



ASHBROOKE HOUSE SCHOOL

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL FOR BOYS AND GIRLS AGED 3 TO 11

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

School Ethos

1. The school wishes to promote the all round development of each child which includes spiritual, intellectual, emotional and physical development.
2. We aim to foster healthy and happy relationships between staff and children and also between pupils.
3. The school aims to promote friendly and open relationships between staff and parents so that concerns about a child's development can be quickly and easily discussed both at a formal and informal level.
4. The school aims to promote the welfare of its pupils by making them feel secure, encouraging them to express their views and by ensuring that the pupils feel that they are being listened to.
5. Under the principles of Every Child Matters:
 - Be healthy
 - Enjoy and achieve
 - Achieve economic wellbeing
 - Make a positive contribution
 - Stay safe

The headteacher and staff have a responsibility to be aware of evidence of a physical or behavioural nature which may point to abuse of the child.

Ashbrooke House fully recognizes its responsibilities for child protection.

Our policy applies to all staff, teaching practice students, work placement students and volunteers working in the school. There are five main elements to our policy:

- Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children.
- 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.

We recognize that because of the day to day contact with children; school staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. The school will therefore:

- 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 they can approach if worried.
- Include opportunities in the PHSE curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognize and stay safe from abuse.
- Make children aware of our anti-bullying policy to help them know what to do if they see or experience bullying.

We will follow the procedures set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board and take account of guidance issued by the Department for Education and Skills to:

- Ensure we have a designated senior person for child protection who has received appropriate training and support for this 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 senior person responsible for child protection.
- Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and staff for safeguarding children by setting out its obligations in the school prospectus.
- Notify Children's Social Care if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a pupil who is on a child protection plan.
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding a child protection matter, including attending 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.

We recognize 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 elements 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 parent 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 and Anti-Bullying Policies which are aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the school. The school will ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but that they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
- Liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as Children's Social Care, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, police, education welfare service and educational psychology service.
- Ensuring that where a pupil on a child protection plan leaves, their information is transferred to the new school immediately and that the child's social worker is informed.

Background Information

The Abuser of a Child

The abuser could be:

1. The parents.
2. A relative.
3. A family friend.
4. A stranger.
5. A member of staff.
6. A child within the school community.
7. A child outside the school community.

Abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by:-

- Inflicting harm
- By failing to act to prevent harm

Physical Abuse

This 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 feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to, a child whom they are looking after. This situation is known as Fabricated and Induced Illness by proxy.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing the child to frequently feel frightened or in danger. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child though it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact or include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at pornographic material or watching sexual activities or encouraging a child to behave in a sexually inappropriate way.

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.

There are a number of sources of stress for children and families and one or more of these may sometimes be a cause or contributory factor leading towards abuse.

1. Domestic violence.
2. Marital breakdown/ introduction of new partner.
3. The mental illness of a parent.
4. Drug or alcohol misuse.
5. Unemployment.

6. A death in the family.
7. Pregnancy.

The School's role in Child Protection

Procedure A - Where the suspected abuse does not involve an allegation about a member of staff or another pupil.

1. The Headteacher is the Child Protection Officer for the school.
2. Staff are required to inform the Headteacher if they suspect any form of abuse to a child. A teacher should complete the school's Form for Suspected Child Abuse. An accurate record of all that has happened must be made, stating:
 - The known facts.
 - Times.
 - Explanations.
 - Actions taken.

Signs of physical injury should be described in detail, and sketched using a copy of the skin map. Any comment by the child concerned, or by any adult who might be the abuser, about how the injury occurred should be recorded, preferably quoting the words actually used, as soon as possible after the comment has been made.

3. The headteacher should contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or in an emergency the police and make a clear statement of:
 - The known facts.
 - Any suspicions or allegations.
 - Whether or not there has been any contact with the child's family.The duty social worker will inform the duty manager, who will discuss and advise on the next step(s) to be taken.
4. The headteacher may convene a meeting of staff who have regular contact with the child, to discuss the suspected abuse.
5. School staff should not notify or make enquiries of parents when abuse is suspected, even if a pupil has been taken to hospital. Children's Social Care, in accepting the referral, become responsible for determining what action is to be taken in relation to the child, including advising parents.

6. If the abuse or suspected abuse is sexual, no attempt should be made to arrange or allow medical examination until discussions have taken place with LADO. A responsible adult must be with the child.

Procedure B - Where the allegation of abuse involves a member of staff (not the headteacher)

1. If a child makes the allegation to a member of staff the headteacher must be informed immediately.
2. Whether made to a member of staff or direct to the headteacher or orally in writing by the parents, the headteacher will convene a meeting with the child and its parents (and the teacher concerned). A full written record will be kept of this meeting.
3. The headteacher will inform the LADO if the parents are dissatisfied with the outcome of this meeting.
4. The LADO, the headteacher and a representative of the police and social services (if considered necessary) will meet with the parents and the child.
5. The LADO, the teacher and a representative of the police and social services (if considered necessary) will meet the teacher. The teacher may have a friend, colleague or union representative present with him/her at this meeting.
6. The outcome of these meetings may result in:
 - a) A child protection investigation involving the Children's Social Care/ the Police.
 - b) A disciplinary investigation mainly involving a breach of contract by the teacher in which case a written warning will be issued. Where suspension is considered to be appropriate it should be in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedure.
 - c) A decision reflecting inappropriate conduct by the teacher and therefore no further formal investigation is warranted. The headteacher may decide upon managerial action.
 - d) A decision which confirms that the allegations are unfounded.
7. The headteacher should consider:
 - a) Whether counselling or informal professional advice to the member of staff is appropriate and if so, in what form;

- b) Whether counselling and support is appropriate for the child(ren) who made the allegations and whether it is appropriate for their parents.

Procedure C - Where the allegation of abuse involves the headteacher.

It is most likely that an allegation of abuse in this case will be reported to the parents by the child. In some circumstances a parent or teacher may wish to report an incident after witnessing this at first hand.

1. The parent or teacher should write down the allegations and request an interview with the directors. A written record of this meeting should be kept.
2. The LADO will be informed by the directors about the allegations.
3. The LADO will convene a meeting at which the parents/teacher, headteacher, police and social services will attend. The teacher may attend with a friend or colleague or union representative and the headteacher may attend with a union representative.
4. The outcome of the meeting may result in
 - a) A child protection investigation, involving the Children's Social Care/Police.
 - b) A warning being issued by the Police against the headteacher which will be communicated to the Independent Schools Section of the Department for Education and Employment.
 - c) A decision which confirms that the allegations are unfounded.

NB If the headteacher, in connection with proven allegations of child abuse, was removed from his/her post the Deputy Headteacher would assume the leadership of the school.

Procedure D - Where the allegation of abuse involves another child at the school, the school's Policy on Bullying will take effect.

BULLYING

Ashbrooke House is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. All pupils are encouraged to tell a member of staff if bullying occurs and can be assured that incidents will be dealt with promptly and efficiently.

Bullying can be:

Physical	pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence.
Verbal	name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.
Emotional	excluding, tormenting (ie. Hiding possessions, threatening gestures), being unfriendly.
Racist	racist taunts, graffiti, gestures
Sexual	unwanted physical contact or abusive comments.
Texting	sending "hate speech" by cell phone
Cyber-bullying	sending e-mails intended to hurt or embarrass another person/ ganging up on victims by making them the subject of ridicule in forums.

Parents have a responsibility to discuss forms of bullying with their child and to ensure that he/she understands what behaviour is unacceptable at school. At the start of each term, teachers will also discuss bullying with their class.

Your child will be told that if they are a victim of bullying, or a witness to it, they should:

- a) Tell the teacher or nearest member of staff.
- b) Realise that the headteacher will be informed and that the bully(ies) spoken to.
- c) Understand that he/she will be questioned by the teacher or headteacher about what they have experienced or witnessed.

Further procedures will include:

- a) An apology from the bully to the victim.
- b) A verbal warning that if a similar incident occurs parents will be informed and a written record of the incident will be kept. Parents will also be invited to school to discuss their child's behaviour.
- c) If persistent bullying occurs the pupil will be permanently excluded from school at any point in the term.

The other main forms of inappropriate behaviour at school include swearing, rude gestures and telling rude jokes. Again parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children understand such behaviour is unacceptable at school.

It is hoped that the general ethos of the school will encourage high all round standards of behaviour.

Accidental Injuries at home or out of school

Physical injuries to a child may well indicate the existence of abuse but they may also be the result of accidents.

Parents have a responsibility to inform the school in writing about any injury sustained by the child when out of school e.g. Sprains, fractures, breaks, bruises and cuts (especially to the face). It is not uncommon for some children to suffer more accidents than others because of poor co-ordination or clumsiness.

The local hospital informs the school about any child who visits Accident and Emergency.

Role of the headteacher as designated Teacher for Child Protection

- Liaise with Children's Social Care and / or police.
- Co-ordinate information from Social Services regarding children on our school roll who are being 'looked after' or are subject to an order following child protection proceedings.
- Keep records of any cases of suspected abuse reported to Social Services and any contemporaneous notes.
- Ensure that all teaching, support staff and volunteers, including those newly appointed to our school, are aware of North Somerset Council's guidelines for child protection and our own policy and procedures and receive appropriate training.
- Be available to advise staff on the interpretation of North Somerset guidelines and our school policy and procedures.
- Share with other members of staff expertise or information gained from training.
- Co-ordinate information from Children's Social Care on pupils who have been placed on a child protection plan.