

## **Rigby Hall School**

### **Child Protection Policy and Guidelines**

#### **Rationale**

This is written with reference to the Care Standards for Residential Special Schools Act 2003, Working Together to Safeguard Children (DFES) and Worcester policy and procedures for safeguarding

This policy applies to both children and vulnerable adults

The governors, Headteacher and all staff have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children in their care and to take steps to prevent children in their care from suffering ill treatment or neglect. Pupils at Rigby Hall are particularly vulnerable as all have special needs, many experiencing difficulties in communication. It is crucial that these difficulties are recognised and that staff continually strive to ensure equitable treatment for the students in their care.

The ICT coordinator is responsible for checking the BECTA web site termly for any updates on child protection and ICT, keeping staff informed and school procedures up to date.

#### **Aims**

- A key member of staff to be designated Child Protection Officer.
- All staff to have received training in Child Protection issues which will be regularly updated.
- All staff to be aware of the Child Protection procedures adopted within the school.
- Child Protection to be a part of the induction procedures for new members of staff, students and volunteers.
- Where possible pupils to be made aware of the role staff have in supporting them through issues relating to Child Protection.

#### **Guidance to staff in Child Protection Procedures**

#### **Procedures**

1. If you have a concern that a child has been mistreated, either physically, emotionally, sexually or by neglect, you **must**:
  - Report the matter immediately to the Headteacher or Designated Teacher for Child Protection
  - The Designated Teacher is Cynthia Pitts, Head (See addendum A for roles and responsibilities of the designated teacher).
  - The Designated Governor for Child Protection is Jim Pearson
  - Keep the matter confidential to as few people as need to know. If there is anyone who needs to be informed the head or designated teacher will ensure this happens. Confidentiality is crucial. Staff not adhering to confidentiality may be liable to disciplinary action.

(This procedure applies to all allegations, including those which may be made against staff. Allegations against the Head teacher must also be directed to the Chair of Governors. Any member of staff may contact the Sally Mills, Designated Child protection person for Worcestershire)

2. It is important to keep an accurate written record of what has occurred or been noticed and to pass a copy, signed and dated, to the Designated Teacher. Staff are advised to keep their own copy. These records are filed into a locked drawer in the Heads office, with access only by the

Head teacher and Senior Leaders. Information from notes may be passed onto social services and other agencies as required.

3. Following a referral to the Head teacher or Designated Teacher (if appropriate) a decision will be made to refer to social services

Once a referral has been made, social services may

- (i) Require school to contact parents to inform them that a referral has been made
- (ii) Convene a strategy meeting (which is multi agency) to decide how to move forwards
- (iii) Log the event but take no action
- (iv) Contact the family to investigate further

- 4 It is not your job to investigate the matter. It will be the duty of those responsible for child protection to gather enough information to decide whether or not to contact the Social Services Department.  
If appropriate, referral to Social Services must be made within 24hours.
- 5 The Social Services Department and the Police have a duty to investigate cases of suspected abuse. Those who work in the education service have a duty to co-operate with any such investigation. This might involve providing information, monitoring the child or in some cases attending a child protection conference. Failure to pass on information or to cooperate may result in disciplinary action being taken against a member of staff.
- 6 All staff, students and volunteers working in the school will be subject to the appropriate recruitment checking requirements i.e. two references must be given and checked, CRB forms completed and returned before anyone can start to work in the school. Clear guidance on Child Protection matters is given at the time of induction. Further training is given bi - annually. The designated teacher will update training every two years.  
All selection panels must contain a person who has relevant training in Safer Recruiting
- 7 All staff employed in the school have their child protection responsibilities clearly outlined in their job description and must sign to confirm that they have read and understand the Child Protection Policy. All staff will receive a copy of 'safe guarding children' July 2005
- 8 Volunteers will also receive a copy of the Child Protection Policy and sign that it has been read and understood.
- 9 Child Protection Policy and Procedures are not discretionary and must be complied with.
- 10 A record of staff training in Child Protection is be kept by the school.
- 11 The school has written guidance (disciplinary procedures) for staff against whom an allegation is made. (See Worcestershire Disciplinary Procedures and Grievance Policy)

### **General Advice**

1. Staff and adults are well placed to notice possible signs of abuse in children, because of their regular contact.
2. Signs of abuse may be:  
  
Obvious and sudden, for example an injury; or part of a picture over a longer period, perhaps including
  - behaviour which is unusual for the child or its age
  - work falling off or a lack of interest

- isolation or introversion
3. Alternatively you may become concerned:
- When a child tells you about ill-treatment which has happened to him or her, or to a friend, brother or sister;
  - or when an adult claims that a child has been mistreated;
  - Or as a result of witnessing the actions of a carer or colleague
4. In all of these cases there are things that you should do:
- Treat the matter seriously and reassure the child if necessary
  - React to what the child tells you with belief
  - Make it clear that you will probably have to inform others
  - Tell only those who need to know
  - Seek advice if in doubt
  - Keep a careful watch on the child
  - Keep an accurate record of what you have noticed, what has happened and what you have done
  - If a child has made a disclosure to you, tell the child what action you must take
5. There are things you must not do:
- Do not promise to keep the matter a secret
  - Do not interrogate children or ask leading questions
  - Do not speak to anyone about whom the allegations are made, even if the allegations are about a colleague or another adult.
6. Students with special needs are particularly vulnerable to abuse and often lack the communication skills to inform anyone. Indirect signs of abuse may be a sudden change in a child's behaviour, a reluctance to come to school, appearing depressed. Staff should be aware of indirect signs and report them to the head or designated teacher if they should occur.
7. Any child on the Child Protection List will have a nominated member of staff to provide pastoral support (this will normally be the tutor).

Reviewed February 2010  
(To be reviewed annually)

## Addendum 1

### Roles and responsibilities of the Designated Teacher

As Designated teacher for Child Protection the Head will

- Liaise with staff, Governors and Social Services in all matters related to Child Protection
  - Be responsible for keeping records of all Child Protection referrals
  - Inform the LA of a Child Protection referral at the time of the referral
  - Ensure all staff are given guidance on Child Protection at induction
  - Ensure that all staff have received, read and signed the Child Protection policy
  - Keep the Head, Governors and staff informed of any changes to Child Protection Procedures or guidance
  - Ensure that staff receive regular training in Child Protection issues
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## **Guidelines on Record Keeping and Management of Child Protection Information**

### **General**

- It is vital for records to be kept up to date so that the school can monitor its safeguarding practices and then school should identify any causes for concern early on.
- Any records should be made at the time of event or as soon as possible afterwards. Records should be factual, if possible use the child's own words and they must be signed, dated and filed chronologically. Any handwritten notes must be kept even if they are 'typed up'.
- All records must be given to and stored by the designated person/teacher; this person will make a decision as to what action (if any) is needed. Other members of staff only should have access of records on a 'need to know' basis, pupils should be told that disclosures will be treated with sensitivity but some info may need to be shared with other professionals in order to protect the child.
- All records are confidential and are to be filed away from a child's main school file. The main school file should have a symbol of some kind to highlight that there are child protection notes on this child.
- A concern of any kind should be recorded.
- *Record sheet* to have:
  - a front sheet (name, dob, address, brief family details)
  - date and time of event/concern
  - nature of concern raised
  - action taken and by whom
- With a *disclosure* the record should also include:
  - as full an account as possible of what the child said
  - questions put to child
  - time and place of disclosure and who was present
  - demeanour of the child, where child was taken at end of disclosure
  - a record/copy of any referral made
- If the child is on the Child Protection Register notes of any child protection case conferences etc...
- If information is taken from a file, a date note should be placed in the file indicating where info has gone and who has it.

### **Access to Files**

- The child in question has a right to access their personal records unless 'the health or well-being of the data subject or another child or prejudice an ongoing criminal investigation'.
- Those with parental responsibility do not have access to their child's CP file. If a parent wants access such a request should be done in writing and the same applies (as with a child above).
- CP information should not be shared with agencies (other than SS, Health, Police or the LA as described in local procedures (seek advice regarding sharing of info with LA's legal service). When information is shared, references to the children other than the data subject by name should be removed and/or any other info which could lead to their identity being discovered.
- If any information relates to an adult it can be disclosed if it is related to the performance by that person in a professional capacity –any reference to that person's private life should be removed.

### **Transfer of Records**

- When a pupil transfers from one school to another all existing CP records should be forwarded immediately, ideally with the old and new designated CP people meeting to 'hand over'.
- If a child leaves without a forwarding home address/new school information contact your EWO.
- When a child with a CP record leaves school the last school the child attended should keep the records until the child reaches 25years old.

Name .....

I have read and understood the Child Protection Policy and Guidance.

Signed ..... (Member of Staff)

Date .....