

## WHOLE-SCHOOL POLICY ON CHILD PROTECTION

**SCHOOL: PEAR TREE SPECIALIST SCHOOL**

### A. Named staff/personnel with specific responsibility for Child Protection

Academic Year	Designated Senior Person	Governor Nominated under Paragraph 31.8 of Safeguarding Children in Education (DfES/0027/2004)
2009-2010	Mrs Lesley Koller Mrs Kairen Dexter	Mrs Anne Fielding

### B. Review dates for this policy

Review Date	Changes made	By whom
<b>Autumn 2010</b>		

## **DEVELOPING A WHOLE SCHOOL POLICY ON CHILD PROTECTION**

‘Through their day to day contact with pupils and direct work with families, education staff have a crucial role to play in noticing indicators of possible abuse or neglect, and in referring concerns to the appropriate agency, normally the social services department’.

*(‘Working Together to Safeguard Children 1999’, Department of Health, Home Office, Department for Education and Employment, 1999)*

### **1. PURPOSE OF A CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

1.1. An effective whole school child protection policy is one which provides clear direction to staff and others about expected codes of behaviour in dealing with child protection issues. An effective policy also makes explicit the school’s commitment to the development of good practice and sound procedures. This ensures that child protection concerns and referrals may be handled sensitively, professionally and in ways which prioritise the needs of the child.

### **2. INTRODUCTION**

At Pear Tree Specialist School we are committed to “working together” and valuing achievement and our school fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect children and support pupils in school.

‘There are three main elements to our Child Protection Policy’.

- (a) Prevention:  
(eg positive school atmosphere, teaching and pastoral support to pupils).
- (b) Protection:  
(By following agreed procedures, ensuring staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to Child Protection concerns).
- (c) Support:  
(To pupils and school staff and to children who may have been abused).

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers in school

### **3. SCHOOL COMMITMENT**

‘We recognise that high self- esteem, confidence, peer support and clear lines of communication with trusted adults helps all children, and especially those at risk of or suffering from abuse.’

Our school will therefore:

- (a) Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- (b) Ensure that children know that there are adults in the school who they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty.
- (c) Include in the curriculum activities and opportunities for PSHE which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse.  
(See PSHCE schemes of work and policies)
- (d) Include in the curriculum material which will help children develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly with regard to childcare and parenting skills.  
(See PSHCE Schemes of work)
- (e) Ensure that wherever possible every effort will be made to establish effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from other agencies.

#### **4. FRAMEWORK**

4.1 Schools do not operate in isolation. The welfare of children is a corporate responsibility of the entire local authority, working in partnership with other public agencies, the voluntary sector and service users and carers. All local authority services have an impact on the lives of children and families, and local authorities have a particular responsibility towards children and families most at risk of social exclusion.' (*Working Together to Safeguard Children 1999*)

Child protection is the responsibility of all adults and especially those working with children. The development of appropriate procedures and the monitoring of good practice are the responsibilities of the Lancashire Area Child Protection Committee (LACPC).

- What is the LACPC, what are its functions, who attends?
- Who represents the LA on this Committee?
- What is the purpose and function of the Locality Children Services Planning Groups and how do these relate to the work of the LACPC?
- What is the Child Protection Register and who can access it?

\* For this information see Document B3 in the Child Protection in Education Information Pack.

## 5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1. All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to protect children. There are, however, key people within schools and the LA who have specific responsibilities under Child Protection procedures. The names of those carrying these responsibilities for the current year are listed on the cover sheet of this document.

**The Child Protection Development Officer** is based at County Hall, Preston  
Tel: 01772 532634

**The Senior Designated Teacher** is the person to whom all concerns should be reported, The Senior Designated teacher should report to the Headteacher, Lesley Koller, and the second Senior Designated Teacher is Kairen Dexter.

- **The Senior Designated Teacher** should:
  - ❖ Understand the procedures and how they work in practice
  - ❖ Ensure the school has a system for recording concerns at all stages
  - ❖ Provide support and guidance to the school staff
  - ❖ Undertake and offer training
  - ❖ Co-ordinate action where there are child protection concerns
  - ❖ Review Child Protection Policy with others in school, including the Governing Body
  
- **The Head Teacher** , when they are not the Senior Designated teacher should:
  - ❖ Ensure that the school has a Senior Designated Teacher
  - ❖ Ensure that policies and Procedures are followed
  - ❖ Support the Senior Designated in discussing appropriate action
  - ❖ Ensure that staff are trained in matters relating to Child Protection
  - ❖ Make Explicit the school's commitment to protecting children

**The Nominated Governor for Child Protection** should:

- ❖ Liaise with SDT and Head to ensure school has policies and sound procedures
- ❖ Ensure that these are regularly reviewed
- ❖ Ensure that CP is an annual item on the governors' agenda
- ❖ Ensure the school staff / governors have access to, and attend training
- ❖ Be responsible for following procedures when there are allegations of abuse against the Headteacher

## 6. PROCEDURES

6.1 Where it is believed that a child is suffering from, or is at risk of significant harm, we will follow the procedures set out in the document produced by Lancashire Area Child Protection Committee – *'Multi-Agency Policy, Guidance and Procedures'(2000)* and the LEA document *'Handling Concerns About the Welfare or Safety of A Child in School.'*

Staff should report concerns directly to the Senior Designated Teacher, recognising the need for confidentiality, and follow advice given. We will follow the procedures set out in the document produced by Lancashire Area Child Protection Committee – Multi-Agency Policy Guidance and Procedures.

Parents will be informed of the school's duties and responsibilities under the Child Protection procedures via the school prospectus. Parents will be reminded of prospectus updates via the school newsletter.

## **7. TRAINING AND SUPPORT**

7.1. Our school will ensure that the Head Teacher, the Designated Senior Person and the nominated governor for Child Protection attend training relevant to their role' at intervals of not longer than 2 years. The Designated Senior Person will also attend Inter Agency Child Protection training within this timescale.

- All governors, teaching staff and support staff will receive basic training on Child Protection.
- Staff will be kept informed on current child protection issues via the policy, meetings or written communication.
- See Safeguarding Children in Education (DfES/0027/2004), Document A3 in the Child Protection Information Pack.

## **8. CONFIDENTIALITY**

8.1. Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. The only purpose of confidentiality in this respect is to benefit the child.

- All staff must recognise the need for confidentiality
- The teacher should never guarantee confidentiality to a child as information must be shared as part of protection procedures
- If relevant, following discussion / advice of the Senior Designated Teacher, the child should be given reasons as to why other people need to be informed and be told who these people may be
- Information and concerns will be shared with people on a need to know basis, parents should be informed of any referral (with reasons). The School Nurse and Class Team may be involved in sharing information. Social Services Child Protection Team is informed and in some cases the Police.
- No one else should be given confidential information. Staff may be alerted to any issues, which necessitates their input to ensure protection of the pupil.
- The Headteacher via liaison with parents and the District Child Protection Team will make initial contact.

- 8.2 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. Any disclosure of personal information to others, [including the social service departments], must always however, have regard to both common and statute law.
- 8.3 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, consent may not be possible or desirable but the safety and welfare of a child dictate that the information should be shared. The law permits the disclosure of confidential information necessary to safeguard a child or children. Disclosure should be justifiable in each case, according to the particular facts of the case, and legal advice should be sought if in doubt.

\* See also Document A10(ii) in the Child Protection Information Pack

## **9. RECORDS AND MONITORING**

- 9.1 Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Our school is clear about the need to record any concerns held about a child or children within our school, the status of such records and when these records should be passed over to other agencies.

School uses a system of dating and recording concerns about the welfare or behaviour of a child using the Safeguarding in Education Document A10(i). The completed record is kept locked in a cabinet in the Headteacher's room. If necessary additional documentation may need to be completed by staff involved – the blank forms – including Body / Skin map are in the Headteacher's room.

Any information completed should be dated, signed and given directly to the Designated Teacher, to be handled and filed confidentially, no copies should be taken. When it becomes apparent that there are child protection concerns, the documents will be transferred to the child protection file, which is in a locked cabinet in the Headteacher's room. Only the Designated Teacher for Child Protection/Headteacher have access to this file. In the absence of the Headteacher, the Deputy would take over the role as Designated Teacher.

The Designated Teacher should monitor children about whom there are concerns, ensuring that staff are alerted to potential difficulties / implications arising from problems as necessary i.e. on a 'need to know' basis. This would usually be those staff with a major role in the pupil's life / and or those with a role in the individual's child protection scenario. This may normally include the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, the nurse, the class teacher, and class support staff.

Parents should be informed by the Headteacher of any sharing of information / concerns in respect of Child Protection issues, unless this would be considered to pose a threat to the child.

\* See also Document A10(i) in the Child Protection Information Pack

## **10. ATTENDANCE AT TEAM AROUND THE CHILD & CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCES**

A Team Around the Child Meeting is also a multi-agency meeting and can be called by any of the agencies involved with the child and family to co-ordinate a multi-agency approach to supporting a child in need.

A Child Protection Conference is a multi-agency meeting called by the Child Protection Team to agree and implement a Child Protection Plan. It will be attended by the Senior Designated Teacher, whenever possible. If this is not possible, then the Senior Designated Teacher will nominate a representative to attend.

\* See also Document B2 in the Child Protection Information Pack

## **11. SUPPORTING PUPILS AT RISK**

11.1 Our school recognises that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth and to view the world in a positive way. This school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. Whilst at school, their behaviour may still be challenging and defiant and there may even be moves to consider suspension or exclusion from school.

It is also recognised that some children who have experienced abuse may in turn abuse others. This requires a considered, sensitive approach in order that the child can receive appropriate help and support.

11.2 This school will endeavour to support pupils through:

- (a) the curriculum, to encourage self-esteem and self-motivation;
- (b) the school ethos, which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and which gives all pupils and adults a sense of being respected and valued;
- (c) the implementation of school behaviour management policies (required under the Code of Practice, 1993 Education Act);
- (d) a consistent approach, which recognises and separates the cause of behaviour from that which the child displays. This is vital to ensure that all children are supported within the school setting;
- (e) regular liaison with other professionals and agencies who support the pupils and their families;
- (f) a commitment to develop productive, supportive relationships with parents, whenever it is in the child's interests to do so;

- (g) the development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable staff group trained to respond appropriately in child protection situations.

This policy should be considered alongside other related policies in school.

These are:

- Behaviour Management Policy;
- Special Education Needs;
- Health and Safety
- Care and Control
- Equal Opportunities
- Anti-Bullying
- Disability Equality Scheme

We recognise that, statistically, children with behavioural difficulties and disabilities are particularly vulnerable to abuse. School staff who work, in any capacity, with children with profound and multiple disabilities, sensory impairment and/or emotional and behaviour problems will need to be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse.

It must also be stressed that in a home environment where there is domestic violence, drug or alcohol abuse, children may also be particularly vulnerable and in need of support or protection.

## **12. SAFE SCHOOLS, SAFE STAFF**

Staff should try to avoid working alone in a 1:1 situation with a pupil. If the situation necessitates, they should ensure they have discussed the issue with colleagues and work in a 'transparent' way – e.g. by leaving the door open, informing staff you will be alone with the child. Staff should consider guidance given in respect of staff / pupil contact, through training i.e. Consider body positioning is now abusive, when physical contact between staff and pupils is necessary.

There is clear guidance for staff in respect of acceptable use of sanctions through school policy. Where allegations may be made against them, they will be dealt with according to locally agreed procedures.

When recruiting staff, vetting procedures include checking of qualifications, investigation of criminal records and accessing of references in respect of the employee, *taking account of the DCSF guidance 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education'*.

\*See also Documents A6(i) and (ii) in the Child Protection Information Pack

### 13. COMMON ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

The framework form should be used when we consider that a child has needs which cannot be met solely by those services and resources which can be accessed directly by school and where, following an assessment of the situation, we believe that co-ordinated intervention is required to promote, safeguard or protect the welfare of the child. The parents would be involved in the assessment process and will give permission for the assessment to be shared with other professionals.

Where, following an assessment of a situation, it is considered immediate protective action is required, a child protection referral must be made by the Designated Senior Person. **This referral will be a telephone/visit to the local social services office.** The multi-agency form should then be forwarded by the nominated officer to social services following the child protection referral.

\* See Documents A1 and B1 in the Child Protection Information Pack

### 14. PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW IF A MEMBER OF STAFF IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE WELFARE OR SAFETY OF A CHILD

**Procedures to follow if a member of staff is concerned about the welfare and safety of a child:**

Concern should be reported to the class teacher and the Senior Designated Teacher



Record information on appropriate forms in liaison with the Senior Designated Teacher



The Senior Designated Teacher will inform the parents / agencies in accordance with Child Protection

\*See Document A1 in the Child Protection Information Pack and Appendix 1 of this template

## **SCHOOL CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES**

### **1. What Should Staff/Volunteers Do If They Have Concerns About A Child or Young Person in School?**

Education professionals who are concerned about a child's welfare or who believe that a child is or may be at risk should pass any information to the Designated Senior Person (DSP) in school; this should occur within 24 hours (See Appendix 1 – attached)

The Designated Senior Person is: The Headteacher

The Back Up Designated Senior Person is: The Deputy Headteacher

It is these senior colleagues who are responsible for taking action where the welfare or safety of children or young people is concerned. If staff are uncertain about whether their concerns centre on a child's welfare or safety, then a discussion with their DSP/line manager will assist in determining the most appropriate next course of action:

Staff should never:

- do nothing/assume that another agency or professional will act or is acting.
- attempt to resolve the matter themselves.

The Designated Senior Person/line manager should always consider the following key questions:

- Am I dealing with 'risk' or 'need'? (By definition, a child at risk is also a child in need. However, what is the priority/level of need?)
- Can the level of need identified be met in or by the school or by accessing lea or universal services/without referral to social services/by working with the child, parents and colleagues?
- What resources are available to me and what are their limitations?
- Is the level of need such that a referral needs to be made to social services which requests that an assessment of need be undertaken? (Section 17)
- Is the level and/or likelihood of risk and/or need such that a child protection referral needs to be made? (Section 47)
- What information is available to me: Child, Parents, Family & Environment?
- Do I need to make an Inquiry of the Lancashire CP Register? (Authorised professional can do so, including DSPs – it is their responsibility to inform parents that they are to do so; see Document B3)
- What information is inaccessible and, potentially, how significant might this be?
- Who do I/don't I need to speak to now and what do they need to know?

- Where can I access appropriate advice and/or support? (LA CP Officers 01772 532634/01772 531196)
- If I am not going to refer, then what action am I going to take? (eg time-limited monitoring plan, discussion with parents or other professionals, recording etc)

## 2. Feedback to Staff Who Report Concerns to the Designated Senior Person

Rules of confidentiality dictate that it may not always be possible or appropriate for the Designated Senior Person to feedback to staff who report concerns to them. Such information will be shared on a 'need to know' basis only and the Designated Senior Person will decide which information needs to be shared, when and with whom. The primary purpose of confidentiality in this context is to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.

## 3. Thresholds for Referral to Social Services

Where a Designated Senior Person or line manager considers the CAF procedure needs to be instigated. There are two thresholds for (and their criteria) and types of referral that need to be carefully considered:

### (i) Is this a Child In Need?

Under section 17 (s.17(10)) of the Children Act 1989, a child is in need if:

- (a) He is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity to achieve or maintain, a reasonable standard of health or development, without the provision of services by a local authority;
- (b) His health or development is likely to be impaired, or further impaired, without the provision of such services;
- (c) He is disabled.

### (ii) Is this a Child Protection Matter?

Under section 47(1) of the Children Act 1989, a local authority has a duty to make enquiries where they are informed that a child who lives or is found in their area:

- (a) is the subject of an Emergency Protection Order;
- (b) is in Police Protection; or where they have
- (c) reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer **significant harm**.

Therefore, 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 is likely to suffer significant harm. **(The Designated Senior Person will make judgements around 'significant harm', levels of 'need' and when to refer)**

#### 4. Making Referrals to Social Services (Designated Senior Person)

##### (i) Child In Need/Section 17 Referrals

The DSP should complete a Common Assessment Framework Form (CAF) and send this to the local Social Services Initial Assessment Team.

- This is a request for assessment/support/services and, as such, you must obtain the consent of the parent(s) (and child/young person where appropriate), this should be identified on the CAF;
- Where a parent/child/young person refuses to consent, you should make clear your ongoing plans and responsibilities in respect of support, monitoring etc, and the possibility of a child protection referral at some point in future if things deteriorate or do not improve.

##### (ii) Child Protection/Section 47 Referral

Make a telephone call to your local Social Services Initial Assessment Team. You will speak to a Customer Care Officer (this person is an administrator, not a Social Worker) whose role is to receive your referral information, enter it onto the appropriate IT system and forward to the relevant Social Work Team Leader for consideration:

- You still need to instigate a CAF and should forward this as soon as possible, and certainly within 48 hours
- You do not require the consent of a parent or child/young person to make a child protection referral
- A parent should usually be informed by the referrer that a child protection referral is to be made. The criteria for not informing parents are:
  - (a) Because this would increase the risk of significant harm to a child(ren); or
  - (b) Because, in the referrer's professional opinion, to do so might impede an investigation that may need to be undertaken;
  - (c) Because there would be an undue delay caused by seeking consent which would not serve the child's best interests.

Fear of jeopardising a hard won relationship with parents because of a need to refer is not sufficient justification for not telling them that you need to refer. To the contrary, this lack of openness will do little to foster ongoing trust, particularly as the source of referrals will be disclosed to parents except in a limited number of circumstances. If you feel that your own or another adult's immediate safety would be placed at risk by informing parents then you should seek advice and/or make this clear on the CAF and in any telephone contact with social services.

## **5. APPENDIX 3: TALKING AND LISTENING TO CHILDREN**

### **If a child wants to confide in you, you *SHOULD***

- Be accessible and receptive;
- Listen carefully and uncritically, at the child's pace;
- Take what is said seriously;
- Reassure children that they are right to tell;
- Tell the child that you must pass this information on;
- Make sure that the child is ok ;
- Make a careful record of what was said (see *Recording*).

### **You should *NEVER***

- Investigate or seek to prove or disprove possible abuse;
- Make promises about confidentiality or keeping 'secrets' to children;
- Assume that someone else will take the necessary action;
- Jump to conclusions, be dismissive or react with shock, anger, horror etc;
- Speculate or accuse anybody;
- Investigate, suggest or probe for information;
- Confront another person (adult or child) allegedly involved;
- Offer opinions about what is being said or the persons allegedly involved;
- Forget to record what you have been told;
- Fail to pass this information on to the correct person (the Designated Senior Person).

### **Children with communication difficulties, or who use alternative/augmentative communication systems**

- While extra care may be needed to ensure that signs of abuse and neglect are interpreted correctly, any suspicions should be reported in exactly the same manner as for other children;
- opinion and interpretation will be crucial (be prepared to be asked about the basis for it and to possibly have its validity questioned if the matter goes to court).

The LA's Child Protection Information Pack (2004) provides guidance on these issues insofar as children with disabilities/complex needs are concerned – See Document C4.

### **Recordings should**

- State who was present, time, date and place;
- Be written in ink and be signed by the recorder;
- Be passed to the DSP or Head Teacher immediately (certainly within 24 hours);
- Use the child's words wherever possible;

- Be factual/state exactly what was said;
- Differentiate clearly between fact, opinion, interpretation, observation and/or allegation.

### **What information do you need to obtain?**

- Schools have **no investigative role** in child protection (Police and social services will investigate possible abuse very thoroughly and in great detail, they will gather evidence and test hypotheses – leave this to them!);
- Never prompt or probe for information, your job is to listen, record and pass on;
- Ideally, you should be clear about what is being said in terms of **who, what, where and when**;
- The question which you should be able to answer at the end of the listening process is 'might this be a child protection matter?';
- If the answer is yes, or if you're not sure, record and pass on immediately to the Designated Senior Person /Head Teacher/line manager.

### **If you do need to ask questions, what is and isn't OK?**

- **Never** asked closed questions ie ones which children can answer yes or no to eg Did he touch you?
- **Never** make suggestions about who, how or where someone is alleged to have touched, hit etc e.g Top or bottom, front or back?
- If we must, use only '**minimal prompts**' such as 'go on ... tell me more about that ... tell me everything that you remember about that ... .. '
- Timescales are very important: '**When was the last time this happened?**' is an important question.

### **What else should we think about in relation to disclosure?**

- Is there a place in school which is particularly suitable for listening to children eg not too isolated, easily supervised, quiet etc;
- We need to think carefully about our own body language – how we present will dictate how comfortable a child feels in telling us about something which may be extremely frightening, difficult and personal;
- Be prepared to answer the 'what happens next' question;
- We should never make face-value judgements or assumptions about individual children. For example, we 'know that [child.....] tells lies';
- Think about how you might react if a child DID approach you in school. We need to be prepared to offer a child in this position exactly what they need in terms of protection, reassurance, calmness and objectivity;
- Think about what support **you** could access if faced with this kind of situation in school.

**Date of Policy:**            **October 2009**            **To be Reviewed:**    **October 2010**