

# RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

### Rationale

Under the Children Act 1989, local authorities have a general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need. It establishes the principal that the child's welfare is paramount and that the voice of the child must be heard. This approach influences the work of all organisations concerned for the welfare of children and is reflected in 'Working Together under the Children Act 1989: A guide for inter-agency co-operation for the protection of children from abuse'.

This policy is written to record the procedures for the identification, referral and monitoring of all cases of suspected abuse and thereby forms the schools' response at Riverside Community Primary School. It is written in conjunction with Local Authority documents: Child Protection in Plymouth, Notes and information for School Co-ordinators (June 1999) and the Multi-Disciplinary Child Protection Handbook (September 1998).

### Philosophy

At Riverside Community Primary School we provide a safe, secure environment, which is built on a climate of trust, where children can have their varied needs met by a team of caring professionals.

### Aims

We aim to provide the very best care for our pupils, by:

- Monitoring their welfare needs daily
- Being aware of the changing needs of pupils
- Responding sensitively and professionally to the pupils' desire to disclose information
- Sharing sensitive information on a need to know basis
- Working together with outside agencies

### Procedures

**The School Co-ordinator** is Mr Brian Jones, Headteacher. In his absence, reports should be made to the Deputy Headteacher, Mrs Lisa Meek

### **If you suspect child abuse:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>DO</b> refer to your Co-ordinator immediately</li><li>• <b>DO</b> write up a full report for the Co-ordinator and retain a safe copy</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>DO NOT</b> examine the child</li><li>• <b>DO NOT</b> ask leading questions</li><li>• <b>DO NOT</b> discuss with anyone other than the Co-ordinator</li></ul>
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Allegations of abuse by another young child or young person must be given the same importance as any other form of alleged abuse and referred to the School Co-ordinator.

If a child discloses information to you, it is essential to safeguard and not contaminate the evidence in the event of the possible subsequent prosecution of the perpetrator. The following guidelines will help you to avoid this.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>DO</b> allow the child to do the talking</li> <li>• <b>DO</b> listen to, rather than directly question the child</li> <li>• <b>DO</b> listen quietly and encouragingly</li> <li>• <b>DO</b> remain calm and caring</li> <li>• <b>DO</b> allow the child to finish</li> <li>• <b>DO</b> explain you may have to tell someone</li> <li>• <b>DO</b> record the conversation as soon as possible afterwards. Use the child's own words where possible</li> <li>• <b>DO</b> refer to your Co-ordinator immediately</li> <li>• <b>DO</b> write up a full report for the Co-ordinator and include timing, setting and persons present as well as what was said. Retain a copy safely. (See Appendix A for a copy of the report form)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>DO NOT</b> postpone or delay the opportunity to listen</li> <li>• <b>DO NOT</b> stop a child who is freely recalling significant events</li> <li>• <b>DO NOT</b> allow your feelings, such as anger, pity or shock to surface</li> <li>• <b>DO NOT</b> make promises of secrecy</li> <li>• <b>DO NOT</b> make notes during the disclosure</li> <li>• <b>DO NOT</b> interpret what you have been told, just record it</li> <li>• <b>DO NOT</b> discuss with anyone other than the Co-ordinator</li> </ul>
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**Please note matters of child protection should always be considered as urgent.**

Emergency cover arrangements may be necessary to enable report writing to take place. Liaise with Deputy Head Teacher if this is required.

**Role of the School Co-ordinator in reporting suspected abuse**

- To receive all referrals of suspected abuse concerning pupils in the school from any source, including ancillary staff, parents, neighbours etc.
- To refer all cases of suspected abuse to the Social Services District Duty Office where the child resides (see Flow Chart detailing School Co-ordinator's Course of Action on receiving a Report of Suspected Abused, Appendix B).
- In cases requiring urgent medical treatment or examination, to contact the Social Services District Duty Officer where the child resides. The Social Worker will then make arrangements to accompany the child, or attend at the hospital, which ever is appropriate, and to inform the parents. The nature and extent of the abuse, medically confirmed, will be needed as evidence.
- To record the circumstances and the detail of every referral, as soon as possible that day, including diagrams where appropriate, on the report forms (see Appendix A). The child's own words should be recorded and a record should also be kept of any action taken.
- Referrals to Social Services must be supported by a written report to the District Manager of the District Team involved, within 24 hours of a referral. A copy of the report (form Appendix A) should be forwarded to the Director of Education. The School Co-ordinator can request a case conference if the response by Social Services to the initial referral is considered unsatisfactory.
- If criminal proceedings go ahead, the child may have what is known as a substantive interview. It is important to ensure that no one on the school staff discusses the case with the child until all court proceeding are complete. Social Services will provide support for the child if needed.

## **Other responsibilities of the School Co-ordinator**

### **Training**

- To attend training refresher courses annually, or as frequently as they are provided if this exceeds one year.
- To update and remind all teaching and non-teaching staff annually about the procedures (and new staff as they take up their posts). Particular importance should be given to the issue of confidentiality of children's statements and the risk of contaminating evidence.
- To consult colleagues as necessary to co-ordinate and plan the form of the school's response.

### **Information sharing and record keeping**

- To ensure all appropriate staff are aware of children on the Child Protection Register or of concerns about suspected abuse, especially when children change class or school.
- To establish and maintain a system of factual confidential records. This should include written or spoken communication concerning child protection cases and must be filed securely.
- To provide a written report for the Chair of a Child Protection Case Conference and to keep a copy for the Co-ordinator's own records (Use Appendix C for compiling such a report). This should be shared with the parents prior to the meeting.
- Written information produced on a word processor should be saved on a disc, removed from the hard drive and the disc stored securely or saved under an impenetrable password. The Data Protection Act should be kept in mind.
- To arrange for appropriate representation at all Child Protection Case Conferences.
- To liaise with other School Co-ordinators regarding siblings at risk of abuse, or pupils on transfer or temporary placement.
- To remove and destroy securely all official child protection minutes from secure files, when a child's name is removed from the register. Keep own notes/jottings.

### **Duty of care**

- With due regard for confidentiality, to arrange in conjunction with Social Services for the 'after care' and monitoring of the child within school.
- To notify the Care Manager of any change of circumstances of the child and also to inform the Care Manager of any changes in the child's behaviour or appearance, or any concerns about the child.

### **Allegations of Physical, Sexual or Emotional Abuse of Pupils by Employees**

- The Plymouth Education Service Procedure will need to be invoked whenever there is a complaint of a child having been abused by an employee. Children may allege that they have been struck or roughly handled (physical abuse), been the subject of improper suggestions, a sexual act or an attempted sexual act (sexual abuse) or been verbally bullied, picked upon, unfairly criticised, intimidated or maligned (emotional abuse).
- The operational procedure (see Appendix D) is designed to ensure allegations of abuse of children by employees are handled in a consistent and appropriate manner, in accordance with both the Child Protection and Personnel Regulations.
- The School Co-ordinator should inform Paul Davies (Directorate of Lifelong Learning) as soon as an allegation has been made.
- The employee is advised to contact their union as a matter of utmost urgency.

### **Success Criteria**

This policy will have been implemented successfully when:

- Child protection concerns are dealt with swiftly and efficiently
- All staff are regularly trained and conversant with the schools' procedures
- Children are actively protected from harm by services working together

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

The Personnel Committee will monitor the daily implementation of this policy and a full review of procedure will occur every three years. The School Co-ordinator will liaise with the Personnel Committee to review procedures as and when necessary.

### **Appendices**

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| A - Report form | - | Notification of Suspected Child Abuse   |
| B - Flow Chart  | - | School Co-ordinator's Course of Action on Receiving a Report of Suspected Abuse |
| C – Report form | - | Report for Child Protection Conference/review                                   |
| D - Flow chart  | - | LA Procedure for Handling Allegations of Child Abuse by Employees               |

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chair of Curriculum/Premises and Health and  
Safety Committee

Date: \_\_\_\_\_