which may compound child's feeling of guilt.
  - b. **Do not** give a guarantee that you will keep what is said confidential or secret. If you are told about abuse or neglect you have a responsibility to report. The best that can be promised is that you will only tell those who have an absolute right to know.
  - c. Respond positively to the disclosure ie avoid attributing blame or criticising anyone. Check your understanding of what has happened.
  - d. Do not interrogate. Only ask questions for purposes of clarification. Avoid leading questions which may give your ideas of what might have happened.
  - e. Do not attempt an investigation by interviewing at any length. Social Services and Police are those with this responsibility.
  - f. Write brief notes, if feasible, and retain. (Original notes written at the time are more important than an improved version written later.) Use the vocabulary used by the child. Record any mention of date, time, place, persons etc as well as any signs of injury.
  - g. Inform the Designated Teacher/Deputy Designated Teacher as soon as feasible. Discuss with her/him whether immediate steps need to be taken to protect the person who disclosed the information or any others at risk.

## 5. **PROCEDURES**

- 5.1 **Figure 1** summarises the procedure to be followed when the school has concerns or has received a report about possible abuse or neglect **by anyone other than a member of the school's staff. The member of staff must act promptly.**
- 5.2 **Figure 2** summarises the procedure to be followed when a complaint is made about possible abuse or neglect **by a member of the school staff. Again prompt action is required.**
- 5.3 Detailed copies of procedures will be held by Principal and Designated Teacher.
- 5.4 Parents wishing to register their concern about their child's welfare in school should take one of the following courses of action. The course chosen will depend upon the nature of the complaint.
- 5.5 **A parent** may .....
- Speak/write to child's teacher.
  - Speak/write to Principal.
  - Write to the Chairman of Board of Governors.
- 5.6 All concerns will be followed up and, where appropriate, will be investigated under the School's Complaints Procedure.

### **PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED IN THE EVENT OF .....**

#### **A CONCERN, SUSPICION OR REPORT OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT BY A MEMBER OF THE SCHOOL STAFF:**

1. Person making or receiving details of complaint should refer it directly to the Principal.
2. Principal will seek clarification if needed.
3. Principal will:
  - a. Ask Designated Teacher or Deputy to initiate the record of the complaint.
  - b. Consult with SEELB Designated Officer.
  - c. Consult with Chairperson of the Board.
4. Principal will consider evidence and advice received.
5. In consultation with Chairperson of the Board, Principal will decide that the evidence is such that:

a. The accusation is unsubstantiated and there is no case of answer.

OR

b. An immediate referral to Social Services or Police is required.

OR

c. Action should be taken under Disciplinary Procedures.

**PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED IN THE EVENT OF .....**

**A CONCERN/SUSPICION OR REPORT OF ABUSE OR NEGLECT BY SOMEONE OTHER THAN A MEMBER OF STAFF:**

1. Person receiving complaint or report should follow recommended guidelines when listening and talking to a child disclosing information.
2. Report details to Designated Teacher (or Deputy) as soon as possible.
3. Consider need for immediate safeguarding of child at risk.
4. Ensure record of details is kept.
5. Designated Teacher informs Principal.
6. Principal and Designated Teacher decide if additional information is required.

If so, discreetly consult with class teacher, informally advise Social Services and contact SEELB Designated Officer (Mrs A Casey or Mr C Boal). Parents should be consulted as soon as possible (unless parent is implicated in the abuse).

7. Principal decides .....

**EITHER - a referral is necessary**

- Inform Social Services or Police.
- Inform SEELB Designated Officer (Mrs A Casey or Mr C Boal).
- Inform parents/guardians (unless implicated).

**OR - no referral is necessary**

- Inform person making complaint or providing information.
  - Inform parents or guardians (unless implicated).
  - Record details, including reasons for no referral in pupil file.
8. Ensure that detailed record is retained (until after the child's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday).

## **VETTING**

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007 is operated by the Independent Safeguarding Authority. The scheme applies to all employers and employees (including volunteers) working in specified positions with children and vulnerable adults. Application forms and guidance on completing the Access NI packs are available from the Rachel Speers.

## **INTERVENTION**

When responding to a child's distress or physical needs, maintaining the child's right to privacy and being treated with dignity is essential. This will often result in touch being given in a private and less visual situation. Any physical contact that could possibly be misconstrued by the pupil, parent or other adult should be mentioned to the Designated Teacher.

The essential component is for staff to be transparent and accountable for all their activities to other staff, parents and pupils. All other natural tactile behaviour is acceptable when carried out in an open environment with other children or adults present.

## **SOCIAL NETWORKING**

Individuals who work with children and young people and others with whom they may in a position of trust should exercise caution when using social networking sites and avoid inappropriate communication of any kind. People who work with children and young people should always maintain appropriate professional boundaries. They should avoid improper contact or relationships which might include:

- Communication of a personal nature
- Inappropriate dialogue through the internet
- The sending of emails or text messages of an inappropriate nature.

As previously stated this policy is:

- Reviewed annually
- In response to staff training
- Upon receipt of updates from the Board

**PROTECTING CHILDREN – a duty to care**

**WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?**

**Child abuse means ill treatment or neglect leading to physical, sexual or emotional injury or harm. The following illustrations outline common indicators of abuse and neglect. These signs are not a checklist, indeed many of them could have other explanations.**

<b>Physical Abuse</b>	
<p><b>Physical Indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexplained bruises or burns particularly if they are recurrent</li> <li>• Human bite marks, welts or bald spots</li> <li>• Unexplained lacerations, fractures or abrasions</li> <li>• Untreated injuries</li> </ul>	<p><b>Behavioural Indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self destructive tendencies</li> <li>• Improbable excuses given to explain injuries</li> <li>• Chronic runaway</li> <li>• Aggressive or withdrawn</li> <li>• Fear of returning home</li> <li>• Reluctant to have physical contact</li> <li>• Clothing inappropriate to weather – worn to hide part of the body</li> </ul>
<b>Neglect</b>	
<p><b>Physical Indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constant hunger</li> <li>• Poor state of clothing and/or personal hygiene</li> <li>• Untreated medical problems</li> <li>• Emaciation/distended stomach</li> <li>• Constant tiredness</li> </ul>	<p><b>Behavioural Indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tiredness, listlessness</li> <li>• Lack of social relationships</li> <li>• Compulsive stealing, begging or scavenging</li> <li>• Frequently absent or late</li> <li>• Low self-esteem</li> </ul>

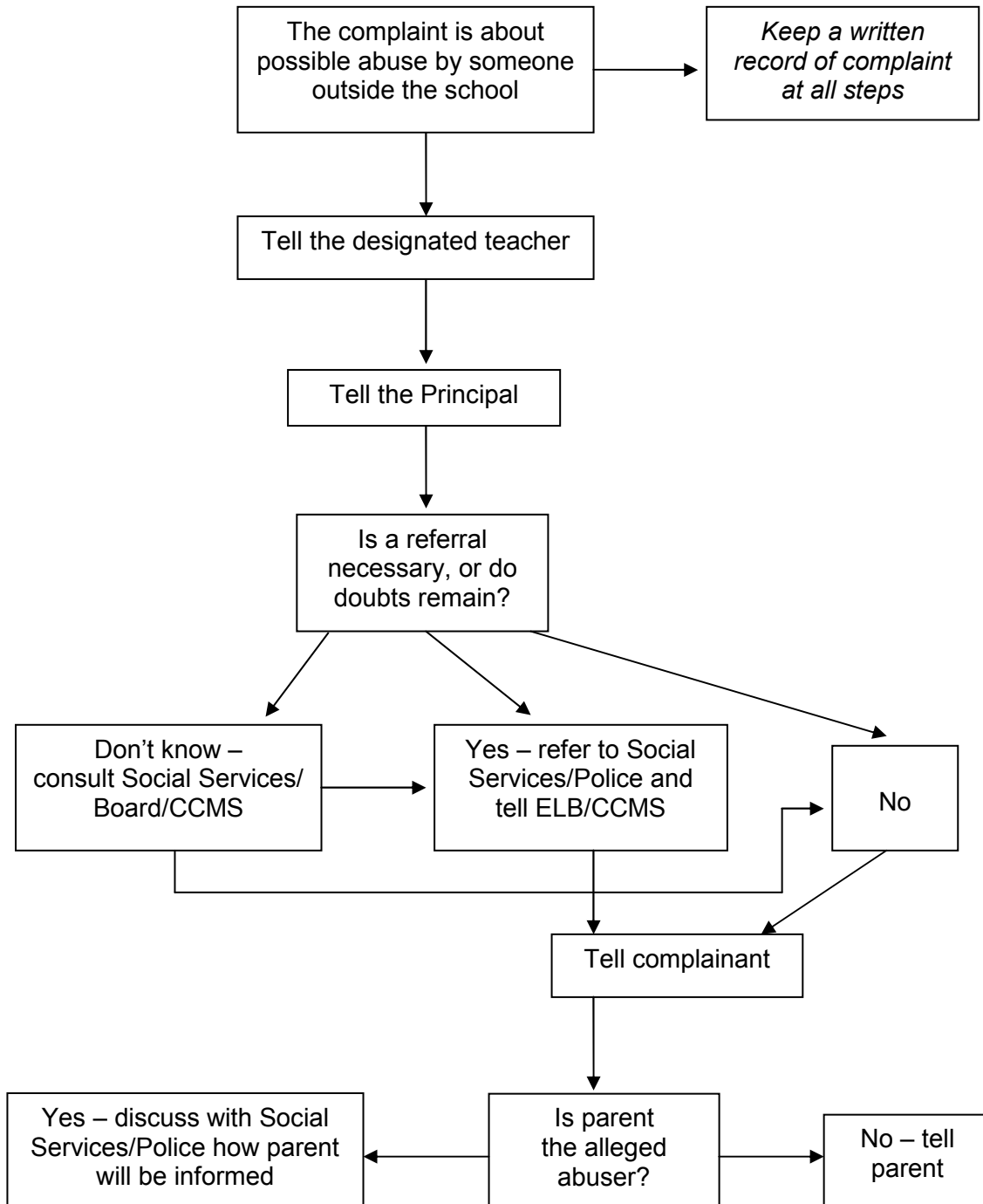
<b>Emotional Abuse</b>	
<p><b>Physical Indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sudden speech disorder</li> <li>• Signs of mutilation</li> <li>• Signs of solvent abuse (eg mouth sores, smell of glue, drowsiness)</li> <li>• Wetting and/or soiling</li> <li>• Attention seeking behaviour</li> <li>• Poor peer relationships</li> </ul>	<p><b>Behavioural Indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neurotic behaviour (eg rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking)</li> <li>• Reluctance for parent liaison</li> <li>• Fear of new situations</li> <li>• Chronic runaway</li> <li>• Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	
<p><b>Physical Indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soreness or bleeding in the genital or anal areas or in the throat</li> <li>• Torn, stained or bloody underclothes</li> <li>• Chronic ailments such as stomach pains or headaches</li> <li>• Difficulty in walking or sitting</li> <li>• Frequent urinary or yeast infections</li> <li>• Vulnerable diseases</li> <li>• Unexplained pregnancies</li> </ul>	<p><b>Behavioural Indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be chronically depressed/suicidal</li> <li>• Inappropriately seductive or precocious</li> <li>• Sexually explicit language</li> <li>• Low self-esteem, self devaluation, lack of confidence</li> <li>• Recurring nightmares/fear of the dark</li> <li>• Outburst of anger/hysteria</li> <li>• Overly protective to siblings</li> </ul>

**NB: If in doubt, speak to someone NOW.**

Pastoral Care in Schools  
CHILD PROTECTION

Figure 1

**Procedure where the school has concerns, or has been given information, about possible abuse by someone other than a member of the school's staff**



Pastoral Care in Schools  
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Figure 2

**Procedure where a complaint has been made about possible abuse by a member of the school's staff**

