



# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

At Rachel McMillan we aim to provide a happy, secure environment where children, mums, dads and carers, as well as staff feel welcomed and valued. We expect adults and children to show respect and concern for each other and to work co-operatively in supporting the development of all children.

Under the Children Act 1989 school staff have a responsibility for identifying, referring and supporting children at risk of abuse or neglect. We are committed to co-operating with other agencies, including social services, in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children as laid down in Greenwich's inter-agency child protection policy, "Working Together for the Protection of Children".

The role of the school in Child Protection is governed by information contained in DfEE circular 10/95 and 11/95.

## **The role of the designated teacher for Child Protection**

There is a designated teacher for Child Protection within the centre who has the following responsibilities:

### **In school**

- To work with mums, dads and carers for the protection of children.
- To ensure that centre staff are aware of procedures.
- To be available for discussion with staff on suspected abuse.
- To make a decision on referral.

- To maintain a system for record keeping and collation of information.
- To manage the nursery's role in the child protection plan.

### **Liaison with other agencies**

- To discuss concerns with Social Services.
- To refer concerns and provide information.
- To promote good working relationships with other agencies.
- To have appropriate input to child protection plans

### **To have knowledge of:**

- Signs and symptoms of child abuse.
- The referral procedure.
- Roles and responsibilities of other agencies.
- Requirements of record keeping.
- Current child protection plans.

### **Identification and support of children who may have suffered abuse**

- All staff share a responsibility for recognising the signs and symptoms of child abuse. It is essential that any concerns are shared with the designated teacher as soon as possible. Such concerns should be recorded by the reporting member of staff and kept in the confidential file in the Head's office. Staff need to be sensitive to the needs of children when concerns are raised.
- Whilst the designated teacher is responsible for referring concerns to Social Services, any member of staff who considers such a referral appropriate should assume this responsibility if not carried out by the designated teacher.

### **The referral process**

- Any concerns relating to the safety and well being of children should be referred to the designated teacher as soon as possible. The protection of children relies on good communication and it is important that any concerns, however apparently trivial, are discussed. The Concerns Form should be completed and given to Theresa.

- Whenever possible, concerns will first be discussed with mums, dads or carers. If the explanation given is judged to be plausible, a note of the incident and enquiry will be kept in the Child Protection file. No further action will be taken.
- In cases of suspected sexual abuse the designated teacher must refer directly to Social Services who will contact the parents.
- If the designated teacher does not consider the explanation to be plausible, based on her knowledge and experience, she has a duty to immediately refer the incident to Social Services using an **Inter Agency Referral Form**.
- A record of all child protection concerns should be kept in the confidential file in the office. The person reporting the concern is responsible for completing this record as soon as possible on the same day. All records should be dated and signed.
- The designated teacher is responsible for keeping a record of discussions with parents and carers, referrals to Social Services and liaison with other agencies. Records relating to child abuse are exempt from the requirements of disclosure under the Education (School Records) Regulations 1989.
- Courts may require schools to provide school protection records in alleged cases of abuse which come to court. Class registers may also be called for. These documents need to be kept for eight years. Child protection records should be kept in the locked filing cabinet in the Headteacher's office.

### **Involvement of staff during investigation and after**

- Staff have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies.
- If a child confides in a member of staff and asks for secrecy it is important that the child is told sensitively of the duty to refer. Children should be assured that the matter will be treated confidentially and only shared with those who need to know.
- Staff should be sensitive to the needs of the child. Children should be afforded opportunities to talk to any chosen member of staff but should not be questioned unnecessarily.
- Information which is received on children and families should only be shared within appropriate professional contexts. Staff should never discuss their concerns in the presence of students, mums, dads, carers or children.

The designated teacher or another member of staff may be asked to provide a report for the child protection conference. Any member of staff could also be required to attend court.

As part of the protection plan staff will provide continuing support to the child and family.

### **Information disclosed to visitors**

- Information disclosed to visitors, e.g. governors or parents working in school, will be followed up according to the agreed referral procedures.
- The designated teacher will discuss the nursery's Child Protection Policy with the visitor and ensure that a written copy of the policy is available.
- Issues of confidentiality will be emphasised.

### **Procedures for allegations against staff**

In such circumstances the school would follow Greenwich Local Authority procedures.

In the first instance ring Greenwich Child Protection Officer - Veronica Mythen - 0208856 9932

### **Staff training programme in child protection**

- All classroom staff will receive training in identification and support of children who may have suffered abuse, in line with the Centre Development Plan.
- The designated teacher will receive training to enable her to meet the responsibilities of that post.

### **Parental involvement in the child protection process**

- Mums, dads and carers are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of their children. If they are concerned about their children it is important that they talk to a member of staff. Misunderstandings can be avoided by informing the staff if their child has received an injury or an upsetting experience. The staff are committed to working in partnership with mums, dads and carers.

## **Child protection in the curriculum**

Issues relating to the safety and wellbeing of children are included within the planned curriculum, when appropriate. Activities which support the development of children's self esteem, enable them to feel good about themselves and to make independent decisions relating to their own actions will be incorporated in the planning. Staff also discuss issues as they arise in conversation with children.

## **Whistleblowing**

We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so. All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the attitudes or actions of colleagues.

## **Physical intervention**

Our policy on physical intervention is set out in our staff code of conduct (the Non-Negotiables) and acknowledges that staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort and that at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person.

We understand that physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures.

## **Prevention**

We recognise that the nursery plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our pupils by providing pupils and adults with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection.

### **Designated teacher for child protection:**

Theresa Lane

### **Responsible teacher in absence of designated teacher:**

Rachel Hogarth-Smith or Christine King

**The designated Child Protection Officers for under threes:**

Christine King and Beverly Grant

**Contacting Social Services**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF GREENWICH**

**Greenwich Duty Line - 02089213172**

**Heathbrooke Team**

**Team Leader - Ernell Watson - 0208 921 3175**

**Assistant Team Leader - Diane Thompson - 0208 921 3141**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**Lewisham Duty Line - 0208 314 6000**

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