

# **GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

### **AIMS**

- to create a safe environment for all our pupils
- to create a climate of trust amongst staff and pupils
- to deal sensitively and confidentially with all child protection issues  
to recognise signs of abuse and take appropriate action to help our pupils

### **RATIONALE**

In our school staff have a key role in creating a physically and emotionally safe environment and in recognising and monitoring suspected or actual abuse. Everyone is responsible for the care and welfare of all our pupils along with the promotion of personal safety.

Child protection issues form an important part of our whole school policies on health and sexuality teaching.

Our staff recognise the nature of the wide range of abusive behaviour that our pupils may experience - emotional abuse, psychological abuse, sexual abuse, physical abuse, neglect, failure to thrive and being witness to acts of violence and pornography. Therefore, every effort is made to ensure that a climate of trust is created where issues of abuse in all its forms can be openly dealt with.

We recognise the sensitive nature of these subjects for our pupils, staff and parents and all issues are responded to sensitively.

Our curriculum concentrates on the rights of the child and we are clear that the responsibility lies with the abuser - not the victim.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Each member of staff within the school recognises that they have a specific responsibility. In Grange the Head Teacher and designated officer undertake the roles as set out in the Angus Child Protection Guidelines.

The role of the teacher is also set out in that document and is listed below:

- Create a physically and emotionally safe school and classroom environment
- Build listening systems into the school and class context
- Build relationships of trust and respect with all pupils
- Observe, monitor and record any concerns about pupils
- Report such information to the Child Protection Designated Officer
- Understand children's behaviour as a means of communication
- Be willing to entertain the hypothesis, but not the assumption that a child may be the victim of abuse
- Be aware of how to respond appropriately to a child's disclosure
- Know the authority's child protection procedure
- Seek initial training in child protection
- Ensure that sex education and personal safety is covered within the curriculum

## **PROCEDURES**

If a member of staff suspects a child protection issue or if a child discloses a child protection issue then it is essential that the proper procedures are followed. Full details of the role of the manager and the Child Protection Designated Officer are set out in the Angus Council's Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures. Noted below is how another member of staff should deal with a concern or a disclosure.

If a child discloses any information to you follow the processes as set out below:

- Make time to LISTEN
- Never promise confidentiality
  - Say you understand what they are telling you
  - Say you are sorry this has happened
  - Say you will do something about it but you will have to tell someone else who can help
- Record disclosure as soon as possible and VERBATUM
  - Record child's demeanor (upset, dishevelled)
  
- Know your limitations
- Share your concerns
- BE SENSIBLE

## CHILD PROTECTION GUIDELINES

### **What to look out for**

Recognising children who have been the subject of abuse and intervening effectively to protect them must be of high priority for us BUT we must also recognise that this is a multi-agency task. We can play a key role in identifying and monitoring cases of abuse but the primary responsibility of investigating cases lies with the Social Work department who could also involve medical staff and police. Education staff are well placed to recognise signs of abuse and we must be able to respond to a child's anxieties. We do not, however, have the necessary skills to question a child to receive the evidence that could be required in court in order to receive a conviction.

### **The following advice is taken from Angus Guidelines**

A child who has been abused or neglected (or both) may show obvious physical signs. In considering whether a child is at risk of significant harm it needs to be recognised that although some bruises and marks may be insignificant by themselves, repeated injuries, even of a very minor nature, may be symptomatic of a family in crisis and, if no action is taken, the child may be injured more seriously. Experience shows that major or fatal incidents are frequently preceded by numerous minor incidents.

Indications of whether a child is being abused can include signs other than physical injuries. There are certain parental responses which are cause for concern (especially if the child has bruising or other marks.)

- A delay in seeking medical treatment which is obviously needed
- An unawareness or denial of any injury
- Inappropriate or varying explanation of the injury
- Constant complaints about a child (realistic or unrealistic)
- Over hasty or violent reaction to a child's naughty or annoying behaviour
- Asking for a child to be removed from home, or indicating difficulties in coping with a child, about whose care there are already doubts
- Unrealistic expectations of the child

There are also certain behavioural characteristics in children which should alert you to the possibility of abuse or neglect:

- frozen watchfulness
- fear of carers
- Refusal to speak
- Severe hostility/aggression towards other children
- Running away from home
- Serious misbehaviour which could be a cry for help
- Over-friendly behaviour to strangers
- Acting in a sexually explicit manner
- Recurrent nightmares and sudden onset of bedwetting

## **PROTECTING OURSELVES**

It is essential that staff consider the possibility of possible allegations of abuse from children or from their carers. This may include physical or verbal abuse. The Angus Guidelines set out clear advice to staff in terms of protecting ourselves. The advice given covers physical restraint, being alone with a child and intimate care. The whole of section 6 of the Angus Guidelines is included with this paper. It is essential that staff make themselves familiar with what is contained in this section.

## PROTECTING OURSELVES

To help all staff protect themselves from possible allegations of abuse from children and young people or from their carers the following points are offered for guidance and advice.

The list is neither formal nor exhaustive and should take into account the age and stage of development of the children and young people who fall within your charge.

As a guide to sound professional practice this list should be considered as a starting point which may be developed through awareness raising and in-service training:

- do not rely on your "good name" to protect you
- do not for one moment believe "It could never happen to me"
- the use of physical restraint on a child or young person should involve only the minimum force necessary and is permissible only when you are certain that they are at imminent risk of endangering themselves, yourself, others or property. Where possible summon a colleague to witness the situation and to give you appropriate help
- any physical contact between a member of staff and a child or young person should be a considered action and for the purposes of instruction or immediate care
- staff are advised not to physically restrain children but the law recognises certain justification for the use of physical force in some civil and criminal cases, for example, self defence and the prevention of crime. It is also recognised that on occasion a teacher or other staff member, in the course of, his/her duty, may need to use physical force to restrain pupils. Examples may be: to break up a fight, or protect a child in immediate danger of harming him/herself, others, or damaging property. Teachers who intervene physically to avert an immediate danger will be protected in the eyes of the law, provided they use reasonable and moderate force. Details of each incident, including names of any witnesses must be recorded
- where possible avoid being alone with a child or young person. Where circumstances make this unavoidable try to ensure that others are within earshot and preferably within sight
- never make salacious or demeaning remarks to or in the presence of children and young people
- if you suspect that a child or young person is becoming inappropriately attracted to you then you are strongly advised to share your concerns with a senior colleague

- in circumstances where your relationship with or feelings towards a child or young person are placing you at risk of unprofessional behaviour you are urged to seek advice and support from a colleague or member of the management team

- from time to time personal circumstances arise which can adversely affect your professional relationships (eg bereavement, health or relationship breakdown). Should this be the case you are encouraged to seek advice and support from a colleague or management
- always use your common sense.

## **Intimate Care**

It is important to have procedures which safeguard children, young persons and staff by providing a consistent approach within a framework which recognises the rights and responsibilities of everyone involved in providing intimate care. Guidelines on intimate care for pupils with special educational needs are available in school.

Disabled young persons should be able to participate in all aspects of community life and that intimate care procedures will therefore be carried out in various settings. Thus it is important that the appropriate facilities and equipment are available wherever the child or young person is.

It is recognised that intimate care carries with it risks. It will not be possible to eliminate all risks, but the balance should be on the side of safety. Everyone is entitled to maximum safety and maximum privacy.

The Health and Safety Policy states "All employees, regardless of position, are legally obliged to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and others, and to co-operate with the employer or other authorised persons in achieving this worthwhile aim i.e. it is the duty of both employer and employee to translate this safety policy into a course of effective action".

To this end guidance is provided for caring staff, parents and managers. Managers are defined as those persons who are responsible for the management of staff directly involved in delivery of intimate care. They may be class teachers, school management staff or other authority employees.

Confident assertive children who feel their body belongs to them are less vulnerable to sexual abuse. The approach to take to a child or young person's intimate care is important: it conveys messages about what their body is 'worth'. Routine care should be enjoyable, relaxed and fun. All adult behaviour should be appropriate to the chronological age of the child or young person.

## **Guidelines for Heads of Establishments**

Any member of staff should be able to seek support without feeling it is an admission of failure. The Head of an establishment has the responsibility to ensure that the necessary procedures and equipment are available for those members of the staff involved directly in providing intimate care. The Head should ensure that:

- all staff involved in intimate care receive appropriate training according to the procedures set down by the school
- practices which ensure the safety of both staff and young people are established
- there are methods of record keeping so that any changes in behaviour ie a pupil's verbal or physical responses during intimate care are noted for reference
- all caring staff have training in basic first aid and emergency medical treatment, eg management of fits, administration of medication, and familiarity with the established routine for dealing with emergencies.
- all caring staff receive training in Child Protection and understand the school procedures for recording and reporting any concerns they have
- all staff receive training which raises their awareness of what is appropriate behaviour in children and young persons of different ages during intimate care.  
This allows staff to avoid potential difficulties
- all members of staff receive a copy of the school's guidelines and practices and the member of management whom they should contact with any concerns
- all staff receive "support and supervision" on a regular basis.

## **Guidelines for Staff**

The essential requirement for good intimate care is that staff treat every child or young person with dignity and respect. It is also important that everyone sees themselves as belonging to a team. This ensures continuity and consistency of practice as well as allowing children to choose whom they are comfortable to have as their personal carers. This is translated into practice in various ways:

- allowing the child or young person to choose their carer
- allowing the child or young person a choice in the sequence of personal care
- ensuring privacy appropriate to the child or young person's chronological age and the situation
- allowing the child or young person to care for him/herself as far as possible
- being aware of and responsive to the child or young person's reactions
- remembering the main issues of privacy and safety when carrying out intimate care away from school, or unit
- encouraging the child or young person to have a positive image of his/her own body.
- not undertaking any procedure, especially emergency medical procedures without proper training



- ensuring that the child has access to a range of adults whom the child trusts.

## **Home- School Liaison: Working with Parents/Carers**

Much of the information required by the school to make the process of intimate care as comfortable as possible for the child or young person is available from the parent or carer. A school which values parents as partners will have no difficulty in involving parents at every stage and no matter what the practical difficulties.

Parents/carers of children with medical problems requiring possible emergency treatment in a public place should be asked about their own procedure for dealing with such an emergency. Where possible, the same routine should be followed to give consistency of approach and offer reassurance to the child in a potentially frightening situation.

It is also important that the parent is informed of the school's routines of care both in school and on outings e.g. going to the swimming pool, where the facilities may require a change in the way staff carry out their duties.

When a child comes to a school for the first time, information about methods of care and the child's own preferences should be noted. This information forms the basis of a personal care programme for each child which will change as skills develop. The changes would be discussed with the family as an integral part of each pupil's educational programme.

Parents/carers are entitled to information about the school's procedures both in and out of school. Should they have any concerns, these should be treated seriously and discussed with parents/carers. It may be that they will choose to withdraw their child from an activity if they are unhappy about the care arrangements. Equally, the parent/carer may have already faced the same kind of difficulty and be able to suggest possible solutions.