

PART ONE

1. RATIONALE

At the West Sussex Alternative Provision College we recognise that it is our statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of our students and that they have a fundamental right to be protected from harm.

Although the college is not an investigative agency we have an important role in all aspects of the welfare of our students. With our day to day contact with our children and young people during school term time we are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour and signs of failure to thrive.

WSAPC is committed to implementing this Child Protection Policy which follows the WSAPC guidelines in the Pan Sussex Protection and Safeguarding Procedures. These are available online at <http://sussex.procedures.org.uk>

2. THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

2.1 Children's Rights

- ✦ Children have the right to protection from neglect, physical, emotional and sexual abuse.
- ✦ All citizens, as well as professionals, have a responsibility for the protection of children and for reporting concerns about a child's welfare or safety.

2.2 Putting Children First

- ✦ The well-being of the child is the paramount consideration in all protection work.
- ✦ In any conflict between the needs of the child and those of the parents/carers, the needs of the child must be put first.

2.3 Treating Children as Individuals

- ✦ Children must be listened to and taken seriously, whatever their level of development or communication.
- ✦ Children's wishes and feelings must be taken into account; children will be involved in decisions about their future in ways appropriate to their age and understanding.
- ✦ Work with children should be sensitive to the child as an individual with particular need and circumstances.
- ✦ All children will be treated with respect and accorded full civil and legal rights.

2.4 Equality

- ✦ Each child and family is unique with differing experiences, circumstances and perspectives.
- ✦ Professionals concerned with child protection investigations must make every effort to identify and ameliorate any disadvantage arising from



ethnic origin, culture, religion, language, gender, sexual orientation, class, disability or age.

- Particular attention should be paid to the vulnerability of children with a disability, special needs or communication difficulties.

2.5 Confidentiality

- All matters to do with our children and their families are subject to clear standards of respect and confidentiality.
- However we must understand that sharing information with the appropriate agencies and professionals is essential if children are to be protected. Research has shown that it is often failure to share information that has put children at risk.
- There are clear legal frameworks that support and promote the sharing of information in a child protection context.
- On 31 October 2015, a mandatory duty for teachers to report known cases of female genital mutilation (FGM) came into force. Procedural information on the new duty published by the Home Office explains that 'known' cases of FGM are where a girl informs the person that an act of FGM has been carried out on her, or where the person observes signs appearing to show that an act of FGM was carried out on a girl. The statutory safeguarding guidance, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', has more information on FGM on pages 14-15.
- It is the role of staff to understand the issues of radicalisation, so that they are able to recognise the signs of vulnerability or radicalisation and know how to refer their concerns. The WSAPC Prevention of Radicalisation and Extremism Policy should be read in conjunction with this policy.



PART TWO

1. WSAPC CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

The Assistant Headteachers (Heads of Centre) act as Designated Teachers for Child Protection. They are available to provide advice, guidance and make decisions in respect of any child protection concerns. If they are not available, the Co-Head Teachers should be contacted.

The Assistant Headteachers (Heads of Centre) or other Designated Members of Staff are as follows:

- ✦ Beechfield (North) – Derrick Foster – 01342 712309 – option 4
- ✦ Blended and E-learning (North and South) – Shaun Jarvis – 07951 543508
- ✦ Burgess Hill Secondary/Primary (North) – Cathy Meyer – 01444 232771
- ✦ Chalkhill (North) – Jackie Clack – 01444 441805
- ✦ Chichester (South)– Deborah Johnson- Cadwell - 01243 642872
- ✦ Crawley (North) – Rowan McConnell – 01293 883209
- ✦ Inclusion (North & South) Helen Ellis – 01243 642872
- ✦ Lancing Primary and Secondary (South) – Ruth McDonald – 01903 270460
- ✦ Littlehampton (South) – Ben Thomas – 01903 278210
- ✦ Worthing 14-16 Centre (South) – Nicola Channon – 01903 201225

The Co-Headteachers can be contacted on the following numbers:

- ✦ Sheila Carroll, Co-Head Teacher (North) – 01444 232771/07432 761118
- ✦ Doug Thomas, Co-Head Teacher (South) – 01903 278210/07506 548280

2. CAUSE FOR CONCERN

A child or young person may share information with you that gives you cause for concern or you may observe something which leads you to believe that a child or young person has suffered harm or may be at risk from harm.

Staff will be aware of the need to make a distinction between, on the one hand, behaviour which amounts to serious physical assault, intimidation and sexual assault which requires external Child Protection intervention and possibly criminal investigation and, on the other hand, normal childhood behaviour or sexual exploration which should be dealt with by the appropriate staff.

3. WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

- ✦ Always stop and listen straight away.
- ✦ Write brief notes as soon after as possible, or at the time if it is not disruptive to information sharing.
- ✦ Keep the originals, no matter how scruffy.



- ✦ Explain that you might not be able to keep a secret; if you are going to be told something very important that needs to be sorted out then you need to tell the people who can sort it.
- ✦ **Don't ask leading questions.**
- ✦ The child or young person's first words are important to note, try to allow the child to express itself freely rather than ask questions. Questions to clarify the account may be helpful but it is important not to ask leading questions as these might influence and possibly distort the account given by the child.
- ✦ NEVER attempt to carry out a formal interview of a child yourself; this must be left to other professionals (Police and Social Workers) responsible for child protection investigations.
- ✦ Immediately consider the need to make the child safe from further harm or from harming others and seek help from colleagues in doing this.
- ✦ Consider the need for hospital or medical attention if there are urgent health needs but be aware of the possible need to retain evidence of harm or assault.

4. ACCUMULATIVE CONCERNS

It may be that the incident you are dealing with, does not in itself appear significant or of a serious nature. It may be one of a series of incidents over time and it is important that senior staff are made aware of such incidents so that the necessary information can be collated.

5. ALLEGATIONS CONCERNING STAFF

Allegations that concern colleagues are extremely challenging to other staff and the college but in spite of our commitment to colleagues we must also allow ourselves to think the unthinkable and keep an open mind to the possibility that a staff member may be implicated.

Never think that abuse is impossible in your college or that an allegation against someone you know well is bound to be wrong.

In such instances the College's own disciplinary procedures will run alongside the child protection investigation and possible Police investigation.

IN ALL CASES YOU SHOULD REPORT YOUR CONCERNS IMMEDIATELY TO THE CO-HEADTEACHERS (unless the allegation concerns them, in which case the allegation(s) should be reported directly to the Chair of Governors, Vicki Illingworth - 01243 786321).

Along with this immediate action, it is **ESSENTIAL** that a written record with clear dates, times and names is begun and kept up to date.

6. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The Designated Teacher for Child Protection will:

- ✦ Immediately respond to the concerns raised by staff (or students) and decide the appropriate course of action.
- ✦ Ensure that the identified child/children are protected from harm.



-  Collate the available information concerning the allegation/incident.
-  Telephone the keeper of the Child Protection Register to check whether the child is recorded.

✦ Make a Child Protection referral to:

West Sussex Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Email: MASH@westsussex.gcsx.gov.uk

Tel: 01403 229900 (Monday – Friday 9am-5pm)

At all other times use the Out of Hours number: 0330 222 6664.

There may be unusual circumstances in which it is best to inform the Police first, for example where there is direct evidence that a serious crime has been committed or the child is in such immediate danger that the protective powers of the Police are needed. In such circumstances Social Services (via MASH) should also be informed immediately as well.

In normal circumstances the child's parents/carers should also be informed as soon as possible and indeed their permission may need to be sought for some elements of the investigation, e.g. a medical.

However in some cases where allegations might implicate parents/carers then Senior Staff will need to take advice from the local Child Protection professionals about when to inform the parents/carers of the child, in case that doing so would impede the investigation.

7. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

If you have any queries about Child Protection, or this policy document, please speak to one of the Designated Teachers.

WSAPC will ensure that staff who are employed, those who volunteer and others who have access to children are checked through the Police service and other appropriate sources.

All staff will be given training in these procedures as part of their induction, and in addition ALL staff will be expected to attend refresher training sessions as organised by the college.

8. THE CHILDREN ACT 1989

This provides the legal framework for defining the situations in which local authorities have a duty to make enquiries about what, if any, action they should take to safeguard or promote the welfare of children.

The Act requires that if the local authority has 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child who lives or is found in their area is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, they must make, or cause to be made, such enquiries as they consider necessary...' ('Child' means any child or young person under the age of 18 years old.)



9. THE CONCEPT OF SIGNIFICANT HARM

Under Section 31(9) of the Children Act 1989:

- ✦ 'harm' means ill treatment or the impairment of health or development;
- ✦ 'development' means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development;
- ✦ 'health' means physical or mental health;
- ✦ 'ill treatment' includes sexual abuse and forms of ill treatment which are not physical.

Under Section 31 (10) of the Act:

Where the question of whether harm suffered by the child is significant, turns on the child's health and development. His or her health or development shall be compared with that which could be reasonably expected of a similar child.

There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm. Consideration of the severity of ill treatment may include the degree and the extent of premeditation, degree of threat and coercion, sadism, and bizarre or unusual elements in child sexual abuse. Each of these elements has been associated with more severe effects on the child, and /or relatively greater difficulty in helping the child overcome the adverse impact of the ill treatment.

Sometimes a single traumatic event may constitute significant harm, e.g. a violent assault, suffocating or poisoning. More often, significant harm is an accumulation of significant experiences, both acute and long-standing, which interrupt, change or damage the children's physical and psychological development. Some children live in family and social circumstances where their health and development are neglected. For them, it is the corrosiveness of long-term emotional, physical or sexual abuse that causes impairment to the extent of constituting significant harm. In each case, it is necessary to consider any ill treatment alongside the family's strengths and supports.

To understand and establish significant harm, it is necessary to consider:

- ✦ The family context, education, or living situation
- ✦ The child's development within the context of their family and the wider social and cultural environment
- ✦ Any special needs, such as medical condition, communication difficulty or disability that may affect the child's development and care within the family.
- ✦ The nature of harm, in terms of ill-treatment or failure to provide adequate care.
- ✦ The impact on the child's health and development
- ✦ The adequacy of care.

10. CATEGORIES OF CHILD 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 feigns the symptoms of or deliberately cause ill health in a child whom they are looking after. This



situation is commonly described using terms such as ‘factitious illness by proxy’ or ‘fabricated illness’ or ‘induced illness’ (formerly known as ‘Munchausen’s Syndrome by Proxy’).

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment 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 in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve 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 ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

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 (e.g. rape or buggery) or 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 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, including non-organic failure to thrive. It may involve the parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child’s basic educational or emotional needs.

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OUTLINE OF CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

- ✦ Identify concerns
- ✦ Pass your concerns to the appropriate Designated Co- Head Teacher
- ✦ WSAPC North – Sheila Carroll – 01444 232771/07432 761118
- ✦ WSAPC South – Doug Thomas – 01903 278210/07506 548280
- ✦ Designated Teacher or member of staff supported by the designated teacher:
 - Beechfield (North) – Derrick Foster – 01342 712309 – option 4
 - Blended and E-learning (North and South) – Shaun Jarvis – 07951 543508
 - Burgess Hill Secondary/Primary (North) – Cathy Meyer – 01444 232771
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 - Littlehampton (South) – Ben Thomas – 01903 278210
 - Worthing 14-16 Centre (South) – Nicola Channon – 01903 201225
- ✦ Telephone the MASH to identify whether the pupil is on the register and pass on BRIEF details when asked **or** to describe the concerns in detail. (01403 229900 - 9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday; out of hours: 0330 222 6664)
- ✦ Follow up referral in writing immediately; ensuring all papers are marked as CONFIDENTIAL and are signed and dated. This should be done by e-mail to MASH@westsussex.gcsx.gov.uk (secure email address for professionals only) or using the online reporting form available via <http://sussex.procedures.org.uk> . Make copies of all papers and file them in the special locked filing cabinet/safe allocated at each WSAPC site.
- ✦ In cases where there is no immediate danger to the student, follow up the referral one week after the information has been passed on. Ask how the case is to be taken forward. Make sure you record the name/s of the people you speak to.
- ✦ Depending on the response, follow up referral again after two weeks.
- ✦ For further information please refer to the Pan Sussex Protection and Safeguarding Procedures which are available on-line at: <http://sussex.procedures.org.uk>

