

# Safeguarding children

Woodcroft School pupil policy 23.11.17

This policy has been developed with regard to the DfE statutory guidance. Woodcroft is located in Essex and the Southend Essex and Thurrock Safeguarding Children Board procedures have been referred to in the development of this policy. The policy has been approved by the board of directors of Woodcroft School and is reviewed annually. The board of directors of Woodcroft School fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection and safeguarding children and recognises that the safety and welfare of children is paramount in all of the school's activities. The board also recognises that the policy and procedures apply to all children and young people regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or religion. The duties set out in this policy apply to all staff, directors, volunteers and contractors working for the school.

There are five main elements to the policy:

- Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children. See *Recruitment, selection and disclosure policy*.
- Raising awareness of safeguarding issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe. See *Appendix A*.
- Implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse. See *Appendix B*.
- Supporting pupils who have been abused.
- Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.

We recognise that because of the day to day contact with children, school staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. The school will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Include opportunities in the curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

We will follow the procedures set out by the Essex Safeguarding Children Board and take account of guidance issued by the DfE to:

- Ensure we have a designated senior person for safeguarding children who has received appropriate training and support for this role.
- Ensure every member of staff (including temporary and supply staff and volunteers) and the board of directors knows the name of the designated senior person responsible for safeguarding children and their role.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated senior person responsible for safeguarding children. See *Appendices A, B, D, E*.
- Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and staff for safeguarding children. See *Parent handbook*.
- Notify social services if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a pupil who is on a child protection plan.
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding safeguarding matters, including attendance at case conferences.
- Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
- Ensure all records are kept securely, separate from the main pupil files, and in locked locations.
- Follow set procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer. See *Appendix C*.

- Ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed.
- Take seriously all concerns and allegations of abuse and respond appropriately, including making referrals to childrens services or to the police in emergencies.

We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at school their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. The school will endeavour to support the pupil through:

- The content of the curriculum.
- The school ethos, which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued.
- The school behaviour policy, which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the school. The school will ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
- Liaison with other agencies that support the pupil, such as social services, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, education welfare service and educational psychology service.
- Ensuring that, where a pupil on a child protection plan leaves, their information is transferred to the new school immediately and that the child's social worker is informed.

## Designated senior person

The head teacher, Brian Sainsbury, is the person designated to be responsible for safeguarding children in the school. These responsibilities include: being the first point of contact for safeguarding concerns, allegations and other safeguarding issues; chairing the safeguarding panel; and ensuring the confidential storage of safeguarding children meeting minutes, records of concerns and other safeguarding documentation.

If the head teacher is off-site, then the care manager, Paulette Regan, is the deputy designated senior person and the first point of contact for concerns, allegations or other safeguarding issues.

The managing director, Daniel Edwards, is nominated as the point of contact if there are safeguarding concerns that involve the designated senior person.

## Multi-disciplinary safeguarding team

Woodcroft multi-disciplinary safeguarding team meetings are attended by a core group consisting of the designated and deputy designated leads for safeguarding (the head teacher, care manager and managing director) and, where required, additional professionals from Woodcroft and/or LAs. All are bound by a code of confidentiality.

The fundamental principle is to ensure a 'team around the child' approach to the work, emphasising collaborative working, consistent communication and the sharing of skills.

As part of this multi-disciplinary way of working all pupils are included in the confidential *Safeguarding meeting file* when starting at Woodcroft. New parents are informed of this and signed agreement is sought. Pupils who have left Woodcroft are retained on the file until the handover of safeguarding responsibilities has taken place, so that progress can be monitored and support provided to pupils' new schools.

Further meetings may occur as a result of these multi-disciplinary discussions. Should safeguarding issues arise from a safeguarding team meeting, the school's senior designated person will take them forward in line with the school's policy and procedures.

## Safeguarding children training

The designated senior person, deputy designated person, managing director and other members of the senior management team receive advanced level training every two years. There is yearly training for other staff and induction training for new staff and volunteers.

## Details of procedures and guidance

- DfE documents: *Working Together to Safeguard Children, February 2017*; *Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2016*
- Essex Safeguarding Children Board documents: *SET procedures*
- Woodcroft documents: *Single central record*; *Staff handbook*; *Staff induction pack*
- Woodcroft policies: *Anti-bullying, Recruitment, selection & disclosure*; *Behaviour management*; *Curriculum development*; *Health and safety*; *Non-employees in school*; *Whistleblowing*

## Current local and national priorities

### Children Missing from Education (CME)

Where a pupil is absent and it has not been possible to communicate with parents to determine why, the school will contact the sending LA to make them aware.

When pupils leave, their former teacher and the care manager contact the new school to confirm enrolment and attendance, and to ensure transfer of any safeguarding information. Our multi-disciplinary safeguarding team tracks former pupils until a destination school has been confirmed. If a pupil leaves and no onward destination school is known, their details are reported to their LA.

### Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Please see *Definitions* below.

### E-safety

Woodcroft uses the Smoothwall internet filtering service for in-school computers and devices. The E-safety co-ordinator attended the CEOPC (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre) Ambassador course and is responsible for cascading the training to others, where appropriate. Teachers, STAs and therapists will complete the Thinkuknow online training course, which has been jointly developed by the NSPCC and CEOP. E-safety and mobile technology issues are periodically brought to the attention of parents through parent newsletters, and questionnaires are used to gather information on pupil and parent training needs. Please also see the *E-safety policy*, which is available from the school office.

### Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. There is a range of potential indicators that a child may be at risk of FGM, which individually may not indicate risk, but if there are two or more indicators present, this could signal a risk to the child. Victims of FGM are likely to come from a community that is known to practise FGM. Professionals should note that girls at risk of FGM may not yet be aware of it or that it may be conducted on them, so sensitivity should always be shown when approaching the subject. Warning signs that FGM may be about to take place, or may have already taken place, can be found on pages 16 and 17 of the *Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines*. Staff should activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children's social care. Any instances of FGM must be reported to the police.

### Preventing radicalisation

All schools are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of their functions, to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'. This duty is known as the Prevent duty. Woodcroft School follows the *Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales* and the DfE departmental advice *The Prevent Duty Guidance for Schools and Childcare Providers, July 2015*.

## Appendix A – recognising the signs of abuse

Teachers and other adults in school are well placed to observe any physical, emotional or behavioural signs which indicate that a child may be suffering significant harm. The relationships between staff, pupils, parents and the public which foster respect, confidence and trust can lead to disclosures of abuse, and/or school staff being alerted to concerns.

### Definitions

**Children** anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection.

#### **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children**

Defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children’s health or development;
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances.

**Child protection** part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

**Abuse** a form of maltreatment of a child. 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 others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

**Physical abuse** a form of abuse which 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 carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**Emotional abuse** the persistent emotional maltreatment 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 insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child’s developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

**Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact

activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Child sexual exploitation** involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where children receive something (for example food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts, money or in some cases simply affection) as a result of engaging in sexual activities. Sexual exploitation can take many forms, ranging from the seemingly ‘consensual’ relationship, where sex is exchanged for affection or gifts, to serious organised crime by gangs and groups. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power in the relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim, which increases as the exploitative relationship develops. Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying (including cyberbullying) and grooming. However, it is also important to recognise that some children who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse.

**Neglect** 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. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

**Young carers** are children and young persons under 18 who provide or intend to provide care assistance or support to another family member. They carry out on a regular basis, significant or substantial caring tasks and assume a level of responsibility, which would usually be associated with an adult. The person receiving care is often a parent but can be a sibling, grandparent or other relative who is disabled, has some chronic illness, mental health problem or other condition connected with a need for care support or supervision.

## Appendix B – what to do if you are concerned

This guidance follows Southend Essex and Thurrock Child Protection Procedures which are consistent with the DfE documents *Working Together to Safeguard Children* and *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.

It is not the responsibility of the school staff to investigate welfare concerns or determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation. All staff, however, do have a duty to recognise concerns and maintain an open mind. Accordingly all concerns regarding the welfare of pupils will be recorded and discussed with the designated senior person with responsibility for child protection (or another senior member of staff in the absence of the designated person or their deputy) prior to any discussion with parents.

### **Staff must immediately report any:**

- suspicion that a child is injured, marked, or bruised in a way which is not readily attributable to the normal knocks or scrapes received in play;
- explanation given which appears inconsistent or suspicious;
- behaviours which give rise to suspicions that a child may have suffered harm (e.g. worrying drawings or play);
- concerns that a child may be suffering from inadequate care, ill treatment, or emotional maltreatment;
- concerns that a child is presenting signs or symptoms of abuse or neglect;
- significant changes in a child's presentation, including non-attendance;
- hint or disclosure of abuse from any person;
- concerns regarding person(s) who may pose a risk to children (e.g. living in a household with children present).

### **Duty to refer**

*Keeping Children Safe in Education* states that if there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child anyone can make a referral to social care. Whilst this remains the case, we believe that the best people to make referrals for our pupils are the senior designated person or their nominated deputy. Therefore, at Woodcroft during school hours, the procedures set out in this policy should be followed by staff, students, volunteers, visitors and any person on-site or involved in an off-site school activity with Woodcroft pupils. In exceptional circumstances (for example those involving the designated persons, or if there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child out of school hours) then direct referrals to social care may be suitable.

## **1. Responding to disclosure**

Disclosures or information may be received from pupils, staff, parents or other members of the public. Woodcroft recognises that those who disclose such information may do so with difficulty, having chosen carefully to whom they will speak. Accordingly all staff will handle disclosures with sensitivity and communicate with pupils in a way suited to their level of communication need.

Such information cannot remain confidential and staff will immediately communicate what they have been told to the designated senior person and make a contemporaneous record.

## 2. Principles

Staff will not investigate but will, wherever possible, elicit enough information to pass on to the designated person in order that s/he can make an informed decision of what to do next.

Staff will:

- listen to and take seriously any disclosure or information that a child may be at risk of harm;
- try to ensure that the person disclosing does not have to speak to another member of school staff;
- clarify the information;
- try to keep questions to a minimum and of an ‘open’ nature, e.g. ‘Can you tell me what happened?’ rather than ‘Did x hit you?’;
- try not to show signs of shock, horror or surprise;
- not express feelings or judgements regarding any person alleged to have harmed the child;
- explain sensitively to the person that they have a responsibility to refer the information to the senior designated person;
- reassure and support the person as far as possible;
- explain that only those who need to know will be told;
- explain what will happen next and that the person will be involved as appropriate;
- fill out a blue form from the school office (*Child protection record of concern*, see *Appendix E*) and hand it in person to the senior designated person.

## 3. Action by the designated senior person

(or deputy designated senior person in their absence)

Following any information raising concern, the designated senior person will consider:

- any urgent medical needs of the child;
- consulting with the Essex Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), see *Appendix D*;
- making an enquiry to find out if the child is subject to a Child Protection Plan by ringing the relevant social care team in the child’s sending authority;
- discussing the matter with other agencies involved with the family;
- consulting with appropriate persons, e.g. sending authority LSCB and/or social care;
- the child’s wishes.

Then decide:

- wherever possible, to talk to parents, unless to do so may place a child at risk of significant harm, impede any police investigation and/or place the member of staff or others at risk;
- whether to make a child protection referral to social care because a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, and if this needs to be undertaken immediately;

OR

- not to make a referral at this stage;
- if further monitoring is necessary;
- if it would be appropriate to undertake an assessment (e.g. Common Assessment Framework) and/or make a referral for other services (for contacts see *Appendix D*).

All information and actions taken, including the reasons for any decisions made, will be fully documented. All referrals to social care will be followed up in writing within 24 hours using an inter-agency form.

#### **4. Action following a child protection referral**

The designated senior person or other appropriate member of staff will:

- make regular contact with the allocated social worker to stay informed;
- wherever possible, contribute to the Strategy Discussion;
- provide a report for, attend, and contribute to any subsequent Child Protection Conference;
- if the child or children are made the subject of a Child Protection Plan, contribute to the Child Protection Plan and attend Core Group Meetings and Review Conferences;
- where possible, share all reports with parents prior to meetings;
- where in disagreement with a decision made by social care, e.g. not to apply Child Protection Procedures or not to convene a Child Protection Conference, follow the guidance in the Southend Essex and Thurrock Child Protection Procedures for Resolving Professional Disagreements;
- where a child is on or is the subject of a child protection plan moves from the school or goes missing, immediately inform the allocated social worker.

#### **5. Recording and monitoring**

Accurate records will be made as soon as practicable and will clearly distinguish between observation, fact, opinion and hypothesis. All records will be signed and dated, any information given will be recorded verbatim where possible, and a note made of the location and description of any injuries seen.

All child protection documents will be retained in a 'Child Protection' file, separate from the child's main file. This will be locked away and only accessible to the designated senior person. These records will be copied and transferred to any school or setting the child moves to, clearly marked 'Child Protection, Confidential, for attention of Designated Senior Person Safeguarding.' Original copies will be retained until the child's 25th birthday.

#### **6. Supporting the child and partnership with parents**

- Woodcroft School recognises that the child's welfare is paramount, however good child protection practice and outcome relies on a positive, open and honest working partnership with parents.
- Whilst we may, on occasion, need to make referrals without consultation with parents, we will make every effort to maintain a positive working relationship with them whilst fulfilling our duties to protect any child.
- We will provide a secure, caring, supportive and protective relationship for the child.
- Children will be given a proper explanation (appropriate to age and understanding) of what action is being taken on their behalf and why.
- We will endeavour always to preserve the privacy, dignity and right to confidentiality of the child and parents. The designated senior person will determine which members of staff need to know personal information and what they need to know for the purpose of supporting and protecting the child.

## Appendix c – allegations against staff or volunteers

Where an allegation is made against any person working in or on behalf of the school that he or she has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- has behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children;

we will apply the same principles as in the rest of this policy and we will always follow the Southend Essex and Thurrock Child Protection Procedures. Detailed records will be made to include decisions, actions taken, and reasons for these. All records will be retained securely by the senior designated person.

Whilst we acknowledge such allegations, (as all others), may be false, malicious or misplaced, we also acknowledge they may be founded. It is, therefore, essential that all allegations are investigated properly and in line with agreed procedures.

### Initial action

- The person who has received an allegation or witnessed an event will immediately inform the head teacher and make a record.
- In the event that an allegation is made against the head teacher the matter will be reported to the managing director who will proceed as described for the head teacher below.
- The head teacher will take steps, where necessary, to secure the immediate safety of children and any urgent medical needs.
- The member of staff will not be approached at this stage unless it is necessary to address the immediate safety of children.
- The head teacher may need to clarify any information regarding the allegation, however, no person will be interviewed at this stage.
- The head teacher will consult with the Essex Local Authority Designated Officer in order to determine if it is appropriate for the allegation to be dealt with by the school or if there needs to be a referral to social care and/or the police for investigation.
- Consideration will be given throughout to the support and information needs of pupils, parents and staff.
- The head teacher will inform and consult the managing director (or, if unavailable, the finance director) of any allegation.

### Further action

- Following the advice of the LSCB and the school's legal advisers, the matter will be dealt with according to the relevant procedures set out in the document *Southend, Essex and Thurrock Safeguarding and child protection procedures, 2016*, and where relevant Woodcroft School's *Disciplinary policy*, both of which are available on request from the head teacher.

## Appendix D – local and national safeguarding contacts

03330 139797 Essex Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)  
(*childrens.safeguarding@essex.gov.uk*)

0845 6037627 Essex Safeguarding Children Board *and*  
Essex Social Care / Initial Response Team  
(*initial.responseteamchildrens@essex.gov.uk*)

0300 1230779 Emergency Duty Team – out of office hours  
0845 6061212 (*emergency.dutyteamoutofhours@essex.gov.uk*)

999 Police or ambulance emergency service

101 Police non-emergency line  
(control room will direct you to the relevant child abuse office)

020 8539 5522 Whipps Cross Hospital

0808 800 5000 NSPCC: help for adults concerned about a child

0800 1111 Childline: help for children and young people

**Note:** a list of the current social care contacts for each pupil's LA is kept in the school office.

## Appendix E – child protection record of concern (blue form)

Blue forms are available from the school office. They must be put in an envelope with a blue sticker (also available from the office) and handed in person to the designated senior person, or in their absence the deputy designated senior person.

Example:

<p><b>Safeguarding record of concerns</b> Woodcroft School 12/09 <span style="float: right;">Private and confidential</span></p> <p>Pupil's name _____ DOB _____</p> <p>Please record your concerns below, place in a sealed envelope marked 'Private and confidential' and hand in person to the head teacher or in their absence to their deputy. Please include the following information regarding your concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The date, time and context</li><li>- The sequence of events</li><li>- Your actual concerns</li><li>- The pupil's actual words, if applicable</li></ul> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 300px; width: 100%;"></div> <p>Staff member recording concerns _____</p> <p style="padding-left: 100px;">Signature _____</p> <p style="padding-left: 100px;">Today's date _____</p>
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