

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY



We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. Children who are and feel safe make more successful learners. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support and protection.

Aim

To ensure a safe and secure environment where children can learn and develop to their full potential. To provide a consistent approach to elements of pastoral care including detecting evidence of potential abuse for the children in our care.'

Rationale

Children who are facing emotional challenges are not effective learners. King Arthur British School provides a safe and secure environment where children know they will be listened to and valued. Teachers are vigilant both in terms of identifying emotional obstacles to learning and being aware of evidence of potential abuse. Where child protection becomes an issue, staff are clear in acting in a consistent manner.

Operations

- The school will ensure that the welfare of children is given paramount consideration when developing and delivering all school activity. All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection.
- All staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm in accordance with this guidance. All pupils and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support from the senior management of the school, who will follow this policy guidance in doing so.
- All concern for a child's emotional well-being or concerns about possible abuse are passed directly to the head teacher. Every incident raised is discussed with the school psychologist. The school psychologist will make a decision as to what action should be taken.

Possible actions include:

- Advising the teacher;

- Meeting with the parents and the psychologist being involved in an intervention strategy;
- Reporting the incident to the school Child Protection Officer (CPO) for further investigation or action. The CPO role is fulfilled by the head teacher.

Responsibilities

The school has nominated a designated senior person for child protection issues. The DSP for child protection in this school is: Maria José Hernández, the School Head.

The school has ensured that the DSP:

- Acts as a source of support and expertise to the school community
- Keeps written records of all concerns when noted and reported by staff or when disclosed by a child, ensuring that such records are stored securely and reported onward in accordance with this policy guidance, but kept separately from the child's general file
- Refers cases of suspected neglect and/or abuse to children's social care or police in accordance with local procedure
- Develops effective links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies
- Ensures that the child protection policy is regularly updated and shared.

The school ensures that all teaching staff working with pupils have the appropriate police checks. In the case of teaching staff from the United Kingdom this means a copy of a recent Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure is kept on their personnel file. References are always taken to further secure the validity of staff employed in the school.

- All adults working in school share the responsibility for child protection and anything considered a concern should be raised with the head teacher.
- Any report relating to child protection should be considered highly confidential and should not be discussed with colleagues.
- Child protection issues should be passed to the head teacher in writing.
- Copies of the report should not be kept electronically and should not be stored alongside any other notes on the child.
- When making notes about child protection issues it is important refer to direct observations only.
- Adults making a report should try and avoid assumptions or leading suggestions. Our role is to observe and record, not to pass a judgement or try and reach a conclusion.
- Within each school year one staff meeting will be used to provide guidance on identifying pupils who may have child protection issues.
- Planned PSHE and assemblies will promote a positive, supportive and secure environment where each pupil knows they are valued.

Good practice guidelines

To meet and maintain our responsibilities towards children, the school community agrees to the following standards of good practice;

- Treating all children with respect
- Setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately involving children in decision-making which affects them
- Encouraging positive and safe behaviour among children
- Being a good listener
- Being alert to changes in child's behaviour
- Recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse
- Reading and understanding all of the school's safeguarding and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues, for example bullying, physical contact, e-safety plans and information-sharing
- Asking the child's permission before doing anything for them which is of a physical nature, such as assisting with dressing, physical support during PE or administering first aid
- Maintaining appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between children and avoiding the use of sexualised or derogatory language

- Being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some children lead to an increased risk of neglect and or abuse.

Ethical Practice for School Staff

All school staff are valued members of the school community. Everyone is expected to set and maintain the highest standards for their own performance, to work as part of a team and to be an excellent role model for our children. All school staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards children is unacceptable and that their conduct towards all children must be beyond reproach.

All school staff should:

- Place the safety and welfare of children above all other considerations
- Treat all members of the school community, including children, parents and colleagues with consideration and respect
- Adhere to the principles and procedures contained in school policies
- Treat each child as an individual and make adjustments to meet individual need
- Demonstrate a clear understanding of and commitment to non-discriminatory practice
- Recognise the power imbalances between children and staff, and different levels of seniority of staff and ensure that power and authority are never misused
- Be alert to, and report appropriately, any behaviour that may indicate that a child is at risk of harm
- Encourage all children to reach their full potential
- Never condone inappropriate behaviour by children or staff
- Take responsibility for their own continuing professional development
- Refrain from any action that would bring the school into disrepute
- Value themselves and seek appropriate support for any issue that may have an adverse effect on their professional practice.

Children who may be particularly vulnerable

Some children may be at increased risk of neglect and or abuse. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse happens, or who have a high level of tolerance in respect of neglect.

To ensure that all of our children receive equal protection, we will give special consideration and attention to children who are:

- Disabled or have special educational needs
- Living in a known domestic abuse situation
- Affected by known parental substance misuse
- Asylum seekers
- Living away from home
- Vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying
- Living in temporary accommodation
- Living transient
- Lifestyles living in chaotic, neglectful and unsupportive home situations
- Vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion or sexuality
- Involved directly or indirectly in prostitution or child trafficking
- Do not have English or Spanish as a first language.

Support for those involved in a child protection issue

Child neglect and abuse is devastating for the child and can also result in distress and anxiety for staff who become involved. We will support the children and their families and staff by:

- Taking all suspicions and disclosures seriously.
- Nominating a link person who will keep all parties informed and be the central point of contact. Where a member of staff is the subject of an allegation made by a child, a separate link person will be nominated to avoid any conflict of interest.

- Responding sympathetically to any request from a child or member of staff for time out to deal with distress or anxiety.
- Maintaining confidentiality and sharing information on a need-to-know basis only with relevant individuals and agencies.
- Storing records securely.
- Offering details of help lines, counselling or other avenues of external support.
- Cooperating fully with relevant statutory agencies.

Complaints procedure in respect of poor practice behaviour

- Our complaints procedure will be followed where a child or parent raises a concern about poor practice towards a child that initially does not reach the threshold for child protection action. Poor practice examples include unfairly singling out a child, using sarcasm or humiliation as a form of control, bullying or belittling a child or discriminating against them in some way. Complaints are managed by senior staff and the head teacher.
- Complaints from staff are dealt with under the school's usual complaints and disciplinary procedures.

If you have concerns about a colleague

- Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague towards a child are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. They may worry that they have misunderstood the situation and they will wonder whether a report could jeopardise their colleague's career.
- All staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount.
- All concerns of poor practice or concerns about a child's welfare brought about by the behaviour of colleagues should be reported to the head teacher. Complaints about the head teacher should be reported to the Administration.

Staff who are the subject of an allegation

- When an allegation is made against a member of staff, set procedures must be followed. It is rare for a child to make an entirely false or malicious allegation, although misunderstandings and misinterpretations of events can and do happen.
- A child may also make an allegation against an innocent party because they are too afraid to name the real perpetrator. Even so, we must accept that some adults do pose a serious risk to children's welfare and safety and we must act on every allegation made.
- Staff who are the subject of an allegation have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress. Suspension is not mandatory, nor is it automatic but, in some cases, staff may be suspended where this is deemed to be the best way to ensure that children are protected.
- Allegations against staff should be reported to the head teacher.
- Allegations against the head teacher should be reported to the Administration.

Safer recruitment

Our school endeavours to ensure that we do our utmost to employ 'safe' staff, in accordance with the law.

Safer recruitment means that all applicants will:

- Complete an application form / provide a full CV
- Provide two referees, including at least one who can comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children
- Provide evidence of identity and qualifications
- Provide a criminal record check from Spain and his/her country of origin (such as, from the UK, through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or an International
- Be interviewed.
- All new members of staff will undergo an induction that includes familiarisation with the school's safeguarding and child protection policy.

Extended school and off-site arrangements

Where extra-curricular activities are provided by and managed by the school, our own safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures apply. If other organisations provide services or activities on our site we will check that they have appropriate procedures in place, including safer recruitment procedures.

- When our children attend off-site activities, we will check that effective child protection arrangements are in place.

Photography and images

To protect children we will:

- Seek consent for photographs to be taken or published
- Use only the child's first name with an image
- Ensure that children are appropriately dressed
- Encourage children to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them.

E-Safety

The school's ICT policy explains how we try to keep children safe in school in their use of technology and the internet.

- Cyber-bullying by children, via texts and emails, will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures.
- Chat rooms and social networking sites are the more obvious sources of inappropriate and harmful behaviour and children are not allowed to access these sites whilst in school.
- Advice will be given to children regarding the safe use of the internet.

Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures

Recognising abuse

To ensure that our children are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse and neglect. Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, for example by hitting them, or by failing to act to prevent harm, for example by leaving a small child home alone, or leaving knives or matches within reach of an unattended toddler.

There are four categories of abuse: **physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect.**

Physical abuse

Physical abuse 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 or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child, such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only for meeting the needs of another person. It may feature age – or developmentally- inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative and non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

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. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing or shelter, including exclusion from home or abandonment; failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; failure to ensure adequate supervision, including the use of inadequate care-takers; or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Indicators of abuse and what you might see

Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example, bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has been inadequately supervised. The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they 'tell'. It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty. For these reasons it is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the designated person.

Remember, it is your responsibility to report your concerns. It is **NOT** your responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused. A child who is being abused and/or neglected may:

- Have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries
- Show signs of pain or discomfort
- Keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather
- Be concerned about changing for PE or swimming
- Look unkempt and uncared for
- Change their eating habits
- Have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships
- Appear fearful
- Be reckless with regard to their own or other's safety
- Self-harm
- Frequently miss school or arrive late
- Show signs of not wanting to go home
- Display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn
- Challenge authority
- Become disinterested in their school work
- Be constantly tired or preoccupied
- Be wary of physical contact
- Be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol
- Display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age.
- Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw, and each small piece of information will help the DSP to decide how to proceed. It is very important that you report your concerns – you do not need 'absolute proof' that the child is at risk.

Taking action

Key points to remember for taking action are:

- Report your concern to the DSP
- Do not start your own investigation
- Share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family

If you suspect a child is at risk of harm

There will be occasions when you suspect that a child may be at serious risk, but you have no 'real' evidence. The child's behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be bizarre or you may have noticed other

physical but inconclusive signs. In these circumstances, you should try to give the child the opportunity to talk. The signs you have noticed may be due to a variety of factors and it is fine to ask the child if they are all right or if you can help in any way.

If, following your conversation, you remain concerned, you should discuss your concerns with the designated person.

If a child discloses information to you

It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose that they are being neglected and or abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual, their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell, they may have lost all trust in adults, or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault. If a child talks to you about any risks to their safety or wellbeing you will need to let them know that you must pass the information on – you are not allowed to keep secrets. The point at which you do this is a matter for professional judgement. If you jump in immediately the child may think that you do not want to listen, if you leave it till the very end of the conversation, the child may feel that you have misled them into revealing more than they would have otherwise.

During your conversation with the child:

- Allow them to speak freely.
- Remain calm and do not over react – the child may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting you.
- Give reassuring nods or words of comfort – 'I'm so sorry this has happened', 'I want to help', 'This isn't your fault', 'You are doing the right thing in talking to me'.
- Do not be afraid of silences – remember how hard this must be for the child.
- Under no circumstances ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings too, or what the child's mother thinks about all this.
- At an appropriate time tell the child that in order to help them you must pass the information on.
- Do not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort. It may be anything but comforting to a child who has been abused.
- Avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing earlier. Saying 'I do wish you had told me about this when it started' or 'I can't believe what I'm hearing' may be your way of being supportive but the child may interpret it that they have done something wrong.
- Tell the child what will happen next. The child may agree to go with you to see the designated person. Otherwise let them know that someone will come to see them. Report verbally to the designated person.
- Write up your conversation as soon as possible.

Notifying parents

The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a child with their parents. This must be handled sensitively and the DSP will make contact with the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure. However, if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from the relevant authorities.

Referral to children's social care

The DSP will make a referral to children's social care if it is believed that a child is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm.

Confidentiality and sharing information

All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the child and staff involved but also to ensure that being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence. Staff should only discuss concerns with the designated person, head teacher or Administration (depending on who is the subject of the concern). That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need- to-know' basis.

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with data protection rules. Information is:

- Processed for limited purposes

- Adequate, relevant and not excessive
- Accurate
- Kept no longer than necessary
- Processed in accordance with the data subject's rights
- Secure.
- Records of concern and other written information will be stored confidentially and only made available to relevant individuals.

Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. If any member of staff receives a request from a child or parent to see child protection records, they should refer the request to the head teacher.

Data Protection does not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child.