



SAFE GUARDING CHILDREN PROCEDURES AT LEA VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL AND SPORTS COLLEGE

September 2011.

“All children whatever their race, sex, beliefs and physical and mental abilities, have the right to grow up unharmed, to have the opportunity to develop fully and to have their basic needs met.”

Children’s Act 1989

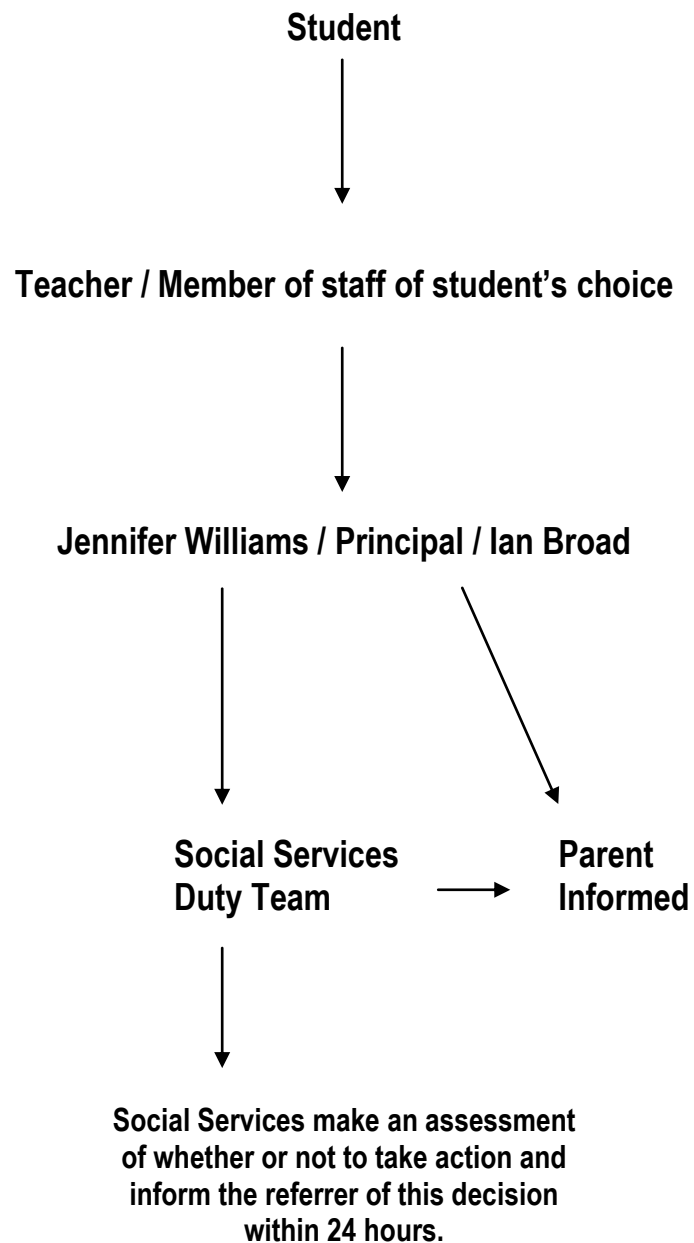
As school staff we are part of a multidisciplinary interagency team, which includes Social Services, Police, NSPCC, Parents/Carers, Health and Education Welfare Service.

Every school must have a designated professional. Although there are a significant number of staff who have had CP training, all issues and referrals are to be directed to Jennifer Williams/Ian Broad in the first instance.

Please keep this in your planning folder.

September 2011

Referral Process



Please be aware that Jennifer Williams / The Principal / Ian Broad may not be able to inform you of any additional information or action once you have made your referral. This is in accordance with Section 47 of the Child Protection Act

1. What to do if a child makes a disclosure?

- You must be honest to the child and tell them you will have to share what they tell with others, namely Vicki Fielder / The Principal
- Take what the child says seriously
- Reassure the child and react calmly
- Keep questions to a minimum - do not ask leading questions
- Record the conversation - use the words the child uses - or ask them to write their own account. (This does not have to happen immediately). This should be recorded on a file note – do not enter electronically onto SIMS.net
- **NB** - you need to strike a balance between collecting information and investigating. The latter is not the job of the school.
- Report the concern to Jennifer Williams / The Principal / Ian Broad

Remember:

- **In the case of physical injury do not examine. Instead suggest that together you go to Jennifer Williams / The Principal / Ian Broad**
- **Always try to have another teacher with you**
- **Always refer a disclosure on to Jennifer Williams / The Principal / Ian Broad**

2. What is child abuse?

The **Children's Act 1989** uses the following definitions of child abuse:

- Actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent a child from physical injury or suffering, including deliberate poisoning or suffocation
- Sexual abuse, including actual or likely sexual exploration of a child or adolescent
- Persistent or severe neglect of a child or failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger or extreme failure to carry out important aspects or care, resulting in the significant impairment of a child's health or development

3. Physical/Verbal Interaction with Students

At times, staff who work in schools place themselves in vulnerable situations through their own actions and are later subject to allegations of child abuse. It is not realistic to suggest that teachers should never touch students. However, the only situations when physical contact is acceptable are to prevent a child or young person hurting themselves or others. Staff should **NEVER**:

- **Physically prevent a child/young person from leaving a room by physically placing themselves in front of a door, or holding the door**
- **Assume that they have a "special" relationship with a student/young person which will allow horseplay or other inappropriate physical actions**
- **Use inappropriate language to a child/young person which is intended to demean them**
- **Discuss their own personal lives/issues with a child or young person**
- **Make inappropriate remarks about a child or young person's family**

The above list is by no means exhaustive, but is illustrative of issues that have been dealt with within this school and others in the local authority.

4. **What happens following a disclosure of abuse?**

- Jennifer Williams/ The Principal / Ian Broad will contact Social Services directly. Together they will discuss and agree the appropriate course of action.
- If Social Services ascertain that there are Child Protection issues, they will call an initial multidisciplinary investigation meeting and this might be followed by a Case Conference.
- If there is a Case Conference the outcome may include the child being put on a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan.

5. **Who tells the parents / carers?**

- In the case of sexual abuse, social services will contact the parents/carers. The police are likely to be involved at this stage.
- In the case of neglect or physical abuse Jennifer Williams / The Principal / Ian Broad will agree the appropriate course of action with Social Services.
- **Staff should NEVER contact parents or carers regarding child protection issues**

6. **Talking to Children**

- a. It is not the responsibility of school staff to interview children about alleged abuse; that is the role of the police and Social Services. However, Jennifer Williams / The Principal / Ian Broad, as the designated persons, will need to make enquiries of a child in order to gain sufficient information whether a referral to the appropriate agencies is needed.
- b. In practical lessons it is acceptable that you may ask a child how they may have come to have a bruise. It is not, however, acceptable to undress and examine a child.
- c. Avoid asking leading questions or putting ideas into a child's mind. Seek only as much clarification as is needed at this stage. Record what is seen and heard. The actions taken by the school will be recorded by Jennifer Williams / The Principal / Ian Broad.

7. **Initial Responses to Sexually Problematic / Harmful Behaviours – Procedures for staff**

It is the response of others, especially adults, to the behaviour that gives it meaning for the child' (British Columbia 1999). Sexual behaviours should be handled like any other behaviour problem – calmly and firmly. If any member of staff becomes aware of an incident of sexually problematic / harmful behaviour, whether it is a first incident or one of a pattern of behaviour being monitored, they should take the following steps.

- **Stop the behaviour** – remove the pupil away from others to speak to them.
- **Describe the behaviour** – describe the behaviour accurately to avoid any misunderstanding, for example
You grabbed X's breast
- **Point out the impact on others**, for example
When you grabbed X's breast, you embarrassed and hurt her.
- **Remind pupil of the norm**, for example
No one should be touched, particularly on their private parts without their consent

- **Report the incident to the identified lead person**
In the report include any response from the child responsible for the behaviour and also any response from the child or adult they have targeted.
- **Make a record**, using a confidential file note, being as specific as possible about what was seen and heard.
- **Send record** to the identified lead person.

Following the information provided the identified lead person will speak to the child to establish their view about what happened and why. Speak to the child who was targeted to establish the impact on them of the behaviour. The identified lead person will then decide on the level of concern if a referral to social care is needed and when the parents will be contacted.

Appropriate intervention /support plan will be put in place.

8. **Confidentiality**

- The welfare of the child is the paramount consideration and should take precedence over the usual issues of confidentiality or maintaining good relations with families. **School staff should not give a child a promise of confidentiality**, especially before they know what a child wants to say.
- Information passed to others within the school should be on a “need to know” basis in order to help safeguard the child’s welfare.
- Information about third parties should be treated with caution and efforts made to establish facts or concerns before referral is made.

9. **Recording Information**

- All records should be dated and signed.
- Access to records will be confined to members of the school staff who require this information in order to help to safeguard the child’s welfare, and appropriate agencies. All records must be kept secure. The Child Protection files are kept in the Principal’s office.

10. **Abuse of Trust**

All education staff, need to know that inappropriate behaviour with or towards children is unacceptable. In particular, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person over 18 (e.g. teacher, youth worker) to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18, where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child. There is never any circumstance that sexual contact between a professional and a child or young person can ever be deemed to be consensual. This applies where the child is in full-time education and the person works in the same establishment as the child, even if he/she does not teach the child.

School staff must also be aware that there can never be a situation in which an adult working at the school can assume that they have a “special” relationship with a student.

- All relationships between students and staff must remain within professional boundaries.
- **Staff should not be ‘friends’ with students or ex-students on social networking sites or instant messaging sites.**
- No favouritism can be shown – all students should be offered the same access to opportunities.

- Staff must abide by all school policies when making arrangements to accompany students off site. If you wish to arrange to take a student or group of students on an external visit, please see the schools operation manager, Tracey Baxter who will inform you of the necessary protocols. Staff cannot privately tutor students from the school, or accept any remuneration for any additional tutoring.
- Staff cannot offer to look for jobs for the students.
- Staff should not offer to meet students' parents off the school site.

Crossing professional boundaries will automatically result in the Principal having to follow child protection regulations, which means involving the police and Social Services. In such cases, there is an immediate multiagency case conference which always results in police records being sought. Disciplinary action will always be taken within school. The member of staff may well be subject to arrest.

11. **Allegations against staff**

All Local Authorities and education establishments should have procedures for dealing with allegations against staff (and volunteers who work with children) that aim to strike a balance between the need to protect children from abuse, and the need to protect staff or volunteers from false or unfounded accusations. However, all staff should be mindful of how a "reasonable person" may interpret their actions towards a child or young person. If in doubt, please ask either the Principal/Vice Principal for advice before embarking on a course of action. Always follow school procedures, which are there for your protection as much as the child's.

Disclosure: Guidance for Staff

DO:

- Reassure but never say that a matter is confidential
- Find a quiet place to talk where you will not be interrupted
- Listen and ascertain the facts
- Tell the child you believe them and let them know they have done the right thing to speak out
- Refer to a designated person immediately after the disclosure. Do not wait any longer than an hour, and do not go home without having referred the matter personally to Jennifer Williams / The Principal / Ian Broad. If you are unable to find either, then you must speak to a Vice Principal immediately.

DO NOT:

- Promise confidentiality that you cannot keep
- Interrupt the child to inform the designated teacher
- Ask leading questions or sympathise inappropriately. Remember your role is to listen and pass information to the designated teacher.
- Make any promises about outcomes
- Refer a disclosure just by email

Definitions: Guidance for Staff

Child Abuse

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or more rarely, by a stranger.

The categories of abuse under which a child can be registered are:

Neglect:

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Physical Abuse:

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after.

Sexual Abuse:

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child into any form of sexual activity. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non physical actions, such as involving the child in watching sexual activities, viewing sexually inappropriate material or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Any student believed to be sexually active under the age of 16 must be reported to a Vicki Fielder.

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 emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or in the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Signs of Physical Abuse

- Unexplained injuries or burns, particularly if they are recurrent
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Untreated injuries
- Admission of punishment which appears excessive
- Bald patches
- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather
- Fear of returning home
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Aggression towards others
- Running away

Signs of Neglect

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Poor state of clothing
- Emaciation
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school
- Untreated medical problems
- Destructive tendencies
- Low self-esteem
- Neurotic behaviour
- No social relationships
- Running away
- Compulsive stealing or scavenging

Signs of Emotional Abuse

- Physical, mental and emotional development lags
- Admission of punishment which appears excessive
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Continual self-depreciation
- Sudden speech disorders
- Fear of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional responses 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
- Running away
- Compulsive stealing or scavenging

Signs of Sexual Abuse

- Suspected pregnancy
- Sudden changes in behavioural or school performance
- Displays of affection in a sexual way inappropriate to age
- Tendency to cling or need constant reassurance
- Tendency to cry easily
- Regression to younger behaviour, such as thumb-sucking, playing with discarded toys, acting like a baby
- Complaints of genital itching or pain
- Distrust of a familiar adult, or anxiety about being left with a relative, a baby-sitter or lodger
- Unexplained gifts or money
- Depression and withdrawal

Additional Categories Under Safe Guarding Children Registration 2004

If you have Concerns about a Child's Welfare

Where there are concerns about a child's welfare relevant agencies need to be involved at an early stage. If a member of staff or a volunteer has concerns about a child's welfare, or if a child discloses that s/he is suffering abuse or reveals information that gives grounds for concern, the member of staff should speak to their designated person with a view to passing on the information. "What To Do If You're Worried a Child Is Being Abused" sets out what should happen next, which we have ordered for all staff.

Abuse or neglect can have a damaging effect on a child's health, educational attainment and emotional well-being. Staff may see changes of behaviour or attendance patterns in existing students which are likely to adversely impact on a child's performance at school. Such changes may not necessarily indicate that a child is suffering abuse or neglect. In some cases those changes may be the symptoms of a hidden disability, or undiagnosed medical condition, and the need to distinguish those cases reinforces the need for a careful and thorough assessment of the child and his/her needs when concerns are passed on.

Drug/Alcohol Abusing Parents

Drug and alcohol abuse by parents can have a serious effect on their children. 70% of children taken into care have parents who are suspected of substance abuse. Not all parents who abuse drugs or alcohol mistreat or neglect their children, but sometimes they can be put at considerable risk.

There is an increased risk of violence in families where parents abuse substances. Children can suffer from lack of boundaries and discipline and live chaotic lives. This can seriously affect their psychological and emotional development and may cause problems with their relationships later on in life.

The children who are the most vulnerable are those whose parents are violent, aggressive, neglectful or rejecting. These children can remain "invisible" from the services intended to support them unless their behaviour attracts attention at school or elsewhere outside the home.

Domestic Violence

The effect of domestic violence on the children is such that it must be considered as abuse. Either witnessing it or being the subject of it is not only traumatic in itself, but it is likely to adversely impact on a child and it should be treated as physical or emotional abuse as appropriate.

It is widely accepted that there are dramatic and serious effects of children witnessing domestic violence, which often result in behavioural issues, absenteeism, ill health, bullying, anti-social behaviour, drug and alcohol misuse, self-harm and psychological impacts. Growing up in a violent household is also a major factor in predicting delinquency.

Moving from the former family home to new accommodation may mean that children have to change school. Any change of school can be a difficult time for a family, but the particular circumstances associated with escape from domestic violence can make it an even more

difficult occasion, particularly if there is an appreciable delay before a school place can be found. If the mother changes her address often or enters a refuge to escape her violent partner, social isolation and loss of friends add to the child's insecurity. Schools should develop protocol focusing on the special needs/requirements of vulnerable children attending from a refuge environment.

Children and Young People who Sexually Abuse

Abuse is not just an adult crime. Children can pose a threat, either physical or sexual to other children. Even when sexualised behaviour is identified and a student is on a treatment programme, they still have to be educated and managed in a school setting. Management of this behaviour in school needs to be approached on a whole school, classroom/curriculum and individual level. If you are concerned about any child or young person, refer this immediately to Vicki Fielder / The Principal.

Sexual Exploitation of Children

Children involved in prostitution and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation are victims of abuse and should be treated as such. Their needs will require careful assessment as this problem is often hidden from view.

Guidance about Children Involved In Prostitution issued jointly by the Home Office and the Department of Health in 1998, stresses that all agencies should treat the child primarily as a victim of abuse and should work together to provide them with strategies to exit prostitution.

If you are concerned about any child or young person, refer this immediately to Vicki Fielder / The Principal.

Female Genital Mutilation

This form of physical abuse involves female genital mutilation by way of female circumcision, excision or infibulation. FGM is extremely harmful. It is not like male circumcision. It causes long-term mental and physical suffering, difficulty in giving birth, infertility and even death. It cannot be justified as a cultural or religious practice. Leaders of all the main faiths have spoken out against it. If you are concerned about any child or young person, refer this immediately to Vicki Fielder / The Principal.

Self Harm

Self harm is when a child or young person deliberately causes injury to themselves in order to alleviate other anxieties in their lives. Although this situation can be shocking, staff should remember that self harming is often an outer manifestation of another issue. School staff often feel that it is their place to tackle this issue directly and this should not be the case. A multi agency approach is required. If you are concerned about any child or young person, refer this immediately to Vicki Fielder / The Principal.

Forced Marriages

Forced marriage is an entirely separate issue from an arranged marriage, and the two things should not be confused. Forced marriage is a human rights abuse and falls within the Crown Prosecution Service definition of domestic violence. Young people at risk of a forced marriage are usually experiencing emotional and/or physical abuse at home.

Schools often feel that it is not their place to tackle this issue, and that doing so intrudes on private and cultural family matters, but that concern is misplaced. No culture or religion sanctions forced marriage: it is completely different from the practice of arranged marriage in which the parties consent to be married of their own free will. By contrast, forced marriage is a human rights abuse in the same way as child abuse and domestic violence and as such must not be ignored.

If you are concerned about any child or young person, refer this immediately to Vicki Fielder / The Principal.

Characteristics of Problematic Sexual Behaviour

The Characteristics of problematic Sexual Behaviours are:

- Not age appropriate
- one-off incidents of low key behaviours such as touching over clothing.
- Incidents where there seems to be peer pressure to engage in the behaviour for example, touching someone breast, exposure of bottom.
- spontaneous, rather than planned.
- self directed eg. masturbation
- The child targeted may be irritated or uncomfortable but they are not scared, and they feel free to tell someone.
- Other factors in their background such as parents are concerned about the behaviour and interested in working with the child to change.

Characteristics of Harmful Sexual Behaviours

The characteristics of harmful sexual behaviours are:

- Not age appropriate.
- Elements of planning, secrecy, force or coercion.
- Power differentials eg. age, size, status, strength.
- The response of the children targeted, eg. negative feelings like fear, anxiety, discomfort etc
- Negative feelings such as fear, anger, aggression etc expressed by the child doing the behaviour.
- Child does not take responsibility for their behaviour and blames others
- Not easily distracted from the behaviour, and the behaviour appears compulsive and is persistent despite intervention.
- Other difficult behaviours, conduct disorder, anger, poor peer relationships etc.

Parental Involvement

All parents need to understand that school has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are their students, that this responsibility necessitates a child protection policy and procedures, and that a school or institution may need to share information and work in partnership with other agencies when there are concerns about a child's welfare.

Where there are any doubts or reservations about involving the child's family, the designated person should clarify with the statutory agencies, whether, and if so when and by whom, the parents should be told about the referral. That may also be important in cases where the police may need to conduct a criminal investigation. Where appropriate, they should help parents understand that a referral is in the interests of the child and that the establishment will be involved in the section 47 enquiry as per the Children Act 1989, or a police investigation. The establishment should keep the parents informed of the educational progress of the child.

Lea Valley High School.
Safeguarding structure.

The Principal



Ian Broad/Jennifer Williams-

all referrals/ contact with parents/ follow up on referrals. Up keep of spreadsheet. Monitoring of agreed actions from Core groups etc.



Key Stage Leaders

In Jennifer Williams/ The Principal/ Ian Broad's absence, all referrals/ contact with parents/ follow up on referrals. Up keep of spreadsheet. Monitoring of agreed actions from Core groups etc



DOYS/ Designated SLT -

Attendance at case conferences/ core groups. Responsible for following through agreed actions and reporting these back to

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with children and young people.

Appendix 2: Guidance on social networking.

Appendix 3: Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers