

Cedars Infant School, Blackburn

Child Protection Policy



Revised Autumn 2007

School Aims

At Cedars we believe that it is a vitally important part of our work, whether we are teaching or non-teaching staff, to identify, support and protect the children in our care who are at risk from abuse in all its forms ;

- physical abuse
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse
- and all forms of neglect.

It is our aim that all staff have the appropriate knowledge and skills to enable them to take prompt and appropriate action when concern is raised so that a child at risk can best be protected from harm and helped to heal.

We aim to create a happy and caring environment in our school where children feel safe, feel **and are** secure, enjoy their school days and are at ease in their world . The adults in school should build relationships with the children which promotes trust, openness and honesty.

We will achieve these aims by ensuring that :

- All staff, Governors and parents are aware that the named designated member of staff responsible for Child Protection in our school is :

Liz Beaumont the Headteacher.

In the absence of the Headteacher this role becomes the responsibility of the Deputy.

The named Governor with responsibility for Child Protection is (Doreen Taylor -Chair of Governors)

The Headteacher & Chairman of Governors have undertaken the "Safer Recruitment" online training provided by the NCSL Learning Gateway.

- It is the policy of our school, in line with the recommendations of the Bichard report, that all new appointments of staff employed to work in our school, and other adults working at Cedars with access to our children, will be required to undergo a Criminal Records Bureau check prior to confirmation of appointment.
 - All new appointments of staff employed to work in our school, and other adults with access to our children, will be required to undergo a Criminal Records Bureau check.
 - All staff within the school are aware of issues surrounding Child Protection and of the school's procedures in dealing with such issues should they arise. All should have undergone basic training to a level appropriate to their role, either externally or internally provided, and be given opportunities to for further development of their knowledge and skills in this area. They should be aware of the role of outside agencies in this field and work co-operatively with them when matters arise in our school.
 - The school's own procedures are known to all staff, and they are especially familiar with the action level appropriate to their own role. However, they should also be aware of the action levels of their colleagues, including the responsibilities of the designated teacher.
 - The school puts into practice the procedures laid down in the Blackburn with Darwen Council's Child Protection document (the "white folder"), the staff are aware of this document and have access to a copy of it in the office.
 - As educators we are aware of our role in helping children to develop attitudes towards "self-protection", the skills and knowledge of ways to keep safe and deal with some circumstances that put them at risk.
- * We have access to teaching materials that enable us to deal with issues appropriate to the age and development of our children.
*This teaching should only take place when teachers are confident that the children's normal relationships and their emotional security will not be threatened.

*We carefully consider the very young age group we are working with and make sure that any teaching methods and materials are appropriate to their stage of intellectual, social and emotional development.

What are we looking for ?

We know our children very well, very often the whole family. We know what is normal for each child and quickly spot changes.

We should always be aware of the signs that can alert us to possible abuse or neglect.

The following are the main signals that will cause us to take action in each of the four categories of abuse. However, this list only identifies serious symptoms, we know that there are lots of other indicators that tell us that all is not right in the life of a child. All kinds of changes in the behaviour of a child we are in daily contact with, can trigger alarms and give rise to concerns.

Never doubt your own "gut reaction" to even the smallest of these changes, they may amount to nothing requiring serious investigation but it is always worth sharing this kind of worry with a colleague.

Watch out for :

1. **PHYSICAL ABUSE** - injury, hurt, harm, death
(beyond reasonable chastisement)
 - hitting
 - squeezing
 - burning
 - administering poisons
 - drowning
 - suffocating
 - use of excessive force

2. **SEXUAL ABUSE** - use of children by adults for their own needs
(beyond the safe touch)
 - inappropriate fondling
 - masturbation
 - oral, anal, vaginal intercourse
 - exposure to pornographic materials

3. **NEGLECT** - failure by parents to meet basic needs

- food
- warmth
- shelter
- protection from harm
- medical attention

4. **EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

- non organic failure to thrive
- persistent lack of love and affection
- scorn / ridicule
- threats
- verbal attacks
- indifference

What to do about it

Suspicions of abuse - sexual / emotional :

If you become aware of any of the symptoms listed in Appendix 1 being displayed by a child in our school **you must not ignore it.**

Discuss any concerns about changes in behaviour with another colleague (if you are a member of the support staff team this should be the class teacher) who has dealings with the child. Even at the earliest stages of concern you should mention the matter to the Senior Designated Teacher (Liz Beaumont) you may have already submitted a "Safeguarding & well-being form" or consider beginning one.

If you are the child's class teacher you should begin to keep an informal "log" with details and dates of the concerns / events, this should be your personal diary i.e. **not** for passing on to the child's next teacher or for discussion with parents.

All subsequent events should be logged and mentioned to the SDT who will decide on any action. Each case is different and no hard and fast rules can be made other than that action must be taken to protect the child by involving outside agencies as soon as the level of concern is such that we feel that the child is being abused.

Suspicious of neglect :

These may grow slowly or be immediate when a child enters school or following a holiday. Again mention your concerns to a colleague and pass them on to the SDT and log all events. Other agencies are available to become involved informally right away, e.g. the school nurse through normal health surveillance and home visiting procedures. With evidence for concern the Social Services will be involved through the SDT, and support for the child and family can be organised.

Suspicious of physical abuse :

If you observe an injury on a child and the explanation given by the child as to its cause does not satisfy you, report the injury to the class teacher. The class teacher should report accurately the events and child's own words to the SDT who will decide on action. If the parent offers the teacher an explanation which is not satisfactory this should still be reported. The events should be "logged" by the class teacher.

Injuries that are not explained satisfactorily will be reported to the Social Services Department on the same day. The SDT (or Deputy if SDT is not in school) will immediately ring the duty officer giving details.

ALL REPORTS TO THE SOCIAL SERVICES MUST BE LOGGED. IF ACTION IS REQUESTED THE TELEPHONE CALL SHOULD BE FOLLOWED UP WITH A LETTER.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- We must be aware of the need to be sensitive to children's and their parents' feelings. All concerns, reports and any subsequent actions should be treated as confidential within the school. While bearing in mind that members of staff could offer information and support, staff will only be informed on a "NEED TO KNOW" basis.
- Staff should be aware of the difficulties such incidents create, the effects on the child of disclosing incidents and events, the upheaval to family life and relationships that an incident can cause, and try to diffuse the tension as much as possible.
- Staff need to be aware that it is not good practice to interview a child alone in a room with the door closed. Keep the door open and alert a colleague to stand nearby and within vision when the need arises to talk to a child one-to-one. It would not be the usual responsibility of anyone other than the designated teacher (or DHT in her absence) to interview a child on a child protection matter.
- Never tell a child that you will keep their information a secret. You cannot keep that promise so don't make it. We are legally bound to pass on certain information, possibly to the police and/or Social Services.
- As professional educators we have many skills in communicating with, and giving comfort and security to young children. However, we are not qualified counsellors and should not try to deal with children's serious emotional difficulties that result from neglect, abuse or other trauma. We must liaise with those agencies that can facilitate the child receiving trained and qualified help.
- We must listen to children and take what they say to us seriously – this is different to always believing what they say.

(The following needs revision in line with the UN statement on "The Rights of the Child")

*Communication within school

Bearing in mind the issue of confidentiality mentioned above, we must ensure that we communicate vital information between staff involved with the child.

If a teacher has been logging information it should be passed on verbally (stating that the diary is still in the teacher's possession) and the next teacher should begin a new diary .

Likewise if a child changes schools information should be passed on verbally - if case conference minutes exist that are still relevant, social services should be informed that the child has transferred so that a decision can be made as to whether minutes should be passed on.

If information about a child's behaviour and about special circumstances is important then it should be communicated to all school and support staff caring for the child:

- *Support teachers*
- *NNEB*
- *Bilingual assistants*
- *Outreach support*

.....all should be made aware that information is CONFIDENTIAL . They will have contributions to make towards reporting about the child.

Liaison with outside agencies

When the Headteacher decides that a referral to an outside agency is required, it will depend on the area of suspicion as to the agency to which the referral will be made.

A suspected non-accidental injury will be referred to social services. Parents will not be made aware of this prior to the referral.

If a family are suspected to be at risk of neglect the school nurse will usually be the first referral, she/he will be asked to visit the family and, as a result, the school may involve social services.

The following are possible agencies for involvement :

- School nurse
- Family GP / health visitor
- Education welfare officer
- Social services
- Police Child Protection Team
- NSPCC
- Other schools / day care establishments' staff
- Community centre staff.

Staff Development and training

All teachers, nursery nurses, bilingual assistants, clerical staff, and the senior lunchtime supervisor will have basic awareness raising training on Child Abuse.

Updating this policy and any changes in procedures will be done annually by the Headteacher as designated child protection teacher.

Appendix 1 : The role of the Designated teacher

DES Circular 4/88 states as one of its principal recommendations that "each school is to designate a senior member of staff as having responsibility, under the procedures established by the LEA, for co-ordinating action within the school and for liaison with other agencies".

Cedars' designated teacher is Liz Beaumont (Headteacher)

Responsibilities :

- Responsibility for co-ordinating action within the school on all forms of child abuse;
- Liaison with other staff over concerns about individual children and action resulting from referrals;
- Make necessary referrals to outside agencies when suspicions of non-accidental injuries and other symptoms of abuse occur.
- Liaison with outside agencies about actions following referrals;
- Attend case conferences, supplying reports following discussions with staff involved with the child concerned;
- Attend strategy meetings and Family Core Group meetings, report to and from, and offer such advice and support to children and their families as school can supply as part of the core group's programme of support;
- Ensure that all staff involved with the day-to-day care of our children are aware of Child Protection issues, school procedures and training opportunities;
- If a child is on the Child Protection register and moves schools, passing on information to the receiving school and informing the custodian of the Child Protection register if the child moves out of the authority.

The role of the Child Protection Governor

- Ensuring , in liaison with the senior designated teacher, that the school has a child protection policy and procedures in place;
- Ensuring that an annual agenda item is placed on the Governors' agenda to report on changes to the Child Protection Policy / procedures, training undertaken by the senior designated teacher and other staff, the number of incidents / cases (without details or names) and the place of Child protection issues in the school curriculum;
- Liaison, with due regard to confidentiality, with the senior designated teacher regarding allegations of child abuse;
- Responsibility for oversight of procedures relating to liaison with Children's services, social services department and the police in relation to any allegations of child abuse made against the Headteacher, including attendance at strategy group meetings;
- Attendance at training for designated Governors.

Appendix 2 : Designated Teacher (& others) Training Record

- Liz Beaumont (Headteacher & senior designated teacher)
 - Online "teachernet" Bichard training - spring/summer 2006
 - 2 day Child Protection for designated teachers - November 2005
 - LEA "Safeguarding children" - ½ day 2005
 - LEA "Impact of domestic violence on children" - 2 days 2002
 - LEA network meetings for LAC (approx. termly)
 - B'burn with Darwen training for "Looked after children" 2001
 - B'burn with Darwen introduction of "white book" 2001
 - LEA :2 day course 1995 & Governor 1 day course 1995
 - NSPCC : sexual abuse 1 day 1993
 - Multi agency : physical abuse 2 days 1991 & 1992

Others :

All staff attended a session of training in Child Protection presented by LA in Autumn term 2000.

- Anne Holden (Teacher)
 - Social services course : Sexual abuse 1992
- Anne Davis (Teacher)
 - Social services courses : Physical abuse 1994
 - Sexual abuse 1994
 - Emotional abuse 1994
- Louise Sames (Teacher)
 - Social services course : Sexual abuse 1993
- Frances Neale (Teacher)
 - Social services courses ; Physical abuse 1993
 - Sexual abuse 1993
- Mary Hodge (NN)
 - Social services course :Physical abuse 1989
- Susan Warner (NN)
 - Social services course : Physical abuse 1995
 - Sexual abuse 1995
 - Emotional abuse 1995
- Tasneem Khan (Biling. NN)
 - Social services course : Physical abuse 1995
 - Sexual abuse 1995
- Diane Bailey (Clerical Assistant)
 - Social services course : Physical abuse 1992