



## Hasmonean Primary School

# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Updated December 2014

### Introduction

This policy was updated in December 2014 to ensure that everyone within the school community understands the importance placed on child protection at HPS and the procedures involved to facilitate a safe environment for all of our pupils. The policy was drawn up to comply with Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (DfES, 2007), Guidance for Safe Working Practice for Adults who Work With Children and Young People (DCSF, 2009), Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfES, 2013) and the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

### Rationale

- Everyone in our community has a responsibility for child protection.
- This policy aims to outline this role, the procedures that staff should take and guidance on issues related to child protection generally.
- All staff should put the needs and safety of the child at the centre of any decision they need to take.
- We aim to secure the safety of the children in our care through identifying emerging issues, intervening early and liaising effectively with other agencies – always placing the child's welfare at the centre of our actions.

### Objectives

- To develop and maintain an ethos in which that the whole community 'look out' for children.
- To work effectively with other agencies, ensuring that the needs of families are met.
- To have effective systems in place to identify at an early stage emerging issues and put strategies in place to deal with them.
- To have effective systems in place to react quickly to child protection concerns and to ensure that referrals are followed up and acted upon.
- To ensure that all staff are clear about their responsibilities and alert to signs of abuse.
- To ensure that training needs and requirements are met.
- To equip children with the skills they need to help look after themselves and to help prevent putting themselves at risk.

### Responsibilities

#### *Governing body*

The governing body has a key responsibility for monitoring child protection in the school.

Responsibilities include:

- having a child protection policy in place
- having procedures in place for dealing with allegations against a member of staff
- having a designated person responsible for child protection
- ensuring that the appropriate training for staff is in place
- ensuring that there is a member of the governing body who has particular responsibility for safeguarding and child protection
- reviewing policies and procedures annually
- receiving regular reports from the Headteacher on child protection.

## Designated Person

The Headteacher, Mr Alan Shaw, is the Designated Senior Person for child protection. In his absence the Deputy Headteacher, Mr Daniel Gastwirth, should be contacted. The named Governor is Mrs E. Masters.

The Designated Person is responsible for:

- coordinating action within the school and liaising with social care and other agencies over cases of abuse and suspected abuse
- acting as a source of advice within the school
- ensuring that staff are familiar with the child protection policy and procedures
- referral of individual cases of suspected abuse to the relevant Local Authority and following up these referrals
- liaising with agencies about individual cases
- organising training on child protection within the school
- informing parents/carers of the responsibilities of staff members with regard to child protection procedures
- ensuring that any pupil currently on the child protection register who is absent without explanation is referred to social care.

## Teachers and Support Staff

New teachers and support staff are familiarised with this child protection policy as part of their induction. Supply staff have a summarised form made available to them on their first day.

Regular staff training aims to ensure that all staff are familiar with the signs of possible abuse, know how to deal with a disclosure and how to refer any concerns that they have.

Teachers and support staff are responsible for:

- keeping alert for potential signs of abuse amongst children within the school
- referring any concerns to the designated person
- supporting pupils in understanding how they can help keep themselves safe
- providing information for use in multi-agency meetings and attending themselves where necessary
- receiving and applying any recommendations resulting from a multi-agency meeting
- supporting pupils who wish to make a disclosure.

Support staff will assist teachers with their responsibilities but will also take responsibility themselves for being alert to signs of abuse and receiving any disclosures when a child indicates that they would like to.

## Curriculum

The personal, social and health education (PSHE) units of work include schemes that encourage pupils to discuss ways of keeping safe and who they might speak to if they have worries either about themselves or a friend.

Every November a week is taken to focus on bullying. The week concludes with an assembly which brings all year groups together to present the activities from the week.

Every year each class covers aspects of internet safety as part of their information and communication technology (ICT) curriculum.

Other annual reminders are discussed during circle time. For example:

- being approached by strangers
- what to do if you have worries or concerns
- school code of conduct
- looking out for one another.

In addition, regular visits by the Community Police Officers endorse this.

## Important Reminder

Class discussion of topics associated with 'safety' may raise issues for some children. Be prepared for children to 'open up' by being familiar with the school policy on Child Protection, especially 'disclosure'.

## Procedures and Practice

### *Guidance on recognising suspected abuse*

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

#### Physical abuse

Physical abuse can include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, suffocating or causing any form of physical harm to a child.

#### Emotional abuse

This is persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development. It can include:

- conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved
- placing inappropriate age-related expectations on children
- making children feel frightened or in danger on a regular basis.

#### Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. These can include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

#### Neglect

Neglect is also a form of abuse. This is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs and can affect the child's health and development. It might include failure to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failure to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or failure to ensure appropriate access to medical care and treatment.

#### Bullying

Bullying can be defined as using deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves.

All incidents of bullying should be dealt with firmly according to the school's anti-bullying policy.

## Guidance on dealing with a Disclosure

All staff should refer concerns to the Designated Senior Person as soon as possible. In the meantime, they should do the following : **'Listen, record, refer'**

- Listen to the pupil, keeping calm and offering reassurance.
- Think who else can hear what the child has to say? If necessary take the child to somewhere that they can talk more freely. However, do not move out of sight from others. If you are alone in a room make sure to leave the door open.
- Observe bruises but not ask a child to remove or adjust their clothing to observe them.
- Allow the child to lead the discussion if a disclosure is made. Do not press for details by asking questions such as 'what did they do next?'
- Listen – don't investigate using questions such as 'is there anything else you'd like to tell me?'

- Accept what the pupil says without challenge – reassure them that they are doing the right thing and that you recognise how hard it is for them.
- Don't lay blame or criticise either the child or the perpetrator.
- Don't promise confidentiality – explain that they have done the right thing and who you will need to tell and why. Tell them that if you are worried about their safety you may have to tell someone else about what they have told you. Reassure them that they were right to tell somebody and be clear who you will be passing the information on to.

### Record-keeping

When it happens :

- Brief notes at the time or immediately after will help you to complete the *significant **Child Protection Concerns Form*** when you are able. You should note:
  - i. Date and time
  - ii. Place and context of disclosure or concern
  - iii. Do not ask any leading questions or attempt to investigate. Only ask questions which give the child the opportunity to tell you what they want to say. Initially, for instance, you might ask, 'What happened?'. It is vital that you keep questions open and to the absolute minimum so as not to jeopardise further investigations.
  - iv. Afterwards make accurate and factual notes of what the child has said and make sure you sign, time and date them.
  - v. If the child is in immediate danger due to the disclosure the Designated Senior Person will inform the LA and so he must be informed immediately.

When you can :

- Complete a **Child Protection Concern Form**, which is available from the Headteacher and stored in his office.
- Remember to keep to factual information and not assumption or interpretation. Use the child's own language to quote rather than translating into your own terms. These sheets may be used at a later date to support a referral to an external agency.
- It is important that concerns are followed up. It is everyone's responsibility to make sure that they are. If you do not hear what the outcome of your referral has been then ask the designated member of staff. If you are still not happy with the outcome of this and remain concerned then the safeguarding governor might be contacted.

### Allegations against Staff

- We ensure that all parents know how to complain about the behaviour or actions of staff or volunteers within the school, which may include an allegation of abuse.
- We follow the guidance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board when responding to any complaint that a member of staff, or volunteer within the school has abused a child.
- Concerns regarding members of staff or volunteers in school should be referred to the Headteacher. Any concerns about the Headteacher should be taken to the Chair of Governors.
- If it is appropriate in the circumstances, the chairperson will suspend the member of staff on full pay, or the volunteer, for the duration of the investigation. This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place, but is to protect the staff as well as the child and families throughout the process.

### Disciplinary Action

Where a member of staff or a volunteer is dismissed from the school because of misconduct relating to a child, we notify the Independent Barring Board administrators so that the name may be included on the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults Barred List.

## Following a referral

Following referral the designated person will:

- Follow-up the referral using the Child Protection Concern Form as a basis for consideration before action.
- Make additional records of discussions and any investigation that takes place.
- Make a decision whether to continue to monitor the situation or take the referral further. This decision should be communicated to the individual making the initial referral.
- If a referral is appropriate, the Headteacher will contact the Local Authority Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub ('MASH') who will liaise with other agencies and decide if any action needs to be taken.
- The MASH contact number is 020 8359 4066 (switchboard 020 8359 2000)
- Documentation relating to Child Protection is kept securely in the Headteacher's office.

## Multi-Agency meetings

### *Social care meetings*

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

- review meetings
- case conferences
- professionals' meetings – in which representative professionals from different agencies are asked to meet to discuss children and their families with a view to providing support or making recommendations in terms of next stages of involvement
- core group meetings – meeting in which a 'core' group of professionals associated with the family are asked to meet to review the progress of actions decided at case conferences and register reviews
- Common Assessment Framework (CAF) meetings in which a range of professionals are brought together to help address the needs of a particular family.

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

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

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

### *Multi-agency meeting (in school)*

Multi-agency meetings are conducted on a half-termly basis and provide an opportunity for external agencies linked to schools and school staff to discuss individuals about whom there have been/are concerns. The meeting will usually include a representative from the following:

- health service – school nurse
- pastoral care worker
- nurture group
- attendance officer
- social services
- senior management of the school.

Any member of staff is welcome to bring an individual to the attention of the group for discussion.

Care should be taken in terms of breaches of confidentiality between departments. Parents' permission must be sought prior to the meeting if their child may be discussed.

There may be times when additional professionals are requested to attend and/or parents themselves.

## **Confidentiality**

- Where children are known to social care and leave one school for another the designated teacher must inform the receiving school and the key worker at the social care department. If the child leaves the school with no receiving school, details should be passed to the principal educational social worker.
- Education staff have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with the investigative agencies. Members of staff should not promise confidentiality but can let the child making a disclosure know that only those who need to know will be informed and that this will be for the child's own sake. They should listen sympathetically and non-judgmentally, and take time to reassure the child and confirm that the information given will be treated sensitively.
- Staff should be careful and ensure that sensitive information is only given to the appropriate person. All staff should be kept aware of issues relating to confidentiality and the status of information they may hold.
- Members of staff, other than the designated member and those closely involved, should only have enough details in order to help them to act sensitively and appropriately to the child. Sensitive information regarding pastoral issues and for children who have a child protection plan is kept separately in a folder in the Headteacher's office.
- Discretion should be used when talking about the personal and changing circumstances of children, for example when a child goes into care. It is necessary to take special care of information received at child protection meetings; this should be treated sensitively, and discretion will be needed as issues emerge on a formal and informal basis.

## **Working with Parents**

It is important that the school has an established approach to working with parents. Parents' and children's need for privacy should be respected. Attitudes to and contact with parents should be non-judgmental in order to maintain a good working relationship. The priority is the needs of the child and effective liaison is crucial for this.

Parents have access to this policy via the school office.

## **Special needs**

Many of the children who are the subject of multi-agency work have special needs. There are many reasons why children with challenging home lives may also have learning/and or behavioural needs too. The difficulties children have often compound one another and can be difficult to separate. Where pupils have special needs it is important that time is taken by school staff to identify any barriers to learning there may be. In some cases other agencies will need to be involved in supporting the school to address these barriers. It may be necessary to call a CAF or other multi-agency meeting to find ways of supporting the family.

## **School Website / Media / e-Safety**

- Parents are asked whether they prefer that their child's photograph is not to be featured on the school website / in the press.
- With regard to the media, the school follows Government recommendations :

- Where a pupil is named, no photograph is displayed; where a photograph is used, no name is permitted.
- Computers in school are filtered via the LGfL to ensure that no unsuitable materials can be viewed and pupils are never left unsupervised.
- In addition, parents are regularly reminded to supervise their children using computers at home.

### **Linked policies**

- Behaviour and anti-bullying
- Equal opportunities
- Health and safety policy
- Special educational needs policy

### **Reviewing the Policy**

This policy should be reviewed annually by Staff and Governors.

**Reviewed by:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of next review:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CHILD PROTECTION CONCERN FORM**

Please note concerns on this form and attach any 'disclosure' or relevant information / facts.

Return the form to Mr Shaw.

Name of child: ..... Date: .....

Name of member of staff completing the form:.....

Details: