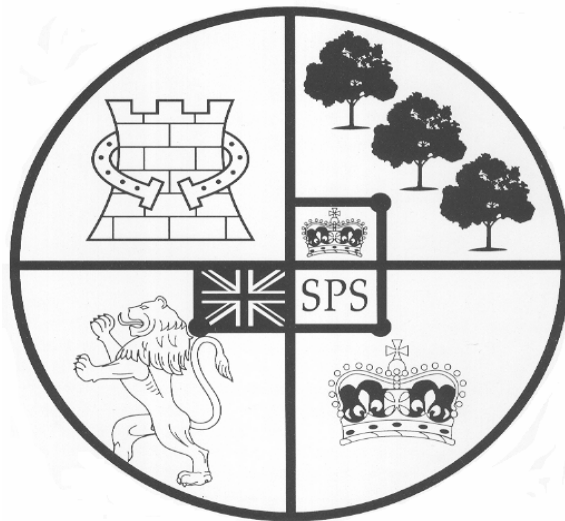


Skelton Primary School



Policy for Child Protection

POLICY FOR CHILD PROTECTION

'The curriculum needs to be delivered in a school with an ethos which empowers children; a school which allows them to voice ideas, feelings and opinions, treats them with respect, values their contribution and lets parents make a contribution to the educational process.'

From **'Responding to Child Abuse'**

Skelton Primary School follows the principles and procedures set out by the South Tees Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC).

Copies of these principles and procedures are available within school in the Head Teachers office, front of school and in the Early Intervention Unit.

"Joint working is essential to safeguard children who are suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm. Promoting children's well being and safeguarding them from significant harm depends crucially upon effective information sharing, collaboration and understanding between agencies and professionals." 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (1999).

Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child requires all agencies to take appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of abuse while in the care of parents, legal guardians or any other person who has the care of the child.

Parents are made aware of the school's duties and responsibilities under ACPC Procedures by a statement in the school prospectus.

'Parents and carers should be aware that the school has a duty to take reasonable action to ensure the welfare and safety of its pupils. In cases where school staff have cause to be concerned that a pupil is at risk of significant harm, staff will follow the ACPC Procedures.'

General Introduction

It is recognised that teachers play an important role in identifying potential cases of child abuse. It is also important that all relevant agencies involved in child abuse cooperate together for the benefit of the child. This is re-enforced with the introduction of 'Every Child Matters', the governments vision for children's services. From the five outcomes; Be Healthy, Stay Safe, Enjoy and Achieve, Make a Positive Contribution and Achieve Economic Well Being the Stay Safe outcome states that children should be:

- ◆ Safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence and sexual exploitation
- ◆ Safe from accidental injury and death
- ◆ Safe from bullying and discrimination
- ◆ Safe from crime and anti-social behaviour in and out of school
- ◆ Have security, stability, and are cared for
- ◆ *Parents, carers and families provide safe homes and stability*

'Every Child Matters: Change for Children in Schools - DfES 2004'

All schools have a nominated teacher for child protection, who liaises with Social Service departments and with teachers in school. For this procedure to work, it relies on the skills and expertise of every class teacher and adult within school to recognise or report concerns.

At Skelton Primary School, Audrey Scott is the main nominated person for child protection however, in her absence, the Head Teacher or Audrey Scott are also nominated people for child protection. All staff have total commitment to child protection. They raise children's awareness about themselves through Personal and Social Education, Health Education, and develop a trusting climate so that children feel able to talk and share their thoughts and feelings.

Skelton Primary School has a policy of partnership between home and school, but with child abuse, or suspicion of child abuse, our first and only responsibility is to the child. This may mean that parents are not informed or consulted in some instances. We may not be able to prevent child abuse, but by following child protection procedures, we are trying our best to protect all our children and this is our first and only responsibility.

All teachers make sure, through their care of children, to try to ensure that children keep safe, remain healthy and are able to say "NO". Suspected cases are reported, procedures adhered to and subsequent actions are left to the appropriate agencies. We also care for children who have been abused and try to understand their problems.

Aims

By following child protection procedures we:

- Care for the child
- Care for our school
- Care for the community we serve
- Respond to the guidelines and procedures of other agencies

Guidelines

In reporting concern or suspicion, all adults in school will notify a nominated person who will then follow ACPC Procedures.

Reasons for Following Procedures

- It protects the child to the best of our ability
- It avoids delay

- It provides consistency
- It protects all staff
- It ensures that, if further action is taken by another agency, then the school has followed the protection procedures

Staff are in contact with children all day and are in a position to detect possible abuse. They must not think that by voicing concern they are necessarily starting procedures. The criteria should be that they have '*reasonable suspicion*' and under the Children Act, 1989, this definition has been extended to include '*or may suffer in future*'.

If a child discloses abuse or staff are suspicious, there are three things to do:

- Report immediately to the one of the nominated people
- Do not speak to the parents
- Do not promise the child that it will be kept a secret

It is very important in these cases that prompt and correct procedures are followed under ACPC Procedures.

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.

Staff have an important role in hearing what children have to say. The school can provide a neutral place where the child feels it is safe to talk. Sensitivity to the disclosure is vital. Staff must listen carefully to what the child is saying, treat it seriously, and value what they say.

Children may feel they will not be believed, or that they will be punished. Staff will need to say that whatever has happened it is not their fault. Fear of the consequences of telling is very common. It can be very tempting to offer a promise of confidentiality to the child. This is not realistic. The child needs to hear the truth about what will happen, together with a commitment to support the child. It is crucial not to ask leading questions. Our role is to enable the child to speak and then know what to do next.

A list of children causing concern is kept by Audrey Scott. This includes all children, who, for whatever reason, need to be monitored. Staff are kept informed of any child in their class who is on this register. Teachers must inform the SENCO of any changes/additions so that this list can be kept up to date.

In the unlikely event of the nominated people not being available to deal with an emergency involving Child Protection issues, then the teacher must speak to a member of the Senior Management Team, who will deal with the matters. This would only occur in extreme circumstances.

Signs and Symptoms

This is intended as a guide. Please remember that the presence of one or more factors does not necessarily give proof that child abuse has occurred. It may, however, indicate that investigation should take place.

- Unexplained delay in seeking treatment which is needed
- Incompatible explanations
- Constant minor injuries
- Unexplained bruising:
 - Bruise marks in or around the mouth
 - Black eyes, especially if both eyes are black and there are no marks to forehead or nose
 - Grasp marks
 - Finger marks
 - Bruising of the ears
 - Linear bruising (particularly buttocks or back)
 - Differing age bruising
- Bite marks
- Burns and scalds
- Cigarette burns
- General physical disability
- Unresponsiveness in the child
- Soiling and wetting
- Change in behavioural patterns
- 'Frozen' look
- Attention seeking
- Apprehension
- Antisocial behaviour
- Unkempt appearance
- Sexually precocious behaviour
- Sexualised drawings and play
- Sudden poor performance in school

- Poor self-esteem
- Self-mutilation
- Withdrawal
- Running away
- Reluctance to return home after school
- Resistance to PE (undressing)
- Resistance to school medicals
- Difficulty in forming relationships
- Confusing affectionate displays
- Poor attendance – repeated infections etc.

Definitions of Child Abuse

An abused child is a boy or girl under the age of 17 who has suffered from physical injury, physical neglect, failure to thrive, emotional or sexual abuse, which the person who has had custody, charge or care of the child either caused or knowingly failed to prevent. Having custody, charge or care includes any person, in whatever setting, who, at the time, is responsible for that child.

Physical Abuse

Physical injury to a child, including deliberate poisoning, where there is definite knowledge, or a reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

Sexual Abuse

The involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children and adolescents in sexual activities that they do not truly comprehend, and to which they are unable to give informed consent; or they violate the social taboos of family roles.

Neglect

The persistent or severe neglect of a child (for example by exposure to any kind of danger including cold or starvation) which results in serious impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

Emotional Abuse

The severe adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection. All abuse involves some emotional ill-treatment; this category should be used where it is the main or sole form of abuse.

Child protection records are kept in a secure location and only the nominated people have access to these records. The records contain information about confirmed and suspected cases of child abuse.

Sexual abuse cases are investigated by the Police. Social Services can be present to assist the Police when interviewing a child.

The child protection policy seeks to support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence. It should be regarded as central to the well being of the individual and is therefore seen to be an integral part of all aspects of the curriculum.

Updated May 2005

To be reviewed May 2008