

CALDECOTT PRIMARY SCHOOL AND CHILDCARE POLICY DOCUMENT	
Child Protection <i>Happy Learners, Aiming High</i>	Policy No: CPS-P-02-15 Issue No: 1.0 draft
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1 PURPOSE

The welfare of children throughout our school and childcare is of paramount importance. This policy for child protection reflects our active commitment to promoting and safeguarding that welfare.

We believe that all children have a fundamental right to feel safe and to be protected from any form of abuse whether physical, emotional, sexual or neglect. Our aim, therefore, is to provide a caring environment and a curriculum where self-esteem can be nurtured and children empowered to protect themselves.

2 SCOPE

All school employees have a responsibility to protect children from abuse and the designated teacher will ensure that all employees are conversant with the current Oxfordshire Child Protection Procedures and know how to access and implement them, independently if necessary.

The school keeps Child Protection records and confidential matters on a 'need to know' basis and these are kept separately from other school records. They are held securely and can be retrieved promptly. All records referred to in this policy will be subject to Sch. 3. Data Protection Act 1998 and the requirements of the act must be complied with at all times.

This policy is available to parents and anyone associated with the school in order to help facilitate open and effective communication between parents, children and teachers and outside agencies responsible for the well being of children.

In the absence of the Headteacher, the Assistant Head is responsible for decision making and acting in urgent situations following local authority guidelines.

3 RELATED DOCUMENTS

Forms [CF17 Child Protection Record Sheet](#)
[CF18 Recording Injuries Sheet](#)

4 POLICY

3.1 Possible Signs and Symptoms of Child Abuse – Guidelines for Staff

Children may behave strangely or appear unhappy for many reasons as they grow up and their family experiences change. The following lists of signs and types of behaviour in combination may be helpful indicators of the possibility or reality of child abuse. They are not, in themselves, evidence of abuse. As staff we worry most where there is a series of seemingly small, inexplicable incidents or signs which on

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their own do not necessarily mean that a child is being abused, but which together create a picture which gives cause for concern.

It is not our role to investigate. Our responsibility as staff, whether we suspect or know that a child is being harmed, is to alert the designated teacher for child protection (see Appendix A) who will then consult one or both of the agencies with statutory powers to investigate or intervene. In Oxfordshire there are two 'investigating authorities', the Social Services Department and the Police.

Possible signs of physical abuse:

- Unexplained injuries or burns, particularly if they recur
- Refusal to talk about injuries
- Improbable explanations of injuries
- Untreated injuries or lingering illness not attended
- Admission of punishment which appears excessive
- Shrinking from physical contact
- Fear of returning home or of parents being contacted
- Aggression/bullying
- Over compliant behaviour or a watchful attitude
- Running away
- Significant changes in behaviour without explanation
- Deterioration of work
- Unexplained pattern of absence which may serve to hide bruises or other injuries

Possible sign of emotional abuse:

- Fear of a new situation
- Inappropriate emotional response to situations
- Self harm or mutilation
- Compulsive stealing/scrounging
- 'Neurotic' behaviour e.g. obsessive rocking, thumb sucking
- Air of detachment – don't care attitude
- Social isolation – doesn't join in and has few friends
- Desperate attention seeking behaviour
- Eating problems, (overeating or lack of appetite)
- Depression, withdrawal.

Possible signs of sexual abuse:

- Bruises, burns, scratches or bite marks on the body
- Scratches, abrasions or persistent infections in the anal or genital regions
- Sexual awareness inappropriate to the child's age e.g. shown in drawings, vocabulary, games
- Frequent public masturbation
- Attempts to teach other children about sexual activity
- Aggressiveness, anger, anxiety, tearfulness
- Withdrawal from friends

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- Refusing to stay with certain people or go to certain places

Possible signs of neglect:

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Inappropriate clothing
- Frequent lateness or not attending school
- Untreated medical problems
- Low self esteem
- Poor social relationships
- Compulsive stealing or scrounging
- Constant tiredness

Possible signs in older children

- Promiscuity, prostitution, provocative sexual behaviour
- Self-injury, self-destructive behaviour, suicide attempts
- Eating disorders
- Tiredness, lethargy, listlessness
- Over-compliant behaviour
- Sleep disturbances
- Unexplained gifts of money
- Depression
- Changes in behaviour

Child abuse raises many questions about what is considered 'normal' and acceptable in child rearing situations and parent/child relationships. Teachers do have extensive contact with children in a variety of situations however and professional training, together with experience, often alerts us to behaviour which is outside the 'norm'. Once difficulties are recognised it is very important to make a referral to the appropriate agency, otherwise responsibility for the child's continuing welfare remains with the school.

3.2 Monitoring and Record Keeping –Guidelines for Staff

Monitoring is particularly valuable because as staff we are in daily contact with children and come to know what is 'normal' or usual for a particular child. Good records therefore can be the basis of valuable contributions to child protection conferences and court cases, helping to ensure that sound decisions are made on a child's behalf.

Records should be made by the class teacher initially, as a result of personal observation or information or when alerted by other school staff.

Other Local Education Authority Staff in regular contact with the child may also have records i.e. the Educational Psychologist or the Educational Social Worker, which again underlines the need for good communication.

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Recording is needed when there is concern in school or childcare about

- marks on a child's body
- unusual or different behaviour, including academic achievement
- mood changes
- puzzling statements or stories
- if requested by another agency, e.g. after a case conference

Records should be kept of:

- patterns of attendance
- changes of mood
- changes in demeanour or appearance
- changes in classroom functioning
- relationships behaviour
- parental interest or comments
- home or family changes
- medicals
- response to PE or sport
- injuries or marks, past and present

For recording please use forms:

[CF17 Child Protection Recording Sheet](#)

[CF18 Child Protection Record of Injuries Sheet](#)

3.3 Constraints which govern recording

Schools and childcare need to comply with government requirements (DSS Circular L83/14) and the policy of their local authority. These usually include the following stipulations:

- Files regarding children must be open to parents
- Third party information is not to be disclosed without consent
- Access to files can be denied for certain prescribed reasons such as in the case of actual, alleged or suspected child abuse
- Parents may have to make formal requests to see their child's file
- Working notes are not subject to disclosure, but must eventually be summarised on the file and then destroyed

3.4 Headteacher's power to exclude certain information from reports to parents

In reporting to parents, the Regulations give headteachers specific powers to exclude from areas of the report certain confidential information. This consists of any information provided by anyone other than the following:

An employee of the LEA that maintains the school; in the case of a voluntary aided and self-governing (grant-maintained) schools, a teacher or other employee at the school (including an educational psychologist engaged under contract for services); an education welfare officer or the person requesting disclosure:

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- which identifies a person (other than the pupil) to whom the information relates or one of those specified above as the source of the information or as the person to whom the information relates; or
- which, in the headteacher's opinion, would be likely to cause serious harm to the pupil concerned or to another person; or
- which bears on a case of child abuse or the risk of it; or
- which would serve to disclose information about a pupil other than the pupil being reported on.

These provisions match safeguards on the disclosure of information held in pupils' educational records as outlined in the Education (School Records) Regulations 1989.

3.5 Dealing with verbal disclosures

- It is vital to offer the child time to talk. If this is impossible immediately, then agree on some specified time later.
- It is crucial to listen to the child without being judgemental or expressing feelings of anger or horror too strongly. The child may well feel shame and guilt at what has happened and may have feelings of love for the abuser.
- It is important to limit any questioning and to be 'open-ended' in any questions you may ask. Any probing or leading questions could contaminate evidence that may be needed in the future. Your role is to receive the child's story.
- Do not promise confidentiality that you cannot honour because of the school's child protection procedures. You will need to talk to the designated teacher for child protection in your school and eventually other agencies may be contacted. A false promise of confidentiality will betray trust placed in you. You may need to tell the child that, in order to safeguard him/her, you will need to talk to someone else.
- You are not expected to be an expert in counselling, but to use your listening skills and respond sensitively.
- Make brief notes at times, if possible.
- Tell the Headteacher and record the conversation on a Child Protection record sheet.

3.6 Monitoring and Review

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Headteacher.

This policy will be updated in line with new initiatives together with any streamlining of school processes.

This policy will be reviewed in two years.

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Appendix A

The designated teacher at Caldecott is Mary Whitehead.

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CHANGE & APPROVAL

Details of Changes

New Issue

Approval

Approved by:	Signature:	Date:
Document Owner <i>Mary Whitehead</i>		
Headteacher <i>Margaret Gibb</i>		
Chair of Governors <i>Kevin Nelson</i>		