



## **Child Protection Policy**

### **Policy Statement:**

All adults have a responsibility to protect every child from abuse; this means that if you have a concern about a child you must talk to the designated teacher for Child Protection.

**The welfare of the child is paramount**  
**Referral should be made without delay**

Children who are suffering any form of abuse will need support from both within the school and beyond. The school will have effective procedures in place which will safeguard the needs of the children.

Priory Community School fully recognises the contribution it makes to Child Protection.

There are three main elements to our policy:

- Prevention through the teaching and support offered to pupils
- Procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse. Because of our day to day contact with children school staff are well placed to observe the outward sign of abuse
- Support to pupils who may have been abused.

### **Aims**

To support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and Independence

To raise the awareness of both teaching and non-teaching staff of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.

To provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm.

To emphasise the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff.

To develop a structured procedure within the school which will be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse.

To develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, especially the Police and Social Services

To ensure that all adults within our school who have access to children have been checked as to their suitability.

## **PREVENTION**

The school recognises that high self esteem, confidence, supportive friends and good lines of communication with a trusted adult helps prevention.

The school will therefore:

- a) establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to
- b) ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty
- c) include in the curriculum, activities and opportunities for PSHE and Citizenship which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse, child sex exploitation, female genital mutilation and to know whom to turn to for help
- d) include, in the curriculum, material which will help children develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly with regard to child care and parenting skills
- e) include in the curriculum, PSHE and tutor programme opportunities that ensure students are made aware of the dangers they face in society of being influenced or radicalised to carry out any acts of extreme behaviour

## **PROCEDURES**

The school follows the procedures set out by - North Somerset Joint Child Protection Procedures.

The school will:

- a) ensure it has a designated Lead Child Protection Officer who has undertaken the 2 day training course provided by the LEA as a minimum
- b) recognise the role of the designated Lead Child Protection Officer and arrange support and training for a range of staff
- c) ensure every member of staff (including Community Education staff) and every governor knows:
  - the name of the designated person and her/his role
  - that they have an individual responsibility for referring child protection concerns using the proper channels
- d) ensure that members of staff are aware of the need to be alert to signs of abuse and know how to respond to a pupil who may tell of abuse
- e) ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection by setting out its obligations in the school brochure
- f) provide training for all staff so that they know (i) their personal responsibility, (ii) the Inter Agency procedures, (iii) the need to be vigilant in identifying cases of abuse (iv) how to support a child who tells of abuse

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

The designated teacher is responsible for:

- Adhering to the ACPC, LA and school procedures with regard to referring a child if there are concerns about possible abuse
- Keeping written records of concerns about a child even if there is no need to make an immediate referral
- Ensuring that all such records are kept confidentially and securely and are separate from pupil records
- Ensuring that an indication of further record-keeping is marked on the pupil records
- Ensuring that any pupil currently on the child protection register who is absent without explanation for two days is referred to Social Services

## **SUPPORTING THE PUPIL AT RISK**

- Children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth and to view the world as benevolent and meaningful. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of self blame.
- This school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. Nevertheless, when at school their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn.
- The school will endeavour to support the pupil through:
  - a) The content of the curriculum to encourage self esteem and self motivation
  - b) The school ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment (ii) gives pupils a sense of being valued
  - c) The school's behaviour policy is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the school. All staff will agree on a consistent approach which focuses on the behaviour of the offence committed by the child but does not damage the pupil's sense of self worth. The school will endeavour to ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but s/he is valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
  - d) Liaison with other agencies who support the student such as Social Services, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, the Educational Psychology Service, Behaviour Support Services and the Education Welfare Service.
  - e) Keeping records and notifying Social Services as soon as there is a recurrence of a concern.
- When a pupil on the child protection register leaves, the transfer of information to the new school will be paramount. The local Child Protection Team will be informed.

## **Children with Education Health Care PLans**

Priory Community School recognises that statistically children with behavioural

difficulties and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse. School staff who deal with children with profound and multiple disabilities, cerebral palsy, sensory impairment and or emotional and behaviour problems will be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse.

## . DEALING WITH A DISCLOSURE

If you have any reason to suspect that a child has been abused you should **listen** and ask only the minimum of questions. It is the role of all of us to clarify issues:

**IT IS THE ROLE OF POLICE AND SOCIAL SERVICES TO INVESTIGATE**

## WHEN A CHILD WANTS TO CONFIDE IN YOU

### DO

- **Be accessible and receptive**
- **Listen carefully and ask open questions to clarify** (e.g. who, what, when, where, how?)
- **Take it seriously** (e.g. this is very serious, I'm sad that has happened to you)
- **Reassure the child they are right to tell** (e.g. I'm glad you told me, that was the right thing to do)
- **Reassure the child it was not their fault** (e.g. the grown up knew it was very wrong to involve you in adult/this stuff/things)
- **Negotiate getting help** – Tell the child you are going to get help for them and their family – prepare them for the fact that you must involve others, they will be interviewed by police and a social worker, and may need a medical examination to check they are OK.
- **Explain – that you cannot personally protect them – but will support them in telling the right people to make sure it does not happen again.**
- **Report** – all suspicions or disclosures immediately.
- **Make careful records of what was said – immediately** using the child's own words and including questions you asked. **Keep your handwritten notes.**

### DO NOT

- **Jump to conclusions**
- **Try to get the child to disclose** – let the child talk and ask only the questions you need to know to clarify immediate safety. The child should not be repeatedly interviewed and the police/social services interview will form the basis of evidence needed to protect the child.

- **Speculate or accuse anybody**
- **Ask any leading question whatsoever** (e.g. was it Daddy/Mummy, etc. or any questions requiring a YES/NO answer.
- **Make promises you cannot keep**

In order to bring about change for the child and his/her situation, it is important that the above guidance is followed, and the Designated Teacher informed as soon as possible.

It is also important to remember that the child has chosen you, as a trusted adult, as a person to confide in – they will expect your support.

Other adults or children may tell you that a child causes them concern – still make it your business to ensure that some appropriate action is taken to protect the child.

## **MONITORING AND RECORDING**

Points to keep in mind:

### **i) Observation**

- (a) Differentiate between a “one-off” incident that requires immediate action and
- (b) Initially lower level concerns that build up to form a picture of concern.

For (b) remember observation can take place:

- Over time
- In different school settings (structured/unstructured)

and should be:

- Shared between colleagues (e.g. Class Teacher/Learning Support Assistant, Tutor/Subject Staff)
- Balanced

### **ii) Recording**

#### **(a) Of observations**

- Date/time
- Context (activity, routine interactive setting)
- Does a pattern emerge?
- Do you have supporting observations by other staff or students?

#### **(b) Of fact**

- Date/time
- Context
- What actions I took (what did I say – do – how did I respond – what did I observe – what judgement did I make?)
- What did the child/parent say – do? (Record in full as soon as possible after the event using the child’s/parent’s own words and your own words).
- What actions did others take?
- What was the sequence of events?

### **NOTE:**

In some cases, clear observation of a single event will form the basis of a disclosure. However, in many cases help will only be forthcoming to a child or

young person as a result of building up a profile of concerns. **Ongoing observation, monitoring and recording is therefore a vital role that the school has to fulfil.**

## **CONTACT FROM OUTSIDE SCHOOL**

If you are contacted directly by someone from outside the school about a child protection matter, **do please ensure** that the Designated Teacher for child protection is aware that you have been contacted, and seek his/her guidance before you give information or take action.

**Take details of the caller and arrange to phone them back.**

You may be contacted:

- To give information about a possible child abuse
- To prepare a report about child abuse
- To attend a Child Protection Case Conference
- To give evidence at Court about child abuse
- To make arrangements for Social Workers and/or Police to come into school to interview a child about possible abuse

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Priory Community School recognises that all matters relating to Child Protection are confidential.

The Principal, Head of School or Designated Lead Child Protection Officer will disclose any information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need to know basis only.

All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.

All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets.

## **SUPPORTING STAFF**

The school recognises that staff working in the school who have become involved with a child who has suffered harm, or appears to be likely to suffer harm may find the situation stressful and upsetting.

We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the designated teacher and to seek further support as appropriate.

## **ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF**

It is understood that a pupil may make an allegation against a member of staff.

If such an allegation is made, the member of staff receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Principal or Head of School.

The Principal or Head of School on all such occasions will discuss the content of the allegation with the LA Lead Officer for Child Protection.

If the allegation made to a member of staff concerns the Principal, the designated teacher will immediately inform the Chair of Governors who will consult with the LAs Lead Officer for Child Protection.

The school will follow the LA procedures for managing allegations against staff, a copy of which will be readily available in the school.

## **PHYSICAL INTERVENTION**

Physical intervention by staff must only be used as a last resort, and that at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person. We understand that physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures.

**Policy Review:**

The working of this policy will be reviewed by the Governors Support Committee annually

As well as examining the specific review data, the policy statement will be checked for continuing relevance against any changed statutory requirements and LEA advice.

**Review Data:**

At the annual review the following data will be examined

- Number of CP referrals made
- Responses from Social Services

**Date Policy Approved: February 2016**

**Date Policy due to be reviewed : February 2017**

**The name of the Designated Lead Child Protection Officer is : Rob Berry**

**Designated Governor for CP is : Fiona Waters**