



# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

## Context

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The welfare of the child is paramount and we acknowledge that everyone has a valuable and unique contribution to our school community. Children and young people have the right to protection from neglect and abuse. All children deserve the opportunity to achieve their full potential. Statements or allegations of abuse must always be taken seriously. Therefore, everyone has a responsibility for the protection of children and young people and for reporting concerns. Professionals working in the education sector have a duty to ensure that the Local Childrens' Safeguarding Bureau (LCSB) procedures are followed. In any conflict between the needs of the child or young person and those of parents/carers or professionals, the needs of the young person must come first.

Staff cannot keep confidential a disclosure of abuse and must refer the matter on to the designated person. All referrals should be made with the knowledge that during any subsequent investigation the source will be made known to the family. Other staff may need to be alerted to concerns about a child or young person, possibly in order to monitor the concern or to gather further evidence prior to a referral being made, or to assist in providing appropriate support to a child or young person once after a referral has been made. Information should only be shared on a strict need to know basis.

This policy is based on the schools values of:

- Ensuring that students become confident, caring and creative individuals
- Working in partnership with parents and governors to provide a safe and disciplined environment in which to work
- Being sensitive to the needs of others, their values and beliefs
- Respecting one another and our environment
- Working together to achieve the best we can for our students and community

All staff have a duty to be vigilant to the indicators of abuse and to refer concerns to the designated member of staff for Child Protection. The abuse of Children and young people is a crime. It is not the role of Ratton School staff to investigate, but staff should be clear about their role and the procedure for reporting to the designated person:

- Any concerns that a child or young person is suffering or is likely to be suffering some form of abuse,
- Any allegations of abuse against staff
- Any disclosures of abuse

Record keeping is an important element of the child protection process and Ratton School has a clear policy regarding the making and keeping of notes and records. In addition staff are made aware of the requirement of the child protection policy to record:

- The reason for the concern (but **not** to interrogate)

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- What was said or witnessed
  - Dates and times of incidents
  - Date and time when notes were made

Notes are passed to the designated person who ensures that all child protection records are kept in a locked cabinet. Such records form evidence and may be used in the child protection investigation and any subsequent legal proceedings.

Although rare, professionals are sometimes abusers. Rattton school has in place a policy for the management of allegations and makes it clear to staff that:

- We will not tolerate inappropriate behaviours and have a policy to protect staff who disclose information regarding abuse by colleagues towards pupils.
- Any allegation against a member of staff will be referred to the Headteacher who will seek advice from the Children's Services Designated Officer in accordance with DCSF guidance

Over recent years, schools have (in line with other institutions and public bodies) been working towards an improved understanding of the diverse nature of their communities. Much of this work is in response to new legislation that places an increased duty on schools and other settings. Legislation requires schools both to eliminate direct or indirect discrimination, victimisation or harassment and to promote equality for pupils, staff and others who use school facilities. These developments reflect the growing awareness of the need to view different equality strands beneath one umbrella, rather than seeing them as separate factions competing with each other for time and resources.

|        |           |
|--------|-----------|
| Status | Statutory |
|--------|-----------|

#### Purpose

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Rattton school will endeavour to support the pupil through:

- Ensuring a senior member of staff is appropriately trained and charged with responsibility for coordinating child protection matters within the college. The role of the designated person should be seen to include the following responsibilities:
  - To raise awareness of child protection issues and equip children with the skills needed to keep them safe
  - To develop and implement procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases of abuse
  - To support students who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed protection plan
  - To establish a safe environment where children can learn and develop
- Providing the point of contact for staff who have concerns or information that a child or young person may be suffering abuse now, or has done in the past or is likely to in the future,
- Making any necessary referrals to social services and police
- Ensuring the school contributes fully to the child protection process
- The content of the curriculum

- The school ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued
- The school behaviour policy which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the school. The school will ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but 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, should a pupil on the child protection register leave, their information is transferred to the new school immediately and that, if appropriate, the child's social worker is informed

Ratton School will work in partnership with Children's Services and Police and other appropriate agencies, sharing relevant information to assist the investigative process. The school will contribute to any subsequent care plan.

#### Consultation

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|---|--|
| Consultation                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School staff</li> <li>• Governors,</li> <li>• Students</li> <li>• Parents</li> <li>• Children's Services</li> </ul>   |
| Relationship to other policies                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equal Opportunities</li> <li>• Safe Recruitment</li> <li>• Managing allegations against Staff</li> <li>• Whistleblowing</li> <li>• Behaviour</li> <li>• Teaching and Learning</li> <li>• SEN</li> </ul> |
| Relationship to standard operating procedures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Protection</li> </ul>   |

| Role                                       | Responsibility   |
|--|--|
| Headteacher                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure wide consultation for the inception and review of this policy</li> <li>• Ensure structures are in place to support the effective implementation of this policy</li> <li>• Monitor and review the effectiveness of this policy</li> </ul>   |
| Designated Child Protection Teacher (DCPT) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead the effective and consistent implementation of this policy</li> <li>• Ensure the school is up to date with current practice and legislation on CP issues</li> <li>• Provide a point of contact for staff who have concerns or information that a young person may be suffering abuse now, or has done so in the past.</li> <li>• Liaise with the Headteacher</li> <li>• Ensure necessary referrals to Childrens' Services and the police are made</li> </ul> |

|                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
|                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all staff receive appropriate training on child protection issues on an annual basis</li> <li>• Ensure appropriate records of concerns about children are kept</li> <li>• Attend regular training sessions in order to keep up-to-date with guidelines and requirements</li> </ul>                                    |
| Care and Guidance Leaders             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain accurate records of concerns in a secure way</li> <li>• Refer issues of concern to Childrens' Services as directed by the DCPT</li> <li>• Provide a point of contact for staff and students</li> <li>• Attend appropriate training sessions in order to keep up-to-date with guidelines and requirements</li> </ul> |
| All staff (teaching and non-teaching) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be vigilant for signs of abuse or neglect and pass on concerns to the DCPT or Care and Guidance Leaders immediately</li> </ul>   |
| Governors                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor the implementation of this policy</li> <li>• Review this policy on an annual basis</li> </ul>  |

### Arrangements for Monitoring and Evaluation

We will work with Children's Services and the governors to review this policy on an annual basis.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Staff member responsible for initial annual review: | AHT Induction, Intervention & Inclusion |
| Date established by Governing body:                 | February 2008                           |
| Date for full implementation:                       | February 2008                           |
| Date of review/approval:                            | February 2010<br>February 2011          |
| Date of next Review:                                | February 2012                           |

### ANNEXES

#### Relevant current legislation and Guidance Underpinning this Policy

- Children Act 1989
- Data Protection Act 1998
- The Protection of Children Act 1999
- Framework for the Assessment of Children in need and their Families 2000
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- The Children Act 2004
- Working Together to safeguard Children 2006
- LSCB Child Protection Procedures 2006
- The Education Act 2002: Section 175
- Forced Marriage Act 2007

#### Definitions, contacts and guidance

- Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008

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## Significant Harm

The concept of Significant Harm introduced by the Children Act 1989 is the threshold by which compulsory intervention by Social Services may take place:

- East Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures
- 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; and
- Ill treatment includes sexual abuse and forms of ill treatment which are not physical
- Working together to safeguard children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (2010)
- Reform of Children's Trusts (2010)

## The categories of abuse:

- Physical Abuse: non accidental injuries, bruising, wounding burns, fractures
- Neglect: the chronic inattention to basic needs
- Sexual abuse: the involvement of children or young people in sexual activity. This includes the abuse of a position of trust
- Emotional Abuse or neglect: persistent emotional ill treatment such as the extreme denial of love, affection or approval

## Local Agency contact numbers:

- East of the county (including Hastings and Rother) 11 years old and under, contact the Duty & Assessment Team - Phone: 01424 724144. If they are 12 years old and over, contact the Youth Support Team - Phone: 01424 724130
- West of the county (including Eastbourne, Hailsham and Seaford) 11 years old and under, contact the Duty & Assessment Team - Phone: 01323 747373. If they are 12 years old and over, contact the Youth Support Team - Phone: 01323 747094
- If you need to report a concern outside of office hours, contact the Emergency Duty Service - Phone: 07699 391462. You can call this number Monday to Friday, 5pm to 8am, on the weekend or on a bank holiday
- If a disabled child needs social care support the service contact the Disabled Children's Service - Phone: 01323 741527

## Police

- Emergencies - Always dial **999** (if life is threatened, if people are injured, if offenders are nearby, if immediate action is required)
- Emergency Text (if possible, it is important with SMS texts to also try other ways to contact Sussex Police. No text messages are guaranteed to arrive quickly. We rely on the mobile phone companies and the network. Sussex Police cannot be held responsible for delays in receiving messages. You will know your message has been received **ONLY** when you get a reply from us. Please note that all calls are recorded for policing purposes) Hearing impaired & speech impaired 65999
- Typetalk Emergency Line: Hearing impaired & speech impaired 18000

## Further reading:

- The Assessment Framework (DOH, DFES, HO 2000)
- What to do if you are worried a child is being abused (DOH, DFES, HO 2006)

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- DfES Circular Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (2006)
  - LSCB Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures (2006)



## Child Protection Standard Operating Procedure

### Objective(s)

To ensure appropriate responses are made to any child protection issues

### Scope

| N <sup>o</sup> | What  | How  | When                             | Who  |
|----------------|---|--|----------------------------------|--|
| 1              | Ensure school has a designated senior person and a governor for child protection                                  | Headteacher appointment                            | Every year                       | Headteacher  |
|                |   | Publicise in publications and on website           |                                  |  |
| 2              | All staff receive appropriate CP training   | Input at staff inset                               | Beginning of each year           | Designated teacher/<br>CPD Manager                             |
|                |   | LSCB training for key care and guidance team       |                                  |  |
| 3              | CP and safeguarding to be included within induction for new staff   | As one of many structures sessions                 | Soon after the start of the year | Manager of CPD   |
| 4              | Be alert to signs of abuse and refer any concerns on to designated senior person responsible for child protection | Contact through care and guidance managers         | Immediately                      | All staff  |
| 5              | Notify appropriate agencies where there is concern about the needs or safety of students                          | Phone call to CS and follow up with written letter | At once if danger                | Care and guidance staff under guidance from designated teacher |
| 6              | Notify social services if there is an unexplained   | Phone call to CS                                   | After 1 days absence at most     | Attendance administration                                      |

|   |   |   |                     |   |
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|   | absence of any student on the CP register   |   |                     |   |
| 7 | Keep written records of concerns about children and ensure these are kept separate from the main student file and in locked locations | Either paper files in locked cabinet or password protected computer files | As situations occur | Care and guidance staff under supervision of designated teacher |

### Other Useful Information

See Guidance on Supporting Evidence

### Audit

### Review

### Author

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Assistant Headteacher - Induction Intervention & Inclusion

### Date

February 2010

### Approved by Governors

February 2010  
February 2011

## Appendix i

### Identifying possible signs of abuse

Even experienced professionals working in child protection do not always find it easy to recognise the signs of abuse. When you start to have suspicions, your first reaction may be shock, anger or disbelief. You may also feel unhappy about reporting a case if you fear there may be an innocent explanation after all. But remember, it is not your direct responsibility to determine whether a child has been abused or not or whether someone

poses a real risk to children. Your responsibility is to act on your concerns, or those raised with you, by passing them on to the designated teacher or the care and guidance team so that action can be taken if necessary.

Don't forget that once you have reported your suspicions, professionals trained in identifying child abuse will carry out many other checks. The authorities will not blame you, or be annoyed that you have wasted their time, if your suspicions turn out to be groundless - they would far rather you alerted them unnecessarily than fail to protect a child who was being abused.

If you are concerned about a child you need to consider both of the following points. Firstly, there are physical signs and behavioural signs. If you are in regular contact with a child, your knowledge of them over time will help you assess whether a change in behaviour or physical appearance is significant - and you should not ignore what your judgement is telling you. Secondly, you also need to consider the child's age and understanding, particularly in regard to sexual abuse.

If a child is showing several of the signs listed on the following pages, you should seriously consider the possibility that abuse or exploitation is taking place and follow Ratton's procedures.

### **Physical abuse**

Bruising is strongly related to mobility. Most children other than babies collect cuts and bruises quite routinely, as part of the rough and tumble of daily life. This makes it difficult to spot cuts and bruises that are not accidental. There are some patterns of bruising that may mean abuse has taken place - for example, bruises on soft parts of the body, bruising to the head and defensive bruises. Physical abuse may have occurred when the injuries fall into one or more of the following categories.

### **Physical signs**

- injuries which the child cannot explain, or explains unconvincingly
- injuries which have not been treated or have been treated inadequately
- injuries on parts of the body where accidental injury is unlikely, such as the cheeks, chest or thighs
- bruising which reflects hand or finger marks
- cigarette burns
- human bite marks
- broken bones (particularly in children under the age of two)
- scalds, especially those with upward splash marks where hot water has been deliberately thrown over the child, or 'tide marks' - rings on the child's arms, legs or body where the child has been made to sit or stand in very hot water.

Disabled children are more vulnerable to having the signs and indicators of abuse missed because their disability may be used as an explanation. For example, a child who uses a wheelchair may have extensive bruising, but this may be explained away by the fact they fell out of their chair when actually they have been beaten.

## **Behavioural signs**

- reluctance to have their parents contacted
- aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- running away or showing fear of going home/attending childcare or education setting
- reluctance to approach staff in the setting
- flinching when approached or touched
- reluctance to get undressed for sporting or other activities where changing into other clothes is normal
- covering arms and legs even when hot
- distress, depression or moods which are out of character with the child's general behaviour
- unnatural compliance with parents, carers or staff.

## **Sexual abuse**

Girls and boys of all ages can be victims of sexual abuse. Several factors combine to make this type of abuse difficult to identify. Most acts of abuse (but not all) are likely to happen in private and child abusers go to incredible lengths to prevent discovery. The child is often threatened to keep silent, and many children feel such a strong sense of guilt and shame that they are reluctant to speak about what has happened to them. Children forced to take part in the production of abusive images or into prostitution will be most susceptible to these forces. Nevertheless, there are some clues to sexual abuse which need to be considered in light of the age and developmental understanding of the child.

## **Physical signs**

- pain, itching, bruising or bleeding in the genital or anal areas
- any sexually transmitted disease
- recurrent genital discharge or urinary tract infections without apparent cause
- stomach pains or discomfort when the child is walking or sitting down
- pregnancy.

## **Behavioural signs**

- sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour
- an apparent fear of someone
- running away from home
- nightmares or bedwetting
- self-harm, self-mutilation or attempts at suicide
- abuse of drugs or other substances
- eating disorders such as anorexia or bulimia
- sexualised behaviour or knowledge in young children
- sexual drawings or language

- possession of unexplained amounts of money
- taking a parental role at home and functioning beyond their age level
- not being allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- alluding to secrets which they cannot reveal
- telling other children or adults about the abuse
- reluctance to get undressed for sporting or other activities where changing into other clothes is normal.

With babies, young children or disabled children - who have little, or different, means of communication - it may be much more difficult for you to recognise indicators of sexual abuse. And they may not have the understanding to know that what is happening to them is wrong or have the language to communicate this.

### **Neglect**

Neglect is a very difficult form of child abuse to recognise. It is often seen as less serious than other forms of abuse, but its effects can be very damaging. Children who are neglected often develop more slowly than others and find it hard to make friends and/or fit in with their peer group.

A child suffering from neglect may show any of the following signs -

#### **Physical signs**

- being constantly hungry and sometimes stealing food from others
- being in an unkempt state; frequently dirty or smelly
- loss of weight or being constantly underweight
- being dressed inappropriately for the weather conditions
- untreated medical conditions - not being taken for medical treatment for illnesses or injuries.

#### **Behavioural signs**

- being tired all the time
- frequently missing day care/school or being late
- failing to keep hospital or medical appointments
- having few friends
- being left alone or unsupervised on a regular basis
- compulsive stealing or scavenging, especially of food.

### **Emotional abuse**

As with sexual abuse, emotional abuse is hard to identify with certainty. Some children are by nature shy and find it difficult to be outgoing and confident, and this does not mean that they are being abused.

### **Physical signs**

- a failure to grow or to thrive (particularly if the child thrives when away from home)
- sudden speech disorders
- delayed development, either physical or emotional.

### **Behavioural signs**

- excessive crying which is out of character with a baby's general behaviour
- compulsive nervous behaviour such as hair-twisting or rocking
- an unwillingness or inability to play
- an excessive fear of making mistakes
- self-harm or self-mutilation
- reluctance to have parents contacted
- an excessive deference towards others, especially adults
- an excessive lack of confidence
- an excessive need for approval, attention and affection
- an inability to cope with praise.

### **Bullying**

Bullying may present as a problem in its own right or it may exist as a factor within a broader picture of concern. When considering allegations that bullying may be taking place within an educational or care setting, the perception of the child or children is an important reference point. The following may lead you to believe bullying has taken place.

#### **A child may:**

- be frightened of walking to and from school
- change their usual route
- not want to go on the school bus
- beg to be driven to school
- be unwilling to go to school (or be 'school phobic') or go to their childcare setting
- feel ill in the mornings
- begin truanting
- begin doing poorly in their school work
- come home regularly with clothes or books destroyed
- come home starving (bully taking dinner money)
- become withdrawn, start stammering, lack confidence
- become distressed and anxious, stop eating
- attempt or threaten suicide
- cry themselves to sleep, have nightmares
- have their possessions go missing
- ask for money or start stealing (to pay the bully)
- continually 'lose' their pocket money
- refuse to talk about what's wrong
- have unexplained bruises, cuts, scratches
- begin to bully other children, siblings
- become aggressive and unreasonable
- give improbable excuses for any of the above.

## Appendix ii

### How to respond if a child confides in you

It can take a great deal of courage for a child to talk to an adult about their abuse because the child is telling on someone who is more powerful than he or she are. The child often learns to be very good at covering up the abuse and is able to give plausible explanations for what has happened. The child may be risking a great deal in the hope that you will believe what he or she says.

### **These are some helpful responses**

- Remain calm, accessible and receptive.
- Listen carefully, without interrupting.
- Be aware of your own non-verbal messages.
- Make it clear that you are taking him or her seriously.
- Acknowledge the child's courage and reassure he or she that they are right to tell.
- Reassure the child that he or she should not feel guilty and that you're sorry that this has happened to him or her.
- Let the child know that you are going to do everything you can to help him or her and what may happen as a result.
- Be clear that you will have to share what he or she has told you with specific others but that everything will be done to maintain confidentiality.
- Make a note of what was said and who was present.
- Use the child's actual words wherever possible.
- Ensure that an appropriate person is found to help him or her communicate if a child has a different first language or communication difficulties.

### **These are things to avoid. Do not -**

- allow your shock or distaste to show
- probe for more information than is offered
- speculate or make assumptions
- make negative comments about the alleged abuser
- make any promises that you cannot keep - eg, promising that 'everything will be alright'
- agree to keep the information a secret
- express disbelief in what the child is saying
- try to investigate or question the child, except to clarify what you have heard - particularly important in cases of sexual abuse.

After discussion with the child, follow the actions set out in the safeguarding policy and procedures but, remember, never delay emergency action to protect a child.