

# Herington House School – Safeguarding Children Policy

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## Principles

- 1.0 This school takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of the children and young people in its care.  
“The welfare of the child is paramount”. Children Act 1989
- 1.1 As part of the ethos of the school, the staff and principal are committed to:
- encouraging and supporting parents/carers and working in partnership with them;
  - listening to, respecting, and placing high value on the pupils;
  - ensuring all staff, both teaching and support, are aware of signs and symptoms of abuse, know the correct procedure for referring concerns or allegations and receive appropriate training to enable them to carry out these requirements;
  - maintaining a safe school environment for all pupils;
  - exercising their duty to work in partnership with other agencies and to share information with them.
- 1.2 We recognise that staff, because of their contact with and knowledge of the children in their care, are well placed to identify abuse and offer support to children in need.
- 1.3 The school recognises it is an agent of referral and not of investigation.

## 2.0 Statement of intent

Herington House School will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the safety of children and to give them the very best start in life.

## 2.1 Aims

Our aims are to carry out this policy by:

To ensure the School is pro-active and taking effective steps to protect young children.

To ensure all **staff are aware of the proper procedures** for a referral of a child they believe has been abused or is at risk of being abused.

To ensure there are clear and supportive mechanisms for staff to report concerns.

To ensure that all concerns about a child's safety are properly investigated.

To ensure that accurate records are kept.

To ensure effective measures are in place for checking the background of those who have contact with children.

# Herington House School – Safeguarding Children Policy

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2.2 The legal framework for this work is:

## *Primary legislation*

The Children Act 1989 - s 47

The Protection of Children Act 1999

Data Protection Act 1998

The Children Act 2004 (Every Child Matters)

The Children (NI) Order 1995

The Children (Scotland) Act 1995

## *Guidance*

What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (HM Government 2006) at [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk)

The Framework for the Assessment of children in Need and Their Families (2000)

Working Together to Safeguard Children (revised 1999)

The Common Assessment Framework 2005

National standards for under 8s day care and childminding (DfES 2003)

Safeguarding children: an evaluation of procedures for checking staff appointed to schools (Ofsted 2006)

## **Procedures for Referral**

3.0 All action is taken in line with the following guidance:

- Essex Child Protection Committee Interdisciplinary Guidelines for Professional Staff;
- D of ES. Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education

3.1 Any member of staff or visitor to the school who receives a disclosure of abuse or suspects that abuse may have occurred **must** report it immediately to the designated

# **Herington House School – Safeguarding Children Policy**

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person for child protection and to the Principal. In the absence of either of the above the matter should be brought to the attention of the most senior member of staff.

- 3.2 The designated person will immediately inform Social Services by telephone.
- 3.3 The telephone referral to Social Services will be confirmed in writing within 24 hours with a copy to the local Education Welfare Service Area Manager. Essential information will include pupil's name, address, date of birth, family composition, reason for referral, name of person receiving the referral and any advice given. This written confirmation must be signed and dated by the referrer.
- 3.4 Confidentiality must be maintained and information relating to individual pupils/families shared with staff on a strictly need to know basis.

## **4.0 Liaison with other bodies**

- We work within the Area Safeguarding Children Committee guidelines.
- We have a copy of the SET Child Protection Handbook in the Principal's office, all staff are familiar with what to do if they have concerns. There is a copy in the Staff Room.
- We have procedures for contacting the local authority on child protection issues.
- Where there are concerns about the immediate welfare or safety of a child Essex Social Care may be contacted on: 0845 603 7634.
- We notify the registration authority (Ofsted) of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which may affect the wellbeing of children.
- If a referral is to be made to the local authority social services department, we act within the Area Safeguarding Children and Child Protection guidance in deciding whether we must inform the child's parents at the same time.

## **5.0 Methods**

### **Staffing and volunteering**

- Our designated persons (members of staff) who co-ordinate child protection issues are Mrs Lyn Medland and Mrs Claire Phypers.
- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
- Applicants for posts within the setting are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

# **Herington House School – Safeguarding Children Policy**

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- Candidates are informed of the need to carry out 'enhanced disclosure' checks with the Criminal Records Bureau before posts can be confirmed.
- Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
- We abide by Ofsted requirements in respect of references and Criminal Record Bureau checks for staff and volunteers, to ensure that no disqualified person or unsuitable person works at the setting or has access to the children.
- Volunteers do not work unsupervised.
- We abide by the Protection of Children Act requirements in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern.
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the School.
- We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the School so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.

## **6.0 Responding to suspicions of abuse**

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, and sexual as well as neglect.
- When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or may be experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure) or through changes in their appearance, their behaviour, or their play.
- Where such evidence is apparent, the child's key person makes a dated record of the details of the concern and discusses what to do with the School leader or manager who is acting as the 'designated person'. The information is stored on the child's personal file.
- Staff in the School take care not to influence the outcome either through the way they speak to children or by asking questions of children.

## **7.0 Allegations against staff**

- We ***ensure that all parents know how to complain*** about staff or volunteer action within the School, which may include an allegation of abuse.

# **Herington House School – Safeguarding Children Policy**

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- We follow the guidance of the Area Safeguarding Children Committee when responding to any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child.
- We respond to any disclosure by children or staff that abuse by a member of staff may have taken, or is taking place, by first recording the details of any such alleged incident.
- We refer any such complaint **immediately** to the local authority's social service department **to investigate**.
- We co-operate entirely with any investigation carried out by social services in conjunction with the police.

When an allegation is made, suspension of the person concerned is not automatic. The Principal is responsible for deciding whether it is appropriate in each instance, taking into account the seriousness and plausibility of the allegation, the risk of harm to the children, as well as the interests of the person concerned. They take advice from appropriate agencies in coming to this decision.

## **8.0 Disciplinary action**

- Where a member of staff or a volunteer is dismissed from the School or internally disciplined because of misconduct relating to a child, we notify the General Teaching Council and the Department of Health administrators so that the name may be included on the List for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults.

## **9.0 Training**

- We seek out training opportunities for all staff involved in the School to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect and so that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals.
- We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the setting.

## **10.0 Planning**

- The layout of the rooms allows for constant supervision. No child is left alone with staff or volunteers in a one to one situation without being visible to others.

# **Herington House School – Safeguarding Children Policy**

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## **11.0 Disclosures**

Where a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff:

- offers reassurance to the child;
- listens to the child; and
- gives reassurance that she or he will take action.

The member of staff ***does not question*** the child

## **12.0 Record Keeping**

Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse, or noticing possible abuse, must make an accurate record as soon as possible noting what was said or seen, putting the event into context, and giving the date, time and location. All records must be dated and signed. A suggested format can be found at the end of this document.

All hand-written records will be retained, even if they are subsequently typed up in a more formal report.

All records relating to child protection concerns will be kept in a secure place and will remain confidential. They do not form part of the pupil's educational records and are not required to be disclosed to parents/carers except by agreement.

Forms kept in filing cabinet in main office to be completed by both the relevant staff member and the designated member to be passed to the Principal who will decide on action if any, required to be taken in addition to the procedure already followed (paragraph 2 above).

## **13.0 Informing parents**

- Parents are normally the first point of contact.
- If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of the local Area Safeguarding Children Committee does not allow this.
- This will usually be the case where the parent is possibly the abuser. In these cases the investigating officers will inform parents.

## **14.0 Confidentiality**

# **Herington House School – Safeguarding Children Policy**

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- All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the Area Safeguarding Children Committee.

## **15. Support to families**

- The School believes in building trusting and supportive relationships with families, staff and volunteers in the group.
- The School ***makes clear to parents*** its role and responsibilities in relation to Child Protection, such as for the reporting of concerns, providing information, monitoring of the child, and liaising at all times with the local social services department.
- We follow the Child Protection Plan as set by the social services department in relation to the School's designated role and tasks in supporting the child and the family, subsequent to any investigation.
- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child in accordance with the procedure and only if appropriate under the guidance of the Area Safeguarding Children Committee.

## **16.0 The Role of the Principal**

The Principal will liaise with the designated person and discuss changes to child protection policy or procedures; training undertaken by the designated person, other staff and carers; the number of child protection incidents/cases (without detail or name); and the place of child protection issues in the curriculum.

The Principal, in liaison with the designated person, will ensure that the school has a child protection policy and procedures in place, and that these are known to all members of staff.

## **17.0 Review**

This policy will be reviewed and up-dated (if appropriate) on an annual basis