



Arnold Lodge School

Policy and Procedure for Safeguarding Children (Child protection)

The school will safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people who are pupils at the school, in compliance with DCSF *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education*.

Aims:

Ensuring we operate safe recruitment procedures in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children, including CRB checks and compliance with Independent School Standard Regulations.

Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe.

Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.

Supporting pupils who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan.

Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.

Our policy applies to the Advisory Board, all staff and volunteers working in the school.

Objectives:

The school will

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Curriculum - Include opportunities in the PSHEE curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse, including e-safety. Assemblies and visitors to the school introduce/develop Safeguarding Children issues.

- We will be in accordance with locally agreed interagency procedures and follow the procedures set out by the Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) and take account of guidance issued by the DCSF to:-
- Ensure we have at least one designated person for child protection who has “status and authority” to take responsibility and has received appropriate training and support for this role. A designated person for the early years is currently undergoing training.
- Ensure we have a nominated member of the Advisory Board (MAB) responsible for child protection.
- Ensure that staff are aware of guidance to ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place pupils or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a pupil (for example, conveying pupils by car, engaging in inappropriate electronic communication with a pupil) See ‘Guidance to staff regarding conduct’ and ‘Parent Volunteers Guidelines’
- Ensure every member of staff and volunteers knows the name of the designated person responsible for child protection and their role.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated person responsible for child protection.
- Have in place arrangements to deal with allegations of abuse against members of staff/ volunteers/ Principal
- Gain assurance that appropriate child protection checks and procedures apply to any staff employed by another organisation and working with the school’s pupils on another site
- Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection by setting out its obligations. The policy is available on the website and in the front office.
- Notify social services if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a pupil who is on the child protection register.
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences.
- Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
- Ensure all records are kept securely, separate from the main pupil file, and in locked locations.
- Develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.
- Ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed.
- Report to the ISA, within 1 month of leaving the school any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or a student) whose services are no longer used and who is under investigation for allegedly causing harm or posing a risk of harm. “Compromise agreements” cannot apply in this connection.

We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at school their behaviour may be challenging

and defiant or they may be withdrawn. The school will endeavour to support the pupil through:-

- The content of the curriculum.
- The school ethos, which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued.
- The school discipline and behaviour policy, which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the school. The school will ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
- Liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as the Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB), Child and Adult Mental Health Service, Education Welfare Service and Educational Psychology Service.
- Ensuring that, where a pupil on the child protection register leaves, their information is transferred to the new school immediately and that the child's social worker is informed

Strategies for Implementation:

Safe Recruitment

Arnold Lodge is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. In this regard our practice is in accordance with *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education*, and all staff and volunteers, including the directors of the school, supply staff, contract staff, trainees or student teachers on placements and staff recruited from overseas are subject to List 99 or CRB checks as appropriate. Any person who has not been CRB checked will be supervised.

In order to meet the Vetting and Barring Scheme (VBS) legislation –

- The school will not **knowingly** employ (or take on as a volunteer) in an ISA regulated activity someone who is barred from such activity
- The school will refer to the ISA details of anyone who is removed from regulated activity, or who leaves while under investigation for allegedly causing harm or posing a risk of harm. The school will provide as much evidence about the circumstances of the case as possible.

The school will note that from 1 November 2010, when ISA registration becomes mandatory for new entrants and movers, it will be a **criminal offence**, with severe penalties:

- to work in an ISA regulated activity role without being ISA registered;
- not to check that potential new employees or volunteers are ISA registered.

Proprietors

The proprietors have a new legal duty to respond to requests from the ISA for information they hold already, but will not have to find it from other sources. The ISA will decide on:

- any new referrals on or after 20th January 2009;
- existing referrals at 20th January 2009 in cases where barring is not automatic, and the Secretary of State had not yet written to the person inviting representations against being included in the barred list.

Barring decisions by the ISA from 20th January 2009 have exactly the same effect as a Secretary of State bar on grounds of unsuitability to work with children made before 20 January 2009 and will be included on the Protection of Children Act List (PoCA) or on List 99. However, the ISA will not provisionally bar a person while considering a referral. Therefore it is even more important for Arnold Lodge to take up references and look into career history, to ensure that it is known why a job applicant left previous employment. Where checks against List 99 or PoCA, this check will also cover people barred by the ISA from 20th January 2009 onwards, as well as those barred by the Secretary of State. Where qualified teachers are registered with the General Teaching Council (GTC), misconduct referrals (that is, those which are not child-protection related) must go to the GTC.

In the case of an employee whose services are no longer used because he or she is considered unsuitable to work with children, the school will make a report to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA), within one month of the person leaving the school. This applies to all those working with children including supply teachers, trainees or student teachers on placements, contract staff and volunteers.

Identifying abuse

Because of their day-to-day contact with individual children, teachers and other staff are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour or failure to develop.

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. Sexual abuse may exhibit physical signs, or lead to a substantial behavioural change including precocity or withdrawal.

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Bruises, lacerations and burns may be apparent, particularly when children change their clothes for physical education and sports activities.

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child causing severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development, often by making them feel they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person, age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children, causing children frequently to feel

frightened, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Signs of emotional abuse, such as excessive dependence or attention seeking, may be noticeable.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development, such as failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, or neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs. Children suffering from neglect may include excessive dependence or attention-seeking.

These signs and others can do no more than give rise to suspicion - they are not in themselves proof that abuse has occurred. But teachers should be alert to all such signs. The appointment of a designated person with specific responsibility for child protection should not be seen as diminishing the role of all members of staff in being alert to signs of abuse and being aware of the procedures to be followed, including those in cases where an accusation is made against a member of the school's staff.

What to do when noticing signs of abuse

Where teachers and other staff see signs that cause them concern they should seek information from the child with tact and sympathy. It is not, however, the responsibility of teachers and other staff in schools to investigate suspected abuse. They should not take action beyond that agreed in the procedures established by the Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB).

Care must be taken in asking, and interpreting children's responses to, questions about indications of abuse. The same considerations apply when a child makes an accusation of abuse or volunteers information which amounts to that. Staff should be aware that the way in which they talk to a child could have an effect on the evidence that is put forward if there are subsequent criminal proceedings. They should not ask the child leading questions as this can later be interpreted as putting ideas into the child's mind. They should, therefore, not ask questions which encourage the child to change his or her version of events in any way, or impose the teacher's own assumptions. The chief task at this stage is to listen to the child, and not interrupt if he or she is freely recalling significant events, and to make a note of the discussion to pass on to the designated person, using the school Record of Concern. The note should record the time, date, place and people who were present as well as what was said. Staff should not give undertakings of absolute confidentiality. They should also be aware that their note of the discussion might need to be used in any subsequent court proceedings.

Procedures for handling suspected cases of abuse, including procedures to be followed if a teacher or other member of staff is accused of abuse are consistent with the policies and procedures of the WSCB and, where appropriate, the local education authority. All staff should be aware of the school's procedures, which should be easily accessible for reference; see below and "Safeguarding children flow chart", "Procedure for making child protection referral".

Local and national telephone helplines are posted in the school. A telephone is available which gives pupils the opportunity to make private calls.

Referral and the role of designated person

The Principal and Vice Principal are designated as having responsibility for liaising with the local social services department and other agencies over cases of abuse. All members of a school's staff should know who the designated person is (see safe guarding children flowchart.)

In all cases where abuse is suspected or a sustainable allegation is made, teachers and other members of staff should report the information to the designated person(s). These designated person(s) should refer these cases to or discuss them with the investigating agencies according to the procedures established by the WSCB, within 24 hours of a disclosure or suspicion of abuse.

If the designated person is unsure about whether a case should be formally referred, or has a general concern about a child's health or development, he or she can seek advice and support from the local social services department or the NSPCC or the WSCB. The Education Welfare Officer may also be able to offer advice. A child who is not being abused or at risk of abuse may nevertheless be 'in need' of local authority services, as defined by the Children Act (Section 17), and such cases need to be made known to the social services department.

Whether or not to make a referral, which could activate a child protection investigation, is a serious decision and will require careful judgement. The designated person will keep the Principal informed of the case.

When making a referral of a case of suspected or alleged abuse, the designated person should ask to be informed of the timing of the strategy discussion between the statutory agencies which will decide whether and how to investigate. The designated person may wish to clarify with the investigating agencies when, how and by whom the parents and the child will be told that a referral has been made. A member of staff, either the designated person or the member of staff who knows the child best, should be prepared to contribute to the strategy discussion the school's knowledge of the child.

Arnold Lodge School recognises the importance of the role played by the designated person and should enable him or her to carry out the duties of that role effectively and with appropriate training.

Designated teachers need to know:

- How to identify the signs and symptoms of abuse and when to make a referral;
- The WSCB child protection procedures and the designated person's role within them;
- The role and responsibilities of the investigating agencies and how to liaise with them;
- The requirements of record-keeping; and
- The conduct of a child protection conference and how the designated teacher or another member of staff can make an appropriate contribution to it.

Confidentiality

Child protection raises issues of confidentiality, which should be clearly understood by all staff. Staff have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies. If a child confides in a member of staff and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the member of staff tells the child sensitively that he or she has a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies for the child's own sake. Confidentiality cannot be promised to a pupil giving evidence and staff should avoid asking leading questions. Within that context, the child should, however, be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it. Staff who receive information about children and their families in the course of their work should share that information only within appropriate professional contexts. Child protection records should be kept securely locked.

This policy also applies to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The following are specific additional EYFS requirements:

- (i) there will be a designated practitioner to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children within the EYFS setting and liaising with local statutory children's agencies as appropriate
- (ii) we will inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises (whether that allegation relates to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere), or any other abuse which is alleged to have taken place on the premises, and of the action taken in respect of these allegations;
- (iii) we will inform Ofsted of the above, as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days.

Dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff, volunteers or other pupils/students

In the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or volunteer at the school, the school will deal with the matter in accordance with *Safeguarding Children in Education: Dealing With Allegations of Abuse Against Teachers and Other Staff* (Ref: DfES/2044/2005). Allegations against staff, volunteers or the designated person with responsibility for safe guarding should be reported to the Principal. If the Principal is absent the allegation should be passed to Mr Gareth Newman, the Director.

The School will inform Ofsted or Independence Safeguarding Authority (ISA) of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working or looking after children at the school (whether that allegation relates to harm or abuse committed on the premise or elsewhere) or any other abuse which is alleged to have taken place on the premises and of the action taken in respect of these allegations as soon as possible or at the latest within 14 days.

This guidance applies to any allegations that might indicate that a person is unsuitable to continue to work with children in their present position, or in any capacity. It should be used in case of any member of staff (including a volunteer) who is alleged to have:

- 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; or,
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

Allegations of abuse by one or more pupils/students against another pupil should be reported to the designated person or the Principal. Advice will be sought from WSCB within 24 hours with information about the age of the children involved and the nature of the alleged abuse. This advice will be followed.

Allegations made to school

If an allegation is made against the designated person with responsibility for child protection, the member of staff receiving the allegation must immediately inform the Principal. If the Principal is absent, the allegation should be passed to the Director, Mr Gareth Newman. If the allegation concerns the Principal, the person receiving the allegation should report it to the Director without notifying the Principal first. In case of serious harm, the police should be informed from the outset.

Guidance and monitoring may also be sought from John Sullivan, the WSCB manager, whose contact details are supplied at the end of this policy. Hereafter in these arrangements, the term 'Principal' may be held to mean 'Director of the school' in cases where the Principal is absent, or is the subject of the allegation or concern.

There may be three strands in the consideration of an allegation:

- a police investigation of a possible criminal offence;
- enquiries and assessment by children's social care about whether a child is in need of protection or in need of services;
- consideration by the school of disciplinary action in respect of the individual.

If the allegation meets any of the criteria set out in paragraph above, the Principal should report it to the Child Protection Services the same day.

Allegation made to the Police or children's social care

If an allegation is made to the police, the officer who receives it should report it to the force designated liaison officer without delay and the designated liaison officer should inform the LA designated officer straight away. Similarly if the allegation is made to children's social care the person who receives it should report it to the LA designated officer without delay.

Initial consideration

1. The LA designated officer will discuss the matter with the Principal / Director and where necessary obtain further details of the allegation and the circumstances in which it was made. N.B. The Principal should not investigate the allegation at this stage. The discussion should also consider whether there is evidence/information that establishes that the allegation is false or unfounded.
2. If the allegation is not patently false and there is cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the LA designated officer will immediately refer to children's social care and ask for a strategy discussion in accordance with "Working Together" to be convened straight away. In those circumstances the strategy discussion should include the LA designated officer and the Principal.
3. If there is not cause to suspect that "significant harm" is an issue, but a criminal offence might have been committed, the LA designated officer should immediately inform the police and convene a similar discussion to decide whether a police investigation is needed. That discussion should also involve the school and any other agencies involved with the child.

Action following initial consideration

4. Where the initial consideration decides that the allegation does not involve a possible criminal offence it will be for the employer to deal with it. In such cases, if the nature of the allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, the Principal should institute appropriate action **within 3 working days**. If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, the hearing should be held **within 15 working days**.
5. Where further investigation is required to inform consideration of disciplinary action the Principal and the Vice Principal should discuss who will undertake that with the LA designated officer. In some circumstances it may be appropriate for the disciplinary investigation to be conducted by a person who is independent of the school. In any case the investigating officer should aim to provide a report to the employer **within 10 working days**.
6. On receipt of the report of the disciplinary investigation, the Principal and the Director should consult the LA designated officer, and decide whether a disciplinary hearing is needed **within 2 working days**. If a hearing is needed it should be held **within 15 working days**.
7. In any case in which children's social care has undertaken enquiries to determine whether the child or children are in need of protection, the Principal and director should take account of any relevant information obtained in the course of those enquiries when considering disciplinary action.
8. The LA designated officer should continue to liaise with the school to monitor progress of the case and provide advice /support when required/requested.

Case subject to police investigation

9. If a criminal investigation is required, the police will aim to complete their enquiries as quickly as possible consistent with a fair and thorough investigation and will keep the progress of the case under review. They should at the outset set a target date for reviewing progress of the investigation and consulting the CPS about whether to proceed with the investigation, charge the individual with an offence, or close the case. Wherever possible that review should take place **no later than 4 weeks** after the initial action meeting and if the decision is to continue to investigate the allegation dates for subsequent review should be set at that point. (It is open to the police to consult the CPS about the evidence that will need to be obtained in order to charge a person with an offence at any stage.).

10. If the police and/or CPS decide not to charge the individual with an offence, or decide to administer a caution, or the person is acquitted by a Court, the police should wherever possible aim to pass all information they have which may be relevant to a disciplinary case to the employer within 3 working days of the decision. N.B. In any case in which children's social care has undertaken enquiries to determine whether the child or children are in need of protection, any information obtained in the course of those enquiries which is relevant to a disciplinary case should also be passed to the school.

11. If the person is convicted of an offence the police should also inform the employer straight away so that appropriate action can be taken.

Referral to Independent safeguarding Authority (ISA)

12. If on conclusion of the case the school ceases to use the person's services, or the person ceases to provide his/her services, the school would make a referral to the ISA and General Teaching Council. If a referral is appropriate the report should be made within one month.

Guidance to all staff

All staff must ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place pupils or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a pupil. For example: If a member of staff is interviewing/teaching an individual pupil without another adult present, s/he should ensure that his/her line manager is aware, and that the door is left open. Staff should make themselves aware of the school's *Guidance to staff regarding contact* and *Guidance on Physical Restraint* and *Parent volunteer guidelines*.

Records and reports for child protection conferences

Arnold Lodge School child protection records include the date, event and action taken in cases of suspected child abuse or when the child is placed on the child protection register. Reports prepared for child protection conferences should focus on the child's educational progress and achievements, attendance, behaviour, participation, relations with other children and, where appropriate, the child's appearance. If relevant, reports should include what is known about the child's relations with his or her family and the family structure. Reports should be objective

and based on evidence. They should distinguish between fact, observation, allegation and opinion. Reports may be made available to the child's parents at the child protection conference.

Child protection records are exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act 1984. For manual records, the Education (School Records) Regulations 1989 exempt information relating to child abuse from the requirement of disclosure. However, in cases of alleged child abuse which come to court, the court may require the school to provide its child protection records.

Monitoring and supporting pupils on the child protection register

The school will monitor pupils whose names are on the child protection register in line with what has been agreed in the child protection plan. The plan sets out the role of the child's parents and various agencies in protecting the child. This might include alerting either the child's key worker or the Education Welfare Officer when a pupil on the child protection register is absent (absence of 2 days or more would be reported) or to any signs which suggest deterioration in a pupil's home circumstances.

Staff should be aware that pupils who are victims of abuse often display emotional or behavioural difficulties. In cases of young people with longer term behavioural problems the school will seek advice from the local social services department, the educational psychology service or the child and adolescent mental health services on the availability of counselling or other systematic therapy.

Parental involvement

The school should help parents to understand its responsibility for the welfare of all pupils. This is an aspect of the school's ongoing work of fostering trust and good relationships with parents. Parents should be made aware of the school's child protection policy and the fact that this may require cases to be referred to the investigative agencies in the interests of the child. The policy is available on the school website and in the front office.

If a case of suspected abuse is referred to the investigative agencies, the school should continue to inform parents of the educational progress of the child.

Staff Training

Training will be undertaken every two years for the designated person. This is due for renewal in Spring 2011.

Training will be undertaken by the Principal and all staff every three years. This is due for renewal in Spring 2012.

All part-time and voluntary staff who work with children will be made aware of the school's arrangements for safeguarding children, and of any updates to current legislation or DCSF guidance which affect these arrangements.

Childline: Tel: 0800 1111

NSPCC: Tel: 0808 800 5000

The Samaritans: Tel: 08457 909090

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PO Box 181
Darlington
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