

Little Oaks, Longwood Primary School – Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

Longwood Primary School recognises its legal duty under s175 Education Act 2002 (section 157 in relation to independent schools and academies) and the 1989 Children Act and takes seriously its responsibilities to protect and safeguard the interests of all children. The school recognises that effective child protection work requires sound procedures, good inter-agency co-operation and a workforce that is competent and confident in responding to child protection situations.

This procedures document provides the basis for good practice within the school for Child Protection work. It should be read in conjunction with Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board Inter-Agency Child Protection Policies and Procedures. These are in keeping with relevant national procedures and reflect what Staffordshire Safeguarding Children's Board considers to be safe and professional practice in this context. Child Protection has to be considered within professionals' wider "safeguarding" responsibilities that include a duty to co-operate under the Children Act 2004. Within the context of Every Child Matters, this takes account of the need for children "being healthy and staying safe".

These procedures aim to provide a framework which ensures that all practice in the area of child protection is consistent with stated values and procedures that underpin all work with children and young people.

This document also seeks to make the professional responsibilities clear to all staff (teaching and non teaching) governors and volunteers, temporary and supply staff to ensure that statutory and other duties are met in accordance with Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board requirements and procedures.

This Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed annually by the governing body.

Underpinning values

Where there is a safeguarding issue, Longwood Primary School will work in accordance with the principles outlined in the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board Inter-agency Child Protection procedures:

- A child's welfare is paramount. Each child has a right to be protected from harm and exploitation and to have their welfare safeguarded.
- Each child is unique. Action taken by child welfare organisations should be child-centred, taking account of a child's cultural, ethnic and religious background, their gender, their sexual orientation, their individual ability and any special needs.
- Children, parents and other carers should be made aware of their responsibilities and their rights, together with advice about the power of professionals to intervene in their family circumstances.
- Each child has a right to be consulted about actions taken by others on his/her behalf. The concerns of children and their families should be listened to and due consideration given to their understanding, wishes and feelings.
- Individual family members must be involved in decisions affecting them. They must be treated with courtesy and respect and with due regard given to working with them in a spirit of partnership in safeguarding children's welfare.
- Open-mindedness and honesty must guide each stage of assessment and of operational practice. The strengths of individual family members, as well as their needs, should be given due consideration.
- Personal information is usually confidential. It should only be shared with the permission of the individual concerned, or unless the disclosure of confidential personal information is necessary in order to protect a child. In all circumstances, information must be confined to those people directly involved in the professional network of each individual child and on a strict "need to know" basis.
- Professionals should be aware of the effects of outside intervention upon children, upon family life and the impact and implications of what they say and do.
- Explanations by professionals to children, their families and other carers should be plainly stated and jargon-free. Unavoidable technical and professional terminology should be explained in simple terms.

- Sound professional practice is based upon positive inter-agency collaboration, evidence-based research and effective supervision and evaluation.
- Early intervention in providing support services utilising the Common Assessment Framework Process and if necessary an assessment under Section 17 of the Children Act (1989) this is an important principle of practice in inter-agency arrangements for safeguarding the welfare of children.

Thresholds for Intervention:

Early Support: Common Assessment Framework - CAF

Is this a child with additional needs where their health, development or achievement may be adversely affected? Practitioners should complete a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) when:

- Age appropriate progress is not being made and the causes are unclear or
- The support of more than one additional agency is needed to meet the child or young person's needs.

If this is a child with additional needs discuss the issues with the CAF trained practitioner in your school, the child and parents. The school will need to obtain parental/pupil consent for a CAF to be completed. The CAF co-ordinator may need to make a referral directly to other agencies, or request the support of Staffordshire County Council Local Support Team (LST).

Child in Need:

Is this child in need? S17 of the Children Act 1989 says:

- They are unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have opportunity to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development, without the provision of services by a local authority.
- Their health or development is likely to be impaired, or further impaired without the provision of such services.
- They are disabled.

A 'child in need' referral should be considered where the needs of the child are unlikely to be met under a CAF, such as a child with complex disabilities, when a social work led assessment is required.

If the Designated Person for Child Protection considers that the welfare concerns indicate that this is a 'child in need', he/she will speak with parents / young person and obtain their consent for referral to First Response (see below) to request an assessment.

Child Protection:

Is this a child protection matter? S47 of the Children Act 1989 says the Local Authority has a statutory duty to investigate when there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. School staff do not investigate whether a child has been abused. This is the duty of Social workers from the Safeguarding team and the police. Schools refer reasonable concerns which indicate that a child may be at risk of significant harm.

If staff consider the concern is potentially a child protection matter, this should be discussed without delay with the designated person who will refer to First Response or, if applicable, the child's current social worker. If the child lives in an authority outside of Staffordshire, the matter will be referred by the Designated Person to children's social care in that area.

It is the 'significant harm' threshold that justifies statutory intervention into family life. A professional making a child protection referral under S.47 must therefore provide information which clearly outlines that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

It is not possible to rely on one absolute criterion when judging what constitutes significant harm. Consideration of the severity of ill-treatment may include the extent of the harm suffered, the context within which it occurred and its duration.

Significant harm may also arise from a combination of significant events which are both acute and long standing and which may impair the child's physical, psychological and social development.

In order to both understand and establish significant harm, it is necessary to consider the family context, together with the child's development within their wider social and cultural environment. It is also necessary to consider any special needs, e.g. medical condition, communication difficulties or disability that may affect the child's development and care within the family. The nature of harm, in terms of ill-treatment or failure to provide adequate care also needs consideration alongside the impact on the child's health and development and the adequacy of care provided.

Guidance on 'Whether this is a Child Protection Matter'

If staff have significant concerns about any child they should make them known to the schools Designated or Deputy Designated Child Protection Persons without delay. These concerns may include:

Physical abuse:

May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Emotional abuse:

Is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development? It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as over protection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including Cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Neglect:

Is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development? Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Sexual abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (e.g. rape, or oral sex) or non penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Making referrals

Where a child is registered at school, consultation must take place with the school's Designated Child Protection person who will be the most appropriate person to initiate any referral. A written record of your concerns should be made using the schools internal recording form. This should then be given to the Designated Child Protection person who will then make the decision if a referral is needed to the First Response Team

For referral to First Response phone 0800 1313126 and speak to the operator. You will need to follow this up with written confirmation on the Multi-agency referral form within 48 hours.

If it is not possible to speak to the designated or deputy designated person for child protection, and there would be an unwarranted delay by doing so, the member of staff should contact First Response to discuss concerns. The Designated Child Protection Person must be informed as soon as possible.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an issue that needs to be understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. This is a complex area and involves consideration of a number of pieces of legislation.

You can never guarantee confidentiality to a child as some kinds of information may need to be shared with others. A suggested form of words that may help when talking to children is as follows:

"I will keep our conversation confidential and agree with you what information I can share, unless you tell me something that will affect your personal safety or that is illegal, but I will tell you if I am going to pass information on and who to."

Professionals can only work together to safeguard children if there is an exchange of relevant information between them. This has been recognised in principle by the courts. However, any disclosure of personal information to others, included social service departments, must always have regard to both common and statute law.

Normally, personal information should only be disclosed to third parties (including other agencies) with the consent of the subject of that information (Data Protection Act 1998 European Convention on Human Rights, Article 8). Wherever possible consent should be obtained before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances, however, consent may not be possible or desirable but the safety and welfare of the child dictate that the information should be shared.

The law requires the disclosure of confidential information necessary to safeguard a child or children. Under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 statutory agencies have a duty to co-operate. Therefore, if the Police or Social Care/Services are conducting a Section 47 investigation under the 1989 Children Act, staff must share requested information relevant to the investigation. Legal advice should be sought if in doubt from the County Legal Services Department.

Talking to and listening to children

If a child chooses to disclose, you SHOULD:

- be accessible and receptive;
- listen carefully and uncritically at the child's pace;
- take what is said seriously;
- reassure the child that they are right to tell;
- tell the child that you must pass this information on;
- Make a careful record of what was said.

You should NEVER:

- take photographs or examine an injury;
- investigate or probe aiming to prove or disprove possible abuse – never ask leading questions;
- make promises to children about confidentiality or keeping 'secrets';
- assume that someone else will take the necessary action;

- jump to conclusions or react with shock, anger or horror;
- speculate or accuse anybody;
- confront another person (adult or child) allegedly involved;
- offer opinions about what is being said or about the persons allegedly involved;
- forget to record what you have been told;
- fail to pass the information on to the correct person;
- Ask a child to sign a written copy of the disclosure.

For children with communication difficulties or who use alternative/augmented communication systems, you may need to take extra care to ensure that signs of abuse and neglect are identified and interpreted correctly, but concerns should be reported in exactly the same manner as for other children.

Record keeping

Well kept records are essential in situations where it is suspected or believed that a child may be at risk from harm.

Records should:

- state who was present, time, date and place;
- use the child's words wherever possible;
- be factual/state exactly what was said;
- differentiate clearly between fact, opinion, interpretation, observation and/or allegation;
- be written in ink and signed by the recorder;

Attendance at Child Protection Conferences

The Designated Child Protection Person or their deputy will be expected to attend the initial Child Protection Conference and provide a written report.

If a child is made subject to a Child Protection Plan it may be more relevant for the class teacher or head of year to attend the subsequent core group meetings and they will be given appropriate support around safeguarding issues by the Designated Senior Person for child protection.

Protecting yourself against allegations of abuse

You should seek to keep your personal contact with children under review and seek to minimise the risk of any situation arising in which misunderstandings can occur. The following sensible precautions can be taken when working alone with children:

- work in a room where there is a glass panel in the door or leave the door open
- Make sure that other adults visit the room occasionally.
- Avoid working in isolation with children unless thought has been given to safeguards.
- must not give out personal mobile phone numbers or private e-mail addresses
- must not give pupils lifts home in your cars
- must not arrange to meet them outside of school hours
- must not chat to pupils on the social websites

Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 it is a criminal offence for anyone working in an education setting to have a sexual relationship with a pupil even when the pupil is over the age of consent but under 18 years of age.

Any use of physical force or restraint against pupils will be carried out and documented in accordance with the relevant physical restraint policy. If it is necessary to use physical action to prevent a child from injury to themselves or others parents will be informed.

Children will not be punished by any form of hitting, slapping, shaking or other degrading treatment.

Allegations of abuse against a professional

Children can be the victims of abuse by those who work with them in any setting. All allegations of abuse of children carried out by any staff member or volunteer should therefore be taken seriously.

If an allegation is received by the Headteacher or Chair of Governors the following should be considered

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children

Allegations of abuse made against staff, whether historical or contemporary, should be dealt with by the Headteacher not the designated child protection person (if the allegation is against the Head then it should be dealt with by the Chair of Governors). The Head / Chair should contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to discuss the allegation. :

Julie Astall Cannock and Lichfield, Tamworth and East Staffs - 01785 278958

Diane May Stafford and South Staffs - 07773791568

Josie Hulme Newcastle and the Moorlands - 07813 909119

This initial conversation will establish the validity of any allegation and if a referral is needed to First Response. If this is the case a strategy meeting will be called that the Head / Chair should attend.

The decision of the strategy meeting could be:

- investigation by children's social care
- police investigation if there is a criminal element to the allegation
- single agency investigation completed by the school which should involve the Schools Senior HR advisor

The fact that a member of staff offers to resign should not prevent the allegation procedure reaching a conclusion.

Recruitment, supervision and training for staff

When recruiting new members of staff the school follows the guidance given in the Safeguarding Children: Safer Recruitment in Education, and the Staffordshire guidelines. The school ensures that CRB checks are undertaken in line with County Council HR policy and that references are taken up and obtained and that qualifications are verified.

Newly appointed staff will have an induction into the child protection procedures when they join the school. They should be aware of the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board procedures as part of that induction programme, and be given a copy of the schools Safeguarding Policy. They will also attend the Level 1 Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children and Young People training within 6 months of joining the school. The initial Child Protection training given to each member of the service should be updated every three years and recorded.

The Designated and Deputy Designated Child Protection Persons will attend Staffordshire Safeguarding Board Courses at Level Two and above at least every 2 years in order to maintain continuous professional development and comply with statutory guidance.

E-Safety

The growth of different electronic media in everyday life and an ever developing variety of devices including PC's, laptops, mobile phones, webcams etc place an additional risk on our children.

Internet chat rooms, discussion forums or social networks can all be used as a means of contacting children and young people with a view to grooming them for inappropriate or abusive relationships. The anonymity of the internet allows adults, often pretending to be children, to have conversations with children and in some cases arrange to meet them.

Access to abusive images is not a 'victimless' act as it has already involved the abuse of children. The internet has become a significant tool in the distribution of indecent photographs of children and should be a concern to all those working with pupils at this school.

Pupils can engage in or be a target of bullying using a range of methods including text and instant messaging to reach their target. Mobile phones are also used to capture violent assaults of other children for circulation (happy slapping).

The best protection is to make pupils aware of the dangers through curriculum teaching particularly PSHE and sex education.

Protection is Prevention

- Software is in place to minimise access and to highlight any person accessing inappropriate sites or information.
- Pupils will be encouraged to discuss openly their use of technology and anything which makes them feel uncomfortable. (If this results in child protection concerns the schools designated child protection person should be informed immediately)
- Pupils should not give out their personal details, phone numbers, schools, home address, computer passwords etc
- Pupils should adhere to the school policy on mobile phones.

The police will be involved if there is any criminal element to misuse of the internet, phones or any other form of electronic media.

Mobile Phones

Aim: To protect children from harm by ensuring the appropriate management and use of mobile phones by everyone who comes into contact with the setting.

Procedures

- To minimise any risks, all personal mobiles must not be used where children are present. This applies to shared use of rooms where non setting staff may be present at the start of the session, for example an out of school club using a classroom with teaching staff present.
- Practitioners' personal belongings including mobile phones should be kept in the locked office at all times to ensure safe and secure storage. It is recommended that personal mobile phones are password protected and insured.
- Visitors, including other professionals, contractors and parents/carers must be made aware by signs and verbal reinforcement that they are not to use their mobile phone where children are present.
- Under no circumstances are images, videos or audio recordings to be made without prior explicit written consent by the designated safeguarding person.
- Personal mobiles may be used in the office area at break times.
- Staff are advised to provide their work place contact number to their family members, own children's schools/settings for use in the event of an emergency.
- The setting will not be held responsible for any loss or damage of personal mobile phones.

Links with other policies

1. This procedures document should also be considered within the context of other policies and documents relating to our work with children and young people. These might include, for example, documents concerning drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, neglect and families where there are mental health concerns.

2. Key documents are:

- Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board Procedures (online)
www.staffsscb.org.uk/professionals/procedures/
- 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2010 (DfE statutory guidance)
- Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board Training Catalogue (online)
www.staffsscb.org.uk/professionals/Inter-Agencytraining/events/
- Staffordshire Policy on the use of Restrictive Physical Interventions (including restraint) in mainstream schools
- Safeguarding Children: Safer Recruitment in Education: January 2007
- The Children Act 2004 - Every Child Matters

- Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board: Continuum of need framework: June 2007, (under review)
www.staffsscb.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/B423F1E7-9E1E-4C51-BF56-364932A39B59/122843/Part2BContinuumofNeedFramework200910.pdf
- Staffordshire County Council Whistle Blowing policy
- Staffordshire e-safety Tool Kit
- Working Together to Safeguard Children March 2010
- Education specific guidance about Safeguarding is available on
<http://education.staffordshire.gov.uk/PupilSupport/SEN/Services/safeguarding/>

Resources

Section 175 (157) of the Education Act 2002 puts an explicit duty on Governing Bodies to ensure their functions are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils. The governing body will therefore ensure that sufficient resources are made available to enable the necessary tasks to be carried out properly under Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board procedures including attending meetings, collating and writing assessment reports, and staff training. The Governing Body will also ensure that all Governors have an understanding of safeguarding issues and those policies and procedures are in place in school to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils in the school. Safeguarding awareness will be addressed through the curriculum as appropriate to ensure all the pupils understand what is meant by safeguarding and how they can be safe.

The Designated Child Protection Person in this school is: Mrs Pauline James

The Deputy Designated Child Protection Person in this school is: Mrs Donna Cooke

The Nominated Governor for Safeguarding is: Mrs N Nutter

ADOPTED BY GOVERNORS ON; (date) 28th February 2012

Review date: 2016

Further advice on Safeguarding matters can also be obtained from
Julie Astall Education Safeguarding Officer East Division (01785 278958)

julie.astall@staffordshire.gov.uk

Roz Randall, Tamworth/East Staffs (07773 791172) roz.randall@staffordshire.gov.uk;

Kate Taylor, Stafford/South Staffs (07773 791573) katrina.taylo@staffordshire.gov.uk;

Josie Hulme, Newcastle and Moorlands (07813 909119) josie.hulme@staffordshire.gov.uk;

Diane May Cannock / Lichfield (07773791568), diane.may@staffordshire.gov.uk

First Response Team (0800 1313126).