

Mougins School Child Protection Policy

Philosophy

"Education staff have a crucial role to play in helping identify welfare concerns, and indicators of possible abuse or neglect, at an early stage: referring those concerns to the appropriate organisation, contributing to the assessment of a child's needs and where appropriate to ongoing action to meet those needs. They will also be well placed to give a view on the impact of treatment or intervention on the child's care or behaviour."
(Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010)

Mougins School Child Protection Policy is one which provides clear direction to staff and others about expected codes of behaviour in dealing with child protection issues. The policy also makes explicit the school's 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 prioritise the needs of the child. Mougins School fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection. Our policy applies to all staff and volunteers working in the school.

Aims of Mougins School

Mougins School Child Protection Policy supports the aims, vision and values of the school to:

Encourage pupils to develop morally, emotionally, culturally, intellectually and physically;
Create a way of life characterised by caring, tolerance, security, praise and high expectations;
Enable pupils to learn best by being encouraged, valued, trusted and respected;
Help pupils develop continuously by providing conditions and experiences that sustain and encourage this development.

Elements of Mougins School Child Protection Policy

Our school fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect children and support students in school. There are three main elements to our Child Protection Policy:

Prevention: e.g. positive school atmosphere, teaching and pastoral support to pupils.

Protection: By following agreed procedures, ensuring staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to Child Protection concerns.

Support: To pupils and school staff and to children who may have been abused.

We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense

of blame. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at school their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. The school will endeavour to support the pupil through:

- The content of the curriculum.
- The school ethos, which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued.
- The school behaviour policy, which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the school. The school will ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.

Aims of Mougins School Child Protection Policy

We recognise that because of the day-to-day contact with children, school staff (especially the form tutors) are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse and children in any form of distress. The aims of Mougins School Child Protection Policy are therefore to:

Provide a safe environment for children and young people to learn. Establish a safe environment in which children can learn and develop, where they feel secure, where they are encouraged to talk and are listened to. Ensure that children know that there are adults in school whom they can approach.

Support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence.

Follow Safer Recruitment Procedures (See Recruitment Policy), ensure staff are CRB (UK) or French Police checked.

Ensure that every member of staff including temporary, supply staff and volunteers knows the name, role and responsibilities of the Designated Senior Person responsible for child protection.

Raise the awareness of all staff and volunteers of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and refer any concerns to appropriate colleagues,

Keep written records of serious concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.

Roles and Responsibilities

All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to protect them. There are, however, key people within schools who have specific responsibilities under Child Protection procedure.

The Headteacher, Brian Hickmore, is the Designated Senior Person responsible for Child Protection issues in school. In future, Marian Leonard will be trained to become the Deputy Designated Senior Person.

Role of Designated Senior Person

Coordinating action within the school and liaising with appropriate agencies over cases of abuse and suspected abuse.

Acting as a source of advice within the school.

Ensuring that staff are familiar with the policy and procedures.

Referral of individual cases of suspected abuse.

Liaising with agencies about individual cases and readily communicating promptly with local Safeguarding Agencies, Les Services Sociaux or La Gendarmerie, reporting any disclosures within 24 hours. Schools have no investigative role in child protection (Police and Social Services) will investigate possible abuse very thoroughly and in great detail, they will gather evidence and test hypotheses.

Organising training on Child Protection within school.

Being familiar with current guidelines on Child Protection and Safer Recruitment and be aware of changes to the regulations.

Undertake appropriate training every 2 years in Safeguarding and Inter-Agency Working.

Ensure that the school has an active Child Protection Policy and that staff are familiar with it and that it is reviewed regularly.

Ensure that accurate records are being kept by the school and that the Child Protection file is up to date.

Ensure that all staff know what to do if they suspect that a child is being abused.

Role of all Staff

Ensure they are familiar with the Child protection policy and related policies and

procedures.

Follow the policy and implement the procedures.

Undergo Safeguarding Training every 3 years, including the Headmaster if no longer acting as Designated Senior Person.

Temporary and Voluntary Staff who work with children are also made aware of the Safeguarding Policies and Procedures.

Procedures

It is recognised that children need protection from:

Physical Abuse

Emotional Abuse

Sexual Abuse

Neglect

Schools have no investigative role in child protection (Police and Social Services will investigate possible abuse very thoroughly and in great detail, they will gather evidence and test hypotheses.

All members of staff at the School should have an understanding of Child Protection issues and should appreciate the importance of their vigilance. Any concerns about Child Protection issues must be recorded and reported to the Designated Senior Person, Brian Hickmore, without delay.

Further information regarding the definition of types of abuse and possible signs of abuse can be found in Appendix 1.

Advice for Staff

Detailed and helpful guidance on how to respond to and support a child who wants to confide in a member of staff is given by the United Kingdom Directorate Children and Young People. (DCYP) A copy of their guidance can be found in Appendix 2.

Confidentiality

We recognise that all matters relating to Child Protection are confidential. The Head teacher, the Designated Senior Person will disclose any information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need to know basis only.

All staff will be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information in order to safeguard children. All staff will be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets. A teacher must never guarantee confidentiality to a child as they may need to act on a disclosure to protect the interests of the child. If a child asks for the information to be kept secret, the adult must be honest, open and calmly and sensitively explain to the child that they cannot promise to keep the matter a secret as they have a duty to look after the interests of the child and this will include reporting the information divulged to the appropriate person - the Designated Senior Person, Brian Hickmore.

Allegations made against Staff

In the case of allegations made against a member of staff or visitor to the school, please refer to Appendix 3.

Allegations made against Peer(s)/Other Student(s)

In some cases of child abuse the alleged perpetrator will also be a child. It is important that potentially abusive behaviour between children is not ignored and, as appropriate, should be reported to the Designated Senior Person. The Designated Senior Person will then make the judgement whether to follow the same procedures as outlined in Appendix 3 for allegations made regarding staff.

Health & Safety

Our Health & Safety policy, set out in a separate document, reflects the consideration we give to the protection of our children both within the school environment and when away from the school when undertaking school trips and visits.

Review

The Mougins School Child Protection Policy, the school's safeguarding policies and procedures and the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged will be reviewed annually by the Board and SMT. This review will take place prior to the start of the new academic year, or where necessary, following any significant changes to legal statutes. Any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements will be remedied without delay.

The SMT will ensure that any outcome of review is rectified in the Staff Handbook, which will be distributed and explained to staff following the review.

Appendix 1

Types of Abuse

Definitions in Terms of Law:

Child: Any person under the age of 18.

Abuse: Can consist of one or more of but is not restricted to the following:

Physical Abuse: Any non-accidental physical injury resulting from practices such as: Hitting, punching, kicking (marks from belt buckles, fingers). Shaking (particularly babies). Burning (irons, cigarettes), biting, pulling out hair. Alcohol or other drug administration.

Emotional Abuse: The chronic attitude or behavior of one person which is directed at another person, or, the creation of an emotional environment which erodes a child's development, self-esteem and social confidence over time. Behaviors may include: Devaluing, ignoring, rejecting, corrupting, isolating, terrorizing or chronic and extreme domestic violence in the child's presence.

Sexual Abuse: Any sexual act or threat to perform such upon another person. It occurs when a person uses their power and authority to take advantage of another's trust to involve them in sexual activity. It does not necessarily involve genital contact but is any act which erodes the sexual boundary between two persons. It may appear consensual but the validity of consent is negated by the power differential.

Neglect: Characterised by the failure to provide for the child's basic needs. Any serious omission or commission which jeopardises or impairs a person's development.

Recognising Possible Signs of Abuse

Child abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children are harmed by someone often in a position of power. It is not the responsibility of school staff to decide whether child abuse is occurring but we are required to act on any concerns and report it to the appropriate party. The health, safety and protection of a child are paramount. Some indicators of possible abuse, taken from www.nspcc.org.uk may be:

Physical Abuse

The physical signs of abuse may include:

Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body

Multiple bruises- in clusters, often on the upper arm, outside of the thigh

Cigarette burns

Human bite marks

Broken bones

Scalds, with upward splash marks,

Multiple burns with a clearly demarcated edge.

Changes in behaviour that can also indicate physical abuse:

Fear of parents being approached for an explanation

Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts

Flinching when approached or touched

Reluctance to get changed, for example in hot weather

Depression

Withdrawn behaviour

Running away from home.

Emotional Abuse

Changes in behaviour which can indicate emotional abuse include:

Neurotic behaviour e.g. sulking, hair twisting, rocking

Being unable to play

Fear of making mistakes

Sudden speech disorders

Self-harm

Fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour

Developmental delay in terms of emotional progress

Sexual Abuse

The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

Pain or itching in the genital area

Bruising or bleeding near genital area

Sexually transmitted disease

Vaginal discharge or infection

Stomach pains

Discomfort when walking or sitting down

Pregnancy

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse include:

Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn

Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people

Having nightmares

Running away from home

Sexual knowledge which is beyond their age, or developmental level

Sexual drawings or language

Bedwetting

Eating problems such as overeating or anorexia

Self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts

Saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about

Substance or drug abuse

Suddenly having unexplained sources of money

Not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)

Acting in a sexually explicit way towards adult

Neglect

The physical signs of neglect may include:

Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children

Constantly dirty or 'smelly'

Loss of weight, or being constantly underweight

Inappropriate clothing for the conditions.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect may include:

Complaining of being tired all the time

Not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointment

Having few friends

Mentioning being left alone or unsupervised.

Appendix 2

Talking and Listening to Children

If a child wants to confide in you, you SHOULD

Be accessible and receptive;

Listen carefully and uncritically, at the child's pace;

Take what is said seriously;

Reassure children that they are right to tell and make sure they are ok;

Tell the child that you must pass this information on;

Make a careful record of what was said.

You should NEVER

Investigate or seek to prove or disprove possible abuse;

Make promises about confidentiality or keeping 'secrets' to children;

Assume that someone else will take the necessary action;

Jump to conclusions, be dismissive or react with shock, anger, horror etc;

Speculate or accuse anybody;

Investigate, suggest or probe for information;

Confront another person (adult or child) allegedly involved;

Offer opinions about what is being said or the persons allegedly involved;

Forget to record what you have been told;

Fail to pass this information on to the correct person (the Designated Senior Person)

What information do you need to obtain?

Schools have no investigative role in child protection (Police and Social Services will investigate possible abuse very thoroughly and in great detail, they will gather evidence and test hypotheses;

Never prompt or probe for information, your job is to listen, record and pass on;

Ideally, you should be clear about what is being said in terms of who, what, where and when;

The question which you should be able to answer at the end of the listening process is 'might this be a child protection matter?'

If the answer is yes, or if you're not sure, record and pass on immediately to the Designated Senior Person, Brian Hickmore.

If you do need to ask questions, what is and isn't OK?

Never ask closed questions i.e. ones which children can answer yes or no to e.g. Did he touch you?

Never make suggestions about who, how or where someone is alleged to have touched, hit etc. e.g. Top or bottom, front or back?

If we must, use only 'minimal prompts' such as 'go on ... tell me more about that ... tell me everything that you remember about that '

Timescales are very important: 'When was the last time this happened?' is an important question.

What else should we think about in relation to disclosure?

Is there a place in school which is particularly suitable for listening to children e.g. not too isolated, easily supervised, quiet etc.;

We need to think carefully about our own body language - how we present will dictate how comfortable a child feels in telling us about something which may be extremely frightening, difficult and personal;

Be prepared to answer the 'what happens next' question;

We should never make face-value judgements or assumptions about individual children. For example, we 'know that [child.....] tells lies';

Think about how you might react if a child DID approach you in school. We need to be prepared to offer a child in this position exactly what they need in terms of protection, reassurance, calmness and objectivity;

Think about what support you could access if faced with this kind of situation in school.

Appendix 3

Allegations made against a Member of Staff

Introduction

Mougins School is subject to French law and therefore any enquiry into allegations of abuse must be made by "Les Services Sociaux" or "La Gendarmerie". The School follows the guidelines laid down by the DfES.

It is essential that any allegation of abuse made against a teacher or other member of staff or volunteer in an education setting is dealt with fairly, quickly, and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection for the child and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

This policy should be used in respect of all cases in which it is alleged that a teacher or member of staff in a school (including a volunteer) has:

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

All staff and volunteers should understand what to do if they receive an allegation against another member of staff or they themselves have concerns about the behaviour of another member of staff.

Such allegations should be reported straight away to the Headmaster. In the absence of the Headmaster, or in cases where the Head is the subject of the allegation or concern, they should be reported to the Chairman of the Board.

There may be up to 3 strands in the consideration of an allegation:

- a police investigation of a possible criminal offence;
- enquiries and assessment about whether a child is in need of protection or in need of services
- consideration by the school of disciplinary action in respect of the individual.

Supporting those involved

Parents or carers of a child or children involved should be told about the allegation as soon as possible, if they do not already know of it. They will also be kept informed about the progress of the case, and told the outcome where there is not a criminal prosecution. That includes the outcome of any disciplinary process.

In cases where a child may have suffered significant harm, or there may be a criminal prosecution, consideration must be given, by relevant professionals, as to what support the child or children involved may need.

The school will also keep the person who is the subject of the allegations informed of the progress of the case and consider what other support is appropriate for the individual. If the person is suspended, the school should also keep the individual informed about developments at school. If the person is a member of a professional association s/he should be advised to contact that body at the outset.

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated/considered. Should the police be involved, they will not normally provide any information to the Press or media that might identify an individual who is under investigation, unless and until the person is charged with a criminal offence.

Resignations and "Compromise agreements"

The fact that a person tenders his or her resignation, or ceases to provide their services, does not prevent an allegation being followed up in accordance with these procedures. Every effort will be made to reach a conclusion in all cases of allegations bearing on the safety or welfare of children, including any in which the person concerned refuses to cooperate with the process. Wherever possible the person should be given a full opportunity to answer the allegation and make representations about it, but the process of recording the allegation and any supporting evidence, and reaching a judgement about whether it can be regarded as substantiated on the basis of all the information available should continue even if that cannot be done or the person does not cooperate.

By the same token so called "compromise agreements" by which a person agrees to resign, the school agrees not to pursue disciplinary action, and both parties agree a form of words to be used in any future reference, must not be used in these cases. In any event, such an agreement will not prevent a thorough police investigation where that is appropriate.

A clear and comprehensive summary of any allegations made, details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved, and a note of any action taken and decisions reached, should be kept on a person's confidential personnel file, and a copy provided to the person concerned.

It is in everyone's interest to resolve cases as quickly as possible consistent with a fair and thorough investigation. Every effort should be made to manage cases to avoid any unnecessary delay.

The procedures need to be applied with common sense and judgement. In rare cases allegations will be so serious as to require immediate intervention by the police. However, it is important to ensure that even allegations that appear less serious are seen to be followed up and taken seriously, and that they are examined objectively.

If the allegation is about physical contact, the strategy discussion or initial evaluation with the police should take account of the fact that teachers and other school staff are entitled to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils in certain circumstances, including dealing with disruptive behaviour.

Suspension

The possible risk of harm to children posed by an accused person needs to be effectively evaluated and managed - in respect of the child(ren) involved in the allegations, and any other children in the individual's home, work or community life. In some cases that will require the school to consider suspending the person until the case is resolved.

Suspension should 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 must not be suspended automatically, or without careful thought. Schools must consider carefully whether the circumstances of a case warrant a person being suspended from contact with children until the allegation is resolved. Schools should also consider whether the result that would be achieved by suspension could be obtained by alternative arrangements.

In cases where it is decided on the conclusion of the case that a person who has been suspended can return to work, the school should consider how best to facilitate that. Most people will benefit from some help and support to return to work after a very stressful experience. Depending on the individual's circumstances, a phased return and/or the provision of a mentor to provide assistance and support in the short term may be appropriate. The school should also consider how the person's contact with the

child or children who made the allegation can best be managed if they are still attending the school.

Action in respect of false allegations

In the rare event that an allegation is shown to have been deliberately invented or malicious, the Headteacher should consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the pupil who made it, or the police should be asked to consider whether any action might be appropriate against the person responsible if s/he was not a pupil.

Referral to DCSF

If on conclusion of the case the school ceases to use the person's services, or the person ceases to provide his/her services, the school will refer the case to the DCSF.