



# PLYMSTOCK SCHOOL

## **Child Protection / Safeguarding Policy (including Intimate Care)**

Governors' Committee: Curriculum  
Lead Officer: Mr W Sprenkel  
Date for Review: Autumn 2018

This policy is in line with:

- Sections 175 and 157 of the Education Act 2002, implemented June 2004.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (March 2015).
- What To Do If You Are Worried A Child is Being Abused; Advice for Practitioners (March 2015).
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2016)
- Counter Terrorism and Security Act (2015)
- Prevent Strategy (July 2015)
- The Prevent Duty – Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers (June 2015)
- Statutory Guidance: Children Missing from Education (September 2016)
- 'Violence Against Women and Girls' Strategy 2016 to 2020 (Home Office, 2016)

### Linked Policies

- Managing Self-Harm
- Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation
- Complaints Procedure
- Behaviour Policy (inc. Anti-bullying)
- Special Educational Needs
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (July 2015)
- Supporting children with medical conditions
- Health and Safety
- Sex and Relationships Education
- Equal Opportunities
- E-safety
- Curriculum
- Managing Allegations of Abuse Against Staff
- Whistleblowing

***Key information from this policy is displayed in the staffroom and is available in the staff handbook.***

## **Aims**

There are five main aims to our policy:

- Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children.
- Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe.
- Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
- Supporting students who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan.
- Establishing a safe environment in which the needs of all children are met so they can learn and develop successfully.

## **Plymstock School's commitment to Child Protection / Safeguarding**

Plymstock School fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection. Safeguarding is the responsibility of all staff who come into contact with children and their families. Our policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the school. 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 Life Education curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.
- Be committed to successful inter-agency working and adopt the Seven Golden Rules to Information Sharing.

## **Plymstock School's Child Protection / Safeguarding Team**

### Designated Persons for Child Protection (Level 3 Qualified)

Designated Safeguarding Lead and Single Point of Contact (SPOC) in relation to the Prevent Duty : **Wil Sprenkel – ext. 240**

N.B. The DSL retains overall responsibility for safeguarding even when the activities associated with the role are delegated to deputies

Additional Designated Child Protection Officers:

- **Rob Diment (Headteacher) – ext. 250**
- **Rob Pearsall (Assistant Headteacher) – ext. 253**
- **Rebecca Littler (Assistant Head of Post 16) – ext. 275**
- **Sam Smith (Attendance Officer) – 244**

### Safeguarding Team

Heads of Year

- **Miranda Kirk – ext. 284**
- **Tamsin Summers – ext. 273**
- **Dave Wyatt – ext. 252**
- **Simon Wookey – ext. 236**
- **Cheryle Robb – ext. 274**

Assistant Heads of Year

- **Sally Holton – ext. 236**
- **Anthony Dott – ext. 252**
- **Steph Harvey – ext. 274**
- **Phil Chivers – ext. 273**

The **Child Protection / Safeguarding Governor** is **Jeff Wright**  
(jrwright@plymstockschool.org.uk)

The **Designated Officer (LADO)** is **Simon White** (Tel: 01752 307144)

***Our Child Protection / Safeguarding procedures are covered in Appendix 1***

**Please note: In the absence of a Designated Child Protection Officer any adult working or volunteering at the school is authorised to make a referral to Children's Services using the procedures outlined in Appendix 1**

## Early Help

All Staff should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life. In the first instance staff should discuss early help requirements with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment.

Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. Early help can also prevent further problems arising, for example, if it is provided as part of a support plan where a child has returned home to their family from care.

Effective early help relies upon local agencies working together to:

- identify children and families who would benefit from early help;
- undertake an assessment of the need for early help; and
- provide targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focuses on activity to significantly improve the outcomes for the child. Local authorities, under section 10 of the Children Act 2004, have a responsibility to promote inter-agency cooperation to improve the welfare of children.

Advice or information to support children and young people in need of early help or where there is a concern for their vulnerability can be accessed through The Gateway (01752 668000 or [gateway@plymouth.gov.uk](mailto:gateway@plymouth.gov.uk) )

## Signs and symptoms of abuse

Child abuse occurs when a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. All Staff are well placed to observe changes in students' appearance, behaviour, learning progress, attendance or language which may indicate incidents of actual or possible child abuse.

Details on categories of abuse and related symptoms are outlined below. Such symptoms may be due to other medical, emotional or psychological reasons but it is in the best interests of all students that concerns about the possibility of abuse should not go unreported.

## **Types of child abuse**

### **Neglect**

The persistent or significant neglect of a child, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation, or persistent failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

### **Physical**

Physical injury to a child, whether deliberately inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

### **Sexual**

The sexual exploitation of a child or young person for an adult's or another young person's own sexual gratification; the involvement of children or young people in sexual activities of any kind (including exposure to pornography) which they do not understand, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate normal family roles

### **Emotional**

Persistent or significant emotional ill treatment or rejection, resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a child. This can include the emotional impact of witnessing domestic abuse.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation**

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) involves exploitive situations, contexts and relationships where young people 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 cyber bullying and grooming. However, it is also important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit signs of this abuse.

### **Harmful Sexual Behaviour**

'Sexual behaviours expressed by children and young people under the age of 18 years old that are developmentally inappropriate, may be harmful towards self or others, or be abusive towards another child, young person or adult'. (Hackett 2014 Children and Young People with Harmful Sexual Behaviours)

The current definition of Sexual Abuse in Working Together to Safeguard Children is also relevant as it recognises that abuse can be perpetrated by children as well as adults.

Risks:

- Two thirds of contact sexual abuse is committed by peers;
- History of abuse, especially sexual abuse, can contribute to a child displaying harmful sexual behaviour;
- All children, including the instigator of the behaviour, need to be viewed as victims;

- Children have greater access to information about sex through technology and this has had an impact on their attitudes to sex and sexual behaviour;
- Children with harmful sexual behaviours who receive adequate treatment are less likely to go on to commit abuse as an adult compared to children who receive no support;
- Incidents of sexually harmful behaviour should be dealt with under the specific child protection procedures which recognise the child protection and potentially criminal element to the behaviour. There should be a coordinated approach between the agencies;
- The needs of the children and young people should be considered separately from the needs of their victims;
- An assessment should recognise that areas of unmet developmental needs, attachment problems, special educational needs and disabilities may all be relevant in understanding the onset and development of abusive behaviour;
- The family context is also relevant in understanding behaviour and assessing risk.

### Indicators

There are no diagnostic indicators in personal or family functioning that indicate a pre-disposition towards sexual offending although the following characteristics have been found in the background of some young people who sexually offend:

- Attachment disorders - poor nurturing and parental guidance;
- Domestic violence and abuse;
- Previous sexual victimisation - a younger age at the onset of the abuse is more likely to lead to sexualised behaviour;
- Social rejection and loneliness;
- Poor empathy skills.
- Many of these factors exist alongside typical family environments where other forms of abuse are present.

There is a significant minority of young people who display this behaviour who have a level of learning need - up to 40% in some studies. Their needs must be carefully assessed as some assessment tools are not suitable. Also, the intervention may need to be extended and involve a high degree of coordination between agencies.

Most healthy sexual behaviour can be characterised by:

- Mutuality (Children of a similar developmental and chronological age);
- Absence of coercion in any form (bullying, emotional blackmail, fear of the consequences);
- Absence of emotional distress.

Additionally, sexual behaviour which seems compulsive, is repeated in secrecy and continues after interventions from parents or carers, is a cause for concern.

## **Domestic Violence and Abuse**

The definition of domestic violence and abuse now includes young people aged 16 – 17 and aims to increase awareness that young people in this age group do experience domestic violence and abuse.

"Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality". This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse:

- Psychological;
- Physical;
- Sexual;
- Financial;
- Emotional.

Controlling behaviour is: a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.

Coercive behaviour is: "an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim."

This definition includes 'honour' based violence, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage, and is clear that victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

The Serious Crime Act 2015 created a new offence of controlling or coercive behaviour in intimate or familial relationships. Controlling or coercive behaviour does not relate to a single incident, it is a purposeful pattern of behaviour which takes place over time in order for one individual to exert power, control or coercion over another. Such behaviours might include:

- Isolating a person from their friends and family;
- Depriving them of their basic needs;
- Monitoring their time;
- Monitoring a person via online communication tools or using spyware;
- Taking control over aspects of their everyday life, such as where they can go, who they can see, what to wear and when they can sleep;
- Depriving them of access to support services, such as specialist support or medical services;
- Repeatedly putting them down such as telling them they are worthless;
- Enforcing rules and activity which humiliate, degrade or dehumanise the victim;
- Forcing the victim to take part in criminal activity such as shoplifting, neglect or abuse of children to encourage self-blame and prevent disclosure to authorities;
- Financial abuse including control of finances, such as only allowing a person a punitive allowance;
- Threats to hurt or kill;
- Threats to a child;
- Threats to reveal or publish private information (e.g. threatening to 'out' someone);
- Assault;

- Criminal damage (such as destruction of household goods);
- Rape;
- Preventing a person from having access to transport or from working.

**Practitioners are reminded of the vulnerability of teenagers in abusive relationships and that domestic violence and abuse often begins or escalates during pregnancy.**

### **So-called 'Honour Based' Violence**

So-called 'honour-based violence (HBV) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including: FGM, forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of HBV are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. If in any doubts, staff should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

### **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 or young person 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 or young person. 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 the practice or that it may be conducted on them, so sensitivity should always be shown when approaching the subject. A girl who's had FGM may:

- Have difficulty walking, sitting or standing
- Spend longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet
- Have unusual behaviour after an absence from school or college
- Be particularly reluctant to undergo normal medical examinations
- Ask for help, but may not be explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear.

**Please note: From 31<sup>st</sup> October 2015 there is a legal obligation to report all suspected cases of FGM to the Police**

**General safeguarding alerts to look out for include:**

- Sudden changes in behaviour
- Unexplained bruising, injuries or burns
- High anxiety or low self-esteem or unreasonable fear of certain people or places
- Knowledge of sexual matters beyond what is expected of that age group
- Acting out in an inappropriate way, perhaps with toys or other objects
- Strong need for affection sometimes expressed in physical terms
- Difficulties in trusting people or showing extreme defiance
- Fear of medical examinations
- Reluctance to change for PE or swimming
- Becoming excessively withdrawn/clingy
- Drug/alcohol/solvent abuse
- Depression
- Eating disorders
- Outbursts of anger
- Secretive
- Socially withdrawn
- Extended absences from school or home



**Other specific potential safeguarding issues include:**

- A child missing from education
- A child missing from home or care
- Bullying including Cyber-bullying
- Drug use
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Faith abuse
- Forced marriage
- Gangs and youth violence
- Gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- Mental health
- Private fostering
- Radicalisation (where an individual adopts extreme political, social or religious ideals)
- Sexting (using internet/media devices to send sexually explicit material)
- Teenage relationship abuse
- Trafficking

**Self-harm**

Self-harm is any deliberate behaviour that inflicts physical harm on someone's own body and is aimed at relieving emotional distress.

Self-harm can include:

- cutting themselves
- scratching themselves
- burning or scalding their body
- banging and bruising themselves
- scrubbing or scouring their body
- deliberate bone-breaking
- punching themselves
- sticking things into their body
- swallowing inappropriate objects or liquids
- taking too many tablets (overdose)
- biting themselves
- pulling their hair or eye lashes out
- attempting to terminate an unwanted pregnancy

Less obvious self-harm behaviours also include:

- controlled eating patterns – anorexia, bulimia, over-eating
- indulging in risky behaviour / risky sexual behaviour destructive use of drugs or alcohol
- an unhealthy lifestyle
- getting into fights

**Warning signs**

Self-harm may present as visible or invisible signs. The latter can include ingested materials or cuts/ bruises under the clothing.

Staff, parents and fellow students may become aware of warning signs that might indicate that a student is experiencing difficulties that may lead to self-harm or suicide. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and anyone observing any of these should

seek further advice from one of the school nurses or a Designated Person for Child Protection.

Warning signs may include:

- visible signs of injury (e.g. scarring)
- a change in dress habit that may be intended to disguise injuries (e.g. an unexpected / sudden change to wearing long sleeved tops)
- changes in eating or sleeping habits
- increased isolation from friends or family; becoming socially withdrawn
- changes in activity or mood (e.g. becoming more introverted or withdrawn)
- lowering of academic achievement
- talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- abusing drugs or alcohol
- expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- changes in clothing / image

### **Links to emotional distress (including abuse)**

Those who self-harm are usually suffering emotional or psychological distress and it is vital that all such distress is taken seriously to assist in alleviating that distress or to minimise the risk of increasing distress and potentially suicide.

Any young person who suggests they are experiencing suicidal feelings must be taken extremely seriously and safeguarding procedures put in place immediately; a young person showing this level of distress must NOT be left unattended.

Emotional/psychological risk factors associated with self-harm can be:

- recent trauma e.g. death of a friend or relative, parental divorce
- negative thought patterns and low self-esteem
- bullying
- abuse – sexual, physical, emotional or through neglect
- sudden changes in behaviour and/or academic performance
- relationship difficulties (with family or friends)
- learning difficulties
- pressure to achieve (from teachers or parents)
- substance abuse (including tobacco, alcohol or drugs)
- issues around sexuality

Other causal or risk factors:

- inappropriate advice or encouragement from internet websites or chat-rooms
- experimentation, 'dares' or bravado, 'copycat behaviour'
- concerns by a girl that she may be pregnant (including an attempt to terminate this)
- a history of abuse of self-harming in the family
- parental separation
- domestic abuse and/or substance misuse in the home
- media influence
- issues surrounding religious or cultural identity

### **Procedures for dealing with self-harm**

At Plymstock School we view self-harm as a child protection/safeguarding issue. If there is concern that a student may be self-harming or is thinking of self-harming, this should be reported immediately to a Designated Child Protection Officer using the school's child protection procedures.

### **Children Missing From Education**

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have: Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area. Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. Effective information sharing between parents, schools and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education. Local authorities should focus their resources effectively in intervening early in the lives of vulnerable children to help prevent poor outcomes.

These 'missing' children can be vulnerable; it is essential that all services work together to identify and re-engage these children back into appropriate education provision as quickly as possible. It is important to establish the reasons for the child being missing at the earliest possible stage.

Possible reasons that should be considered include:

- Failure to start appropriate provision and never enter the system;
- Stopped attending, due to illegal exclusion or withdrawal by parent/carers;
- Failure to complete a transition between schools;
- Children from refugee and asylum seeking families;
- Children from families who are highly mobile;
- Children at risk of a forced marriage;
- Children experiencing abuse and neglect.

Children who remain disengaged from education are potentially exposed to higher degrees of risk.

Children who go missing or run away from home or care may be in serious danger and are vulnerable to crime, sexual exploitation or abduction as well as missing education.

Staff at Plymstock School should be alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

By law Plymstock School is required to have both an admission register and attendance register. All students will be placed on both registers

If any student is to be removed from our admission register we will inform the LA of why and where they are going through our weekly admissions return. Reasons for this will include where they:

- have been taken out of school by their parents and the school has received written notification from the parent that they are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education;
- have ceased to attend school and no longer lives within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age;
- are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- have been permanently excluded. The local authority must be notified when a school is to delete a pupil from its register under the above circumstances. This should be done as soon as the grounds for deletion are met, but no later than deleting the pupil's name from the register.

Plymstock School will comply with this duty, so that local authorities can, as part of their duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing education, follow up with any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse or neglect.

Plymstock School will inform the local authority of any student who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more.

Plymstock School will notify the local authority within five days when a pupil's name is added to the admission register at a non-standard transition point. The school will provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil.

### **Radicalisation and Extremist Views**

Plymstock School uses the following accepted Governmental definition of extremism (outlined in the Prevent Strategy 2015) which is:

*“Vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs; and/or calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas”*

As part of wider safeguarding responsibilities staff will be alert to:

- Disclosures by students of their exposure to the extremist actions, views or materials of others outside of school, such as in their homes or community groups, especially where students have not actively sought these out.
- Graffiti symbols, writing or art work promoting extremist messages or images.

- Students accessing extremist material online, including through social networking sites.
- Parental reports of changes in behaviour, friendship or actions and requests for assistance.
- Local schools, local authority services, and police reports of issues affecting students in other schools or settings
- students voicing opinions drawn from extremist ideologies and narratives
- Use of extremist or 'hate' terms to exclude others or incite violence
- Intolerance of difference, whether secular or religious.
- Views based on, but not exclusive to, gender, disability, homophobia, race, colour or culture.
- Attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others.
- Anti-Western or Anti-British views.

All staff have a duty to challenge extremist views by students. In each case, this should be reported urgently to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who in turn will investigate and where necessary alert key agencies such as the Police and Children's Services.

***Please see the school's Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy for more information.***

Reporting online material, which promotes extremism such as illegal or harmful pictures or videos, can be done through the government website (<https://www.gov.uk/report-terrorism>).

## **Spiritual, Cultural and Religious Beliefs**

### **Definition and Concerns**

Definition of 'belief in spirit possession'

The term 'belief in spirit possession' is the belief that an evil force has entered a child and is controlling him or her. Sometimes the term 'witch' is used and is the belief that a child is able to use an evil force to harm others. There is also a range of other language that is connected to such abuse. This includes black magic, kindoki, ndoki, the evil eye, djinns, voodoo, obeah, demons, and child sorcerers. In all these cases, genuine beliefs can be held by families, carers, religious leaders, congregations, and the children themselves that evil forces are at work. Families and children can be deeply worried by the evil that they believe is threatening them, and abuse often occurs when an attempt is made to 'exorcise', or 'deliver' the child. Exorcism is the attempt to expel evil spirits from a child. (See report: Safeguarding Children from Abuse Linked to a Belief in Spirit Possession 2007)

The belief in 'possession' or 'witchcraft' is widespread. It is not confined to particular countries, cultures or specific religions, nor is it confined to new immigrant communities in this country.

**Any concerns about a child which arise in this context must be taken seriously.**

### **Concerns**

A number of faith groups have beliefs, which affect how they use health services and specifically treatment and immunisations for children. A number of churches and faith

groups believe in the power of prayers and faith in God and as a result may refuse medical interventions and treatments including assistance at child births, health checks and immunisations. Where a practitioner becomes aware of a belief held by the parents, where it may impact on the health and development of the child, the practitioner should consult with other professionals to assess the potential risks of significant harm to the child.

### **Risks**

The number of known cases of child abuse linked to accusations of 'possession' or 'witchcraft' is small, but children involved can suffer damage to their physical and mental health, their capacity to learn, their ability to form relationships and to their self-esteem. It is likely that a proportion of this type of abuse remains unreported.

Such abuse generally occurs when a carer views a child as being 'different', attributes this difference to the child being 'possessed' or involved in 'witchcraft' and attempts to exorcise him or her.

A child could be viewed as 'different' for a variety of reasons such as, disobedience; independence; bed-wetting; nightmares; illness; or disability. There is often a weak bond of attachment between the carer and the child.

There are various social reasons that make a child more vulnerable to an accusation of 'possession' or 'witchcraft'. These include family stress and/or a change in the family structure.

The attempt to 'exorcise' may involve severe beating, burning, starvation, cutting or stabbing and isolation, and usually occurs in the household where the child lives.

Any siblings or other children in the household may be well cared for with all their needs met by the parents and carers. The other children may have been drawn in by the adults to view the child as 'different' and may have been encouraged to participate in the adult activities.

The parent/s may have a perspective on child rearing practices underpinned by culture or faith which are not in line with UK law and cultural norms, and they may put their child at risk of harm through actions such as exercising harsh physical punishment, forcing a child into marriage etc.

### **Indicators**

Concerns reported in the cases known from research have involved children aged 2 to 14, both boys and girls, and have generally been reported through schools or non-governmental organisations. The referrals usually take place at a point when the situation has escalated and become visible outside the family.

Note: This means that the child may have been subjected to serious harm for a period of time already.

The initial concerns referred have been about:

- Issues of neglect such as not being fed properly or being 'fasted', not being clothed, washed properly etc. but left to fend for themselves especially compared to the other children in the household;
- Often the carer is not the natural parent and the family structure can be complex;

- Children often appear distressed and withdrawn;
- The child is seen as the scapegoat for a change in family circumstances for the worse;
- In a group of children it may be the child who is relatively powerless vis-a-vis the parents/carers, maybe a child with no essential role in the family;
- The child is seen as someone who violates the family norms by being physically different perhaps because of illness, disability or, in some cases, a suspicion by the father of adultery by the mother.
- Child abuse linked to faith or belief may occur where a child is treated as a scapegoat for perceived failure.

All agencies should be alert to the indicators above and should be able to identify children at risk of this type of abuse and intervene to prevent it.

**For further reading on any of these safeguarding issues, Plymstock School recommends viewing the NSPCC website: [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)**

**Staff at Plymstock School should always maintain an attitude of 'It could happen here'**

## Safeguarding students

We will follow the procedures set out by the Plymouth Safeguarding Children Board and take account of guidance issued by the Department for Education.

We will:

- Ensure we have a Designated Safeguarding Lead for child protection who has received appropriate training and support for this role. Level 3 multi-agency training for Child Protection Officers will take place every **two** years.
- Ensure that the DSL has undergone WRAP training.
- Ensure that at least one Child Protection Officer has undergone training on FGM.
- Adopt the Seven Golden Rules to Information Sharing (displayed in the staffroom).
- Ensure we have a nominated governor responsible for child protection.
- Ensure every member of staff (including temporary and supply staff and volunteers) and governing body knows the name of the designated senior person responsible for child protection 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 child protection.
- Ensure all staff and long-term visitors/volunteers undergo **annual** safeguarding training and complete an online learning package with subsequent test/assessment. The online learning package is provided through Hayes and covers four key areas – Safeguarding Children (including child protection, identification of harm, abuse and neglect and all new legislation updates), Roles and Responsibilities, Health and Safety and Bullying. The course is CPD certified and all staff must take and pass a test.
- Ensure that all staff receive safeguarding updates as required, but at least annually, to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.
- Ensure that all staff have received a copy of, and have signed to say that they have read Part 1 of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the warning signs of potential radicalisation (including extreme right-wing views).
- Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection by setting out its obligations in the school prospectus.
- Notify Children's Services if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a student who is on the child protection register.
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection 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 student file, and in locked locations.
- Analyse patterns and trends in safeguarding and make interventions and changes to practice, when appropriate.
- Develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.
- Ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed.
- Ensure our procedures are reviewed annually and up-dated in accordance with current legislation.



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 student through:

- The content of the curriculum.
- The school ethos, which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives students a sense of being valued.
- The school behaviour policy, which is aimed at supporting vulnerable students in the school.
- The school will ensure that the student 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 student such as Children's Services, Child and Adult Mental Health Service, Education Welfare Service and Educational Psychology Service.
- Ensuring that, where a student on the child protection register leaves, their information is transferred to the new school immediately and that the child's social worker is informed.

## **Safer Recruitment in Education**

The school pays full regard to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2016). Safe recruitment practice includes scrutinising applicants, verifying identity and academic or vocational qualifications, obtaining professional and character references, checking previous employment history (including gaps in employment) and ensuring that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job. It also includes undertaking interviews: appropriate Enhanced DBS checks (inc. Barred List checks), Section 128 management checks, further checks on people who have lived or worked outside the UK including a check for EEA restrictions and prohibited list checks. Prohibition checks will be carried out using the 'Teacher Services System'.

All staff employed at the school engaged in regulated activity will be subject to a full Enhanced DBS and Barred List check before starting at the school. All recruitment materials will include reference to the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of its students.

The Headteacher, key governors and appropriate senior staff will undertake the NSPCC Safer Recruitment in Education training course. All interviews will include at least one panel member who has undertaken Safer Recruitment Training.

## **Allegations of abuse made against a member of staff or other adult at school**

If an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff the allegation must be passed immediately to the Headteacher. Depending on the nature and severity of the allegations the Headteacher may complete some initial fact finding to see if the allegation has substance. This will only occur if the allegation took place during school hours, on the school site and with other staff and/or students present. This may include some initial conversations with identified staff/students and viewing of CCTV footage if the area is covered by an internal camera.

If no substance to the allegation can be found, internal school procedures will be followed. If there is the potential that an allegation could be true, or is deemed extremely serious, consultation with the LADO is required within one working day, before a formal investigation takes place.

All out of school concerns, concerns of a sexual nature, or anything that would place a child or children in serious harm, will be reported to the LADO within one working day.

The LADO will consider the nature, content, and context of the allegation or concern. Any initial consideration in which information is shared and evaluation sought, may result in no further action being taken. However, this decision, and the reason for it, will always be fully recorded by the Headteacher and LADO, and agreement reached on what information must be put in writing to the individual concerned, and by whom. They will also consider what action should follow for the individual and for the person/s who made the allegation.

For legal reasons, the school cannot rule out the need to make third parties aware of certain issues, as well as possibly the identity of those involved. This would only be likely to happen when, for example, a student's safety was at risk or it became necessary to refer matters to the police.

If the allegation is not demonstrably false or unfounded, and there is cause to suspect a child has suffered, is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, a strategy discussion will be convened with appropriate agencies, such as the police and children's social care.

If the person subjected to the allegation is a member of a union or professional association they will be advised to contact that organisation at the outset.

In cases where a formal strategy discussion is not considered appropriate because the threshold of 'significant harm' is not reached, but a police investigation might be needed, the police and any other agencies involved with the child will be consulted to evaluate the allegation and decide how it should be dealt with.

If the allegation or concern is about physical contact, it will be taken into account that teachers and other school staff are entitled to use reasonable force to control or restrain students in certain circumstances, including dealing with disruptive behaviour.

If the allegation or concern is such that it is clear that an investigation by police and/or enquiries by children's social care are not necessary, or the initial evaluation decides that is the case, the Headteacher and LADO shall decide as to the appropriate next steps.

In these circumstances, the options open to the school depend on the nature and circumstances of the allegation and the evidence and information available, and will range from taking no further action to summary dismissal, or a decision not to use the person's services in future.

In some cases, further enquiries will be needed to enable a decision about how to proceed; this will be determined by the Headteacher and LADO.

The following definitions should be used in determining the outcome of an investigation:

- Substantiated, i.e. there is evidence to prove the allegation
- False, i.e. there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation
- Malicious, i.e. there is clear evidence to prove there has been a deliberate act to deceive, and the allegation is entirely false
- Unfounded, i.e. no evidence or proper basis to support the allegation. Typically, the person who made the allegation may not have been in full knowledge of the facts or circumstances, misinterpreted the incident, or have been mistaken about what they saw.
- Unsubstantiated, i.e. there is insufficient evidence to prove or disprove the allegation. In these circumstances, no guilt or innocence is implied.

## **Suspension**

Suspension will be considered in any case where there is cause to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm, or the allegation warrants investigation by the police, or is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. However, a person will not be suspended automatically, or without careful consideration of the circumstances. Advice will always be sought from the LADO.

The power to suspend is vested in the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors. However, they will first consult the police and LADO about whether the member of staff about whom the allegation has been made needs to be suspended from contact with children.

Consideration will always be given as to whether the same result can be considered by alternative arrangements, based on assessment of risk; for example, redeployment, supervision, removing access to children. This can allow time for a more informed decision to be made.

The potential for permanent professional reputational damage, which can result from suspension, will always be considered.

Where suspension is used, a clear record of the decision and justification or rationale is always taken.

Where a staff member feels unable to raise the issue with the Headteacher or Chair of Governors or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels are open to them – please refer to the **Whistleblowing Policy** for further information.

**Please see the Managing Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy for more details.**

# Intimate Care

## Plymstock School's Commitment to Intimate Care

Plymstock School is committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for the intimate care of students will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. Plymstock School recognises that there is a need to treat all students with respect when intimate care is given. No student should be attended to in a way that causes distress or pain.

## Plymstock School's approach to intimate care

The management of all students with intimate care needs will be carefully planned. The student who requires intimate care is treated with respect at all times; the student's welfare and dignity is of paramount importance.

- Staff who provide intimate care are trained to do so (including Student Protection and Health and Safety training in lifting and moving) and are fully aware of best practice. Apparatus will be provided to assist with students who need special arrangements following assessment from physiotherapist/ occupational therapist as required.
- Staff will be supported to adapt their practice in relation to the needs of individual students taking into account developmental changes such as the onset of puberty and menstruation. Wherever possible staff who are involved in the intimate care of students/young people will not usually be involved with the delivery of sex education to the students/young people in their care as an additional safeguard to both staff and students/young people involved.
- The student will be supported to achieve the highest level of autonomy that is possible given their age and abilities. Staff will encourage each student to do as much for him/herself as he/she can. This may mean, for example, giving the student responsibility for washing themselves. Individual intimate care plans will be drawn up for particular students as appropriate to suit the circumstances of the student.
- Each student's right to privacy will be respected. Careful consideration will be given to each student's situation to determine how many carers might need to be present when a student is toileted. Where possible, one student will be catered for by one adult unless there is a sound reason for having more adults present. If this is the case, the reasons should be clearly documented
- Wherever possible the same student will not be cared for by the same adult on a continuous basis; ideally there will be a rota of carers known to the student who will take turns in providing care. This will ensure, as far as possible, that over-familiar relationships are discouraged from developing, whilst at the same time guarding against the care being carried out by a succession of completely different carers.
- Wherever possible staff should only care intimately for an individual of the same sex. However, in certain circumstances this principle may need to be waived where failure to provide appropriate care would result in negligence.
- Intimate care arrangements will be discussed with parents/carers on a regular basis and recorded on the student's care plan. The needs and wishes of students and parents will be taken into account wherever possible within the constraints of staffing and equal opportunities legislation.

## **The protection of students**

Education Student Protection Procedures and Inter-Agency Student Protection procedures will be adhered to.

- All students will be taught personal safety skills carefully matched to their level of development and understanding.
- If a member of staff has any concerns about physical changes in a student's presentation, e.g. marks, bruises, soreness etc. s/he will immediately report concerns to the appropriate manager/ designated person for child protection.
- If a student becomes distressed or unhappy about being cared for by a particular member of staff, the matter will be looked into and outcomes recorded. Parents/carers will be contacted at the earliest opportunity as part of this process in order to reach a resolution. Staffing schedules will be altered until the issue(s) are resolved so that the student's needs remain paramount. Further advice will be taken from outside agencies if necessary. If a student makes an allegation against a member of staff, all necessary procedures will be followed (see Inter - Agency Student Protection Procedures for details)

## **Additional guidance**

### **Changing facilities**

- Students who have long-term incontinence will require specially adapted facilities. The dignity and privacy of the student should be of paramount concern. An area, which can be made private by the use of a screen, is acceptable. Consideration should be given to the sighting of this area from a health and safety aspect. The area should not be situated in a thoroughfare, as a changing mat will have to be used on the floor when a student is to be changed. This is the recommended method of changing a student, as it avoids an adult having to lift a student and cause possible back injury

### **Equipment Provision**

- School is responsible for providing gloves, plastic aprons, a bin and liners to dispose of any waste.

### **Health and Safety**

- Staff should always wear an apron and gloves when dealing with a student who is bleeding or soiled. Any soiled waste should be placed in a polythene waste disposal bag, which can be sealed. This bag should then be placed in a bin (complete with a liner) which is specifically designated for the disposal of such waste. The bin should be emptied on a weekly basis and it can be collected as part of the usual refuse collection service as this waste is not classed as clinical waste. Staff should be aware of the school's Health and Safety policy

### **Special needs**

- Students with special needs have the same rights to safety and privacy when receiving intimate care. Additional vulnerabilities that may arise from a physical

disability or learning difficulty must be considered with regard to individual teaching and care plans for each student. As with all arrangements for intimate care needs, agreements between the student, those with parental responsibility and the organisation should be easily understood and recorded.

- Regardless of age and ability, the views and/or emotional responses of student with special needs should be actively sought (with advocacy arrangements made for those who can't) in regular reviews of these arrangements

A record of all intimate care given should be recorded and passed to Helen Richards (SENCo) where it will be recorded and filed.

***For further information on Plymstock School's Intimate Care Procedures please see Appendix 2.***

## **Review**

The Child Protection / Safeguarding Policy (Inc. Intimate Care) is submitted annually, or following any significant changes, to the Curriculum Governors Committee for review. The Governors will ensure that any faults are rectified, by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Governor responsible for Safeguarding.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead, along with the Level 3 Designated Persons Team will review safeguarding data (inc. bullying data) once per term to identify possible patterns and trends, taking preventative action where appropriate.

An annual evaluation and review of child protection records will be undertaken by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Chair of the Governors' Personnel Committee (Valerie Gregory) conducts a half termly check on the school's Single Central Record by randomly choosing five members of staff and viewing all records and documentation.

The Safeguarding Governor (Jeff Wright) will also complete an annual 'Test the System' evaluation which is then reported back to the Full Governing Body. The school completes a bi-annual Section 175/157 Safeguarding Audit through Plymouth City Council. The latest was undertaken in the summer term 2015. The audit showed that the school's safeguarding policies and procedures were very strong.

## Appendix 1

### **Plymstock School Safeguarding Guidelines**

#### **What is safeguarding?**

Safeguarding can be summarised as:

- Protecting children and learners from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's and learners' health or development.
- Ensuring that children and learners are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Undertaking that role so as to enable those children and learners to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.
- Preventing children and learners from being exposed to and influenced by extremist viewpoints and stopping radicalisation.

All staff will undergo annual safeguarding training. This will comprise of face-to-face procedural training and an online learning course.

#### **Raising a safeguarding concern**

Where a staff member has a concern about a child, he/she will need to decide what action to take. Where possible, he/she should discuss this with the DSL. Possible courses of action include referral to social services, referral to other agencies, or an early help assessment.

Advice or information to support children and young people in need of early help or where there is a concern for their vulnerability can be accessed through The Gateway (01752 668000, [gateway@plymouth.gov.uk](mailto:gateway@plymouth.gov.uk))

Where a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral should be made to children's social care through the Multi-Agency Hub and/or the police immediately. Anyone can make a referral.

The Multi-Agency Hub can be contacted on 01752 305200, [multiagencyhub@plymouth.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:multiagencyhub@plymouth.gcsx.gov.uk)

If a member of staff wants to raise a safeguarding concern with the safeguarding team then a referral form must be completed (Available in Staff Area).

The completed form will be taken to the **Hub** for assessment and action.

Where a referral is made by someone other than the DSL in either case, the DSL should be informed as soon as possible afterwards.

Email referrals are **NOT** acceptable.

#### ***If a student makes a disclosure to you it is important that you:***

1. Tell them that you cannot keep it a secret and you must tell the Child Protection Officer.
2. Listen carefully to what they say but do not ask leading questions.
3. Reassure them that they are doing the right thing.
4. Do not write anything down whilst the child is present.

5. Remain impartial – do not get emotionally involved or show emotion.
6. Inform the Hub or a Child Protection Officer straight away.

### **Welfare or neglect concerns**

This is when you are concerned about the general wellbeing of students. It can also involve students engaged in “risky” behaviour. Commonly welfare referrals will detail concerns in the following areas:

- Self-harming
- Underage BUT consensual sex (assuming both parties are 14 or more and there is not a significant age gap between them)
- Minor drug use
- Runaways
- Standard of cleanliness
- Standard of dress
- Access to food
- Transport concerns
- Changes in behaviour
- Changes in attendance
- Lack of engagement from parents
- General unhappiness about a child’s home situation

The school should investigate these incidents in the first instance. Often this will involve contact with parents, including meetings and potential support from a single outside agency. If, following investigation, the situation is more complex then initiation of the CAF process may be appropriate. Occasionally a welfare or neglect concern could be so serious that it results in a child protection referral.

### **CAF**

CAF stands for ‘Common Assessment Framework’ and refers to the process where a child or family require support from two or more agencies. A CAF is often initiated following unresolved or very complex welfare/neglect concerns or from a child protection referral that does not meet the Children’s Services threshold. Occasionally CAFs are initiated by agencies other than the school.

### **Project CARA (Child At Risk Alert)**

Previously known as Encompass Initiative, CARA it is an initiative between the police and schools in Plymouth and designed to provide early reporting on any domestic abuse incident that occurs outside school, but which may have an impact on a child in school and details of any caution that students at our school may have received from the police.

### **Child Protection**

An incident is considered to be child protection if the child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm. Child protection includes:

- Physical abuse (violence)
- Sexual abuse
- Serious emotional abuse
- Serious chronic neglect



A child protection incident will require immediate action and the child protection procedures outlined below should be followed consistently.

Child protection incidents should always be immediately referred to Children's Services.

### **Procedures for dealing with a child protection referral**

1. Referral arrives at the Hub.
2. A member of the safeguarding team checks the online safeguarding log. If the referral relates to extremism/radicalisation referrals should go directly to the SPOC or in the absence of the SPOC another Level 3 Child Protection Officer. *Please see the Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy for further details.*
3. If safeguarding incidents have been logged - check the safeguarding filing cabinet for further details.
4. Assess the referral - Is it child protection? Decide on category. Discuss with another member of the safeguarding team if needed. Plymstock School will refer to the Threshold Guidance from the PCSB which can be viewed at: <http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/homepage/socialcareandhealth/childrensocialcare/adviceandassessment.htm>
5. Interview with student (Questions should be factual and open focusing on what, when and how. There should be no leading questions. For example an inappropriate leading question might be "Is that a cigarette burn on your hand? Did your mum or dad do that to you?" Whereas an appropriate open-ended question would be "How did that happen to your hand?"
6. Advice or information to support children and young people in need of early help or where there is a concern for their vulnerability can be accessed through The Gateway (01752 668000, gateway@plymouth.gov.uk)
7. If it is deemed to be child protection, **contact the Multi-Agency Hub on 01752 305200 IMMEDIATELY** to make a referral (be clear what you are doing / use the correct language).
8. When contacting the Multi-Agency Hub ensure the following details are to hand:

*Student name*

*DOB*

*Address*

*Family details*

*Clear details of your concern - are you making a referral?*

*Do not minimise your concerns*

*Record the name of the social worker you are talking to and the date/time you spoke to them*

*Be clear what the follow up will be BEFORE you end the call*

9. If a referral is accepted it must be **followed up in writing within 48 hours (a copy must also go to Isabelle Morgan, Inclusion Officer)** - a copy must be retained in the child's safeguarding file. (Proforma available in Staff Area and on the Advice and Assessment website at: <http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/homepage/socialcareandhealth/childrensocialcare/adviceandassessment.htm>

10. If you are not satisfied with the response from the Gateway or Multi-Agency Hub you must discuss with one of the Level 3 trained staff, who will take further action using the 'Professional Differences Resolution Process' outlined in the Threshold document at:  
<http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/homepage/socialcareandhealth/childrensocialcare/adviceandassessment.htm>
11. If you have not heard anything back from the Multi-Agency Hub or allocated social worker within 24 hours – **you must chase up.**
12. If the Multi-Agency Hub do not need to be consulted consider alternatives - parental contact, in-school support or CAF process.
13. Update the online safeguarding log.
14. Update the student's safeguarding paper file.

***It is better to make a referral that turns out to be unsubstantiated than for a child to come to harm because you were indecisive.***

### **Child Protection Conferences**

Where child protection concerns are substantiated and the agencies involved judge that a child may continue to suffer, or be at risk of suffering significant harm, Children's Services will convene an **Initial Child Protection Conference**.

The purpose is to draw together all available information, assess risk and decide whether the child requires a **Child Protection Plan**.

If a child becomes subject to a Child Protection Plan then further regular meetings will take place.

Reports compiled by the school for Child Protection Conferences or Reviews will be completed on the agreed PCSB proforma.

Any reports compiled by the school for or minutes from Child Protection Conferences should be filed in the relevant student safeguarding file. (Proforma available in Staff Area).

### **Safeguarding files**

A safeguarding file for a student will contain the following

1. Welfare concerns
2. CARA reports
3. CAF information (where two or more agencies are supporting)
4. Child protection information

This is a separate confidential file

This information should not be kept with general student files or SEN files.

No safeguarding files will be kept within other filing systems.

The main student file will be marked with a sticker to indicate there is also safeguarding file for that that student.

The safeguarding files are managed by Sally Holton (Assistant Head of Year).

### **Case chronologies**

It is important that a 'case chronology' is started as soon as a student has a safeguarding file.

This will record all welfare/neglect concerns, CAF meetings and child protection incidents.

This is recorded digitally on the restricted CP/safeguarding log.

The case chronology will include the following:

- Student details
- Date
- Nature of concern/incident
- Staff name
- Action taken.

### **Storage of safeguarding files**

The central record for safeguarding files is a secure, lockable filing cabinet kept in locked storage room adjacent to the Hub. The key to the filing cabinet is kept in a separate locked (key code entry) storage box.

Sally Holton is responsible for these files.

Key code holders for this filing cabinet are

- Heads of Year
- Assistant Heads Year
- Rob Diment
- Wil Sprenkel
- Rob Pearsall

A restricted electronic safeguarding log will be kept for quick reference.

Plymouth LA has advised us that safeguarding information can be saved to memory sticks. If used, these will be kept locked where used in the filing cabinet.

No other individual members of staff should keep safeguarding records or notes relating to safeguarding.

When staff make a referral to a member of the safeguarding team they should not keep a copy of the referral in their own filing system.

### **Transfer of safeguarding information from primary school or in-term entry**

Safeguarding is a discussion point during each primary school visit as part of the induction process.

All records for in-term entry or primary-secondary transfer need to be checked on arrival.

The relevant Head of Year and Assistant Head of Year should read any safeguarding information and a safeguarding file created for each relevant student.

The main student file will be marked with a RED card to indicate there is also safeguarding file for that that student.

### **In-term entry**

Once a child is offered a place the Head of Year should ring the current school for an overview of the child (academic, behaviour, attendance and whether there have been any safeguarding concerns).

If a safeguarding concern has been identified, all records should be requested ASAP.

### **Leavers**

If a student leaves Plymstock School to join another school it is important that the safeguarding file is also sent with an accompanying letter (Proforma available in Staff Area).

The following is expected:

- Files will be clearly marked so others will be able to use and understand them – please ensure the case chronology is the first page.
- The file should be marked clearly as confidential and for addressee only or marked for attention of Designated Person.
- The file should be sent separately to general student files, having notified the Designated Person in the receiving school (request confirmation of arrival using the acknowledgment proforma).

### **Reviewing Safeguarding Records**

Termly the Senior Designated Child Protection Officer will review active cases, in conjunction with the additional Designated Persons. An annual review of record keeping will be undertaken by the Senior Designated Child Protection Officer.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Plymstock School Intimate Care Guidance**

Guidance to safeguard students and education staff with regard to situations, which may lend themselves to allegations of abuse (Physical contact, first aid, showers/changing clothes, out of school activities, and photography)

#### **Physical Contact**

All staff engaged in the care and education of students and young people need to exercise caution in the use of physical contact.

- The expectation is that staff will work in 'limited touch' cultures and that when physical contact is made with students this will be in response to the pupil's needs at the time, will be of limited duration and will be appropriate given their age, stage of development and background.
- Staff should be aware that even well intentioned physical contact might be misconstrued directly by the student, an observer or by anyone the action is described to. Staff must therefore always be prepared to justify actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny.
- Physical contact which is repeated with an individual student or young person is likely to raise questions unless the justification for this is formally agreed by the student, the organisation and those with parental responsibility.
- Students with special needs may require more physical contact to assist their everyday learning. The general culture of 'limited touch' will be adapted where appropriate to the individual requirements of each student. The arrangements must be understood and agreed by all concerned, justified in terms of the student's needs, consistently applied and open to scrutiny. Wherever possible, consultation with colleagues should take place where any deviation from the arrangements is anticipated. Any deviation and the justification for it should be documented and reported.
- Extra caution may be required where a student has suffered previous abuse or neglect. In the student's view, physical contact might be associated with such experiences and leave staff vulnerable to allegations of abuse. Additionally, many such students are extremely needy and seek out inappropriate physical contact. In such circumstances staff should deter the student without causing them a negative experience. Ensuring that a witness is present will help to protect staff from such allegations.

#### **Restraint**

- The staff members who have been trained in the use of restraint are: Kevin Dyke (Deputy Headteacher) and Neil Bellamy (Head of Year). They should be called on in the first instance.
- There may be occasions where it is necessary for staff to restrain students physically to prevent them from inflicting damage on either themselves, others or property.
- In such cases only the minimum force necessary should be used for the minimum length of time required for the student to regain self- control.

- In all cases of restraint the incident must be documented and reported. Staff must be fully aware of the school's/organisation's Physical Intervention/Positive Handling Policy.
- Under no circumstances would it be permissible to use physical force as a form of punishment, to modify behaviour, or to make a pupil comply with an instruction. Physical force of this nature can, and is likely to, constitute a criminal offence.
- For further details, please refer to the 'Use of Reasonable Force Policy'

### **Students in distress**

- There may be occasions when a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance that may include physical touch such as a caring parent would give. Staff must remain self-aware at all times to ensure that their contact is not threatening or intrusive and not subject to misinterpretation.
- Judgement will need to take account of the circumstances of a pupil's distress, their age, the extent and cause of the distress. Unless the student needs an immediate response, staff should consider whether they are the most appropriate person to respond. It may be more suitable to involve the student's relative or school's counsellor.
- Particular care must be taken in instances which involve the same pupil over a period of time. Where a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance they should seek further advice, from their line manager or other appropriate person

### First Aid and Intimate Care

- Staff who administer first aid should ensure wherever possible that another adult or other students are present. The pupil's dignity must always be considered and where contact of a more intimate nature is required (e.g. assisting with toileting or the removal of wet/soiled clothing), another member of staff should be in the vicinity and should be made aware of the task being undertaken.
- Regular requirements of an intimate nature should be planned for. Agreements between the school, those with parental responsibility and the student concerned should be documented and easily understood. The necessity for such requirements should be reviewed regularly. The student's views must also be actively sought and, in particular, any discomfort with the arrangements addressed.

### Physical Education and other skills coaching

- Some staff are likely to come into physical contact with students from time to time in the course of their duties when participating in games, demonstrating an exercise or the use of equipment.
- Staff should be aware of the limits within which such contact should properly take place and of the possibility of misinterpretation.

- Where it is anticipated that a pupil might be prone to misinterpret any such contact, alternatives should be considered, perhaps involving another member of staff or a less vulnerable pupil in the demonstration.

### Showers/changing clothes

- Young people are entitled to respect and privacy when changing clothes or taking a shower. However, there must be the required level of supervision to safeguard young people with regard to health and safety considerations and to ensure that bullying or teasing does not occur. This means that adults should announce their intention of entering changing rooms, avoid remaining in changing rooms unless pupil needs require it, avoid any physical contact when students are in a state of undress and avoid any visually intrusive behaviour. Given the vulnerabilities of the situation, it is strongly recommended that when supervising students in a state of undress, another member of staff is present. However, this may not always be possible and therefore staff need to be vigilant about their own conduct, e.g. adults must not change in the same place as students or shower with students.

### Out of school trips, clubs etc...

- Employees should take particular care when supervising students in the less formal atmosphere of a residential setting or after-school activity. Although more informal relationships in such circumstances tend to be usual, the standard of behaviour expected of staff will be no different from the behaviour expected within school. Staff involved in such activities should also be familiar with their school's/establishment's policy and all guidance regarding out of school activities.
- To ensure students' safety, increased vigilance may be required when monitoring their behaviour on field trips, holidays etc. It is important to exercise caution so that a pupil is not compromised and the member of staff does not attract allegations of overly intrusive or abusive behaviour.
- On occasions (field trips/days out, etc.) some students might be short of funds and would be embarrassed or singled out if this were known. It would be acceptable for a member of staff to subsidise a student, provided that this was disclosed to colleagues.
- Meetings with students away from the school premises where a chaperone will not be present are not permitted unless specific approval is obtained from the Headteacher or other senior colleague with delegated authority. Staff should not place themselves in a position where they are in a vehicle, house or other venue alone with a student.
- If staff come into contact with students whilst off duty, they must behave as though in their professional role and not give conflicting messages regarding their own conduct.

### Photography, videos and similar creative arts

- Staff should be aware of the potential of such mediums of teaching to be used for the wrong purposes. Additionally, students who have been previously abused in this way may feel threatened by the legitimate use of photography, filming etc... The potential for founded and unfounded allegations of abuse requires that careful consideration be given to the organisation of these activities.
- Consent to participating in these activities should be confirmed from those with parental responsibility at the beginning of course, but staff should remain sensitive to those students who appear particularly uncomfortable with the activity.
- Another member of staff should view all material for acceptability. Its circulation should be in accordance with the schools 'Use of Images' policy, and relevant arrangements with parents.

A record of all intimate care given should be recorded and passed to Helen Richards (SENCo) where it will be recorded and filed.