



"To Inspire and be Inspired"

Through:

Love
Faith
Truth
Respect
Excellence

St Brigid's School

Child Protection Policy

1. Introduction

The governors and staff of St Brigid's School believe that all children have a right to be educated in a safe and secure environment. Children learn effectively if they feel secure.

The aim of this Policy is to:-

- Protect the children and recognise the signs of abuse.
- To ensure that all staff understand the correct procedures.

This procedure is in line with the statutory duties and procedures and follows the guidance in working together to safeguard children.

The key principles that underpin work with children and families are found in the *Children Act 1989* and *2004* and the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*, which the Welsh Assembly Government adopted as the basis for its work with all children and families in Wales. In *Children and Young People: Rights to Action 2004* the Welsh Assembly Government established seven core aims through which it would work to ensure all children:

1. Have a flying start in life;
2. Have a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities;
3. Enjoy the best possible health and are free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation;
4. Have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities;
5. Are listened to, treated with respect, and have their race and cultural identity recognised;
6. Have a safe home and a community which supports physical and emotional well being; and
7. Are not disadvantaged by poverty.

(Taken from: All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008)

2. Prevention

St Brigid's school recognises that high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and good lines of communication with a trusted adult are essential to wellbeing, and that staff have a crucial role to play in noticing indicators of possible abuse or neglect. The school therefore:

- seeks to maintain an ethos where children and young people feel secure, in a positive, supportive and safe environment, have a sense of being valued, and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- ensures children and young people know there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.
- helps children and young people understand what is and is not acceptable behaviour towards them, teaching them about staying safe from harm, and how to speak up if they have worries or concerns.
- provides appropriate training for staff and governors.
- includes awareness of safety and self-protection in the curriculum where appropriate.
- publicises appropriate channels to whom pupils can turn for assistance, both within and outside the school.

St Brigid's school recognises the need to establish suitable safeguards with regard to staff and governors at the school. The following measures and guidelines are offered to protect both staff and pupils:

- All members of staff and governors are subject to Disclosure and Barring Service checks on appointment and safe recruitment procedures. Assurance must also be obtained that appropriate child protection checks and procedures are made by organisations which work with pupils from the School on other sites or visitors to the school.
- Staff and governors will be made aware of their pastoral responsibility and duty of care towards the children and young people and the trust inherent in their role.
- High standards of personal conduct must be maintained at all times.
- Staff and governors are reminded that correct Child Protection Procedures are followed at all times in order to protect children from abuse or further abuse.

3. The Child Protection Officer /Designated Teacher

There is a designated teacher for ensuring that child protection matters are correctly administered at St. Brigid's School. The Head should be contacted immediately if any member of staff has any concerns that could be considered to be about child protection.

Designated Teacher: Child Protection - Lynne Price

Second Designated Teacher: Rona Jones

Designated Governor: Child Protection - Dr Markus Hesselning

School Chaplain - Sr. Elizabeth Kelly

School Education Social Worker - Mandy Butterworth 07884268172

Safeguarding Officer - Wayne Wheatley 07500123965

Denbighshire Social Services -First Contact Team - 01824712800

School Nurse Mrs Jo Ormerod Tel: 01745 5854546

e-mail: josette.ormerod@wales.nhs.uk

4. Definitions of abuse

A child is abused or neglected when somebody inflicts harm, or fails 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. A child or young person up to the age of 18 years can suffer abuse or neglect and require protection via an inter-agency child protection plan

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or caregiver fabricates or induces illness in a child whom they are looking after.

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 a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far 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, for example by witnessing domestic abuse* within the home or being bullied, or 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.

*For further information on how to deal with a domestic abuse situation, please see: *Information and Guidance on Domestic Abuse: Safeguarding Children and Young People in Wales*. Welsh Assembly Government, March 2010.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

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 caregiver 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. In addition, neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse.

5. Possible Signs of abuse

Staff should be alert to the possible indicators of abuse of children in their care, but should also be aware that the following signs may also have other explanations.

Physical Abuse

- Unexplained injuries or burns particularly if they are recurrent (possible signs of self harm?)
- Improbable reasons given for injuries either by the child or parent
- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Admission of punishment that 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
- Self destructive tendencies
- Aggression towards others
- Chronic running away

Neglect

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Poor state of clothing
- Emaciation
- Frequent lateness or non attendance at school
- Untreated medical problems
- Destructive tendencies
- Low self esteem
- Neurotic behaviour (rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking)
- No social relationships
- Compulsive stealing or scavenging

Emotional Abuse

- Physical, mental and emotional developmental delay
- Admission of punishment that appears excessive
- Overreaction to mistakes
- Sudden speech disorders
- Fear of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- Neurotic behaviour
- Self mutilation
- Fear of Parents being contacted
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Drug, alcohol, or solvent abuse
- Chronic running away
- Compulsive stealing / scavenging

Sexual Abuse

Children may show no signs at all or some of the following signs

- Hinting about a secret they cannot discuss
- Says a friend has a problem
- Ask if you will keep a secret if they tell you something
- Begin lying, stealing, blatantly cheating in the hope of being caught
- Have unexplained sources of money
- Have terrifying dreams
- Start wetting themselves
- Exhibit sudden inexplicable changes in behaviour, such as becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- Stop enjoying previously liked activities such as music, art, sports, gym or uniformed organizations
- Become fearful or refuse to see certain adults for no apparent reason; dislike a babysitter, relative or other adult
- Act in a sexual way inappropriate for their age
- Draw sexually explicit pictures depicting some form of abuse
- Being secretive about something that is worrying them
- Have frequent urinary infections, bleeding in the genital or anal areas
- Have soreness or bleeding in the throat
- Have chronic ailments such as stomach pains or headaches
- Develop eating disorders, such as anorexia or bulimia
- Become severely depressed and or attempt suicide
- Have a poor self image / self mutilate
- Continually running away
- Regress to younger behaviour such as thumb sucking, surround themselves with previously discarded toys
- Show discomfort when walking
- Say they are no good, dirty, rotten
- Be wary, watchful
- Repeat obscene words or phrases which may have been said during the abuse
- Attempt to sexually abuse another younger child
- Talk or write about sexual matters
- Find excuses for not going home or to a friend's house after school (places where abuse might be happening)

6. Responding to concerns

If staff are concerned that children are showing symptoms of abuse behaviour or third parties bring child protection concerns relating to a pupil to a member of staff or if children speak to them about abuse they should contact the Child Protection Officer at school at the earliest opportunity. The Child Protection Officer will then instigate the appropriate procedures if required. The Child Protection Officer will also share the concern with the Head Teacher and the local Social Services department.

Staff should record their concerns on a dated sheet, with details as follows

- What the concern is
- What was the evidence that led to the concern
- What the child said what the member of staff said or did in response

This record should use the actual words spoken as far as possible as if an investigation takes place it may be used as evidence.

The purpose of written records is:

- To provide a documental account of involvement with a child and/or family;
- To assist continuity when a Designated Child Protection Officer changes;
- To provide essential sources of evidence for investigations and enquiries.

If a member of staff is the first to see an injury then they must inform the Child Protection Officer immediately.

During school related excursions (e.g. school trips, CCF activities) the responsible adult will act as the designated child protection officer and will be expected to act in the child's best interest and in line with the All Wales Child Protection Procedure.

If you suspect a child is being abused you must refer.

If a child discloses, there are a number of actions to support the child:

- Stay calm and be available to listen;
- Do not promise confidentiality
- Listen with the utmost care and sensitivity;
- Do not put words into the child's mouth, but note the main points carefully;
- Keep a full record - date, time, what the child did, said etc, (please use the "Child Protection Initial Concern Form" in Appendix ...)
- Reassure the child and let them know they were right to inform you;
- Inform the child that this information will have to be passed on;
- Follow the referral procedures.

Making a referral

An exchange of relevant information between professionals is essential in order to safeguard children. The overriding concern must always be the welfare of the child. The safety of the child is always the paramount consideration.

A referral must be made to the Duty Social Worker, Social Services and a copy to the Senior Education Officer with responsibility for Child Protection as soon as a problem, suspicion or concern becomes apparent and certainly within 24 hours. All telephone referrals or referrals made by the Child Protection Officer / Head teacher / ESW should then be confirmed in writing within twenty four hours to the e mail address below:

cfsgateway@denbighshire.gov.uk

After a referral is made

The person making the referral may be asked to do any or all of the following tasks and should be prepared and willing to do them:

- Contribute to a strategy discussion;
- Assist with section 47 enquiries;
- Write a report for the Child Protection Conference;
- Attend a Child Protection conference.

It is the responsibility of the individual professional, to ensure that their child protection concerns are taken seriously and followed through. Each individual is accountable for his or her own role in the child protection process, and if the professional remains concerned about a child he or she should re-refer the child and/or bring the matter to the immediate attention of the Social Services senior manager with responsibility for child protection. In all such situations, the professional's own line manager should be informed. All records kept should be clear, concise and complete.

(Taken from the All Wales Child Protection Procedures)

7. The Distinctions between a Disclosure / Allegation and a Suspicion

The differences between these two possible Child Protection issues are very important when bringing them to the attention of the Child Protection Officer.

A disclosure / allegation is very important and should be dealt with immediately. Once the disclosure / allegation has been brought to the member of staff's attention, this member of staff should immediately inform the Child Protection Officer, so that the correct procedures can be put in place. Along with this, when a disclosure/ allegation is heard, the member of staff must never ask leading questions, allow the child to talk and do not suggest situations that may have happened.

As soon as it becomes apparent that the child has disclosed always inform the child that his or her secret cannot be kept and that this information will have to be shared with an appropriate person.

As soon as possible after the conversation with the child write down a transcript of the conversation so that an accurate account of what was said for future reference.

Where there is suspicion, there is not the urgency that an allegation / disclosure would create. The Child Protection Officer will need to be told as soon as possible and relevant agencies consulted. Concerns should be logged and passed to the Child Protection Officer.

8. Helping the Child when Abuse is Disclosed

Should a young person disclose that s/he has been or is being abused, this information must be passed on to the Child Protection Officer. If a young person discloses abuse, the staff member should:

DO	DO NOT
Listen to the child / young person rather than directly questioning him or her.	Stop a child who is freely recalling significant events.
Allow the child / young person to have another person present if they wish.	Show shock or disquiet.
Reassure the young person that they are not to blame and are right to tell.	Guarantee confidentiality.
Inform the child / young person that you will have to share the information with the named appropriate person.	Put words into the child / young person's mouth.
Make a written record of the discussion as soon as possible after the child has made the disclosure to you, taking care to record the timing, setting, personnel / other staff present as well as what was said.	Be afraid to seek support from yourself from your line manager. However, it is not appropriate because of the high standard of confidentiality that must be maintained in child protection to discuss individual cases

	with personal friends or acquaintances, who may be able to identify the family concerned.
Be clear about your own position, you have a duty and responsibility to protect children and young people.	Interrupt the child / young person.
Keep any drawings, paintings etc. that the child / young person relating to their disclosure.	Expose the child / young person to mass examination by staff to verify any injuries.
Remain calm and reassuring.	Question the child, remember, this task must be undertaken by specially trained professionals.

9. Reactions to Abuse

What to expect from a child who has been abused

A child may experience a range of reactions to abuse including some or all of the following

- A feeling of shame or guilt
- A feeling of being dirty - spoilt- degraded
- Embarrassment
- A desire to talk continually about the abuse and to gain reassurance
- Dislike of being touched and touching others
- Loss of confidence
- Trouble sleeping, nightmares
- Possible drug/alcohol abuse
- Hatred of self and of his/her body. Destructive behaviour
- Inability to complete school work
- Inability to relate to other children / adults
- Difficulties may continue long after the abuse and the child may need specialist support

10. E-Safety

Most of our pupils will use mobile 'phones and computers at some time. They are a source of fun, entertainment, communication and education. However, we know that some men, women and young people will use these technologies to harm children. Chatrooms and social networking sites are the more obvious sources of inappropriate and harmful behaviour and pupils are not allowed to access these sites on school equipment. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails, to enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, webcam photography or face-to-face meetings. The school's e-safety policy explains how we try to keep pupils safe in school. Cyber-bullying by pupils, via texts and emails, will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures.

11. Self Harm

In the event of a disclosure of a pupil self harming the Child Protection Officer or her deputy must be informed. One of the Level 2 CAMHS trained teachers (Stuart Ayres, June Morris, Lynne Price) will use the screening tool and a phone call will be made to the CAMHS early intervention team seeking advice. Children's Services will be contacted and informed of the action taken.

12. Independent listener

A number of agencies are suggested to pupils if they need to talk to someone from outside the school. These are displayed in corridors near communal areas and include the School Nurse, the Catholic Children's Society, Childline and the Samaritans. The school's appointed Independent Listener for is Jo Ormerod the school nurse.

13. The Role of the Child Protection Officer/Designated Teacher

The person nominated or appointed as Child Protection Officer should have;

- A clear understanding of the importance of Child Protection and the role of the school or facility in this process.
- The ability to communicate effectively with other agencies and the ability to appreciate all relevant perspectives.
- The ability to relate well to pupils, parents and colleagues in order to gain their confidence.
- Sufficient seniority or recognition within the school in order to act on behalf of the organisation and in some instances bring about change if required.
- A willingness to develop awareness of Child Protection, particularly through training and obtaining information available in existing and future procedures, circulars and guidance.

The role of the co-ordinator /designated person includes:

- Ensuring that all members of staff are aware of the appropriate Child Protection Procedures and who the designated teacher is. This is particularly important for new staff.
- Ensuring that the proper procedures are followed.
- Liaison with other agencies over cases of alleged abuse and the promotion of co-operative working including attendance at Case Conferences.
- Ensuring that the designated named officer for Child Protection for School is aware of any breakdown in communication or problems with the implementation of local procedures.

- Maintaining appropriate records regarding cases which cause concern and subsequent action taken.
- Ensuring that ongoing monitoring exists for pupils having been the subject of child abuse concerns and/or, placed on the Child Protection Register and made the subject of a plan involving their school.

The designated teacher has the responsibility for ensuring that the procedures are followed and for liaising with Social Services Area Office in any case of abuse, following discussion with the Head teacher.

Staff must bring all child protection concerns or allegations to the Child Protection Officer.

14. Confidentiality

Members of staff have a duty/ professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with the Child Protection Officer.

Members of staff should not promise to keep secret information given to them by a child, but should explain that they are obliged to pass the information to the designated person.

15. If the Designated Child Protection Officer is not in School

In the event of the designated child protection officer not being in school then any member of staff with concerns should contact the Head teacher without delay.

16. Where it is alleged that abuse has taken place involving a member of teaching or other school staff

When it is alleged or suspected that a pupil has been abused by a member of staff employed by the Lifelong Learning Department, the following procedure should be taken.

- The Head teacher/Manager or deputy in his/her absence should be informed immediately.
- All suspected abuse must be reported to Social Services or The Police.
- Schools must not undertake their own internal enquiries but must refer on as described above. Schools must not make their own decisions about whether a concern that involves a particular member of their own staff is a disciplinary issue or a child protection issue. Such complex considerations should only take place with the involvement of Social Services, the local authority Safeguarding Officer and The Police.
- In the event of an allegation of abuse being made against an individual employee in their private life, child protection enquiries should be conducted in accordance with the procedures described in the All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008.
- The Welsh Assembly Government has in the *Staffing of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2006* set out the requirement for an independent investigation service.

Schools are now required to use an independent investigation service in respect of any disciplinary process in relation to teaching staff. The purpose of the independent investigation service is to support school governing bodies when considering a disciplinary matter.

However the independent investigative element should not be introduced until the completion of the child protection enquiries and/or criminal investigation by the statutory agencies.

- If the allegation or complaint is about the person who is designated as the Child Protection Officer for the school then any information should be shared with the Head teacher or ESW / Safeguarding Officer who will act as the Child Protection Officer for the school during the investigations and will communicate with Social Services.
- If it is alleged that the abuse involves a Head teacher, Manager or senior member of staff. In such situations: Inform, without delay, the Safeguarding Officer for Education or the appropriate Chief Officer. Alternatively, request a "confidential" interview with the appropriate Chief Officer, Education Social Work Team Leader or Head of Partnership & Inclusion.

17. Dissemination of the Child Protection Policy

Copies of the Child Protection policy will be reviewed annually and published on the school's website. Copies are provided for all Staff and Governors. A suitable summary of the document will be placed in pupil planners.

18. Review Procedure for the Child Protection Policy

The Child Protection Policy will be reviewed annually by the Child Protection Officer, the designated governor for Child Protection, Education Social Worker and the Head teacher. Any updates / changes will be made and communicated to staff, governors and parents & pupils.

Last reviewed: December 2014