
SAINT NICHOLAS SCHOOL

SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Note: This policy applies to all sections of the school including EYFS - This policy is available to parents on the [school website](#)

Reviewed April 2016

Review Date April 2017

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of document

Saint Nicholas School has a statutory as well as a moral duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children receiving education and training at the School. Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places responsibility on the Governing Body to have policies and procedures in place that safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils of the school.

Saint Nicholas School takes this responsibility extremely seriously and recognises its role in facilitating the well-being of the children in its care. This document outlines its policies and procedures relating to safeguarding children and child protection.

This policy applies to all pupils, staff, governors, volunteers, visitors and contractors. It has three main elements:

- *Prevention* through the creation of a positive school atmosphere and the teaching and pastoral support offered to pupils.
- *Protection* by following agreed procedures, ensuring staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to child protection concerns.
- *Support* to pupils who may have been abused. Please see [Section 4](#)

The Governing Body recognises that some adults are also vulnerable to abuse, accordingly, the procedures may be applied (with appropriate adaptations) to allegations of abuse, and the protection, of young or vulnerable adults. The terms 'child' and 'children' in this document encompass also 'young and vulnerable adults' (this includes everyone under the age of 18).

1.2 Local inter-agency procedures

This policy and procedures has been drawn up in accordance with locally agreed inter-agency procedures.

2. KEY INFORMATION

2.1 Key school staff

Role	Person	Other key roles in school	Contact details
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mrs Melanie Wright	Head of Learning Support Member of SLT	m.wright@saintnicholassschool.net
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mrs Shona Johnson	History teacher for Y6 - 11	s.johnson@saintnicholassschool.net
Chair of Governors	Mr Robert Ellice		r.ellice@saintnicholassschool.net
Governor with responsibility for Safeguarding	Mrs Claire Satchell		c.satchell@saintnicholassschool.net

2.2 Key contact information

Our Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is **Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB)**

Essex Safeguarding Children Board address	Room C228, County Hall, Chelmsford CM1 1QH
General Enquiries	0333 013 8936 Email: escb@essex.gov.uk

Where schools have urgent and immediate concerns for the safety and welfare of a child or young person during or out of office hours	0845 606 1212
General referrals and consultation for referrals	0845 603 7627
Safeguarding allegations department (allegations against staff)	01245 436744
General enquiries and information contact the initial response team	01206 266113
To contact the initial response team via secure email	initialresponse@essex.gcsx.gov.uk

3. CHILDREN IN NEED AND CHILDREN AT RISK

The school recognises duties both to children in need and children at risk. All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to protect them. However, key people within the School have specific responsibilities.

It is important to recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that although referrals are usually managed by the DSL and Deputy DSL, anyone can refer a child to children's social care if necessary.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The school meets its responsibilities under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and the DFE statutory guidance (Keeping Children Safe in Education, July 2015) pays due regard to the Government's statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'. If the school has concerns about children's safety or welfare, we will notify agencies with statutory responsibilities without delay. This means the local children's social care services and, in emergencies, the police.

4.1 The Governing Body

The Governing Body of Saint Nicholas School is committed to ensuring that the School:

- Provides a safe environment for all of its students to learn in
- Identifies children and young or vulnerable people who are suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm, and
- Takes appropriate action to help ensure that such children (and young or vulnerable adults under the age of 18) are kept safe, both at home and at the School.

In pursuit of these aims, the Governing Body will approve and annually review policies and procedures with the aim of:

- Raising awareness of issues relating to the welfare of children and the promotion of a safe environment for the children and young or vulnerable people learning within the School
- Aiding the identification of children and young or vulnerable people at risk of significant harm, and providing procedures for reporting concerns
- Establishing procedures for reporting and dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff
- The safer recruitment of staff

A designated governor responsible for Safeguarding will undertake appropriate training in Child Protection issues.

At the annual review, or as required, the Governing Body will:

- review the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged.
- ensure that any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements that come to light are remedied without delay;

4.2 Designated Governor

The designated Governor is responsible for liaising with the Head and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL - see below), including ensuring that:

- the School has procedures and policies which are consistent
- the Governing Body considers the effectiveness of the School policies of the protection and the Staff Behaviour Policy each year

- the Governing Body and the DSL will update policies annually and ensure these are available in the public domain
- each year the Governing Body is informed about how the School and its staff have complied with the policy, including but not limited to, a report on the training that staff have undertaken.
- where an allegation has been made against a member of staff, the designated Governor, together with the senior staff member with lead responsibility should, at the conclusion of the investigation and any disciplinary procedures, consider whether there are any matters arising from it that could lead to the improvement of the School's procedures and/or policies, including those for staff training.

The designated Governor is responsible for overseeing the liaison between agencies in connection with allegations against the Head. This will not involve undertaking any form of investigation, but will ensure good communication between the parties and provide information to assist enquiries.

To assist in these duties, the designated Governor will receive appropriate training. The designated Governor will meet termly with the DSL.

4.3 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL is a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and is supported by the Deputy DSL. The DSL has a key duty to take lead responsibility for raising awareness among the staff of issues relating to the welfare of children and young or vulnerable people and the promotion of a safe environment for the children and young or vulnerable people learning within the School.

The DSL has received training in child and young or vulnerable learner protection issues and inter-agency working and will receive refresher training annually. The DSL is expected to keep up to date with developments in all relevant protection issues.

The DSL is responsible for:

- ensuring that the Head and all staff receive regular basic training adequate to familiarise them with protection issues and responsibilities and the School policies and procedures, with refresher training annually.
- Have a working knowledge of how Essex Safeguarding Children's Board operates, the conduct of a child protection conference and to be able to attend and contribute to these effectively, when required to do so.
- ensuring that staff new to the school are fully aware of the school's policy and procedures.
- ensuring that parents of children and young or vulnerable people within the School are aware of the School's protection policy
- overseeing the referral of cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the relevant investigating agencies
- providing advice and support to other staff on issues relating to the child and young or vulnerable people's protection
- maintaining a proper record of any protection referral, complaint or concern (even where that concern does not lead to a referral)
- liaising with appropriate agencies
- liaising with other schools which send pupils to the School and schools to which receive our pupils to ensure that appropriate arrangements are made for the pupils
- liaising with employers and training organisations that receive children or young or vulnerable people from the School on long term placements to ensure that appropriate safeguards are put in place

The DSL will provide an annual report to the Governing Body of the School setting out how the School has discharged its duties. He/she is responsible for reporting deficiencies in procedure or policy to the Governing Body at the earliest opportunity.

5. A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

5.1 The school ethos

Saint Nicholas School embraces and will promote the Government's aim¹ that every child, whatever their background or circumstances, receives the support they need to:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve through learning
- Make a positive contribution to society
- Achieve economic well-being.

We expect respect, good manners and fair play to be shown by everyone so that every pupil can develop his/her full potential and feel positive about him/herself as an individual. All pupils should care for and support each other.

The school recognises that, for our pupils, high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and clear lines of communication with a trusted adult help to prevent abuse. The school will therefore:

- establish and maintain an environment where pupils feel safe and secure, are encouraged to express themselves and are listened to.
- ensure that pupils know that there are adults within the school who they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty.
- include in the curriculum activities and opportunities which equip pupils with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse.
- include in the curriculum material which will help pupils to develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly with regard to child care and parenting skills.
- ensure that wherever possible every effort will be made to establish effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from partner agencies.

5.2 Safe recruitment practices

Staff are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment at the setting).

The School will ensure that:

- appropriate pre-appointment checks are applied to staff and volunteers who may work with children and young or vulnerable adults. This includes pre-appointment staff checks to identify teacher restrictions imposed by all EEA authorities, in addition to the normal teacher prohibition pre-appointment checks as detailed in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education. Schools
- posts and roles are clearly defined.
- key selection criteria for the post or role are identified.
- vacancies are advertised widely in order to ensure a diversity of applicants.
- documentary evidence of academic/vocational qualifications is obtained.
- professional and character references are obtained.
- previous employment history is verified.
- for statutory disclosure checks the School will ensure sensitive and confidential use of the applicant's disclosure.
- a variety of selection techniques (eg qualifications, previous experience, interview, reference checks) are used.

The Senior Leadership Team will all complete the NSPCC Online Safer Recruitment in Education Course.

5.3 Induction and training

¹ Every Child Matters: Change for Children in Schools, DCSF (now DfE), 2005

The Head and all other staff who work with children, including new staff, governors and volunteers, will undertake appropriate child protection awareness training to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for child protection effectively, kept up to date by refresher training annually. The school will ensure that the School DSL and DDSL also undertakes training in inter-agency working that is provided by the Education Safeguarding Service and refresher training annually to keep knowledge and skills up to date.

All temporary and voluntary staff who work with children are to be made aware of the school's Safeguarding policy, procedures and arrangements.

The school will ensure that induction training for all staff and volunteers newly appointed takes place.

5.4 Interaction with pupils: Model code of conduct for staff

Staff should ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place pupils or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a pupil .

See Staff Code of Conduct Policy

5.5 Other relevant policies

Other policies relevant to safeguarding children include those on: Anti-bullying Policy; Disability & Access Plan Policy, Health & Safety Policy, Educational Visits & Trips Policy, Lost or Missing Child Policy, Parental Complaints Policy, ICT Acceptable Use Policy, Staff Code of Conduct Policy, Behaviour Policy, Preventing Extremism And Radicalisation Policy, and CSE Policy.

6. CHILD PROTECTION

Because of their day to day contact with individual children during school time, teachers and other school staff are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour or failure to develop.

6.1 What is child abuse?

Child abuse occurs when an adult harms a child or young person under the age of 18, either through action or inaction (intentional or unintentional). Four main types of abuse are recognised, all of which can cause long term damage to a child or young person: physical, emotional, child sexual abuse, and neglect. Abuse may also be organised. It is always wrong and never the young person's fault.

Physical abuse may involve poking, pushing, hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning or suffocating. It may be done deliberately or recklessly, or be the result of a deliberate failure to prevent injury occurring. It can also include fabricated induced illness where a parent deliberately simulates the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill-health in a child.

Emotional abuse occurs where there is persistent emotional ill treatment or rejection that is likely to cause severe and adverse effects on the person's behaviour and emotional development. This may involve name calling, conveying to children that they are worthless, unloved or inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature inappropriate expectations being imposed on children, relevant to their age and development. Some level of emotional abuse is present in all forms of abuse.

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in or watch sexual activity. It is not necessary for the person to be aware that the activity is sexual and the apparent consent of the person is irrelevant. The activities may involve physical contact including penetrative or non-penetrative acts, but also non-contact activities such as involvement of children in looking at, or the production of, pornographic material or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect is the persistent or severe failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs which is likely to result in serious impairment of their health or development. It may present as a parent or carer failing to provide food, shelter, clothing or protection from harm or danger, but may also include neglect of a child's basic emotional needs.

Organised abuse is where there is more than a single abuser and the adults concerned appear to act in agreement to abuse children, or where an adult uses an institutional framework or position of authority to recruit children for sexual abuse.

6.2 Signs of abuse

Abuse is not easy to diagnose, even for experts. The following general signs *may* indicate that a child is being abused and should act as a warning, particularly if a child exhibits several of them, or a pattern emerges.

However, they do not *confirm* abuse. Other explanations may exist. A more comprehensive list of possible signs is at [APPENDIX A](#).

- Repeated minor injuries or bruising
- Bruises of different ages
- Dirty, smelly, poorly clothed or appearing to be underfed
- Deterioration in school work or performance
- 'Tummy pains' without medical reason
- Significant changes in behaviour, particularly aggressive behaviour or tantrums
- Reverting to younger behaviour
- Being withdrawn or detached
- Developing a watchful attitude
- Not wanting to go home
- Being afraid of adults, particularly those that are close
- Not wanting to change for games/sport
- Eating problems (including over-eating)
- Self harm

May be reported by abuser, a third party or from observation

7. FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

Female Genital Mutilation is a form of child abuse and as such is dealt with under the schools Child Protection/Safeguarding policy. At Saint Nicholas School, the Head and Governors expect Safeguarding to be everybody's responsibility and expect all staff to adhere to and follow these policies.

7.1 Definition of FGM

The school uses the World Health Organisation definition as written below.

"Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) comprises of all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural or non-therapeutic reasons."
(World Health Organisation-1997)

7.2 Government guidance

The UK Government has written advice and guidance on FGM that states;

"FGM is considered child abuse in the UK and a grave violation of the human rights of girls and women. In all circumstances where FGM is practised on a child it is a violation of the child's right to life, their right to their bodily integrity, as well as their right to health. The UK Government has signed a number of international human rights laws against FGM, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child."

"Girls are at particular risk of FGM during school summer holidays. This is the time when families may take their children abroad for the procedure. Many girls may not be aware that they may be at risk of undergoing FGM.

UK communities that are most at risk of FGM include Kenyans, Somalis, Sudanese, Sierra Leoneans, Egyptians, Nigerians and Eritreans. However women from non-African communities that are at risk of FGM include Yemeni, Kurdish, Indonesian and Pakistani women."

APPENDIX C outlines procedures for dealing with concerns relating to FGM;

8. DEALING WITH DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE AND PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING CONCERNS

If a child or young person tells a member of staff about possible abuse:

- Inform them that you must pass the information on, but that only those that need to know about it will be told. Inform them of to whom you will report the matter.

- Listen carefully and stay calm.
- Note the main points carefully, verbatim where possible
- Do not interview the child or person concerned, but question normally and without pressure, in order to be sure that you understand what they are telling you.
- Do not put words into the child or person's mouth. Use the 'TED' Questioning Approach (Tell me, Explain, Describe) :
 - Reassure them that by telling you, they have done the right thing.
 - Make a detailed note of the date, time, place, what the child or person said, did and your questions etc.
 - Staff should not investigate concerns or allegations themselves, but should report them immediately to the DSL or, in his/her absence, the Deputy DSL, Head or in the absence of the Head the Deputy Head.

The school recognises it is an agent of referral and not of investigation.

✓ DO

- Listen carefully
- Make accurate notes using the child's words
- Inform the DSL
- Tell the child that they have done the right thing by telling you

✗ DON'T

- Ask leading questions
- Use your own words to describe events
- Investigate

9. REFERRAL TO SOCIAL CARE SERVICES

The school is required to report cases of suspected abuse or allegations of abuse ***within 24 hours of suspicion or disclosure*** to Essex County Council Protection Line (Children's Safeguarding Service), who will provide support and guidance in all cases.

10. REPORTING AND DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST MEMBERS OF STAFF

10.1 Allegations against staff members

These procedures apply to all staff, whether teaching, administrative, management or support, as well as to volunteers and visitors to the school. The word "staff" is used for ease of description.

In rare instances, staff of education institutions have been found responsible for abuse. Because of their frequent contact with children and young or vulnerable people, staff may have allegations of abuse made against them. The School recognises that an allegation of abuse made against a member of staff may be made for a variety of reasons and that the facts of the allegation may or may not be true. It is imperative that those dealing with an allegation maintain an open mind, and that investigations are thorough, dispassionate, and not subject to delay.

The School recognises that statute states that the welfare of the child is the paramount concern, and that this is equally applicable to young or vulnerable adults. It is also recognised that hasty or ill-informed decisions in connection with a member of staff can irreparably damage an individual's reputation, confidence and career. Therefore, those dealing with such allegations within the School will do so with sensitivity and will act in a careful, measured way.

All allegations against a member of staff should be reported to the DSL and the Head should be informed.

The school will report cases of suspected abuse or allegations of abuse ***within 24 hours of suspicion or disclosure*** to the Safeguarding allegations department (allegations against staff) of Essex Safeguarding Children Board. This should take place before any investigation takes place. If a crime has been committed the matter will be reported to the Police.

For detailed procedures to be followed in dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff see [APPENDIX B](#).

10.2 Allegations against the DSL and the deputy DSL

The Head is responsible for overseeing the liaison between agencies in connection with allegations against the the DSL and the deputy DSL.

10.3 Allegations against the Head

The designated Governor is responsible for overseeing the liaison between agencies in connection with allegations against the Head. This will not involve undertaking any form of investigation, but will ensure good communication between the parties and provide information to assist enquiries.

11. REPORTING AND DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE BY ONE PUPIL AGAINST ANOTHER

A member of staff who receives an allegation about alleged abuse between pupils should follow the guidelines in section 8 above for dealing with disclosure. A bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern if there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. Staff should also refer to the school's anti-bullying policy.

12. USE OF CAMERAS AND MOBILE 'PHONES

Staff should not use their personal mobile 'phones or cameras to store pictures of children. All images must be taken on school equipment (cameras, iPads, etc). These images must be transferred to the secure staff drive as soon as possible and deleted from the said equipment. This is important in EYFS where photographic evidence is collected regularly.

13. RECORDS

Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse, must make an accurate record as soon as possible noting what was said or seen, putting the event in context, and giving the date, time and location. All records should be dated and signed and must include the action taken. The school's records on child protection are kept locked in a confidential Child Protection file in the Head PA's office and are separate from routine pupil records. Access is restricted to the Head, DSL and designated safeguarding governor.

13.1 Guidance for the transfer of child protection records

When a pupil transfers to another school (including a Pupil Referral Unit, Academy or other Learning Centre) the DSL should inform the receiving school as soon as possible in person or by telephone that child protection records exist. The original CP records must be passed on either by hand or sent recorded delivery, separate from the child's main school file. Care must be taken to ensure confidentiality is maintained and the transfer process is as safe as possible.

If the records are posted, they should be copied and these copies retained until there has been confirmation **in writing** that the originals have arrived at the new school. They can then be shredded.

Whether child protection files are passed on by hand or posted, there should be written evidence of the transfer (such as a form or slip of paper signed and dated by the member of staff at the receiving school – (see Appendix A). This receipt should be retained by the originating school for 6 years, in line with Records Management Society guidance.

If the pupil is removed from the roll to be electively home educated, the school should pass the child protection file to the local authority's EHE advisor and a receipt obtained as described above.

If a pupil with a child protection record leaves the school without a forwarding address and no contact is received from the new school within 10 school days, the DSL should follow the Child Missing Education (CME) procedures. If there is reason to suspect the pupil is suffering harm then the DSL should refer to Children's Social Care in the usual way.

13.2 Retention of Records

The school should retain the record for as long as the pupil remains in school and then transferred as described above.

Records Management Society guidance states that when a pupil with a child protection record reaches statutory school leaving age (or where the pupil completed 6th form studies), the last school attended should keep the child protection file until the pupil's 25th birthday. It should then be shredded (and a record kept of this having been done, date, and why).

14. CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is an issue that must be understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. The only purpose of confidentiality in this respect is to benefit the child. A member of staff must never guarantee confidentiality to a pupil nor should they agree with a pupil to keep a secret, as where there is a child protection concern, this **must** be reported to the school DSL and may require further investigation by appropriate authorities.

Staff will be informed of relevant information in respect of individual cases involving child protection on a 'need to know basis' only. Any information shared with a member of staff in this way must be held confidentially to themselves.

Governors and other staff must not be given details relating to individual child protection cases or situations to ensure that confidentiality is not breached.

15. FURTHER GUIDANCE

All action taken must be in line with the following guidance:

- The Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB) Guidelines and the SET (Southend, Essex and Thurrock) Child Protection Procedures, a copy of which is available on www.escb.co.uk and from the Head or the School Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, March 2015 (DFE)
- 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education' (DCSF)
www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/familyandcommunity/childprotection

APPENDIX A

16. SIGNS OF ABUSE

16.1 Signs of Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may result in the symptoms described below. Aside from direct physical contact, physical abuse can also be caused when a parent or caregiver feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. Signs of physical abuse include:

- Bruises on legs before a child is mobile
- Black eyes without bruising to the forehead
- Fingertip bruising and bruises in various stages of healing
- Cigarette type burns anywhere, patterned burns (irons), rope burns. Contact burns in abnormal sites.
- Lacerations to the body or mouth
- Multiple fractures. Evidence of old fractures. Any fractures to children under two years old
- Fading injuries noticeable after an absence from school
- Seems frightened of parents, does not want to return home at the end of the day
- Shrinks markedly (backs away) at the approach of adults
- Suffers from frozen watchfulness
- Constantly asks in words/actions what will happen next

16.2 Signs of Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature inappropriate expectations being imposed on children, relative to their actual development or age. Signs of emotional abuse displayed by children include:

- Excessive behaviour, such as extreme aggression, passivity or become overly demanding
- Children who self-harm, for instance by scratching or cutting themselves
- Is either inappropriately adult or infantile
- Children who persistently run away from home
- Children who show high levels of anxiety, unhappiness or withdrawal

16.3 Signs of 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. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving the child in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Signs of sexual abuse displayed by children include:

- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Pain/itching/bleeding/bruising/discharge to the genital area/anus
- Urinary infections/sexually transmitted diseases
- Persistent sore throats
- Eating disorders
- Self mutilation
- Refuses to change for gym or participate in physical activities
- Exhibits an inappropriate sexual knowledge for their age

- Exhibits sexualised behaviour in their play or with other children
- Lack of peer relationships, sleep disturbances, acute anxiety/fear
- School refusal, running away from home
- Pregnancy

16.4 Signs of Neglect

- Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs. This is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Signs of neglect include:
- Frequent absenteeism from school
- Beggars or steals money or food
- Lacks needed medical or dental care, immunisations or glasses
- Lacks appropriate clothing, e.g. for weather conditions, shoes are too small, ill-fitted clothes
- Clothes are consistently dirty
- Teeth are dirty, hair quality is poor and contains infestations
- Hands are cold, red and swollen
- The parent or adult caregiver has failed to protect a child from physical harm or danger

16.5 The Parent or Other Adult Caregiver:

- Denies existence of or blames the child for the child's problems at home or at school
- Sees and describes the child as entirely worthless, burdensome or in another negative light
- Unrealistic expectations of the child, i.e. demands a level of academic or physical performance inappropriate for their age or development
- Offers conflicting or unconvincing explanation of any injuries to the child
- Appears indifferent to or overtly rejects the child
- Refuses offers of help for the child's problems
- Isolated physically/emotionally

APPENDIX B

17. REPORTING AND DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST MEMBERS OF STAFF

17.1 Receiving an Allegation

A member of staff who receives an allegation about another member of staff should follow the guidelines above for dealing with disclosure

The allegation should be reported immediately to the DSL and the Head, unless the Head is the person against whom the allegation is made, in which case the report should be made to the designated Governor. If the allegation is against the DSL or Deputy DSL then the Head should be informed.

The Head (or Dedicated governor with responsibility for safeguarding if the allegation is against the Head) should:

- report cases of suspected abuse or allegations of abuse **within 24 hours of suspicion or disclosure** to the Safeguarding allegations department (allegations against staff) of Essex Safeguarding Children Board. (LADO –Local Authority Designated Officer) This should take place before any investigation takes place.
- obtain written details of the allegation from the person who received it, that are signed and dated. The written details should be countersigned and dated by the Head (or designated person).
- record information about times, dates, locations and names of potential witnesses.
- if a crime has been committed, report the matter to the Police.

17.2 Initial Assessment by The Head (or Designated Safeguarding Lead)

After informing Essex Safeguarding Children Board the Head should make an initial assessment of the allegation, consulting with the DSL and the Designated Governor as appropriate. Where the allegation is considered to be either a potential criminal act or indicates that the child or person has suffered, is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, the matter should be reported immediately to the Chair of Governors and appropriate outside agencies.

It is important that the Head (or designated person) does not investigate the allegation. The initial assessment should be on the basis of the information received and is a decision whether or not the allegation warrants further investigation.

Other potential outcomes are:

- The allegation represents inappropriate behaviour or poor practice by the member of staff and is neither potentially a crime nor a cause of significant harm to the child or person. The matter should be addressed in accordance with the School disciplinary procedures.
- The allegation can be shown to be false because the facts alleged could not possibly be true.

17.3 Enquiries and Investigations

Child or young or vulnerable adult protection enquiries by social services or the police are not to be confused with internal, disciplinary enquiries by the School. The School may be able to use the outcome of external agency enquiries as part of its own procedures. The child protection agencies, including the police, have no power to direct the School to act in a particular way. However, the School should assist the agencies with their enquiries.

The School shall hold in abeyance its own internal enquiries while the formal police or social services investigations proceed; to do otherwise may prejudice the investigation. Any internal enquiries shall conform with the existing staff disciplinary procedures.

If there is an investigation by an external agency, for example the police, the Head (or Designated Safeguarding Lead) should normally be involved in, and contribute to, the interagency strategy discussions. The Head (or Designated Safeguarding Lead) is responsible for ensuring that the School gives every assistance to the agency's enquiries. He/she will ensure that appropriate confidentiality is maintained in connection with the enquiries, in the interests of the member of staff about whom the allegation is made. The Head (or Designated Safeguarding Lead) shall advise the member of staff that he/she should consult with a representative, for example, a trade union.

Subject to objections from the police or other investigating agency, the Head (or Designated Safeguarding Lead) shall:

- inform the child/children/person or people or parent/carer making the allegation that the investigation is taking place and what the likely process will involve.
- ensure that the parents/carers of a child making the allegation have been informed that the allegation has been made and what the likely process will involve.
- inform the member of staff against whom the allegation was made of the fact that the investigation is taking place and what the likely process will involve.
- inform the Chair of Governors and/or a designated governor of the allegation and the investigation.

The Head (or Designated Safeguarding Lead) shall keep a written record of the action taken in connection with the allegation.

17.4 Suspension of Staff

Suspension should not be automatic. In respect of staff other than the Head, suspension can only be carried out by the Head or a Senior Postholder. In respect of the Head, suspension can only be carried out by the Chair of Governors (or in his/her absence, the Vice Chair).

Suspension may be considered at any stage of the investigation. It is a neutral, not a disciplinary, act and shall be on full pay. Consideration should be given to alternatives:

- eg paid leave of absence; agreement to refrain from attending work
- change of, or withdrawal from, specified duties.

Suspension should only occur for a good reason. For example:

- where a child or young or vulnerable adult is at risk.
- where the allegations are potentially sufficiently serious to justify dismissal on the grounds of gross misconduct.
- where necessary for the good and efficient conduct of the investigation.

Prior to making the decision to suspend, the Head (or Chair or Vice Chair of Governors) should interview the member of staff. If the police are engaged in an investigation, the officer in charge of the case should be consulted.

The member of staff should be advised to seek the advice and/or assistance of his/her trade union and should be informed that they have the right to be accompanied by a friend. The member of staff should be informed that an allegation has been made and that consideration is being given to suspension. It should be made clear that the interview is not a formal disciplinary hearing, but solely for raising a serious matter which may lead to suspension and further investigation.

During the interview, the member of staff should be given as much information as possible, in particular the reasons for any proposed suspension, provided that doing so would not interfere with the investigation into the allegation. The interview is not intended to establish the member of staff's innocence or guilt, but give the opportunity for the member of staff to make representations about possible suspension. The member of staff should be given the opportunity to consider any information given to him/her at the meeting and prepare a response, although that adjournment may be brief.

If the Head (or Chair or Vice Chair of Governors) considers that suspension is necessary, the member of staff shall be informed that he/she is suspended from duty. Written confirmation of the suspension, with reasons, shall be despatched as soon as possible, and ideally within one working day.

Where a member of staff is suspended, the Head (or Chair or Vice Chair of Governors) should address the following issues:

- the Chair of Governors should be informed of the suspension in writing.
- the Governing Body should receive a report that a member of staff has been suspended pending investigation; the detail given to the Governing Body should be minimal
- where the Head has been suspended, the Chair or Vice Chair of Governors will need to take action to address the management of the School

- the parents/carers of a child making the allegation should be informed of the suspension, as should a young or vulnerable adult making the allegation. They should be asked to treat the information as confidential. Consideration should be given to informing a child making the allegation of the suspension
- senior staff who need to know of the reason for the suspension should be informed
- depending on the nature of the allegation, the Head should consider with the nominated Governor whether a statement to the students of the School and/or parents/carers should be made, taking due regard of the need to avoid unwelcome publicity

The Head shall consider carefully and review the decisions as to who is informed of the suspension and investigation.

The suspended member of staff should be given appropriate support during the period of suspension. He/she should also be provided with information on progress and developments in the case at regular intervals.

The suspension should remain under review in accordance with the School disciplinary procedures.

17.5 The Disciplinary Investigation

The disciplinary investigation should be conducted in accordance with the existing staff disciplinary procedures.

The member of staff should be informed of:

- the disciplinary charge against him/her.
- his/her entitlement to be accompanied or represented by a trade union representative or friend.

Where the member of staff has been suspended and no disciplinary action is to be taken, the suspension should be lifted immediately and arrangements made for the member of staff to return to work. It may be appropriate to offer counselling.

The child or children, person or people making the allegation and/or their parents as appropriate should be informed of the outcome of the investigation and proceedings. This should occur prior to the return to School of the member of staff (if suspended).

The Head (or designated person) should give consideration to what information should be made available to the general population of the School.

17.6 Allegations without foundation

Obviously false allegations may be indicative of problems of abuse elsewhere. A record should be kept in order that other agencies may act upon the information.

In consultation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or the designated Governor, the Head shall:

- inform the member of staff against whom the allegation is made orally and in writing that no further disciplinary or child protection action will be taken. Consideration should be given to offering counselling/support.
- inform the parents/carers of the alleged victim that the allegation has been made and of the outcome.
- where the allegation was made by a child other than the alleged victim, consider informing the parents/carers of that child.
- prepare a report outlining the allegation and giving reasons for the conclusion that it had no foundation and confirming that the above action had been taken.

17.7 Records

It is important that documents relating to an investigation are retained in a secure place, together with a written record of the outcome and, if disciplinary action is taken, details retained on the member of staff's personal and confidential file.

If a member of staff is dismissed or resigns before the disciplinary process is completed, he/she should be informed about the School's statutory duty to inform the statutory body under the current legislative safe recruitment procedures.

17.8 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

The school will report promptly to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm to a child and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) with children, or would have been removed had he or she not left earlier).

17.9 National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL)

The school will consider making a referral to the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) where a teacher has been dismissed for misconduct (or would have been dismissed had he/she not resigned first). The reasons for such an order are: 'unacceptable professional conduct', 'conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute' or a 'conviction, at any time, for a relevant offence'.

APPENDIX C

18. FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

18.1 Procedures School has in place

Saint Nicholas School has decided to take proactive action to protect and prevent our girls being forced to undertake FGM. The Head and Governors do this in 4 ways:

1. A robust attendance policy that does not authorise holidays, extended or otherwise.
2. FGM training for DSLs and disseminated training for all staff at the front line dealing with the children.
3. Information on FGM will be made available to parents of all children.
4. Comprehensive PSHE and Relationship and Sex Education delivered to children with a discussion about FGM.

In order to protect our children it is important that key information is known by all of the school community.

18.2 Indications that FGM has taken place

- Prolonged absence from school with noticeable behaviour change – especially after a return from holiday.
- Spend long periods of time away from the class during the day.
- Medical assessment and therapeutic services to be considered at the Strategy Meeting.

18.3 Indications that a child is at risk of FGM

- The family comes from a community that is known to practice FGM - especially if there are elderly women present.
- In conversation a child may talk about FGM.
- A child may express anxiety about a special ceremony.
- The child may talk or have anxieties about forthcoming holidays to their country of origin.
- Parent/Guardian requests permission for authorised absence for overseas travel or you are aware that absence is required for vaccinations.
- If a woman has already undergone FGM – and it comes to the attention of any professional, consideration needs to be given to any Child Protection implications e.g. for younger siblings, extended family members and a referral made to Social Care or the Police if appropriate.

18.4 Dealing with concerns

A child who has undergone FGM should be seen as a child protection issue.

If we have concerns that children in our school community are at risk or victims of Female Genital Mutilation then we may;

Ask

Ask children to tell you about their holiday. Sensitively and informally ask the family about their planned extended holiday ask questions like;

- Who is going on the holiday with the child?
- How long they plan to go for and is there a special celebration planned?
- Where are they going?
- Are they aware that the school cannot keep their child on roll if they are away for a long period?
- Are they aware that FGM including Sunna is illegal in the U.K even if performed abroad?

If you suspect that a child is a victim of FGM you may ask the child;

- Your family is originally from a country where girls or women are circumcised –

- Do you think you have gone through this?
- Has anything been done to you down there or on your bottom?
- Do you want to talk to someone who will understand you better?
- Would you like support in contacting other agencies for support, help or advice?

These questions and advice are guidance and each case should be dealt with sensitively and considered individually and independently. Using this guidance is at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Record

All interventions should be accurately recorded.

Refer

Child protection lead or Headteacher needs to seek advice about making referrals to Social Care and CAIT (Child Abuse Investigation Team).