

Child Protection Policy Statement



Everyone employed by Arts Educational School, London has a responsibility in relation to child protection. In most cases this will be the referral of concerns to a line manager, and to ensure that concerns are reported to The Headmaster, in his role as Designated Person for Child Protection. In day-to-day contact with children at risk, staff have an opportunity to note concerns and to meet with parents and other associated adults.

Increasingly, schools are expected to work with, support and sometimes lead different agencies to enable the most appropriate form of intervention to take place. This policy aims to outline the role that the school will have, the procedures that staff should take and guidance on issues related to child protection generally. It is not exhaustive. All staff should use, as a rule of thumb, the needs and safety of the child as being at the centre of any decision they make.

The Aims of the Policy

The aims of this policy are:

- to raise awareness of individual responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse
- to provide a systematic means of monitoring, recording and reporting of concerns and cases
- to provide guidance on recognising and dealing with suspected child abuse
- to provide a framework for inter-agency communication and effective liaison
- to identify strategies and interventions available to support children at risk.
- to establish a safe environment in which children can learn and develop
- to ensure we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children



PROCEDURE

Designated Person

The designated person is The Headmaster

The designated person will:

- co-ordinate action within the school and liaise with social care and other agencies over cases of abuse and suspected abuse
- act as a source of advice within the school
- ensure that staff are familiar with the school policy and procedure
- make child protection referrals, recording and reporting accordingly
- liaise with agencies about individual cases
- organise training on child protection within school
- ensure that appropriate strategies for recording and reporting incidents are kept within school
- provide appropriate feedback to members of staff as and when necessary.

The Governing Body

The governing body will:

- be responsible for undertaking regular reviews of the procedures that apply to child protection
- be responsible for receiving and discussing updates provided by the designated person as part of the Headmaster's report.

School Staff

School staff should:

- be alert to the signs of abuse as detailed in this policy
- report any concerns immediately, where possible to the designated teacher or his deputy

- consult with the designated teacher if in any doubt as to how to proceed
- follow the advice given in this policy in relation to how to handle disclosures.

Partnerships with Parents

It is important that the school has an established approach to working with parents. Parents' and children's need for privacy should be respected. However, the priority is the needs of the child and effective liaison is crucial for this.

It should be recognised that families from different backgrounds and cultures will have different approaches to child-rearing. These differences should be acknowledged and respected provided they do not place the child at risk as defined later in this policy.

Where possible school staff should work with and share information with parents. Permission for liaison and information sharing with outside agencies should be sought unless it places the child at risk. In these cases it is preferable to seek advice from social care or make a child protection referral.

Guidance on Recognising Abuse

Child abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children are harmed by someone often in a position of power. It is not the responsibility of school staff to decide whether child abuse is occurring but we are required to act on any concerns and report it to the appropriate party. The health, safety and protection of a child are paramount.

Abuse might fall into the categories of:

- physical
- emotional
- sexual
- neglect.

More details on how to recognise signs of abuse are included in the Staff Handbook and through regular whole staff training sessions.

Policy on Dealing with Suspected Abuse

All staff should refer concerns to the designated teacher as soon as possible. In the meantime, they should:

- listen to the pupil, keeping calm and offering reassurance
- observe bruises but should not ask a child to remove or adjust their clothing to observe them
- allow the child to lead the discussion if a disclosure is made, but do not press for details by asking questions, eg “what did they do next?”
- listen — don't investigate but use questions such as “is there anything else you'd like to tell me?”
- accept what the pupil says without challenge — reassure them that they are doing the right thing and that you recognise how hard it is for them
- not lay blame or criticise either the child or the perpetrator
- not promise confidentiality — explain that they have done the right thing and who needs to be told.

Procedures for Monitoring, Recording and Reporting

Arts Educational School policy is that brief notes should be kept at the time of the incident - or immediately after - with the subsequent completion of a critical incident sheet. Records may be used in legal proceedings and must be kept accurate and secure. All records should be copied to the designated person and should include factual information rather than assumption or interpretation. The child's own language should be used to quote rather than a translation.

Records may be used at a later date to support a referral to an external agency.

Designated Teacher

The designated teacher will:

- follow-up the referral using the critical incident sheet as a basis for consideration before action
- make additional records of discussions and any investigation that takes place
- make a decision whether to continue to monitor the situation or take the referral further. This decision should be communicated to the individual making the initial referral
- where a child is referred to social care a referral form will be completed and sent within 24 hours.

Inter-agency Liaison

Social Care Meetings

At times school staff will be called to participate in meetings organised and chaired by social care. These might include:

- register reviews
- case conferences
- professionals' meetings in which representative professionals from different agencies are asked to meet to discuss children and their families with a view to providing support or making recommendations in terms of next stages of involvement
- core group meetings in which a “core” group of professionals associated with the family are asked to meet to review the progress of actions decided at case conferences and register reviews.

At these meetings, representatives from the school should be ready to report back providing information about

- attendance and punctuality
- academic achievement

- child's behaviour and attitude
- relationships with peer group and social skills generally
- child's appearance and readiness for school
- contact with parents/carers
- any specific incidents that need reporting.

Prior to the meeting, class teachers and other adults working closely with the child will be asked for their comments. Following the meeting feedback will be given and staff brought up-to-date with any actions that are needed.

Confidentiality

Where children are on the child protection register and leave one school for another, the designated teacher must inform the receiving school and the key worker. If the child leaves the school with no receiving school, details should be passed to the principal education social worker (ESW).

Education staff have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with the investigative agencies. Members of staff should not promise confidentiality but can let the child know that only those who need to know will be informed, and always for the child's own sake.

Time should be taken to reassure the child and confirm that information given will be treated sensitively. Reassurance should be given and the adult involved listen sympathetically and non-judgmentally.

Staff should be careful in subsequent discussions and ensure that information is only given to the appropriate person. All staff should be kept aware of issues relating to confidentiality and the status of information they may hold.

Members of staff, other than the designated member and those involved closely, should only have enough details in order to help them to act sensitively and appropriately to a pupil. Sensitive information regarding pastoral issues and for children on the child protection register is kept separately in a folder in the closed section of the office. Discretion should be used when talking about the personal and changing circumstances of children, for example if a child goes into care.

Supporting Children at Risk

For children at risk, school may be the one stable place from which they can expect security and reassurance. It is not only about being alert to potential abuse but providing the support to help children through difficult times. Providing them with the coping skills that can help avoid situations arising and deal with the emotional difficulties afterwards if they do.

The Personal Education Plan

Children who are “looked after” will have their own personal education plan (PEP). The PEP is part of the care plan. It is a record of what needs to happen in order to enable the young person to “fulfil their potential”. It should reflect other education plans such as individual education plans (IEP).

Support in School

All Tutors and Pastoral Staff are responsible, in conjunction with other school staff, for the pastoral needs of the children in their care. This includes maintaining opportunity for children to share their concerns and follow the guidance in this document. Care should always be taken in regard to the discussion of sensitive issues and advice should be sought where there are concerns.

Within the curriculum there will also be opportunities to discuss issues that some children might find sensitive. Care should be taken particularly in relation to discussion about families and their make-up. Assumptions about members of families and the presence of both parents should be avoided both in discussion and the presentation of materials. During health and safety and sex education lessons, staff should be alert to the fact that some children will have very different experiences and may find the content at odds with their own experiences. Staff should make themselves familiar with the background of the children in their care in order to avoid distress.

