

Child Protection Policy

Foreword

This policy is the foundation for recognizing our duties with regard to safeguarding and protecting children, and offers guidance for all staff who are involved with children to prevent them from harm.

We have a duty to ensure that we comply with legislation according to the Local Education Authority's Child Protection Policy and the All-Wales Child Protection Procedures, and we are eager to comply with these procedures.

Ysgol Gyfun Gŵyr takes its responsibilities with regard to safeguarding children and child protection seriously, and ensures full cooperation with all the relevant authorities in undertaking them.

There are three main elements to our policy:-

- a) prevention through the teaching and pastoral support offered to pupils;
- b) procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse. Because of our day to day contact with children, school staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse; and
- c) support to pupils who may have been abused.

Our policy applies to all staff working at the school and governors. Learning support assistants, canteen staff, caretakers, office staff, as well as teachers, can be the first point of disclosure for a child.

Prevention

We recognise that high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and good lines of communication with a trusted adult helps to safeguard pupils.

The school will therefore:-

- a) establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to;
- b) ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty;
- c) include in the curriculum, activities and opportunities for PSE which equip children with the understanding to stay safe from abuse and to know to whom to turn for help; and

- 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.

Specific Duties

The school has a **Designated Child Protection Officer** (Jeffrey Connick, Assistant Head) who is responsible for coordinating all child protection matters within the school. In his absence Dafydd Jenkins, Assistant Head will operate as **Deputy Designated Child Protection Officer**.

The Designated Teacher (or his deputy) will:

- Ensure that all concerns regarding child abuse are considered in line with guidance from the All-Wales Child Protection Procedures.
- Ensure that any disclosure is referred to the Social Services Department without delay, ensuring that the referral is followed up in writing on the Agreed Form as soon as possible thereafter, keeping records of cases which cause concern safely.
- Be a source of advice and correct information, and who staff can trust on matters regarding safeguarding or protecting children.
- Receive information about concerns regarding safeguarding or child protection
- Ensure that he has received relevant training and keeps up to date by attending relevant courses as necessary (the Designated Teacher, JC, attended safeguarding training organized by the Local Authority Safeguarding Officer, Paul Henwood, on 22 October 2012).
- Provide up to date information to enable staff to carry out their duties effectively. "Safeguarding Children: Notes for Staff" (2011) has been provided by the Local Authority, which gives guidance on all child protection matters, and is available on the school intranet.
- Keep members of staff informed of individual cases when appropriate.
- Be a link between Social Services, School Senior Management Team and the Education Authority.

The **Designated Governor for Child Protection** (Dr. John Davies) will:

- Ensure that child protection procedures are in place within the school,
- Ensure that the procedures are available to all staff, and
- Ensure that the procedures include guidance on allegations regarding children and staff.

Training

Whole school training is arranged, when appropriate, to ensure that all staff know their duties in accordance with Safeguarding and Child Protection.

Each permanent member of staff within the school is provided with a booklet which contains child protection guidance and the booklet is also provided to any temporary member of staff, or supply teacher. The booklet is available on the school's intranet in the J Drive under "Staff Booklet".

Additional training is organised for key members of staff, e.g. Teaching Assistants, Heads of Learning and Progress, members of the Senior Management Team and others as required, through County provision or other agencies.

The Designated Teacher will need to ensure that he receives refresher Child Protection training at least every three years.

The training program will make staff aware of the following:

Signs of Abuse/Neglect

Signs which suggest physical abuse:

- Extensive bruising on different parts of the body
- Bruises of different colours which could be evidence of regular abuse
- Fingermark bruising on chest, back, arms or legs
- Burns of any shape or size
- Marks which do not have a plausible explanation

Signs of possible sexual abuse

- Something that the child has said
- Something that the child has said to someone else
- Child showing sexual behaviour which causes concern, when playing or in the company of other children
- Child who possesses sexual understanding beyond that which is acceptable for his/her age
- Child who visits, or is cared for by someone who is known as a sexual criminal or is suspected to be one

Signs which suggest emotional damage

The following signs can be present in children when parents are overcritical and emotionally cold, or who cannot meet with the emotional needs of children:

- Children whose behaviour is overt eg. continuous bed wetting, overeating, continuously hitting the head or shaking
- Children who self-harm eg. those who cut or scratch themselves, or take an overdose
- Children who try to commit suicide
- Children who continually run away from home
- Children who show high levels of anxiety, are unhappy and withdrawn
- Children who usually seek comfort and warmth, or those who try to avoid it
- Children who disclose that they have witnessed, or heard domestic violence

Signs which suggest neglect

- Home conditions which are dirty or dangerous
- Parents who have not addressed a child's health or developmental needs
- Children who always appear too light as regards expected weight or physically too small
- Children who always appear tired or lack energy
- Children who always have physical marks due to lack of supervision

Supporting the Pupil at Risk

We recognise that children who are at risk, suffer abuse or witness violence may be deeply affected by it.

This school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. Nevertheless, when at school, their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn.

The school will endeavour to support the pupil through:-

- a) the content of the curriculum to encourage self-esteem and self-motivation (see section on Prevention);
- b) the school ethos which:-
 - i) promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment; and
 - ii) gives pupils a sense of being valued (see section on Prevention);
- c) a regime which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the school. Staff will agree on a consistent approach which focuses on the offence suffered but does not damage the pupil's sense of self-worth. The school will endeavour to ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but s/he is still valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred;
- d) liaison with other agencies who support the pupil such as Social Services, the Educational Psychology Service, Behaviour Support Services and the Education Welfare Service; and
- e) keeping records and notifying Social Services as soon as there is a recurrence of a concern;

When a pupil on the Child Protection Register leaves, we will transfer information to the new school immediately under the agreed protocol and inform Social Services.

***In Appendices 1 and 2 of this policy, there is information regarding the steps to be taken when disclosures are made on the school site.**

Bullying

Our policy on bullying is set out in the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and is reviewed annually.

Physical Intervention

Our policy on physical intervention is known and is reviewed annually.

Essentially, every effort is made not to use force unless it is necessary to do so in order to:

- Prevent serious injury to a pupil or member of staff
- Prevent serious damage to property
- Ensure the safety of pupils and staff.

Children with Statements of Special Educational Needs

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

*APPENDIX 1

Steps to be taken when an allegation is made on the school site by a pupil regarding personal circumstances

STEP 1: Pupil discloses information to a member of staff (or member of staff becomes aware of a situation which endangers a pupil).

STEP 2: Member of staff makes notes regarding what was said by the pupil. These should contain as far as possible the EXACT WORDS that the pupil used to describe feelings, events, etc. These should be kept safe-perhaps these will be needed in the future if a court case occurs.

STEP 3: Member of staff explains to the pupil exactly what will happen next and endeavors to reassure the pupil that he/she has done the right thing in sharing the information. The pupil should also be reassured that he/she will be kept informed of every stage of the process. It should be explained that it is to JC as the Designated Child Protection Officer that the information shared will be relayed. Perhaps the pupil will not know JC and feels nervous that a stranger will know so quickly about such personal information-it is important to place the child's mind at ease by saying things such as "...he talks to many children about personal problems-he deals with a lot of different situations which cause unhappiness for children".

STEP 4: Member of staff tells JC-he will want to know as much information as possible. Perhaps JC will want to see the pupil in order to show support and put the child's mind at rest that he/she has done the right thing. THE DESIGNATED TEACHER WILL NOT ASK THE PUPIL TO REPEAT THE INFORMATION OR GO TO SEE A PUPIL ABOUT WHOM INFORMATION WAS OBTAINED. In cases of abuse which lead to a court case, it could be detrimental to the pupil that he/she has been forced to repeat the allegation. JC can also seek more guidance regarding dealing with the matter by contacting Paul Henwood (County's Education Child Protection and Safeguarding Officer-LACPC) on 01792 637148 or Kathryn Thomas, in his absence (01792 636537).

STEP 5: JC contacts the child's parents or guardians, if this does not place the child in more danger, in order to seek their support before transferring the matter to Social Services.

STEP 6: JC contacts Social Services (01792 635700) and follows instructions-informs the pupil of the next steps. It is possible that the Social Services will want to speak with the pupil or visit the home etc. JC will inform the Headteacher of what is happening.

***Appendix 2**

Steps to be taken on the school site regarding a professional allegation made by a pupil/member of staff

1. When a pupil or staff member has a potential child protection concern about a member of staff, the concern will be relayed to JC as the Designated Member of Staff (DMS) with responsibility for Child Protection.
2. JC will contact Paul Henwood – the Education Child Protection and Safeguarding Officer (ECPSO) by telephone on 01792-637148 and provide details of the alleged incident/s providing names, addresses and dates of birth for all parties (pupil/s and adult/s) involved in the allegation.
3. The ECPSO will contact Mike Holding – the Local Authority Child Protection Co-ordinator (LACPC) and relay the details of the alleged incident/s. This will constitute the Strategy Discussion as required in the All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008 document.
4. The Police will also become involved in these discussions as part of the process.
5. The LACPC will advise the ECPSO if it is necessary to call a Professional Strategy Meeting (PSM) or if the matter is considered not to meet the threshold for being a child protection concern then the school will be informed in order for the matter to be dealt with internally eg as a training matter, support and/or mentoring provided to ensure improved practice in future.
6. A PSM will be called usually within 48 hours of the initial contact being made. However, there may be times when it will not be possible to call the PSM within this time period eg just before a half term school holiday. In these circumstances, the PSM will be held at the earliest possible opportunity.
7. The ECPSO will attend the PSM along with the LACPC and a member of the Police Public Protection Team. A member of the School Senior Management Team and/or the DMS will attend the PSM as well as a representative from the Human Resources Team.
8. Actions will be taken in accordance with the outcome of the discussion and decisions at the PSM. These discussions will also identify the individuals with responsibility for each separate action.
9. The PSM will record the need to set a date for a Review PSM or to finalise the process. This decision will be made at the initial PSM and will be recorded in the minutes of the PSM.
10. The Review PSM will be arranged to review and if necessary consider future actions or formally close the case.
11. The School will retain records relating to the alleged incident for a period of 10 years. The ECPSO will also retain records for the same time period.
12. If a potential child protection allegation is made against the Headteacher then the member of staff in receipt of that allegation will need to contact the Chair of Governors to pass on details of what has been alleged. The Chair will then contact the ECPSO and paragraphs 5 – 11 above will then follow as described.
13. Should a PSM be convened in respect of a potential child protection allegation having been made against the Head, then the Chair of Governors will be invited to attend that meeting.