

**LANCASTER STEINER SCHOOL**

**Safeguarding Children**  
**Policy**

DESIGNATED SENIOR PERSONS

Denise Randall

Rowan Brook-Thompson (deputy)

Under Review for April 2010

## Safeguarding Children

Denise Randall is the Designated Senior Person

Rowan Brook Thompson – deputy DSP

Deanne Bell - Council Member for Child Protection

### CONTACT NUMBERS

**Social Services** – Andy Shackleton is the team leader of the safeguarding team. Ask to speak to him or the duty social worker. Telephone - 01524 66246

**LEA** –Mary Aurens is the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) at County Hall Preston – 01772 532634

# Safeguarding Children Policy

'Because of their day-to-day contact with individual children during school terms, teachers and other school staff are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour or failure to develop.'

( *Working Together – Under the Children Act, 1998*)

## **1. Purpose Of A Safeguarding Children Policy**

1.1 Our school safeguarding children policy provides clear direction to staff and others about expected codes of behaviour in dealing with child protection issues. It makes explicit our commitment to the development of good practice and sound procedures. This ensures that child protection concerns and referrals may be handled sensitively, professionally and in ways which support the needs of the child.

## **2. Introduction**

2.1 Lancaster Steiner School fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect children and support pupils in school.

There are three main elements to our Safeguarding Children Policy:

a) Prevention

We aim to create a positive school atmosphere where staff provide support to children in a teaching as well as a pastoral role.

b) Protection

This is achieved by our following agreed procedures and ensuring that staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to Safeguarding Children concerns.

c) Support:

Support will be given to pupils and school staff and also to children who may have been abused.

2.2 This policy applies to all of the following:

children; teaching staff; non-teaching staff; parents; students; governors; visitors; volunteers

### **3. School Commitment**

3.1 We recognise that for children, high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and clear lines of communication with a trusted adult all help prevention and that this is especially true for those at risk of suffering from abuse.

Our school will therefore:

- a) establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are listened to. The Steiner Waldorf Curriculum places great emphasis on the relationship between children and between child and teacher and activities and learning are structured to support children's social, emotional, personal and spiritual development. As part of the admissions procedure teachers may visit children and their parents in their home. This gives the child individual time with their teacher in which to begin their relationship. Children also visit the school with their parents and in the kindergarten parents are offered the opportunity of accompanying the child so that the child can settle in at its own pace. Formal situations where speaking and listening occur include daily snack time/ morning break.
- b) ensure that children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty. In the kindergarten free play and time in the garden offer many opportunities for exchange. In the lower school teachers take their break with the children and there are opportunities for exchange in this informal setting. Teachers are also sensitive to the child's need for privacy and actively create opportunities for exchange when a child seems troubled or in need of support.
- c) provide through the curriculum, activities and materials which will help equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse and also help them develop realistic attitudes to the role of adults. This will mainly be in the form of discussion, story and role play based on age appropriate stories used with the awareness of issues raised by the teacher.
- d) Ensure that wherever possible every effort will be made to establish effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from other agencies. Relationships between parents and teachers are developed and sustained through regular meetings with parents and by the whole school community meeting together for festivals and celebrations. There is a strong community basis to the school, with supportive links between older and younger classes and good community awareness work, both within the classroom and for adults involved in the school. A particular feature of Steiner Schools is that the children have the same kindergarten teacher from 3 to 6 years of age and the same class teacher from 6 to 14 years of age. This means that parents and teachers work together for several years and this allows for the growth of familiarity and trust.

- e) build upon our community by establishing links between younger and older classes and work with children and adults on community awareness.

#### **4. Framework**

Schools do not operate in isolation. We work in partnership with other public Agencies. Safeguarding Children is the responsibility of all adults and especially those working with children. We work to guidance contained in the Lancashire Safeguarding Children Procedure (2006).

#### **5. Roles and Responsibilities**

5.1 All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to safeguard children. The key roles for safeguarding children are -

The Designated Senior Person (DSP) the role of the DSP is to:

- a) Understand the *procedures* and how they work in *practice*
- b) Ensure that the school works to its *policy* for handling child protection concerns
- c) Ensure that the school has a system for *recording* concerns at all stages
- d) Provide *support* and *guidance* to school staff
- e) Undertake and offer *training*
- f) Co-ordinate action where there are child protection concerns
- g) Review Child Protection Policy with others in school including the management group
- h) In the event of the absence of the DSP for either the kindergarten or school the other DSP will act as the DSP for the whole school.
- i) Support the other DSP in discussing appropriate action
- j) Seek support, advice and guidance from outside agencies (e.g. LEA, Social Services, NSPCC) when necessary.

5.3 The nominated Council Member for The Safeguarding Children will:

- a) Ensure that the school has a DSP
- b) Liase with the DSPs to ensure the school has policies and sound procedures
- c) Ensure that these are annually reviewed
- d) Ensure that Safeguarding Children is an annual item on the Council agenda
- e) Ensure that school staff/ representatives from the Council undertake relevant training
- f) Responsibility for following procedures where there are allegations of abuse against a member of staff

It is not the role of the nominated council member to be involved in the personal details of an individual case. No details relating to specific child protection situations will be given to council members to protect the confidentiality of the child. An exception would be for staff directly involved in the care or education of that child.

## 6. Procedures

- 1) Any member of staff with an issue or concern relating to Safeguarding Children should immediately discuss it with the DSP (as above) Allegations of child abuse must always be given the highest priority and referred immediately. It should be made clear to children that.

### **CONFIDENTIALITY CANNOT BE GUARANTEED IN RESPECT OF CHILD PROTECTION ISSUES**

- 2) The designated officer will then decide on an appropriate course of action. *In all cases the designated officer will be led directly by guidance from Lancashire Safeguarding Procedures and the Schools Safeguarding Officer.*
- 3) Information for parents/carers will be published in the School Handbook telling them the name of the DSP and that staff are required to follow the procedures laid down
- 4) Safe recruitment policies and procedures are followed in recruitment. The selection and vetting procedures include checks into the eligibility and the suitability of all Council members, staff and volunteers who have direct or indirect contact with children.

### **5) ALLEGATIONS AGAINST SCHOOL STAFF.**

- Teachers must protect themselves especially when meeting on a one to one basis with children and staff should bear in mind that even perfectly innocent actions can sometimes be misconstrued.
- Teachers who hear an allegation of abuse against another member of staff should discuss the matter immediately with the DSP so that guidelines can be followed. (Please read the Whistle Blowing Policy - Guidance for Employees in the appendices)
- **Working Together 2006 and Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education 2007 introduced new statutory guidance dealing with allegations against professionals.**
- **All allegations and concerns must be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer, Mary Laurens, within the same day.**

### **DEALING WITH DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE**

If a child chooses to tell a member of staff about possible abuse there are a number of things that should be done to support the child:

- Stay calm and be available to listen
- Listen with the utmost care to what the child is saying
- Question normally without pressurising

- Don't 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
- Do not question the child again if another adult already has done so – talk to that adult.
- Reassure the child and let them know they were right to inform us
- Inform the child that this information will now have to be passed on
- Immediately inform one of the Designated Child Protection Officers and if absent the School Administrator and if both are unavailable Children and Family Services on the numbers at the beginning of this document.

## **7. Training and support**

Our school will ensure that the DSPs and the nominated Council member for Safeguarding Children attend all training relevant to their role.

All staff will receive regular training. SDTs must undertake training every 2 years. All other staff should have training updated every 3 years.

Volunteers will receive an induction together with basic child protection information.

The DSP will keep staff informed on current safeguarding children issues mainly by disseminating information at staff meetings.

The DSPs will always be available to staff who may have concerns or queries about child protection.

A nominated council member will provide information on policies and where to seek outside support.

## **8. Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with children particularly in the context of child protection. The only purpose of confidentiality in this respect is to benefit the child.

We ensure that parents, governors and every adult within the school understands the need for, and principles of, confidentiality through verbal information. Written information will be included in the school handbook.

When there are concerns about the welfare of a child, information about this will be shared with the DSPs and the child's teacher. The DSPs will decide if there are other significant adults in each situation who need to be informed. Personal information is kept within as small a group as possible.

## 9. Records and monitoring

It is essential that accurate records be kept where there are concerns about the welfare of a child. These records are kept in secure, confidential files, which are separate from the child's school records. You are not required to disclose to parents any written information relating to Safeguarding Children. The preferred practice is for parents to be informed of and agree to any referral being made unless to do so would create an additional risk to the child.

### **Staff must keep the Designated Child Protection Teacher informed of:**

- Poor attendance and punctuality
- Concerns about appearance and dress
- Changed or unusual behaviour
- Concerns about health and emotional well being
- Deterioration in educational progress
- Discussions with parents about concerns relating to their child
- Concerns about home conditions or situations
- Concerns about pupil on pupil abuse (including serious bullying)

Beside the instance of children being at immediate risk, formal record keeping begins when a teacher or other adult has concerns about a child's general welfare. A common indicator of concern will be the child's behaviour in school. When the teacher feels that there is cause for concern they will meet with the SDT and open a welfare section in the child's school records. See appendix 2 for details. At this stage the records are part of main school record and are available to the relevant parents.

All staff concerned will be notified that a child is being monitored. Staff will be asked to pass on relevant observations and concerns to the DSP. Concerns may be expressed verbally by staff. The DSP will make sure that there is a written and dated record of all concerns in the welfare section of the child's file.

When there is suspicion of significant harm to a child and a referral is made as much information as possible should be given about the nature of the suspicions, the child and the family. Use of previous records (if available) may prove to be particularly useful in this respect.

**NB** Any referral to Children's Services by telephone must be confirmed in writing and a copy kept on the confidential school file. A note must be made of the Duty Social Worker and the time at which the call is made.

**If parents have not been informed about (or if they have agreed to) the referral being made this must be reported to Children's Services.**

Reports may be needed for Child Protection Case conferences or the criminal / civil courts. Consequently records and reports should be:

- **Factual (no opinions)**

- **Non-judgemental (not assumptions)**
- **Clear**
- **Accurate**
- **Relevant**

**They should be clearly dated and initialled - immediately at the end of each and every block of writing to preclude later edits. With names clearly printed – a pro-forma that can be used is attached to this policy.**

## 10. **Supporting pupils at risk**

10.1 Our school recognises that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth and to view the world in a positive way. This school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. Whilst at school, their behaviour may still be challenging and defiant, or there may even be moves to consider suspension or exclusion from school.

It is also recognised that some children who have experienced abuse may in turn abuse others. This requires a considered, sensitive approach in order that the child can receive appropriate help and support.

10.2 This school will endeavour to support the pupil through:

- a) the curriculum, to encourage self esteem and self motivation
- b) the school ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and which gives all pupils and adults a sense of being valued.
- c) the implementation of school behaviour management policies (required under the code of Practice, 1993 Education Act).
- d) a consistent approach, which recognises and separates the cause of behaviour from that which the child displays. This is vital to ensure that all children are supported within the school setting.
- e) regular liaison with other professionals and agencies who support the pupils and their families
- f) a commitment to develop productive, supportive relationships with parents, whenever it is in the child's interests to do so.
- g) the development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable staff group, trained to respond appropriately in child protection situations

10.3 This policy should be considered alongside other related policies in school, including those covering behaviour management, bullying, special educational needs and health and safety.

10.4 We recognise that statistically, children with behavioural difficulties and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse. School staff who work, in any capacity, with children with profound and multiple disabilities, sensory impairment and/or emotional and behaviour problems will need to be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse.

It must be stressed that in a home environment where there is domestic violence, drug or alcohol abuse, children may also be vulnerable and in need of support or protection. All parents need to be aware of those responsible for the safeguarding of children and the school system of reporting

## **11. Safe schools, Safe Staff**

Safe recruitment policies and procedures are followed in recruitment. The selection and vetting procedures include checks into the eligibility and the suitability of all Council members, staff and volunteers who have direct or indirect contact with children.

All visitors are required to wear a visitor's badge and sign into the visitor book.

All staff and volunteers are required to work within the framework of the policies, procedures and ethos of the school.

Existing and new staff are required to attend meetings where policies are reviewed e.g. teacher inset days and volunteers receive guidance from the staff with whom they are working.

11.1 Staff working with young children know that they have a need to feel wanted and secure. There are many situations where physical contact is sought by the child for reassurance or comfort or when the subject being taught requires some interaction. Such occasions would include:

- Giving comfort and support when a child is distressed
- Comforting a child after a fall or an accident
- Involvement in role play
- Assisting a child in a Games session, eurhythm, etc.
- Cleaning a child who has been sick or soiled themselves

11.2 Staff should limit physical contact to times when other children or adults are present. This offers protection to both child and teacher. In the case of the kindergarten, where the toilets are through two adjoining doors, these doors should be left open when a member of staff takes children to the toilet.

There will be occasions when members of staff are alone with a child. All staff should be aware of such situations and endeavour not to place themselves in a situation where they are spending excessive amounts of time with a child away from other people. Where practical doors shall be left open and it is

good practice, when possible, to let another member of staff know that you are with an individual child in a particular room.

- 11.3 We are aware that the following problems can get in the way of protecting children:
1. Organisational: lack of training, communication problems, ignorance of procedures.
  2. Personal: involvement and friendship with families, personal stress and lack of support, differing opinions and perspective, personal experience and views of parenting.
  3. Professional: lack of training.

As part of the induction of new staff and volunteers the DSPs will discuss the content of the policy, procedures and practices adopted by the school.

- 11.4 It is the responsibility of all staff who may have concerns about any relationship between an adult and a child or between children in our school community to report that concern and their reasons for it to the DSP or deputy DSP.
- 11.5 With regard to recruiting and selecting safe staff, all staff teachers, assistants and volunteers who have substantial unsupervised access to children are subject to police checks or have CRB enhanced clearance.
- 11.6 This policy will be **reviewed** by the Council Members annually.