

Child Protection Policy

Roxeth Mead's Policy on Child Protection and Child Abuse

This policy reflects our active commitment to promote and safeguard the welfare of pupils at Roxeth Mead School and incorporates the principles of the Every Child Matters Outcomes: Be healthy; stay safe.

It is designed to inform staff, parents, directors and volunteers of the school's responsibilities for safe-guarding children. To enable all who are connected with Roxeth Mead to have a clear understanding of how these responsibilities are carried out.

We believe that children have a fundamental right to feel safe and protected from abuse. Therefore at Roxeth Mead we aim to provide an atmosphere of trust in which the children feel secure and know that they will be listened to by the staff. The curriculum is designed to include opportunities to promote self-esteem, nurture well-being and empower the children to protect themselves.

The members of the school staff are particularly well placed in their daily contact with the children to observe outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour and failure to thrive recognising that abuse may be emotional, physical, sexual or through neglect.

We aim to ensure that children who are vulnerable, at risk and have suffered or are likely to suffer significant harm are identified, and appropriate action is taken to keep them safe. Roxeth Mead has and will continue to develop a systematic approach to safeguarding children maintaining a clear framework for the identification and referral of suspected child abuse to the appropriate agency.

In formulating this policy we have considered current legislation and guidance from the DCSF (with particular reference to *Working Together to Safeguard Children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children March 2010* and the publication *What to do if you think a child is being Abused*), and the child protection procedures set down by the London Safeguarding Children Board and the Children and Family Services of the London Borough of Harrow. It incorporates also the regulations for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

This child protection policy is part of a body of documents and policies which relate to the safeguarding responsibilities of the school and should be read in conjunction with the following: Safer Recruitment, Behaviour, Anti-Bullying, Health and Safety, PSHE, Staff Discipline and Intimate Care policies.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers working in the school and visitors. Anyone of them could be the first point of disclosure for a child.

The senior management of the school will:

- Appoint a designated senior member of staff with a deputy to act in her absence to be responsible for all child protection matters.

- Make arrangements for this member of staff, and any other relevant staff, to be released to attend child protection conferences and training.
- Ensure that appropriate checks are carried out on all applicants for positions in the school-paid or voluntary in accordance with the guidelines set out in 'Safeguarding Children: Safer Recruitment and Selection in Education Settings'. This will include checking identity, qualifications, professional and character references, health and physical capacity, previous employment history to ensure gaps are accounted for, and criminal records. Disclosures and enhanced disclosures will be provided by the Home Office accredited body Atlantic Data Limited / Disclosures.
- Ensure that child protection procedures set out in this policy are followed by all staff and volunteers.
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers have undertaken up-to-date training, including interagency working in the case of the senior designated member of staff. This will include providing child protection training for all new recruits.
- Ensure that all staff selection panels include someone who has undertaken the Safer Recruitment training programme
- Have in place procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff in accordance with Revised Guidance on 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment Education' Chapter 5: (March 2010) and ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of them.
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers know how to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and address such concerns sensitively and effectively (refer to Whistle blowing policy).
- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk, and are given a sympathetic hearing.
- Ensure children are aware that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.
- Include in the curriculum activities and opportunities for PSHE which equip the children with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse and to know who to turn to. This includes internet safety.
- Include in the curriculum material which will help children develop realistic attitudes to their responsibilities in living with and caring for others.

The senior designated teacher or named deputy must:

- Have received training in how to identify abuse and know when it is appropriate to refer a case, together with a working knowledge of how to contribute effectively when required by Children and Family Services of London Borough of Harrow at child protection conferences and other procedures and discussions.
- Hold the School's copy of the current London Safeguarding Children Board Child Protection Procedures and be conversant with the School's copy of 'Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to interagency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children' *March 2010*. Making these resources and other publications e.g. 'What to do if you think a child is being abused' and any other similar relevant documentation available for staff to refer when necessary.

- Brief and inform staff and volunteers about the relevant contents of the above guidance and procedures, and about the procedures the school should follow.
- Ensure that all staff, volunteers, pupils and parents recognise that she is a source of information, advice, support and expertise within the school.
- Be responsible for co-ordinating referrals by liaising with Social Services and other agencies over cases of abuse or allegations of abuse
- Ensure that colleagues have had training in child protection relevant to their role and needs and know how to identify and report any concerns they have to the senior designated member of staff immediately they arise.
- Ensure each member of staff and each volunteer has access to and understands this child protection policy
- Ensure that the school effectively monitors children about whom there are concerns, including notifying the relevant body of the absence of a child who is the subject of a child protection plan.
- Liaise with the Senior Management to inform them of any issues and ongoing investigations to ensure there is always cover for their role.
- Keep accurate, detailed and secure written records of referrals or concerns separate from the academic file, marked 'Strictly Confidential'
- Ensure that when a child transfers to another school the next school receives the individual's child protection file in time to make any necessary arrangements, and advise the receiving school of the need for this file to be kept separate from the main school file.
- Ensure parents have access to the child protection policy and are aware that referrals may be made by the school
- Report to the Designated Director for Child Protection at least annually and ensure that this policy is reviewed and updated.

All members of staff have a responsibility to protect children from abuse and if are made aware of or suspect child abuse should take immediate action as per the attached procedures and immediately inform the designated senior member of staff.

A direct accusation of a possible criminal action by a member of staff or volunteer must be reported to the Head Teacher the same day and without anybody else being informed. If the concerns are about the Head Teacher, then the Director with responsibility for child protection should be contacted.

The Directors will ensure that:

- This policy conforms to the Local Authority and London Safeguarding Children Board guidance and is reviewed annually
- The policy includes provision for procedures for recruiting and selecting staff and volunteers and for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff/volunteers.
- The school has a designated senior member of staff to take lead responsibility for dealing with child protection issues

- Members of the Board of Directors and all staff have received appropriate training and information to carry out their responsibilities for child protection
- Any deficiencies in child protection arrangements are brought to the attention of the Board of Directors immediately
- A member of the Board of Directors is nominated to be the person responsible for liaising with the Local Authority and external agencies in the event of allegations of abuse being made against the Head Teacher.

This nominated Director, where she is also the chair of the Board of Directors, will:

- Ensure that this child protection policy is reviewed and reported on annually to the governing body using the Investigation and Referral Support Co-ordinator's (IRSC) Self-Review Tool for Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools. See Appendix 3
- Oversee procedures and take action according to Local Authority procedures and with reference to 'Safeguarding Children in Education: Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and Other Staff'

When the nominated director is not the chair of the board allegations against the Head Teacher should be referred to the chair and/or the Local Authority Designated Officer.

Parents and Carers need to be aware that should any member of staff suspect that a child might have been deliberately harmed or neglected by their parents/carer, the school has a duty to inform the Local Authority Designated Officer. It is then up to the Local Authority to decide on the best way of carrying out an investigation. The police have the right to speak with the child without parental consent when it is in the best interests of the child. They may do so on school premises or, as appropriate in special premises where a video may be made. They cannot take, however, a child off the school premises without the permission of the Head Teacher. When the police interview a child, a member of staff known to the child will provide support.

Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation

The Head Teacher will report to the Board of Directors annually on the implementation of the policy, identifying any necessary changes in approach which are deemed necessary.

Procedures

If any member of staff is concerned about a child he or she must inform the Designated Senior Member of Staff.

Staff should be make themselves familiar with the guidelines set down in the publication **What to Do if You're Worried a Child is Being Abused**. Mrs. Isaacs and Mrs. Power have copies.

The staff member must record information regarding the concerns on the same day. The recording must be a clear, factual account of the observations.

The Designated Senior Member of Staff will decide whether the concerns should be referred to the Child Protection Manager at the Children and Family Services. If it is decided to make a referral to the Children and Family Services this will be done with prior discussion with the parents, unless to do so would place the child at further risk or harm.

Particular attention will be paid to the attendance and development of any child about whom the school has concerns, or who has been identified as being the subject of a child protection plan and a written record will be kept.

If a pupil who is/or has been the subject of a child protection plan changes school, the Designated Senior Member of Staff will inform the social worker responsible for the case and transfer the appropriate records to the Designated Senior person at the receiving school, in a secure manner, and separate from the child's academic file.

Indicators that should raise concern

All staff and volunteers should be aware that the main categories of abuse are:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Bullying

Refer to for definitions of the above categories together with certain indicators which might lead the member of staff to consider the possibility of abuse and discussing it with the Senior Designated Member of Staff.

All staff and volunteers should be concerned about a child if he/she presents with indicators of possible significant harm- **See Appendix for details**.

Generally, in an abusive relationship the children may:

- Appear frightened of the parent/s or other household members e.g. siblings or others outside of the home
- Act in a way that is inappropriate to the child's age and development (full account needs to be taken of different patterns of development and different ethnic groups)
- Display insufficient sense of 'boundaries', lack stranger awareness.
- Appear wary of adults and display 'frozen watchfulness'

Dealing with a Disclosure

If a child discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the member of staff/volunteer should:

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what is being said
- Allow the child to talk freely
- Reassure the child, but not make promises which it might not be possible to keep
- Not promise confidentiality-it might be necessary to refer to the local Children and Family Services
- Stress that it was the right thing to tell
- Not criticise the alleged perpetrator
- Limit any questioning to the minimum necessary to seek clarification only, strictly avoiding 'leading' the pupil by making suggestions or asking questions that introduce their own ideas about what may have happened
- Stop asking any more questions as soon as the pupil has disclosed that he or she believes that something abusive has happened to him or her, or to someone else
- Tell the pupil what has to be done next explaining who will be told in order to follow the problem through
- Ask the pupil what steps he or she would like to be taken to protect them now that they have made an allegation, and assure that the School will try to follow, if possible, his or her wishes
- Make a written record (see Record Keeping)

Pass the matter immediately, with all the relevant details, to the Senior Designated Member of Staff.

Allegation of abuse against a Member of Staff or Volunteer

The following behaviours should be considered within the context of the categories of abuse (see appendix). These include concerns relating to inappropriate

relationships between members of staff and children that contravene the Sexual Offences Act 2003, for example:

- Having a sexual relationship with a child under 18 if in a position of trust in respect of that child.
- 'Grooming', i.e meeting a child under 16 with intent to commit a relevant offence
- Other 'grooming' behaviour giving rise to concerns of a broader child protection nature (singling out individual pupils for special favours, sending text messages or images, gifts, socializing etc.)
- Possession of indecent photographs/pseudo-photographs of children

A written record should be made of the allegation using the informant's words- including time, date and place where the alleged incident took place, what was said and anyone else present. This record should be signed and dated. The Head Teacher must, at the earliest opportunity, tell the Local Authority Designated Officer in accordance with 'Safeguarding Children in Education: Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and Other Staff' DfES/2044/2005.

All staff should be aware of placing themselves in situations that leave them vulnerable to allegations of abuse. They should take responsibility for their actions and should work in an open and transparent way.

Action to be taken by Senior Designated Member of Staff

The Senior Designated Member of Staff on receiving information of an allegation of abuse, should:

- Take any further steps needed to protect any pupil involved from risk of immediate harm
- Not interview or investigate the allegation further, but if it is a clear case of possible abuse, refer the matter, within twenty four hours, to the Child Protection Manager at the local Children and Family Services Department. The referral should be made by speaking personally with the Children and Family Services manager; reliance should not be placed on leaving a message. A telephone referral should be followed up in writing within forty eight hours
- Consult the Children and Family Services Child Protection Team Manager (or deputising officer) and follow the advice given about contacting parents, other staff, police, doctor or alleged perpetrator or witness direct. Agree with the Team Manager any necessary steps in relation to:

- a. Informing a pupil's parents
 - b. Medical examination or treatment for the pupil
 - c. Immediate protection that may be needed for any pupil who has been the victim of abuse
 - d. Informing other members of staff of the allegation and its investigation
 - e. Informing the pupil or adult who made the initial allegation of what the next steps are to be, having agreed these with the Team Manager
 - f. If necessary, suspend from duty, pending investigation, any staff member or volunteer who is alleged to be the abuser.
 - g. Make arrangements where feasible for any pupil who has been the subject of abuse to receive counselling and support by agreement with his or her parents where appropriate
 - h. In some cases it will be necessary to refer the case to the ISA for consideration of including the person on the ISA barred lists
- Offer support to the member of staff/volunteer who seeks help having experienced the stressful situation of dealing with a disclosure from a child
 - Ensure that the person who is the subject of the allegation is kept informed of the progress of the case and consider what support is appropriate for the individual. If, the person is suspended because it is considered that children are at risk of significant harm she/he will be kept informed about developments at work. If the person is a member of a union/professional association she/he should be advised to contact that body at the outset.

Note If the allegation is about physical contact, the strategy discussion or initial evaluation with the police should take account of the fact that teachers and other school staff are entitled to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils in certain circumstances (Refer to *Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils* issued in November 2007)

Unfounded or Malicious Allegations

If an allegation is unfounded or malicious the child concerned will be considered by the Child Protection Team Manager/ Officer to be in need of services as he/she may have been abused by someone else. In the rare event that an allegation is shown to have been deliberately invented or malicious, the head teacher should consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the pupil who made it, or the police should be asked to consider whether any action might be appropriate if he/she is not a pupil

Confidentiality

Child Protection raises issues of confidentiality that must be clearly understood by all staff/volunteers in the school

- All staff, both teaching and non-teaching, have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly the investigative agencies (Children and Family Services and the Police)
- If a child confides in a member of staff/volunteer and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the member of staff/volunteer tell the child in a manner appropriate to the child's age/stage of development that **they cannot promise complete confidentiality-instead they must explain that they may need to pass information to other professionals to help keep the child or other children safe.**
- Staff/volunteers who receive information about children and their families in the course of their work should share that information only within appropriate professional contexts.
- In the case of an allegation against a member of staff every effort should be made to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while it is being investigated

Record Keeping

When a child has made a disclosure, the member of staff/volunteer should:

- Make brief notes as soon as possible after the conversation
- Not destroy the original notes in case they are needed in court
- Record the date, time, place and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child
- Draw a diagram to indicate the position of any bruising or injury
- Record statements and observations rather than interpretations or assumptions

All records need to be given to the Designated Senior Person promptly. No copies should be retained by the member of staff or volunteer.

Early Years Foundation Stage

Any suspicions or disclosures of abuse should be recorded and reported to the Designated Senior Member of Staff as set out in the main body of this document who will follow the protocols and procedures for informing the Children and Family Services.

The Designated Senior Member of Staff will inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person working or looking after the children on the premises (whether that allegation relates to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere), or any other abuse which is alleged to have taken place on the premises, and of action taken in that respect.

Ofsted will be informed of the above, as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days.

Contact Information

The Contact details for Harrow Child and Family Services are:

Children and Family Services
429/433 Pinner Road
Harrow
Middx HA1 4HN
020 8863 5544

The Senior Child Protection Co-ordinator is **Steve Spurr**, at the **Civic Centre: 020 8424 9644**

The out of hours emergency duty team can be contacted on **020 8424 0999**

Definition of Physical Abuse:

Hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, attempted drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm.

Staff should also be aware that Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) or to take a child abroad to have a procedure that involves the removal of the external female genitalia or injury to the female organs whether for cultural or non-therapeutic reasons is an offence in the UK and is illegal under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (Refer to London Safeguarding Children Board Protection Procedures, 2007 for further guidance)

Note: If non-accidental injuries are observed or suspected no attempt at examination should be made and the child should never be asked to undress to disclose the injury; refer the matter in the first instance to the Designated Senior Member of Staff.

Possible Signs of Physical Abuse

- Unexplained injuries or burns and scalds, particularly if they are recurrent
- Injuries not typical of accidental injury
- Frequent injuries even with apparently reasonable explanations
- Improbable or conflicting explanations for injuries
- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Admission of punishment which appears excessive
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Bald patches
- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Arms and legs covered in hot weather
- Fear of returning home
- Fear of medical help / parents not seeking medical help
- Self destructive tendencies
- Aggression towards others
- Chronic running away
- Frequently absent from school

Definition of Emotional Abuse

This is probably the most difficult type of abuse to recognise. It can be defined as persistent emotional maltreatment, for example conveying to a child that it is worthless, unloved or inadequate; age or developmentally inappropriate expectations; interactions beyond the child's capability; overprotection; seeing or hearing the maltreatment of another for example domestic violence. The effects of witnessing domestic violence are extremely damaging emotionally for the child.

Possible Signs of Emotional Abuse

- The child appears introverted, withdrawn and depressed
- Low self-esteem
- Admission of punishment which appears excessive
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Sudden speech disorders
- Fearful of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional response to painful situations
- Neurotic behaviour (for example, rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking)
- Self mutilation
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Drug/solvent abuse
- Chronic running away
- Compulsive stealing
- Air of detachment – 'don't care' attitude
- Social isolation – does not join in and has few friends
- Desperate attention-seeking behaviour
- Eating problems, including over-eating and lack of appetite

Definition of Sexual Abuse

Enticing or forcing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening; may include non-contact activities such as involving the child in looking at or producing pornographic material, watching sexual activity or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Possible signs of Sexual Abuse

- Demonstrates sexual knowledge or behaviour inappropriate to age/stage of development, or that is unusually explicit
- Wetting or regressive behaviours for example thumb sucking
- Inexplicable changes in behaviour, such as becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- No longer enjoys previously liked activities
- Reluctance to undress for PE lessons
- Becomes fearful of, or refuses to see certain adults for no apparent reason; shows dislike of a particular baby sitter, relative or other adult
- Draws sexually explicit pictures
- Urinary infections, bleeding or soreness in the genital or anal areas
- Soreness, or bleeding in the throat
- Chronic ailments, such as stomach pains or headaches
- Takes over the parental role at home; seems old beyond his/her years
- Developing an eating disorder
- Depression or suicidal thoughts
- Poor self-image, self-harm, self-hatred
- Physical discomfort
- Uses drugs or alcohol to excess
- Memory loss
- Frequent running away
- Restricted social activities
- Aversion to certain places, people or physical contact
- Has recurring nightmares and a fear of the dark
- Is unable to concentrate; seems to be in a world of his/her own
- Has a 'friend who has a problem' and proceeds to describe the abuse of said friend
- Sudden changes in school work habits, truanting
- Anxious and withdrawn
- Outbursts of anger or irritability
- Unexplained sums of money
- Acts in a sexually inappropriate/harmful or seductive way towards others

Definition of Neglect

Persistent failure to meet a child's physical and/or psychological needs; can include:

- Failure to provide adequate food and clothing
- Failure to provide shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Failure to protect a child from physical and emotional harm
- Failure to ensure adequate supervision
- Failing to provide medical treatment
- Failing to provide for emotional needs

Possible signs of Neglect

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Inappropriate clothing unkempt and in a poor state of repair
- Frequent lateness or absence from school
- Untreated medical problems
- Low self-esteem
- Poor social relationships
- Compulsive stealing
- Constant tiredness
- Emaciation
- Destructive tendencies
- Neurotic behaviour
- Chronic running away
- Scavenging for food or clothes

Definition of Bullying

Working Together to Safeguard Children defines bullying as: deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves; for example, physical, verbal or emotional bullying. In the extreme, bullying can cause significant harm, including self-harm.

Possible Signs of Bullying

- Physical injuries, the result of hitting, kicking etc.
- Constantly 'losing items' that have, in reality, been stolen or extorted
- Poor self-esteem due to racist or homophobic remarks, name calling or other forms of humiliation.
- Social isolation
- Fearfulness
- Self-harm
- Reluctance to participate in certain activities

In addition to all the above signs a child may disclose an experience which he/she may have been harmed, or there may be any other cause to believe that a child may be suffering harm.

It is important to be aware that a child may not disclose that he/she is being abused, for some of the following reasons:

- Fear
- Threats
- Fear of punishment
- Guilt or shame
- Lack of vocabulary
- Not understanding that an action against them is abusive
- Lack of trust
- Fear about the implications of disclosing abuse
- Considers the abuse to be “normal behaviour”

Adults who have heard a disclosure of abuse must be receptive and not dismiss the allegation because they believe that it is not possible, the child is imagining or lying about the situation; or is not able to understand if the communication is non-verbal.

Staff must be alert to situations where a child may be the abuser.

Training

All school staff and volunteers will receive child protection training so that they are knowledgeable and aware of their role in the early recognition of the signs and symptoms of abuse or neglect and of the appropriate procedures to follow.

It is the role of the Designated Senior Member of Staff for Child Protection to:

- Ensure that she receives refresher training at two yearly intervals to keep her knowledge and skills up to date.
- Ensure that all staff who work with children undertake appropriate training to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for child protection effectively and that this is kept up to date by refresher training at three yearly intervals.
- Ensure that newly appointed staff receive a child protection induction

Ensure that temporary staff and volunteers are made aware of the school’s arrangement for child protection.

Governor and Staff with Special Responsibility for Child Protection at Roxeth Mead School

The Child Protection Governor is

Mrs. Averil Collins

Contact number 07982 468148

The Designated Senior Member of Staff for Child Protection is

Mrs. Alison Isaacs, Head Teacher

The Deputy Senior Member of Staff for Child Protection is

Mrs. Fiona Power, Deputy Head Teacher