

Child Protection Policy

Schools play an important role in protecting children. A high percentage of those children identified as at risk have been referred by teaching and support staff. As such, Queen Elizabeth's Grammar, Alford fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection. Our policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the academy. There are five main elements to our policy:

- Ensuring we practise safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children
- Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe.
- Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
- Supporting a pupil who has been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan.
- Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.

We recognise that because of the day-to-day contact with children, academy staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. The academy will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the academy whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Include opportunities in the PSHEE curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

We will follow the procedures set out by the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) and take account of guidance issued by the Department for Education to:

- Ensure we have a designated teacher for child protection who has received appropriate training and support for this role (Jay Harding).
- Ensure we have a nominated governor responsible for child protection who has received appropriate training and support for this role (Rachael Houlty)
- Ensure we have a designated member of staff responsible for e-safety who has received appropriate training and support for this role (Mike Johnson)
- Ensure every member of staff, volunteer and governor knows the name of the designated teacher responsible for child protection and their role.
- Ensure all staff have access to a copy of *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, which is on S drive under Safeguarding and are aware of their obligation to read it. On the S drive (Safeguarding) there are also the new government guidelines for Information Sharing (updated 2015), the Multi-Agency Guidelines for FGM and information on child exploitation.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated teacher responsible for child protection.

- Ensure that staff supervising residential trips take all necessary steps to promote and guard the safety of the pupils in their care
- Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the academy and staff for child protection by setting out its obligations in the academy prospectus.
- Notify social services if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a pupil who is on the child protection register.
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences.
- Keep written records of concerns about children (on the intranet system), even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
- Ensure all handwritten records are kept securely, separate from the main pupil file, and in locked locations.
- Develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.
- Ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed.

We recognise that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The academy may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at school their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. The academy will endeavour to support the pupil through:

- The content of the curriculum.
- The academy ethos, which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued.
- The academy's Code of Conduct, which supports vulnerable pupils in the school. The academy will ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but that they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
- Liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as social services, Child and Adult Mental Health Service, education welfare service and educational psychology service.
- Ensuring that, where a pupil on the child protection register leaves, their information is transferred to the new school immediately and that the child's social worker is informed.

Referrals

While the academy does not have a direct investigative responsibility, it must support the Local Authority Social Services by acting on behalf of children and must follow the guidelines laid down in the Lincolnshire Code of Practice (following the signs of safety model for risk assessment and safety planning).

The academy may make either **section 17** or **section 47** referrals to Social Services

Section 17 (s17): Children in Need

A child shall be taken to be in need if:

- S/he is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision of services by the local authority.
- Health and development are likely to be significantly impaired without such provision.
- S/he is disabled

Section 47 (s47): Significant Harm

The authority should make enquiries to decide whether action is required to safeguard or promote a child's welfare when:

- There is information that a child a) is subject to an emergency protection order b) is in police protection, or c) has contravened a ban imposed by a curfew order.
- There is reason to suspect a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm.

Abuse

Definition: A child is considered to be abused or at risk of abuse when basic needs are not being met through acts of commission or omission, leading to demonstrable harm or likely harm.

Forms of abuse

Physical abuse

Children are hurt, injured or in extreme cases killed. This can involve hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning or biting. It could be the giving of poisonous substances, inappropriate drugs or alcohol and attempted or actual suffocation or drowning.

Emotional abuse (including witnessing parental Domestic Abuse)

Children are made to feel unwanted, ugly, worthless, guilty or unloved. Lack of affection, threats, verbal attack, taunting, shouting can lead to a loss of confidence and self-esteem.

Neglect

Children are not provided with basic necessities. This can include inappropriate clothing, food, warmth and medical care or being left alone.

Sexual abuse

The involvement of dependent, emotionally immature children and adolescents in sexual activities that they do not comprehend and to which they are not able to give consent; activities which violate the taboos of family life. They may be exposed to or involved in the production of pornographic material. Sexual abuse also covers child sexual exploitation;

female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage (please see the document 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' in the Appendix.)

Identification of abuse

In school we can use indicators of possible abuse to identify children we feel to be 'at risk'. It is important to remember that types of abuse are often not isolated; if there are indicators of one type, there are often signs of others. Although these signs are not proof that abuse has occurred, they must be regarded as indicators of the possibility of significant harm and therefore justify the need for discussion with the designated teachers, (or in the absence of all those individuals, an experienced colleague)

Possible signs of Physical Abuse

- Unexplained injuries or refusal to discuss them
- Cigarette burns
- Long bruises
- Teeth marks
- Fingertip or slap marks or bruises
- Black eyes
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Aggressiveness towards others
- Fear of medical treatment
- Unexplained patterns of absence that might be in order to hide injuries.

Possible signs of Emotional Abuse

- Delay in development
- Inappropriate emotional responses
- Self-mutilation
- Extreme passivity or aggression
- Running away
- Drug/solvent abuse
- Excessive fear of situations or people
- Social isolation
- Depression

Possible signs of Neglect

- Failure to thrive (looks unwell, thin, below average height/weight)
- Unusually hungry
- Has regular accidents (especially burns)
- Poor personal hygiene
- Kept away from school medicals
- Tiredness
- Reluctance to go home
- Poor social relationships
- Frequent lateness / non-attendance at school
- Inappropriate clothing

Possible signs of Sexual Abuse

- Depression, suicidal, self-harming
- Anorexic/bulimic
- Acting in a sexually inappropriate way towards adults/peers
- Unexplained pregnancies
- Running away
- Telling of a 'friend with a problem of abuse'
- Sexually abusing a younger child
- Afraid of certain people
- Chronic medical problems (stomach pains, headaches)
- Withdrawn, isolated

How to handle disclosures

Disclosures by a child that s/he is in need or in danger of significant harm.

Please note:

- Do not question in front of other pupils – any disclosure should be made in total privacy
- **Do not promise confidentiality** but what is said should remain confidential apart from those staff who need to know
- Where practical it is ideal for a girl to make a disclosure to a female member of staff and a boy to make a disclosure to a male member of staff, although a child should never be discouraged from making a disclosure for this reason.

Listen to what is said

- Accept what you are told
- Listen without displaying shock or disbelief

Reassure the pupil

- Acknowledge their courage in telling
- Remind them they are not to blame (but avoid criticising the alleged perpetrator)
- Reassure them, but do not promise what you may not be able to deliver eg 'everything will be alright now' (it may not be)

Responding

- Respond to what the pupil has said but do not interrogate
- Avoid leading questions eg 'Do you want to tell me anything else?' 'And?' 'Yes?'
- Where necessary clarify what has been said to you so you are clear and able to decide if this is an abusive situation
- Explain what you will do next

Recording

- Make notes as soon as possible
- Keep original notes then write up a subsequent record using the referral system on the Intranet
- Describe observable behaviour

- Record as far as possible the actual words the child uses
- Pass any and all original handwritten notes to the Designated Child Protection Officer

Supporting

- Consider what support you think necessary for the child
- Think of your own needs for support

Revised and re-written July 2015.