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# Charters School

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## Child Protection Policy

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Updated September 2011

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## Child Protection Policy

Approved on 03/10/11 Minute number 062/12

Review Date October 2012

Statutory requirements applying: Statutory policy

Clerk to Governors to indicate where information is to be displayed

Website ✓ First Class ✓ Folder ✓

Approved by Curriculum committee

## Introduction

The Governing Body of Charters School is responsible for ensuring the annual review of this policy, and for reporting back to the Local Authority via the minutes of meetings of the relevant Governing Body committee.

The Governing Body understands, takes seriously and fulfils its safeguarding responsibilities under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;

Safeguarding (as defined in the Joint Inspector's Safeguarding report) is taken to mean "All agencies working with children, young people and their families take all reasonable measures to ensure that the risk of harm to children's welfare is minimised" and "where there are concerns about children and young people's welfare, all agencies take all appropriate actions to address those concerns, working to agree local policies and procedures in full partnership with other agencies."

We recognise that all staff and Governors have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm, and that the child's welfare is our paramount concern. "Staff" covers ALL adult staff on site, including temporary, supply and ancillary staff, and volunteers working with children including:

- Parents and other members of the public
- Visitors
- Off-site personnel including Tirabad and RWSC
- Work experience personnel
- Cleaners
- Invigilators
- Catering personnel
- Peripatetic music teachers
- Coaches
- Governors

We believe that our school should provide a safe, caring, positive and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child.

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Act 1989; and in line with the following:

'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2010 Guidance

'Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families' 2000

'What to do if you are worried a Child is being Abused' 2003

'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education' DCSF 2006

'Berkshire Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCB) Child Protection Procedures' 2006

## The aims of this policy are:

- To provide an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued and respected, feel confident and know how to approach adults if they are in difficulties.
- To raise the awareness of all 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, and ensure we, the school, contribute to assessments of need and support plans for those children.
- 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 ensure that all adults within our school who have access to children have been checked as to their suitability. This includes other community users of our facilities working under the auspices of the school

## **Designated Person for Child Protection**

We have a Designated Person for Child Protection (Sue Derrick). The Designated Person who has undertaken appropriate training for the role, as recommended by the LA, within the past two years. Our Designated Person will update their training with LA approved training every two years.

We have two members of staff who will act in the Designated Persons absence who have also received training for the role of Designated Person (Sally Cronk and Gill Pennells). Additionally, should those persons be absent, a Headteacher (Richard Pilgrim) has also received training. There is a nominated CP representative on the Governing Body (Herta Morris).

The names and details of the Designated People will be prominently displayed around the school, with a statement explaining the school's role in referring and monitoring cases of suspected abuse. Additionally, all visitors and temporary staff will receive this information on entry.

## **Procedures**

Our procedures will be annually reviewed and up-dated and the training records will be audited by the Governing Body.

### **Awareness and Training**

All adults, as specified above, new to our school will be made aware, in writing, of the school's policy and procedures for Child Protection, the name and contact details of the Designated Person and have these explained, as part of their induction into the school.

All members of staff shall receive training on joining the school and at least every three years to receive training arranged or delivered by the Designated Person in order to develop their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse, how to respond to a pupil who discloses abuse and the procedure to be followed in appropriately sharing a concern of possible abuse or a disclosure of abuse.

All parents/carers are made aware of the school's responsibilities in regard to child protection procedures through publication of the school's Child Protection Policy, and reference to it is made in our prospectus/brochure and home school agreement.

Ensure that community users organising activities for children are aware of and understand the need for compliance with the school's child protection guidelines and procedures.

Our selection and recruitment policy includes all checks on staff and regular volunteers' suitability including Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks as recommended by the LA and in accordance with current legislation.

The name of any member of staff considered not suitable to work with children will be notified to the DCSF Teachers' Misconduct Team, with the advice and support of Human Resources and in accordance with the NEOST guidance and related regulations and withdrawn from contact with children with immediate effect by the headteacher.

## **Lettings Policy**

Our lettings policy will ensure the suitability of adults working with children on school sites at any time.

## **Supporting Children**

We recognise that a child who is abused or neglected, who witnesses violence or who lives in an unstable environment may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame him/herself, and find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self worth.

We recognise that the school may provide the only stability in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm.

We recognise that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our pupils by providing them with effective lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection.

We accept that research shows that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn.

Our school will support all pupils 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 Behaviour Policy which is aimed at supporting vulnerable children in the school. The school will ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but that they are valued and that any abuse or neglect which has occurred is not their fault.
- liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as Social Services, Child and Adult Mental Health Service, Education Welfare Service and Educational Psychology Service, East to West and Counselling Service.
- ensuring that where a pupil who is the subject of a Child Protection Plan leaves, their information is transferred to the new school immediately and that the child's social worker is informed.

## **Confidentiality**

We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential. The Headteacher or Designated Person will disclose personal information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need to know basis only.

However, 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 confidentiality.

We will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to the Safeguarding Service with their parents /carers unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm, or impede a criminal investigation.

## **Supporting Staff**

We recognise 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 Person and to seek further support. This could be provided by the Headteacher or another trusted colleague, Occupational Health, Care First (the LA counselling service) and/or a representative of a professional body or trade union, as appropriate. Reference: Staff Well Being Policy.

In consultation with all staff, we have adopted a code of conduct for staff at our school which is included in the school's Behaviour Policy. This forms part of staff induction and is in the staff handbook. We understand that staff should have access to advice on the boundaries of appropriate behaviour as part of the annual INSET programme.

## **Allegations against staff**

All school staff should take care not to place themselves in a susceptible position with a child.

All staff should be aware of the school's behaviour policy. This can be found on First Class>Charters Staffroom and on the school website.

We understand that a pupil may make an allegation against a member of staff and that members of staff may have concerns about the conduct of other members of staff from their own observation.

If such a situation arises the member of staff receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Headteacher or the most senior teacher if the Headteacher is not present. If the allegation concerns the Headteacher, the person receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Chair of Governors or an alternative Governor if the Chair is not available.

The Headteacher/senior teacher or the Chair of Governors as appropriate will discuss the content of the allegation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). In the case of allegations involving the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors will not inform the Headteacher of the allegation.

The school will follow the LA procedures for managing allegations against staff, a copy of which can be found in the LA Whistleblowing policy on First Class.

Suspension of the member of staff against whom an allegation has been made needs careful consideration, and we will consult with the LADO as above in making this decision.

Our lettings agreement for other users requires that the organiser will follow LA procedures for managing allegations against staff and, where necessary, the suspension of adults from school premises.

## **Whistleblowing**

We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.

All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues. RBWM 'Raising Concerns at Work (Whistle-blowing Policy) for Schools' is available on FirstClass and sets out actions to be taken. This has been adopted by the school.

## **Physical Intervention**

Our policy on physical intervention by staff is set out separately, as part of our Behaviour Policy. It complies with LA Guidance, 'The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils' November 2007. This policy states that staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, eg. when a child is endangering him/herself or others and that, at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to themselves or another person.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Role of the Designated Person for Child Protection**

1. Making referrals to the Safeguarding Service if there are concerns about a child's welfare, possible abuse or neglect.
2. Ensuring that detailed and accurate written records of concerns about a child are kept even if there is no need to make an immediate referral.
3. Ensuring that all such records are kept confidentially and securely and are separate from pupil records, with a front sheet listing dates and brief entry to provide a chronology. An indication of further record-keeping should be marked on the pupil's general record.
4. Acting as a focal point for staff concerns and liaising with other agencies and professionals.
5. Ensuring that either they or another appropriately informed member of staff attends case conferences or other planning meetings, contributes to the assessment process, and provides a report which has been shared with the parents as appropriate.
6. Ensuring that any absence, without satisfactory explanation, of a pupil currently subject to a child protection plan is referred to their Education Welfare Officer and the keyworker for the child protection plan immediately.
7. Ensuring that all school staff are aware of the school's CP policy and procedures, and know how to recognise and refer any concerns.
8. Keeping themselves up to date with knowledge to enable them to fulfil their role, including attending relevant training, at least every two years.
9. Ensuring that all staff receive basic Child Protection awareness training on joining the school and at least every three years and it is recorded in the Single Central Record completed by the School Manager.
10. Providing an annual report for the Governing Body, detailing any training undertaken by staff and Governors, number and type of incidents/cases, referrals to Children's Safeguarding Service and children subject to Child Protection Plans (anonymised).
11. Notifying the Safeguarding Service when a child attending the school is privately fostered.
12. Ensuring that any concerns about a pupil who leaves the school are forwarded under confidential cover to the Designated Person at the pupil's new school as a matter of urgency. The original copy of significant documents will be retained at our school, and photocopies forwarded as above.

## Appendix 2

### **Statutory Definitions of Abuse (Children)**

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.

Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger, for example, via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

The four definitions of abuse below operate in England based on the government guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010)'.

### **Physical Abuse**

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**

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 overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying) 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.

### **Sexual Abuse**

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 penetrative (e.g. rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, 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.

### **Neglect**

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); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

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

## **Appendix 3**

### **Signs and symptoms of abuse**

#### **Unexplained injuries or burns, particularly if they are recurrent**

- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Improbable/inconsistent explanations for injuries
- Untreated injuries of lingering illness not attended to
- Admission of punishment which appears excessive
- Shrinking from physical contact
- Fear of returning home or of parents being contacted
- Fear of undressing
- Fear of medical help
- Aggression/bullying
- Over compliant behaviour or a 'watchful attitude'
- Running away
- Significant changes in behaviour without explanation
- Deterioration in work
- Unexplained pattern of absences which may serve to hide bruises or other physical injuries.

#### **Possible signs of emotional abuse**

- Continual self-deprecation
- Fear of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- Self-harm or mutilation
- Compulsive stealing/scrounging
- Drug/solvent abuse
- 'Neurotic' behaviour – obsessive rocking, thumb-sucking, and so on
- Air of detachment – 'don't care' attitude
- Social isolation – does not join in and has few friends
- Desperate attention-seeking behaviour
- Eating problems, including overeating and lack of appetite
- Depression, withdrawal

#### **Possible signs of neglect**

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Inappropriate clothing
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school
- Untreated medical problems
- Low self-esteem
- Poor social relationships
- Compulsive stealing or scrounging
- Constant tiredness

#### **Possible signs of sexual abuse**

- Bruises, scratches, burns or bite marks on the body
- Scratches, abrasions or persistent infections in the anal or genital regions
- Pregnancy – particularly in the case of young adolescents who are evasive concerning the identity of the father
- Sexual awareness inappropriate to the child's age - shown for example

in drawings, vocabulary, games, and so on.  
Frequent public masturbation  
Attempts to teach other children about sexual activity  
Refusing to stay with certain people or go to certain places  
Aggressiveness, anger, anxiety, tearfulness  
Withdrawal from friends.

### **Possible signs in older children**

Promiscuity, prostitution, provocative sexual behaviour  
Self-injury, self-destructive behaviour, suicide attempts  
Eating disorders  
Tiredness, lethargy, listlessness  
Over-compliant behaviour  
Sleep disturbances  
Unexplained gifts of money  
Depression  
Changes in behaviour

## Appendix 4

### Dealing With Disclosures

#### Receive

- Listen to the child. If you are shocked by what they tell you, try not to show it. Take what they say seriously. Children rarely lie about abuse and to be disbelieved adds to the traumatic nature of disclosing. Children may retract what they have said if they meet with revulsion or disbelief.
- .Accept what the child says. Be careful not to burden them with guilt by asking 'Why didn't you tell me before?'

#### Reassure

- Stay calm and reassure the child that they have done the right thing in talking to you. It's essential to be honest with the child, so don't make promises you may not be able to keep, like 'I'll stay with you' or 'Everything will be all right now.'
- Don't promise confidentiality: you have a duty to refer a child who is at risk
- Try to alleviate any feelings of guilt that the child displays. For example, you could say: 'You're not to blame' or 'you're not alone, you're not the only one this sort of thing has happened to.'
- Acknowledge how hard it must have been for the child to tell you what happened.
- .Empathise with the child - don't tell them what they should be feeling.

#### React

- React to the pupil only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer this matter; but do not 'interrogate' them for full details.
- Do not ask 'leading' questions such as: 'What did he do next?' (this assumes that he did!) or 'Did he touch your private parts?' Such questions may invalidate your evidence (and the child's) in any later prosecution in court. Instead ask open questions like 'Anything else to tell me?', 'Yes?' or 'And... ?'
- Do not criticise the perpetrator: the pupil may love him/her and reconciliation may be possible.
- Do not ask the pupil to repeat everything to another member of staff.
- Explain what you have to do next and to whom you have to talk.
- Inform the Designated Person for child protection
- Ensure that if a Social Services interview is to follow, the pupil has a 'support person' present if they wish (possibly yourself).
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#### Record

- Make some very brief notes at the time on any paper which comes to hand and write them up as soon

as possible.

- Do not destroy your original notes in case they are required by a court.
- Record the date, time, place, any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and words used by the child. If the child uses their family's own private sexual words, record the actual words used, rather than translating them into 'proper/words'.
- Draw a diagram to indicate the position of any bruising.
- Be objective in your recording: include statements and observable things rather than your interpretations or assumptions.

## **Support**

- Make sure that you continue to support the child, providing time and a safe space throughout the process of investigation and afterwards.
- Get some support for yourself, without disclosing confidential information about the child to colleagues.