

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

- ❖ The management and staff at The Education Centre are committed to the principle that issues related to the care and protection of the children here are central to our work. The principle that their welfare is the paramount consideration is fundamental and underlies all our policies.
- ❖ This policy and procedure has been drawn up to reflect the requirements of the Care Standards Act 2000 and the Education Act 2002.
- ❖ The school is committed to ensuring that all staff will receive training in child protection to help them recognise abuse or potential abuse and be confident about what action to take.
- ❖ It is the responsibility of ALL members of staff within the school to be alert to incidents which may involve child protection issues (suspected child abuse) and to follow the procedure set out below.
- ❖ The designated Child Protection Officer (CPO) will take overall responsibility for co-ordinating action within the school and referring to and liaising with other agencies, except in cases where an allegation is made against a member of staff (or volunteer) in which case inter-agency liaison is the responsibility of the Education Co-ordinator in consultation with the CPO.
- ❖ Any member of staff reporting a concern about possible child abuse, which they believe is not dealt with according to these procedures, should immediately make a referral themselves to Social Services at Haywards Heath.

PROCEDURE

What action to take-

❖ **Suspected or Alleged Abuse Outside the School**

Any observations made by any staff regarding a child in school indicating possible abuse or neglect, or any report of suspected abuse or neglect received from a child, should be immediately reported to the CPO. The CPO will immediately contact the relevant Social Services Department (SSD) in the area where the child lives and inform the Assessment Team at the Haywards Heath SSD (Mid-Sussex Locality). The CPO will decide, in conjunction with the SSD's, who else needs to be informed. This will include Key people within the school. The CPO will inform the child's parents/carers of the investigation and outcome, unless a notification is likely to put the child's welfare at risk. The CPO will notify the child's placing Authority of the investigation and outcome of any formal child protection enquiry.

❖ **Suspected or Alleged Abuse Within the School**

1. If at any time, a member of staff believes that a child has been or maybe being abused by an adult (including the registered person or person in charge of the school at the time) or another child within the school, either as a result of something they have observed or because any child has said something directly, they should immediately inform the CPO.
2. If an allegation is made against a member of staff (or volunteer) the CPO will refer the matter immediately to the Education Co-ordinator.
3. If the allegation involves another child (or an adult not employed by the school), the CPO will refer the matter immediately to the AT, at Haywards Heath SSO and the staff there will decide how to proceed.
4. In situations where an allegation is made against a member of staff, consideration must be given to suspending that staff member pending the outcome of the Child Protection Investigation. Advice should be sought by the Education Co-ordinator from the Designated Officer Children's Safeguarding West Sussex County Council's Education Department in all cases in which it is alleged that a member of staff has:
 - behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child:
 - possibly committed a criminal offence against a child or related to a child, or
 - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he/she is unsuitable to work with children.

a member of staff may be suspended from work at any time, without prejudice, and outwith the disciplinary procedure, pending any inquiries into any concerns regarding child protection or safety. In these circumstances, a member of staff may be sent home immediately by any two of the Management Team.

No disciplinary action will be taken against a member of staff until the case has been fully investigated.

At every stage in the procedure, the member of staff will be advised of the nature of the complaint against him/her and will be given the opportunity to state his/her case before any decision is made.

The member of staff will have the right to be accompanied by a colleague, friend, union representative or any other person of their choosing during any interview.

Failure by a staff member to report to a CPO any concerns regarding the child protection of an Education Centre pupil is grounds for implementation of staff disciplinary procedure.

5. If the CPO is not sure whether what has been reported is a child protection matter, contact should be made immediately to SS Haywards Heath for advice
6. If the concern is reported outside normal office hours (ie 5pm-9am) the matter should be referred to the 'Out of Hours' Emergency Service on 0903 694422.
7. The CPO will notify the CSCI and that child's Placing Authority of the instigation and outcome of any formal SSD Child Protection Investigation.

❖ **Disclosure of Suspected or Alleged Abuse**

If a member of staff receives any report of suspected abuse of a child or young person, they must follow the steps below.

1. Stop and listen to what they are being told, interrupting any other activity they are carrying out if necessary. Responding to an allegation or suspicion of abuse of a child takes priority over other duties.
2. Take notes of what is said, as it is being said, if appropriate to do this. If it is not possible to take notes at the time, they should be made immediately afterwards. Keep the notes taken at the time, without amendment, omission or addition, whatever subsequent reports may be written. Keep a note of the child's demeanour and activities and any contact with parents etc. Following any disclosures.
3. Do not promise confidentiality or agree to 'keep it a secret'. You can assure the child or anyone else giving you information that you will only tell those you have to tell to try to get the matter dealt with, and will not tell anyone who does not need to know.
4. Do not ask leading questions like "did he do X to you?", but open questions like "can you tell me what happened?" Leading questions – anything likely to suggest ideas, occurrences or interpretations- are likely to damage any chance of subsequent investigations or criminal proceedings. Avoid expressing any opinions. You can express your support for the child or person giving the information in getting the matter sorted out.
5. Always consider whether any child who has told you of concerns about abuse, or any other child, is in need of immediate protection in the light of what you have been told or suspect. If so, initiate or take the necessary temporary protective action- eg by staying with the child until satisfactory arrangements can be made. You can ask and take into account the child's wishes about any immediate protection. You should aim to transfer protection of any child into the normally expected arrangements as soon as you are satisfied that these are safe.
6. Do not tell the person against whom you have received an allegation of abuse, or who you suspect of abuse, of that allegation or suspicion- that may put a child at further risk and damage any subsequent social services or criminal investigation.
7. Immediately inform the CPO, who will then follow procedures outlined above.

❖ **Children involved in prostitution**

The involvement of a child or young person in prostitution and particularly if the child is under 16 years of age, is abuse in itself, over and above of any question of the legality of either the child's activities or the adults involved with him/her.

Evidence of a child becoming involved in prostitution, or of unauthorised persons picking children up, contacting children in the school, or observed trying to make contact with children outside the school must immediately be reported to the CPO. The CPO will immediately follow procedures already outlined in Abuse Outside the School and will in addition will contact the police.

❖ **Confidentiality**

All incidents dealt with according to this policy must be recorded by the CPO and securely filed to protect confidentiality.

CONFIDENTIAL CHILD PROTECTION REFERRAL

TO: Children's Support _____ Locality _____

CONFORMATION OF TELEPHONE CALL MADE ON _____ TO _____

ARE YOU AWARE IF A CAF FORM MAY HAVE ALREADY BEEN COMPLETED? Yes/ No/ Do not know

FAMILY COMPOSITION

Male carer _____ DOB _____ Marital Status _____

Female carer _____ DOB _____ Marital Status _____

Children	DOB	school

Address _____

Tel No: _____

AGENCIES ALREADY INVOLVED WITH CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILY (particularly GP if known)

Agency	Address	Contact Name	Telephone

PREVIOUS SOCIAL SERVICE INVOLVEMENT YES/NO

ARE FAMILY AWARE OF REFERRAL? YES/NO

IF NO, please give reason _____

REASON FOR REFERRAL

CONFIDENTIAL CHILD PROTECTION REFERRAL

CHILD'S/CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS

PARENTING

FAMILY AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

What other action have you taken?

Signed Date

.....

Print Name

Designation

Work Base Contact No

.....

ORIGINAL TO CHILDREN'S SUPPORT

COPY TO BE RETAINED IN CHILD'S NOTES.

COPY TO CHILD PROTECTION COORDINATOR