



SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

Statement of intent

At Pilgrims Pre-Preparatory School we want to work with children, parents and the community to ensure the safety and protection of children and to give them the very best start in life. This policy is in accordance with Bedfordshire locally agreed inter-agency procedures. "The school" refers to Little Pilgrims and Pilgrims main school.

Aims

Our aims are to:

- Create an environment in our school which is safe and secure for all children;
- Enable children to have the self confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches;
- Encourage children to establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their families, with peers, and with other adults;
- Encourage children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence;
- Work with parents to build their understanding of and commitment to the welfare of all our children.

In order to fulfil these aims:

- Our Headteacher and all our staff and volunteers receive training in Safeguarding Children as part of the Induction Policy. Volunteers who are unable to attend training are thoroughly briefed on Safeguarding. All staff, including Headteacher and volunteers, also receive updated training every three years. Our designated staff receive training every two years in child protection and inter-agency working.
- We follow the procedures laid down by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- We have a copy of Working Together to Safeguard Children available for staff to use if required and for parents to see if they wish, along with the publication 'What to do if you're worried a Child is being abused'.
- All members of staff know the school's procedures for recording and reporting incidents.
- In consultation with parents/carers we are able to refer children for additional help through the Common Assessment Framework.
- We notify the registration authority (Ofsted) of any incident or accident within 14 days which affects the wellbeing of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the ISA for all other pupils. This includes any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises (whether that allegation relates to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere) or any other abuse which is alleged to have taken place on the premises, and of the action taken in respect of these allegations.
- We have procedures for contacting the local authority's Intake and Assessment Team on safeguarding children issues.
- If a report is to be made to the authorities, we take advice from the Intake and Assessment Team in deciding whether we must inform the child's parents at the same time.
- A separate policy for allegations against the staff, volunteers or Headteacher forms appendix A.
- Pilgrims Pre-Preparatory School operates safe recruitment procedures (including CRB checks and compliance with Independent School Standard Regulations).

How we ensure that Children are safe and protected

Staffing and volunteering

- Mr Michael Webster is the named person who coordinates safeguarding children issues.
- Mrs Beth Smith takes the lead responsibility for safeguarding children within the EYFS setting and liaising with local statutory children's agencies as appropriate.
- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
- All staff have a duty to maintain the wellbeing of children in their care.
- Applicants for posts within the school are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Candidates are informed of the need to carry out Enhanced CRB checks and take-up references before posts can be confirmed. Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
- We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and police checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unfit person works at the school or has access to the children.
- Volunteers do not work unsupervised.
- We abide by the Protection of Children Act requirements in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of safeguarding children concern.
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the school.
- We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the school so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.

Disciplinary Action

The school will inform Ofsted and the ISI of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises (whether that allegation relates to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere), or any other abuse which is alleged to have taken place on the premises, and of the action taken in respect of these allegations, as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days.

Training

All our staff, volunteers and Headteacher receive training on Safeguarding Children issues at least every three years. Safeguarding is part of the induction programme for all staff. Part-time staff and volunteers who are unable to attend training days are thoroughly briefed on Safeguarding procedures. Our designated staff, Mr Michael Webster and Mrs Beth Smith, receive training every two years in child protection and inter-agency working. We seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the school to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect and so that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals. We ensure that all staff are aware of the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the school. In addition, guidance is given to ensure that all staff are made aware of how to avoid placing themselves at risk from harm or allegations. A separate restraint policy forms part of the school's documentation.

Assurance is always obtained by the school that appropriate child protection checks and procedures apply to any staff employed by any other organisation working with the school's pupils either in school or at another institution (see Safer Recruitment Policy).

Guidance is given to staff as part of the training to ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place pupils or themselves at the risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a pupil (for example, in one-to-one tuition, sports coaching, conveying a pupil by car, engaging in inappropriate electronic communication with a pupil etc.)

A dedicated Safeguarding training folder is kept in the staff room and updated regularly by Mr Michael Webster and Mrs Beth Smith.

Planning

The layout of the rooms allow for constant supervision. Where children need to spend time away from the rest of the group, the door is left ajar.

Curriculum

- We create within the school a culture of value and respect for the individual.
- We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is appropriate for the ages and stages of our children.
- We introduce key elements of safeguarding children into our curriculum, or activity planning so that children can develop an understanding of why and how to keep safe (eg Stranger Danger, Road Safety).

Complaints

- We ensure that all parents know how to complain about staff or volunteer action within the school, which may include an allegation of abuse.
- We have a procedure on allegations made against a member of staff.
- We notify Ofsted and the Intake and Assessment Team when we receive an allegation made about a member of staff, in line with our procedure.
- We follow all the disclosure and recording procedures when investigating an allegation that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child as if it were an allegation of abuse by any other person.

If we suspect abuse

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms – physical, emotional, sexual and neglect, and may originate from an adult, or one or more pupils against another pupil
- When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, this may be demonstrated through changes in their behaviour, or in their play. Where such changes in behaviour occur, or where children's play gives cause for concern, we investigate.
- We allow investigation to be carried out with sensitivity. Staff in the school take care not to influence the outcome either through the way they speak to the children or ask questions of children.
- Where a child shows signs and symptoms of 'failure to thrive' or neglect, we make appropriate referrals. We seek parent's permissions before making a referral unless by seeking this permission we put a child at risk.
- We work co-operatively with the parent unless this is inconsistent with the need to ensure the child's safety.

Disclosures made to us

Where a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff:

- Offers reassurance to the child;
- Listens to the child; and
- Gives reassurance that she or he will take action
- Informs the child that confidentiality cannot be promised

The member of staff does not question the child and avoids asking any leading questions – the golden rule is observe and listen but do not probe.

If a pupil makes an allegation against the designated teacher with responsibility for Child Protection, the member of staff receiving the allegation must immediately inform the Headteacher. If the Headteacher is absent, the allegation will be passed the Chairman of Governors. If the allegation concerns the Headteacher, the person receiving the allegation should immediately inform the Chairman of Governors, without notifying the Head first. In case of serious harm the police should be informed from the outset. (See also Appendix A).

Some children are thought to be particularly vulnerable to physical, sexual and emotional abuse by their peers. Such abuse is taken as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult. All disclosures will be investigated and referred to Social Services.

Recording and Reporting suspicions of abuse and disclosures

Staff make a record of:

- The child's name, address, date of birth;
- The date and time of the observation or the disclosure;
- An objective record of the observation or disclosure;
- The exact words spoken by the child;
- The name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time;
- The names of any other person present at the time.

These records are signed and dated and kept in a separate confidential file.

The member of staff will discuss the incident with the Headteacher or designated member of staff and a decision for safeguarding children will be made about who should be notified. If a child's safety is at risk the Intake and Assessment Team (the local Welfare Agency) will be contacted immediately, and in all cases, within 24 hours (the telephone numbers are at the bottom of this policy). We will take advice from them regarding information then given to parents.

In a case where a child is not in immediate danger we try to discuss the matter with parents before making any referrals. However, it is the welfare of the child which is paramount and this is at the forefront of all our actions. We are aware that many children have suffered because of lack of communication between agencies, and that government guidance now encourages the full sharing of information. We shall therefore use our professional judgement in sharing information with the agencies that 'need to know', being open and honest with parents and children as to why we feel we need to share the information.

Full records of conversations will be maintained when any referrals or discussions are held with any other agencies or with parents prior to a referral. These records will include dates and times of the conversation, who we speak to, and the advice we were given.

The school reports to the Independent Safeguarding Authority, within one month of leaving the school, any person whose services are no longer used, because he or she is considered unsuitable to work with children.

Informing Parents

We will always aim to involve parents in any referrals before they are made. However if a suspicion of abuse is recorded, and the child is considered at risk an immediate referral will be made to the Intake and Assessment Team and we will take their advice on informing parents.

Confidentiality

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. If there are concerns within a school it is important that the Headteacher or designated staff member is made aware of them. However, children will work with a number of different adults in a setting and they should also be made aware that there are concerns about an aspect of well-being of the child in question. Any information shared with external agencies is done under the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Support to families

- We take every step in our power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff and volunteers in the group.
- We continue to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to abuse in the home situation.
- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child only if appropriate under the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- With the proviso that the care and safety of the child is paramount, we do all in our power to support and work with the child's family.

Social Services

North Beds – 01234 223599

South Beds – 01582 818499

Emergency out of hours – 0870 238 5465

Police – 01234 841212

CIS – 01234 228229

NSPCC 24 hr helpline – 0808 8005000

Ofsted - Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester M1 2WD. Tel 0300 123 1231

Independent Safeguarding Authority: PO Box 181, Darlington, DL1 9FA. Tel 0300-123-1111

The Governors of Pilgrims Pre Preparatory School accept their duties as outlined in the above statement. They will annually assess the effectiveness of this policy in order to remedy all deficiencies and weaknesses. All necessary changes are made without delay. This policy will be reviewed and updated annually.

Signed:

Chairman of Governors

Date:



APPENDIX A

PROCEDURE IN THE EVENT OF AN ALLEGATION BEING MADE AGAINST A MEMBER OF STAFF, VOLUNTEER OR THE HEADTEACHER

It is recognised that whilst school staff are uniquely placed to detect signs and indicators of child abuse, they are themselves particularly vulnerable to malicious or misplaced allegations made by children either deliberately or innocently, arising from normal association with them within the school.

When a child makes an allegation of abuse by a member of staff, the person receiving the allegation must take it seriously and deal with it by informing either the school Leader (if the allegation is not against that person) or the Chair of the School Committee/Headteacher/Nominated Safeguarding Children Officer. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

What to do when an allegation is made

If an allegation is made against an employee of Pilgrims Pre-Preparatory School, the Headteacher or Senior Manager will be immediately informed. The following action will be taken:

- The member of staff against whom the allegation is made should immediately be suspended.
- Ofsted should be notified within fourteen days.
- Immediate contact should be made with the Intake and Assessment Team at Children's Services (formerly the Duty Desk at Social Services)
- School Committee members should also be informed that an allegation has been made.
- No discussions are to be held at this stage with the member of staff concerned.

Ofsted and the Intake and Assessment Team will advise further on the action that the school should now take with regard to the member of staff.

The school may talk to the member of staff concerned but should not interview the child until Ofsted and the Intake and Assessment Team give the go-ahead. Depending on the outcome of these investigations the Disciplinary Procedure will be followed.

If the allegation relates to the Headteacher or the Safeguarding Children Officer, the next most senior member of staff must follow the procedure listed above.

Confidentiality should be maintained throughout this matter, in order that any subsequent investigation is not prejudiced.

School staff:

1. Cannot promise total confidentiality to children since they must inform the Head,
2. Must make a written note of the allegation/concerns including a note of anyone else witnessing the incident. Witnesses should also make a record, these will be signed and dated.
3. Will only establish what the child is saying and will not interview the child about the allegation.
4. Who have any reason to suspect that a child may have been abused by another member of staff, must immediately inform either the Head or the Manager.

Where suspicions or allegations of abuse against a child attending the school and involving members of school staff are received by a person outside the group, eg Social worker, Police, by a parent, relative or family friend, then the Head and/or Manager should be informed as soon as possible and immediately follow the above procedure. The person to who the allegation has been made may already have contacted Ofsted and/or the Intake and Assessment Team.

In the event of a third party hearing the allegation the school should:

1. obtain details of the allegation in writing, signed and dated by the person who received the allegation (not the child who is the subject of the allegation)
2. record any information about times, dates, locations and names of potential witnesses
3. establish whether Ofsted and the Intake and Assessment team have been informed about the allegation
4. follow the main procedure outlined above.

Following completion of the investigation by Ofsted and the Intake and Assessment Team there will be four possible courses of action:

Criminal – Ofsted and FRT will decide if there is sufficient evidence to carry forward a prosecution of the member and if so will involve the police directly.

Disciplinary – Ofsted and the FRT may determine that there is not sufficient evidence to press a criminal charge, but there may nevertheless be issues which require that disciplinary action is taken via the school's disciplinary guidelines

Training – The investigations may indicate that the allegation was unfounded but the case may well have shown that there are issues of training and performance amongst staff which need to be dealt with by additional staff training

Child Protection – There may be other outstanding child protection issues which do not involve the member of staff concerned but which Ofsted and FRT deem need to be dealt with via child protection procedures.

Where the allegation has been found to be without basis Ofsted and the FRT will write to the school summarising the outcome of the investigation

RECORDS

Where an allegation has been found to be unfounded a summary of the allegation and subsequent investigation should be kept on the school's confidential child protection file. Where disciplinary action has been taken, however, documents relating to the investigation should be retained, together with a written record of the investigation, on the member of staff's personal and confidential file.