

Eridge House

Safeguarding Children Policy

At Eridge House, we believe that children have a fundamental right to be safe and to have a childhood free from abuse, neglect or exploitation. All staff, both teaching and non-teaching, have a responsibility to be mindful of issues relating to children's safety and welfare and a duty to report concerns. We fully recognise our responsibilities for child protection.

Information regarding safeguarding children is kept in the safeguarding children file in the main school office along with reference documentation. 'What to do' flow charts are displayed in the foyer, staff room and all three offices.

This policy is reviewed annually.

Contents
Introduction
Responsibilities of proprietor and staff
Scope of the policy
Aims
Legislation, Guidance and Reference ISA
Implementation Recording Information Support Training Ofsted
Allegations against members of staff
Responding to suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice
Responding to a child making a disclosure or allegation
Action to be taken
Actions to be avoided
Sharing concerns with parents
Reporting procedure
Records and information
Allegations against staff by another member of staff
Action to be taken
Confidentiality
Internal inquiries and suspension
Notification to social services
Support to the subject of allegations
Action if bullying is suspected
Allegations of previous abuse
Misuse of the procedure
APPENDIX
A Recognition of abuse and neglect
B Reporting concerns and allegations against staff
C Indicators of abuse

Eridge House

D How to report incidents and Useful telephone numbers and contacts

E “What to do if your worried a child is being abused” flow chart
--

Designated person responsible for Child Protection is **Janie Richardson** and the second designated person is **Jamie McDowall**.

Introduction

The policy is based on the principle that:

“It is everyone’s responsibility to act on concerns of abuse and report them to relevant authorities; it is not the staff member’s responsibility to investigate allegations or suspicions of child abuse”

In accordance with EYFS Welfare Requirements, it is a legal requirement for all childcare establishments to take steps to ensure the safety and protection of children.

Responsibilities of Proprietor and staff

The Proprietor

Proprietors of independent schools have similar responsibilities to those of governing bodies of maintained schools but cannot rely on local authorities to provide advice, support, etc. automatically in the same way as they do for maintained schools. Authorities are free to provide those services to independent schools, and many do, charging appropriate fees for the work, but they have no obligation to do so. As with FE colleges, independent schools that do not purchase services from a local authority can approach the LSCB for advice.

In any event, proprietor will ensure that:

- ⌘ the school has a child protection policy and procedures in place that are in accordance with locally agreed interagency procedures, and the policy is made available to parents on request;
- ⌘ the school operates safe recruitment procedures and makes sure that all appropriate checks are carried out on staff and volunteers who work with children, see safer recruitment file and policy.
- ⌘ the school has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff or volunteers that comply with locally agreed inter-agency procedures. These include procedures for the proprietor to liaise with other agencies in the event that allegations are made involving the head teacher
- ⌘ a senior member of the school’s management structure is designated to take lead responsibility for dealing with child protection issues and liaising with other agencies where necessary.
- ⌘ in addition to basic child protection training, the designated person undertakes training in inter-agency working that is provided by, or to standards set by, the LSCB, and refresher training at two yearly intervals to keep his or her knowledge and skills up to date;
- ⌘ the Head teacher, and all other staff who work with children undertake training that equips them with the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out their responsibilities for child

Eridge House

protection that is kept up to date by refresher training at three yearly intervals, and temporary staff and volunteers who work with children are made aware of the school's arrangements for child protection and their responsibilities; refresher training is run Termly during staff meetings

∞ any deficiencies or weaknesses in regard to child protection arrangements are remedied without delay; and

∞ the proprietor undertakes an annual review of the school's policies and procedures relating to safeguarding, and how the above duties have been discharged.

Responsibilities of the Head Teacher

The Head teacher should ensure that:

∞ the policies and procedures adopted by the proprietor are fully implemented, and followed by all staff;

∞ sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable the designated person and other staff to discharge their responsibilities, including taking part in strategy discussions and other interagency meetings, and contributing to the assessment of children; and

∞ all staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice with regard to children, and such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner in accordance with agreed allegations against staff (whistle blowing) policies, where appropriate.

Scope of the policy

Our policy applies to all adults working in the school. There are five main elements to the policy:

- Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children (see CRB Disclosure Policy)
- 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 children who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan
- Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.

Aims

The Safeguarding Children Policy and procedures aims to safeguard and promote the welfare of children by:

- **Recruitment**

All employees will be subject to an enhanced CRB check. Employment will only be offered when a cleared CRB has been returned, The school will keep a record of the reference code allocated and date of issue. If CRB check is not returned in time of the commencement of employment the school will 'List 99' employees. From November 2010 all new staff will be

Eridge House

required to be registered with the ISA. Staff will not be employed if they are not registered with the ISA.

Please refer to our Recruitment, CRB Disclosure and ISA policies

• *Prevention*

Employees will endeavour to ensure that all children and young people at school can attend safely and appropriately, and are treated with respect and understanding. The school organises its services and activities for children with a preventative, safeguarding purpose in mind.

• *Protection*

The school takes all reasonable steps to safeguard and protect the rights, health and well-being of children who take part in activities organised within its facilities, as well as those of children who staff may come into contact with in the course of their work.

• *Support*

Child protection training is made available to all members of staff who work with or come into regular contact with children in the course of their job. The school recognises that child protection issues can be emotive and offers suitable, impartial support to any member of staff affected by this policy, whether directly or indirectly.

We recognise that because of the day-to-day contact with children, school staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. The school 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 school whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Include opportunities in the PSHE curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

Legislation, Guidance and Reference

This Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy and the accompanying Child Protection Procedures have been developed in line with the principles of The Children Act 1989 and The Children Act 2004, and with reference to the following:

- Vetting and Barring Scheme Oct 2009
- Working Together To Safeguard Children 2006
- What to Do If You're Worried a Child Is Being Abused (2006)
- Every Child Matters 2004
- The NSPCC publication Sportscheck
- Early years Foundation Stage (September 2008)

This policy has regard to the requirements of '*Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education*' (DfES 2006), which came into force on 1st January 2007 and should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

Eridge House

CRB Disclosure, ISA Policy
Recruitment Policy
Recruitment of Ex Offenders Policy
Allegations against members of staff Policy
Confidentiality Policy
Data Protection Policy
Anti-bullying policy

ISA

At Eridge House we only employ staff that have clear enhanced CRB's returned, the check includes one carried out by the The Independent Safeguarding Authority; ISA.

The Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) was created as part of the Government's Vetting and Barring Scheme (VBS) to help prevent unsuitable people from working with children and vulnerable adults. It is a Non Departmental Public Body, sponsored by the Home Office. They work in partnership with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) to help ensure that there is 'no known reason' why individuals who work or wish to work or volunteer with children or vulnerable adults shouldn't do so.

The ISA's role within the VBS is to make independent barring decisions and place or remove individuals on either the ISA's Children's Barred List or the ISA's Vulnerable Adult's Barred List, or both.

Increased safeguards were introduced under the Vetting and Barring Scheme, from October 12th 2009:

- It is a criminal offence for individuals barred by the ISA to work or apply to work with children or vulnerable adults in a wide range of posts - including most NHS jobs, Prison Service, education and childcare. Employers also face criminal sanctions for knowingly employing a barred individual across a wider range of work;
- The three former barred lists (POCA, POVA and List 99) are being replaced by two new ISA-barred lists;
- Employers, local authorities, professional regulators and other bodies have a duty to refer to the ISA, information about individuals working with children or vulnerable adults where they consider them to have caused harm or pose a risk of harm.

If anyone working or in contact with Eridge House was dismissed under a safeguarding offence we would immediately contact the ISA and complete the referral forms to place them on the barring list to prevent them from working with vulnerable groups again.

For more information please visit www.isa-gov.org.uk

Implementation

We follow the Pan-London Child Protection Procedures, outlined in the document '*What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused*' (see attached). Accordingly, we:

- Ensure we have a designated person for child protection who has received appropriate training and support for this role. Our designated person responsible for Child Protection is **Janie Richardson** and the second designated person is **Jamie McDowall**

Policy due for review: September 2011

Eridge House

- Ensure every member of staff and volunteer knows the name of the designated person(s) responsible for child protection and their role
- 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(s) responsible for child protection
- Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and staff for safeguarding children by setting out our obligations in the Parents' Handbook
- Display the flow chart in a central place for parents to view
- Notify social services if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a pupil who is on the child protection register
- Notify social services if there is an unexplained absence of more than 10 days for any pupil
- 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, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately
- Ensure all records are kept securely in lockable storage
- Ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed.

Recording information

Each classroom has a book in which any 'niggles' or concerns are entered. Information must be recorded word for word, signed and dated. The designated person must be informed when a 'niggle' is entered and a copy is kept confidentially in the designated persons safeguarding children file. The designated person will take action in accordance with the flow chart as appropriate.

Support

We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The school 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 school will endeavour to support the child through:

- The content of the curriculum.
- The school ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued.
- Liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as Social Services, Child and Adult Mental Health Services, the Education Welfare Advisory Service and the Psychology in Education 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.

Training

All staff receive regular training at least every 3 years and once every 2 years for the designated persons to ensure they have an up to date understanding of safeguarding children issues, in line with Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) local guidance and

Eridge House

procedures. Copies of certificates from such training are retained in the CPD Files to ensure that monitoring and review takes place.

The school ensures that safeguarding children is a standing agenda item for weekly staff meetings.

Ofsted

Ofsted must be contacted without delay in the event of any allegations of serious harm or abuse. Any provider who without reasonable excuse, fails to comply with this requirement, commits an offence.

Allegations against members of staff

Where an allegation is made against a member of staff, either by a child, a parent or a fellow staff member, the following procedures apply:

Responding to suspicions and allegations of abuse and poor practice

We believe it is important to maintain an open culture where all employees, volunteers, children and parents or carers feel able to express concern about child protection issues and issues of dealing with children and vulnerable adults.

These procedures and guidance apply whenever it is alleged that a member of staff has:

- Behaved in a way that has or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved towards a child in a way which indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children

These procedures apply to situations when:

- There are suspicions or allegations of abuse by a person works with children in either a paid or unpaid capacity – as a permanent, temporary or agency staff member, contract worker, consultant, student or volunteer
- It is discovered that an individual known to have been involved previously in child abuse, is or has been working with children

If an allegation relating to a child is made about a person who undertakes paid or unpaid work, consideration must be given to the possible need to alert those who manage her/him in that role.

Any employee, child or young person reporting concerns under this Policy is assured that their concerns will be taken seriously and treated sensitively. Every effort will be made to respect the anonymity of the person making the report, although it is not possible to guarantee this, particularly if to do so would adversely affect the welfare of the child or young person, or one or more legal authorities become involved.

The school will not tolerate harassment of any employee, child or young person who raises concerns of child abuse. Such harassment will be dealt with under disciplinary procedures, and the school will robustly support any ensuing investigation by any recognised authority.

Eridge House

False allegations do occur. However, if a child indicates that they are being abused, or information is obtained which gives concern that a child is being abused; this should never be ignored. Any allegation of abuse must be reported to the designated person(s) and relevant Local Authority Safeguarding contacts.

Responding to a child making a disclosure or allegation

Action to be taken

A member of staff receiving information should:

- react calmly so as not to frighten the child
- listen carefully
- reassure the child that they are right to tell
- not make promises of confidentiality, but let them know that you will have to tell another adult
- take what the child says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent in interpreting what is said by a child
- keep questions to an absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. Questions should not be leading and should consist of Who...? What...? When...? Where...?
- tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared
- make a full written record of what has been said (using the child's own words), heard and/or seen as soon as possible using an Incident Report form (Appendix A). Note the date and time, any names mentioned and to whom the information was given. Ensure the record is signed and dated.

Actions to be avoided

The person receiving information should not:

- panic
- allow their shock or distaste to show
- probe for more information than is offered
- speculate or make assumptions
- make negative comments about the alleged abuser
- approach the alleged abuser
- make promises to keep secrets
- discuss the issue with anyone other than the Designated Officer, the line manager or head of service.

It is essential that all employees understand that child abuse is a complex issue and that diagnosis of the validity of an allegation is the responsibility of relevant, expert agencies. The role of employees is to report and refer any concerns, not to investigate or judge. All allegations that fall within the scope of this policy and procedure are to be followed up and examined objectively by the Hammersmith & Fulham social services referral and assessment service.

Sharing concerns with parents

Eridge House

The school is committed to working in partnership with parents or carers where there are concerns about their children. Therefore, in most situations, it would be important to talk to parents or carers to help clarify initial concerns. It is essential, therefore, that the designated person(s) undertakes this liaison.

However, there are circumstances in which a child might be placed at even greater risk if concerns are shared (e.g. where a parent or carer is the alleged abuser or is not able to respond to the situation appropriately). If there is any concern that informing a parent or carer may place the child at risk or may compromise police evidence, immediate advice must be sought from the Hammersmith & Fulham social services referral and assessment service or the police by the designated person.

Reporting procedure

Staff responding to a suspicion of abuse or poor practice should complete the Incident Report form.

- The incident should be reported to the designated safeguarding person
- The designated person(s) will assess the incident; decide what appropriate action needs to be taken and contact the Hammersmith & Fulham social services referral and assessment service or the Police as necessary.
- The Hammersmith & Fulham social services referral and assessment service will be informed within 1 working day of any allegations that come to the settings attention and appear to fall within the scope of this policy and procedure.

Records and information

Information passed to the external child protection agencies or police must be as helpful as possible, hence the necessity for making a detailed report at the time of the initial disclosure/concern. Information included in this report should include:

- the nature of the allegation
- a description of any visible bruising or other injuries
- the child's account in their own words, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred
- witnesses to the incident(s)
- any times, dates or other relevant information
- a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay
- date and time of record.

Reporting the matter to Hammersmith & Fulham social services referral and assessment service or the Police should not be delayed in an attempt to obtain more information.

A record should also be made of the name and designation of the Hammersmith & Fulham social services referral and assessment officer or police officer to whom the concerns were passed, together with the time and date of the call, in case any follow-up is needed. A note of any crime report number should also be taken.

All employees must be prepared to attend a relevant child protection conference or child in need meeting, and comply with the need to complete appropriate paperwork.

Eridge House

Electronic and hard copies of all reports and incident information must be sent to the designated person(s).

Allegations against staff by another member of staff (may also referred to as ‘whistle-blowing’). Please refer to the Allegations against Members of Staff Policy for further support and information.

Any person working on behalf of Eridge House who suspects that a colleague may be abusing a child or young person must act on their suspicions. Action should also be taken if it is felt that colleagues are not following the codes of conduct.

This action will serve not only to protect children but also colleagues from false accusations:

Employees are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within their own working environment. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to their colleagues and that there is a possibility that their concerns are unfounded. They may also fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may be a suspicion of malpractice.

Eridge House acknowledges that this is an extremely sensitive issue and assures all employees and persons working on its behalf that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports a concern or an allegation that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.

Types of investigation

Where there is a complaint of abuse against a member of staff, there may be three types of investigation:

- criminal
- child protection
- disciplinary (to be treated as gross misconduct)

Civil proceedings could also be instigated by the person/family of the person who alleged the abuse. The results of any Police and Hammersmith & Fulham social services referral and assessment service investigation may influence a disciplinary investigation.

Action to be taken

Poor practice

If, following consideration by the designated person(s) and appropriate external child protection & safeguarding children agencies, the allegation is clearly about poor practice, the relevant manager may wish to invoke an investigation in accordance with Disciplinary Procedures.

Suspected abuse

Where it is suspected that abuse has taken place:

Eridge House

- Any suspicion that a member of staff has abused a child should be Reported to the designated person(s) immediately..
- The designated person(s) will take such steps as they feel appropriate to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.
- The designated person(s) will report the incident to the Proprietor where consideration will be given to the next steps. These steps may include suspension on full pay, whilst the matter is investigated further.
- The designated person(s) will seek advice from the Hammersmith & Fulham social services referral and assessment service as appropriate, who may involve the police.
- If the designated referral and assessment officer is the subject of the suspicion/allegation, the report must be made directly to the Proprietor who will assume their role in the above procedure.

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This is required in order to:

- Protect children
- Facilitate enquiries
- Avoid victimisation
- Safeguard the rights of the person about whom the allegation has been made and others who might be affected
- Manage disciplinary/complaints aspects

It is expected that those involved on a need to know basis would include the following:

- Members of the team overseeing any investigation
- The parents of the child alleged to have been abused
- The person making the allegation
- Hammersmith & Fulham social services referral and assessment service and the Police
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is under 18 years of age)

Any information will be stored in a secure place with access limited to the investigation team and in line with data protection.

Internal inquiries and suspension

Eridge House

- Irrespective of the findings of the borough or of police inquiries, Eridge House will assess all individual cases under its own disciplinary procedures to decide whether a member of staff can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled.
- Eridge House will reach a decision based on the available information and decide on a balance of probability basis whether an allegation is true.

The welfare of children will always remain paramount.

Notification to Social Services

- A copy of the Incident Report form should be submitted to Hammersmith & Fulham social services referral and assessment service without delay. This is the responsibility of the Designated person(s).
- Any further inquiries from Hammersmith & Fulham social services referral and assessment service or any other interested third party should be passed immediately to the disciplinary investigation team to deal with. A written record should be kept of any such conversations.

Support to the Subject of Allegations

Subject to the specific procedures the subject of the allegations should be:

- Advised at the outset to contact her/his Union representation if a member
- Treated fairly and honestly and helped to understand the concerns expressed, processes involved and possible outcomes
- Kept informed of the progress of the case and of the investigation
- Clearly informed of the outcome of any investigation and the implications for disciplinary or related processes.
- Provided with appropriate support (via occupational health or GP surgery).

Signs of abuse

Abuse

Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur, or has already taken place.

Whilst it is accepted that staff are not experts at such recognition, they do have a responsibility to act if they have any concerns about the behaviour of someone (an adult or a child) towards a child. All staff have a duty to discuss any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child or young person

immediately with the designated person(s) or the Director

Abuse is any form of maltreatment of a child; somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to prevent harm. It can take many forms but is usually divided into four categories;

Physical abuse

May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, giving children alcohol and/or inappropriate drugs, 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

Eridge House

deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as factitious illness by proxy or Munchausen syndrome by proxy.

Emotional abuse

Is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child that would adversely affect the child's emotional development. It may involve:

Conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. This may be verbally or via electronic or written communication.

Imposing age or developmentally inappropriate expectations, for example overprotection or limitation of exploration and learning.

Causing children to feel frightened or in danger for example witnessing domestic abuse, seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another.

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, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative and non-penetrative acts. Penetrative acts include 'rape' (intentional penetration of vagina, anus or mouth with a man's penis) and 'assault by penetration' (intentional sexual penetration of the vagina or anus of a child with a part of her/his body or an object).

Sexual activities may also include non-contact activities, e.g. involving children in looking at, or in production of abusive images, watching sexual activities or encouraging them to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. This may include use of photographs, pictures, cartoons, literature or sound recordings e.g. the internet, books, magazines, audio cassettes, tapes, CD's

Children under 16 years of age cannot provide lawful consent to any sexual activity, though in practice many are involved in sexual contact to which, as individuals, they may have agreed.

Neglect

Is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of health and development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once the child is born neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: Provide adequate food, shelter and clothing (including exclusion from home or abandonment). Protect a child from physical harm or danger.

Meet or respond to a child's basic emotional needs. Ensure adequate supervision including use of adequate care-takers. Ensure adequate access to appropriate medical care or treatment. Ensure that educational needs are met.

Indicators of Abuse

It is important to remember that a child may suffer or be at risk of suffering from one or more types of abuse and that abuse may take place on a single occasion or may occur repeatedly over time. There is no absolute criteria on which to rely on when judging what constitutes significant harm, the following indicators on the signs and symptoms may be consistent with

Eridge House

abuse; but children may exhibit them for other reasons. For this reason any concerns about a child must be raised with the designated person(s) at the earliest opportunity. Examples of the indicators of different types of abuse are identified in Appendix A

Bullying

It is important to recognise that abuse is not always carried out by an adult on a child; the abuser may be another child, for example, in the case of bullying.

Bullying may be seen to be deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves.

Although anyone can be a target for bullying, victims are typically shy, sensitive and perhaps anxious and insecure. Sometimes they are singled out for physical reasons – being overweight, physically small, having a disability or belonging to a different race, faith or culture. Bullying can and does occur anywhere where there is inadequate supervision – on the way to and from school for example.

Bullies come from all walks of life; they bully for a variety of reasons and may have been bullied or abused themselves. Typically, bullies have low self-esteem, be excitable, aggressive and jealous. Crucially, they have learned how to gain power over others.

Bullying may be:

- Physical, e.g. hitting, kicking, theft.
- Verbal, e.g. name-calling, constant teasing, sarcasm, racist or homophobic taunts, threats, graffiti, gestures.
- Emotional, e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring.
- Sexual, e.g. unwanted physical contact, abusive comments.

The damage inflicted by bullying is often underestimated. It can cause considerable distress to children, to the extent that it affects their health and development or, at the extreme, causes them significant harm (including self harm).

There are a number of signs that may indicate that a child is being bullied:

- Behavioural changes, such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, erratic mood swings, reluctance to go to school, activities or sports clubs.
- A drop in performance at school or standard of play.
- Physical signs, such as stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed wetting, scratching, bruising, damaged clothes, and bingeing, for example on food, cigarettes or alcohol.
- A shortage of money or frequent loss of possession

Action if bullying is suspected

The same procedure should be followed as set out for **Responding to Suspicions of Abuse** above if bullying is suspected.

Action to help the victim and prevent bullying

Eridge House

- All signs of bullying should be taken seriously
- All children should be encouraged to speak and share their concerns
- The victim should be helped to speak out and tell the person in charge or someone in authority.
- An open environment should be created.
- All allegations should be investigated and action taken to ensure the victim is safe. The victim and bully(ies) should be spoken to separately.
- Staff should reassure the victim that they can be trusted and will help them, although they cannot promise not to tell anyone else.
- Records should be kept of what is said.
- Staff should report concerns to their line manager.

Action towards the bully(ies)

- The situation should be explained to the bully(ies).
- An effort should be made to get the bully(ies) to understand the consequences of their behaviour.
- An apology to the victim should be sought.
- The parents of the bully(ies) should be informed.
- Any borrowed items should be returned to the victim.
- Appropriate sanctions should be imposed as necessary.
- Encouragement and support for the bully(ies) to change their behaviour should be offered.
- Meetings should be held with parents to report on progress.
- All appropriate staff should be informed of action taken.
- A written record of action taken should be kept.

Allegations of previous abuse

Allegations of abuse may be made some time after the event (e.g. by an adult who was abused as a child by a member of staff who is still currently working with children). Where such an allegation is made, the procedures as detailed above should be used and the matter reported to the police by the Designated Person(s). This is because other children may be at risk from this person. Anyone who has a previous criminal conviction for offences related to child abuse is automatically excluded from working with children.

Local support paths for the abused person will be located.

Misuse of the Procedure

Malicious complaints about an employee(s) and /or serious and/or persistent abuse of these safeguarding children and child protection procedures will not be tolerated and will be dealt with through the disciplinary process.

Employees may not discuss any allegation of child abuse, whether substantiated or not, with:

- Anyone other than the Headteacher who they consulted and the designated person(s),
- Any member of any external agency, other than as part of the formal reporting procedure as set out in this policy or as part of the investigative process; and

Eridge House

- Any other interested party, including parents, carers, and relatives of the child or young person without the express permission of the person with overall responsibility for the investigation.

This does not exclude the employee from the need or right to consult with a solicitor, trade union representative, Human Resources, or other *bona fide* legal adviser. Any enquiries from the media concerning an allegation of child abuse must be referred to the lead investigating agencies press office.

Eridge House

Appendix A

Recognition of abuse and neglect

The factors described below are frequently found in cases of child abuse or neglect. Their presence is not proof that abuse has occurred, but:

- Must be regarded as indicators of the possibility of significant harm;
- Indicates a need for careful assessment and discussion with the agency's nominated child protection person;
- May require consultation with and/or referral to the LA children's social care and / or the police.

The absence of such indicators does not mean that abuse or neglect has not occurred.

In an abusive relationship the child may:

- Appear frightened of the parent;
- Act in a way that is inappropriate to their age and development.

The parent may:

- Persistently avoid routine child health services and/or treatment when the child is ill;
- Have unrealistic expectations of the child;
- Frequently complain about / to the child and may fail to provide attention or praise (high criticism / low warmth environment);
- Be absent or leave the child with inappropriate carers;
- Have mental health problems which they do not appear to be managing;
- Be misusing substances;
- Persistently refuse to allow access on home visits;
- Persistently avoid contact with services or delay the start or continuation of treatment;
- Be involved in domestic violence;
- Fail to ensure the child receives an appropriate education.

Professionals should be aware of the potential risk of harm to children when individuals (adults or children), previously known or suspected to have abused children, move into the household. See section 5.18. Harming others and section 13. Risk management of known offenders.

Recognising physical abuse

The following are often regarded as indicators of concern:

- An explanation which is inconsistent with an injury;

Eridge House

- Several different explanations provided for an injury;
- Unexplained delay in seeking treatment;
- The parent/s are uninterested or undisturbed by an accident or injury;
- Parents are absent without good reason when their child is presented for treatment;
- Repeated presentation of minor injuries (which may represent a 'cry for help' and if ignored could lead to a more serious injury);
- Frequent use of different doctors and accident and emergency departments;
- Reluctance to give information or mention previous injuries.

Bruising

Children can have accidental bruising, but the following must be considered as indicators of harm unless there is evidence or an adequate explanation provided. Only a pediatric view around such explanations will be sufficient to dispel concerns listed below:

- Any bruising to a pre-crawling or pre-walking baby;
- Bruising in or around the mouth, particularly in small babies which may indicate force feeding;
- Two simultaneous bruised eyes, without bruising to the forehead, (rarely accidental, though a single bruised eye can be accidental or abusive);
- Repeated or multiple bruising on the head or on sites unlikely to be injured accidentally;
- Variation in colour possibly indicating injuries caused at different times;
- The outline of an object used (e.g. belt marks, hand prints or a hair brush);
- Bruising or tears around, or behind, the earlobe/s indicating injury by pulling or twisting;
- Bruising around the face;
- Grasp marks on small children;
- Bruising on the arms, buttocks and thighs may be an indicator of sexual abuse.

Bite marks

Bite marks can leave clear impressions of the teeth. Human bite marks are oval or crescent shaped. Those over 3cm in diameter are more likely to have been caused by an adult or older child.

A medical opinion should be sought where there is any doubt over the origin of the bite.

Burns and scalds

It can be difficult to distinguish between accidental and non-accidental burns and scalds, and will always require experienced medical opinion. Any burn with a clear outline may be suspicious, e.g:

- Circular burns from cigarettes (but may be friction burns if along the bony protuberance of the spine);
- Linear burns from hot metal rods or electrical fire elements;
- Burns of uniform depth over a large area;
- Scalds that have a line indicating immersion or poured liquid (a child getting into hot water of its own accord will struggle to get out and cause splash marks);

Eridge House

- Old scars indicating previous burns / scalds which did not have appropriate treatment or adequate explanation.

Scalds to the buttocks of a small child, particularly in the absence of burns to the feet, are indicative of dipping into a hot liquid or bath.

Fractures

Fractures may cause pain, swelling and discolouration over a bone or joint, and loss of function in the limb or joint.

Non-mobile children rarely sustain fractures.

There are grounds for concern if:

- The history provided is vague, non-existent or inconsistent with the fracture type;
- There are associated old fractures;

124 London Child Protection Procedures

⁹

Cawson et al's 2000 study for the NSPCC

- Medical attention is sought after a period of delay when the fracture has caused symptoms such as swelling, pain or loss of movement;
- There is an unexplained fracture in the first year of life.

Scars

A large number of scars or scars of different sizes or ages, or on different parts of the body, may suggest abuse.

Recognising emotional abuse

Emotional abuse may be difficult to recognise, as the signs are usually behavioural rather than physical.

The indicators of emotional abuse are often also associated with other forms of abuse. Professionals should therefore be aware that emotional abuse might also indicate the presence of other kinds of abuse.

The following may be indicators of emotional abuse:

- Developmental delay;
- Abnormal attachment between a child and parent (e.g. anxious, indiscriminate or no attachment);
- Indiscriminate attachment or failure to attach;
- Aggressive behaviour towards others;
- Appeasing behaviour towards others;
- Scapegoated within the family;
- Frozen watchfulness, particularly in pre-school children;
- Low self esteem and lack of confidence;
- Withdrawn or seen as a 'loner' – difficulty relating to others.

Recognising sexual abuse

Eridge House

Sexual abuse can be very difficult to recognise and reporting sexual abuse can be an extremely traumatic experience for a child. Therefore both identification and disclosure rates are deceptively low.

Boys and girls of all ages may be sexually abused and are frequently scared to say anything due to guilt and / or fear. According to a recent study⁹ three-quarters (72%) of sexually abused children did not tell anyone about the abuse at the time. Twenty-seven percent of the children told someone later, and around a third (31%) still had not told anyone about their experience/s by early adulthood.

If a child makes an allegation of sexual abuse, it is very important that they are taken seriously. Allegations can often initially be indirect as the child tests the professional's response. There may be no physical signs and indications are likely to be emotional / behavioural.

London Safeguarding Children Board, 2007 (www.londonscb.gov.uk) 125 3rd edition

¹⁰ *Grubin. D (1998). Sex offending against children: understanding the risk. Police Research Series. Paper 99. Home Office*

Behavioural indicators which may help professionals identify child sexual abuse include:

- Inappropriate sexualised conduct;
- Sexually explicit behaviour, play or conversation, inappropriate to the child's age;
- Contact or non-contact sexually harmful behaviour;
- Continual and inappropriate or excessive masturbation;
- Self-harm (including eating disorder), self mutilation and suicide attempts;
- Involvement in sexual exploitation or indiscriminate choice of sexual partners;
- An anxious unwillingness to remove clothes for e.g. sports events (but this may be related to cultural norms or physical difficulties).

Physical indicators associated with child sexual abuse include:

- Pain or itching of genital area;
- Blood on underclothes;
- Pregnancy in a child;
- Physical symptoms such as injuries to the genital or anal area, bruising to buttocks, abdomen and thighs, sexually transmitted disease, presence of semen on vagina, anus, external genitalia or clothing.

Sex offenders have no common profile, and it is important for professionals to avoid attaching any significance to stereotypes around their background or behaviour. While media interest often focuses on 'stranger danger', research indicates that as much as 80 per cent of sexual offending occurs in the context of a known relationship, either family, acquaintance or colleague¹⁰.

Recognising neglect

It is rare that an isolated incident will lead to agencies becoming involved with a neglectful family. Evidence of neglect is built up over a period of time. Professionals should therefore compile a chronology and discuss concerns with any other agencies which may be

Eridge House

involved with the family, to establish whether seemingly minor incidents are in fact part of a wider pattern of neglectful parenting.

When working in areas where poverty and deprivation are commonplace professionals may become desensitised to some of the indicators of neglect. These include:

- Failure by parents or carers to meet essential physical needs (e.g. adequate or appropriate food, clothes, warmth, hygiene and medical or dental care);
- Failure by parents or carers to meet essential emotional needs (e.g. to feel loved and valued, to live in a safe, predictable home environment);
- A child seen to be listless, apathetic and unresponsive with no apparent medical cause;
- Failure of child to grow within normal expected pattern, with accompanying weight loss;
- Child thrives away from home environment;
- Child frequently absent from school;
- Child left with inappropriate carers (e.g. too young, complete strangers);
- Child left with adults who are intoxicated or violent;
- Child abandoned or left alone for excessive periods.

Disabled children and young people can be particularly vulnerable to neglect (see [section 5.10. Disabled children](#)) due to the increased level of care they may require.

Although neglect can be perpetrated consciously as an abusive act by a parent, it is rarely an act of deliberate cruelty. Neglect is usually defined as an omission of care by the child's parent, often due to one or more unmet needs of their own.

London Safeguarding Children Board, 2007 (www.londonscb.gov.uk) 123 3rd edition

APPENDIX B

Reporting Child Protection Concerns / Allegations Against Staff

Are you concerned about a child/young person's welfare, or concerned about the behaviour of a member of staff?

- Complete an Incident Referral form noting dates, times, facts, observations.
- Report the concerns, allegations or incident to the designated person(s), your Line Manager immediately. The manager informed will inform the designated person(s)
- The designated person(s), will assess the concerns and if necessary, seek guidance from Hammersmith & Fulham social services referral and assessment service.
- All allegations will be reported to the Hammersmith & Fulham social services referral and assessment service within 1 working day
- Still have concerns No longer have concerns, No further action. Ensure that all documentation is completed and filed appropriately.

Matter is referred to Hammersmith and Fulham Social Services

Eridge House

- If it involves an allegation against a member of staff.
- Social Services acknowledge receipt of referral and decide on next course of action within one working day
- If the matter relates to a member of staff, the designated person(s), will initiate a disciplinary investigation team in line with Disciplinary Procedures to oversee the internal investigation.

APPENDIX C

Examples of Indicators of abuse.

Type of Abuse Physical Indicator Behavioural Indicator

Physical

- Frequent or unexplained bruising, marks or injury
- Bruises which reflect hand marks or shapes of articles e.g. belts
- Cigarette burns
- Bite marks
- Unexplained broken or fractured bones
- Scalds
- Fear of parent being contacted
- Behavioural extremes – aggressive/angry outbursts or withdrawn
- Fear of going home
- Flinching when approached or touched
- Depression
- Keeping arms/legs covered
- Reluctance to change clothes
- Panics in response to pain
- Reports injury caused by parents

Emotional

- Delays in physical development or progress
- Sudden speech disorders
- Failure to thrive
- Neurotic behaviour
- Sleeping disorders, unable to play
- Fear of making mistakes
- Sucking, biting or rocking
- Inappropriately adult or infant
- Impairment of intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development

Sexual

- Pain/itching in the genital area
- Bruising/bleeding near genital area
- Sexually transmitted disease

Eridge House

- Vaginal discharge/infection
- Frequent unexplained abdominal pains
- Discomfort when walking/sitting
- Bed wetting
- Excessive crying
- Inappropriate sexual behaviour or knowledge for the child's age
- Promiscuity
- Sudden changes in behaviour
- Running away from home
- Emotional withdrawal through lack of trust in adults
- Unexplained sources of money or 'gifts'
- Inappropriate sexually explicit drawings or stories
- Bedwetting or soiling
- Overeating or anorexia
- Sleep disturbances
- Secrets which cannot be told
- Substance/drug misuse
- Reports of assault

Neglect

- Constant hunger
- Poor hygiene
- Weight loss/underweight
- Inappropriate dress
- Consistent lack of supervision/abandonment
- Unattended physical problems or medical needs
- Begging/stealing food
- Truancy/late for school
- Constantly tired/listless
- Regularly alone/unsupervised
- Poor relationship with care giver

Eridge House

APPENDIX D

Report of Incident/Concern Involving Child or Young Persons

Date and time;
Child or Young Persons details:
Child's first names, Child's last name, Any other name(s):
Age and date of birth, Address, Contact telephone numbers:
Parent(s)/Carer(s) details:
Name, Relationship, DOB, Contact details;
Reason for concern:
<i>Please detail all information, including date, time, place, how long you have known the child or young person and in what capacity, and the precise details of the concern. Clearly define what is fact, opinion or hearsay.</i>
List of evidence, documents, records made etc: Item Location

Eridge House

Describe the evidence, document, record etc.

State the location of the item (e.g. in employees note book; retained by the designated person, etc.

Injuries: Description Site

Describe the injury(ies) seen by you. Describe location. Do not ask the child or young person to remove clothing.

Medical assistance:

Detail any medical assistance you obtained, including the name of any doctor, nurse, or other professional. If an ambulance was called, state ambulance number, and crew base.

Police:

If Police called, detail who called them, and provide name, badge number, and police station of all officers attending.

Social Services:

If Social Services contacted, provide details of who spoken to, time, and advice they gave.

Eridge House

Staff with in the school
<i>If any other staff in the school were involved provide details of their name and the reasons why they were involved.</i>
Any further action taken?
Your name and signature
Your Position

Important numbers

HM Government, contact and assessment;

Duty Line 9am-5pm, 02087535392

Out of hours 5pm-9am 02087488588

Ofsted hotline; whistle blowing telephone number;

Call us on 08456 404046 (Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm).

Email whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk

Write to us at:

WBHL

Ofsted

Royal Exchange Buildings

St Ann's Square

Manchester

M2 7LA.

ISA

<http://www.isa-gov.org.uk/>

Eridge House

0300 123 1111

Hammersmith and Fulham, Early Years service;

Office: 020 8753 3772

Address: Third Floor, Barclay House, Effie Road
London
SW6 1EN

Fulham Police; 0300 123 1212

APPENDIX E

See flow chart paper copy attached (not in electronic form)

Flow charts are displayed around the school in all offices, the school foyer and the staff room