

**AGINCOURT SCHOOL PUPIL PROTECTION POLICY  
(REVISED NOVEMBER 2011)**

This policy ensures all staff; both teaching and support staff in our school are clear about the actions necessary with regard to a child protection issue.

Agincourt School accepts that it is the responsibility of every adult to protect children from abuse. All children have a right to be protected from all forms of abuse and discrimination and to be treated equally regardless of age, gender, racial origin, culture, religious belief, language, disability or sexual identity.

There are three main aspects of this policy:

- a. prevention of abuse through our teaching and the pastoral support which is offered to pupils;
- b. procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.

(Teaching and non-teaching staff are well placed to observe signs of abuse because they are working closely with pupils); and

- c. support to pupils who may have been abused.

### **Child Protection**

It is now widely accepted that it is the responsibility of every adult to protect children from abuse. Child abuse and particularly child sexual abuse can arouse strong emotions in those facing such a situation and it is important to understand those feelings and not allow them to interfere with your professional judgement.

Child abuse may come to light in a number of ways:

- A child may tell you what has happened to them
- From a third party (eg. Another child)
- Through the child's behaviour
- A suspicious, unexplained injury to the child

These notes are intended to provide a guide to help you identify signs of possible abuse and know what action to take in such cases.

## **The main Forms of Abuse**

### ***Physical Abuse***

This is where adults physically hurt or injure children. Hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning and biting are all forms of physical abuse. Giving children alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison is classified as physical abuse. Attempted suffocation or drowning also comes within this category.

### ***Sexual Abuse***

Girls and boys are abused by adults who use children to meet their own sexual needs.

Showing children pornographic magazines or videos is also a form of sexual abuse.

### ***Emotional Abuse***

Persistent lack of love and affection damages children emotionally. Being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted can make the child very nervous and withdrawn.

### ***Neglect***

This is where adults fail to meet a child's basic needs, like food or warm clothing.

Children might also be constantly left alone unsupervised. Sometimes adults fail to, or refuse to, give their children love and affection. This is emotional neglect.

Abuse in all its forms can affect a child of any age. The efforts can be so damaging that they may follow an individual into adulthood.

## **Identifying Signs of Possible Abuse**

Recognising abuse is not easy, even for individuals who have experience working with child abuse. Most children will receive cuts, grazes and bruises from time to time and their behaviour may give reason for concern. There may well be reasons for these factors other than abuse, but any concern should be immediately discussed with a senior member of staff at Agincourt School to assess the situation.

Warning signs which may alert teachers to the possibility of abuse can include:

- Unexplained bruising, cuts or burns on the child, particularly if these are on parts of the body not normally injured in accidents
- An injury which a parent or carer tries to hide or for which they might have given different explanations
- Changes in behaviour such as the child suddenly becoming very quiet, tearful, withdrawn, aggressive, or displaying severe tantrums
- Loss of weight without a medical explanation
- An inappropriately dressed or ill-kept child who may also be dirty
- Sexually explicit behaviour, for instance playing games and showing awareness which is inappropriate for a child's age
- Continual masturbation, aggressive and inappropriate play
- Running away from home, attempted suicides, self-inflicted injuries
- A lack of trust in adults, particularly those who would normally be close to the child
- Disturbed sleep, nightmares and enuresis particularly if a child has previously been dry
- Eating problems including over-eating or loss of appetite

Remember, the above signs do not necessarily mean that a child has been abused. If you are concerned about the welfare of a child, however, you must act. Do not assume that someone else will help the child: they might not.

## **PREVENTION**

Abuse is more likely to be prevented if pupils have high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and open lines of communication with trusted adults.

At Agincourt School we will try to:

- a. maintain an ethos where pupils feel secure and are encouraged to talk and where they believe adults around them will listen;
- b. make sure that pupils know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty;
- c. include in the curriculum and in activities and PSHE lessons opportunities for pupils to gain self-esteem and confidence so they gain the skills to stay safe and to know to whom to turn for help;
- d. include in the curriculum material which will help pupils to gain a supportive and caring attitudes to others.

In order to help protect pupils from visitors to the School, members of staff are asked to take any adult who is looking for a pupil to the School Reception.

## **PROCEDURES**

Agincourt School will:

- Appoint a senior member of staff to coordinate pupil protection matters. Mr Wren is the designated senior member of staff responsible for Child Protection.
- Ensure that the designated member of staff has appropriate training on a regular basis.
- Inform staff and governors of the name of the designated member of staff.
- Have procedures in place to take forward concerns when the designated person is unavailable.
- Ensure that members of staff are aware of the need to be vigilant for signs of abuse and that they will know how to respond to a pupil who may tell of abuse.

- Ensure that parents are sent information about the School's Pupil Protection policy and procedures.
- Provide appropriate training for staff so that they understand their personal responsibilities, know the School's procedures, are vigilant and know how to support a pupil who tells of abuse.
- Notify the social services if a pupil on the child protection register is excluded from the School for a fixed term or permanently; or if there is an unexplained absence of a pupil on the child protection register of more than two days duration, or one day following a weekend.
- Maintain links with relevant agencies and cooperate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at initial case conferences, core groups and child protection review conferences.
- Keep written records of concerns about children even when there is no need to refer the matters to social services. These records will include date, event and action taken.

These records will be confidential and kept in secure, locked locations.

- Ensure that all staff are CRB checked and that all new staff are checked in accordance with Welsh Assembly guidance circular " Child Protection: Preventing Unsuitable People from working with Children in the Education Sector".
- Designate a governor for child protection.

When a member of staff sees signs in the behaviour or attitude of a pupil which causes him or her concern the member of staff responsible for Pupil Protection (Mr Wren) must be informed. When the member of staff responsible for Pupil Protection suspects that a pupil has been abused he will consult the Head teacher. If in the judgement of the Head teacher a referral needs to be made she will inform, (within 24 hours in writing, or with written confirmation of a telephoned referral) the Social Services Department and the Chair of the Governors.

1. If a member of staff is accused of child abuse then this must be reported to the Head teacher.

2. If the cause for concern is the member of staff responsible for Pupil Protection, Mr Wren, then the member of staff should inform the Head teacher.

3. If the cause for concern is the Head teacher then the Chair of the Governors should be contacted.

If urgent action needs to be taken then the Police should be notified at the earliest possible opportunity.

Further information and advice on these matters is available from Mr Wren and the Head teacher.

The member of staff responsible for Pupil Protection has the responsibility for raising staff awareness of pupil protection matters. This will include giving a copy of the Pupil Protection Procedure to new staff, making current staff aware of changes in the procedure and meeting with new staff to explain and answer questions on the procedures.

### **Listening to the Child**

- Remember that the child's welfare is paramount and this must be the most important consideration.
- Listen carefully to any complaint or allegation by the child and tell and show the child that you are taking them seriously.
- If a child's behaviour or your observations give rise to concern then talk to the child sensitively to find out if there is anything worrying them.
- Keep questions to a minimum but make sure you are absolutely clear about what a child has said so that you can pass on this information to professionals who are trained and experienced in investigating possible child abuse. Do not prompt or ask leading questions.
- Acknowledge how difficult and painful it must have been for them to confide in you and reassure the child, stressing that they are never to blame.
- Stay calm: don't take hasty or inappropriate action.
- Don't make promises which you may not be able to keep. Don't promise to keep what you have been told a secret as you have a

responsibility to disclose information to those who need to know and they may be able to help.

- As soon as possible after talking with the child make a written record of what the child said, how they were behaving, and what you did in response. Use their exact words if possible.
- Note the date, time, place and names of those present and then sign this record and take it to Mr Wren (or Head teacher if the allegation is against a member of staff) as soon as possible after the meeting.

### **Talking to Parents and Carers**

When reading this section it must be remembered that the safety of the child must be paramount.

It is possible that a relationship with parents and carers will have been established and as a general principle it is important to be open and honest when dealing with them.

There may be circumstances, however, when it is not appropriate for parents to be informed immediately of the concerns you have, as this may prejudice any investigation and may place the child at even greater risk.

Always discuss your concerns first with a senior colleague, in most cases this will be the Mr Wren: contact with parents should be delayed until advice has been sought from one of the professional agencies who have been notified.

### **Responding to Child Abuse: What to do if you are Concerned**

Remember that it is not your responsibility to decide if child abuse has occurred, but it is your responsibility to take action, however small your concern.

Inform a senior colleague who will take responsibility for seeking any additional advice and for contacting the local Social Services Department or the Police who are trained to deal with such situations and have the necessary legal power to protect the child.

If no senior colleagues are available, or concerns for the child remain, then you must contact the local Care Standards Inspectorate for Wales, Social

Services Department, the Police or the NSPCC yourself. You do not have to give your name, although this will be helpful to the agency making enquiries into the matter and who may need to talk to you again. There will be immunity from retribution or disciplinary action against staff for "whistle blowing" in good faith.

The agency receiving your referral will take responsibility for ensuring that appropriate investigations are undertaken and the child protected.

Mr Wren, the Head teacher and the main School office have the contact details of the local Area Child Protection Committee. Mr Wren liaises with the Area Child Protection Coordinator.

## **SUPPORTING PUPILS AT RISK**

Agincourt School recognises that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth or view the world as a positive place. This school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk.

Nevertheless, whilst at school their behaviour may still be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn.

Agincourt School will endeavour to support pupils through:

- a) The curriculum to encourage self-esteem and self-motivation.
- b) The school ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and which gives all pupils and adults a sense of being respected and valued.
- c) The implementation of the school's promoting good behaviour policy.
- d) A consistent approach which will endeavour to ensure the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but he or she is valued.
- e) A commitment to develop productive, supportive relationships with parents, whenever it is in the child's best interest to do so.
- f) The development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable staff group, trained to respond appropriately in child protection situations.
- g) Recognition that statistically children with behavioural difficulties and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse so members of staff who work in any capacity with children with profound and multiple disabilities, sensory

impairment and / or emotional and behavioural problems will need to be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse.

h) Recognition that in a home environment where there is domestic violence, drug or alcohol abuse, children may also be vulnerable and in need of support or protection.

This policy should be considered alongside other related policies in school.

These are the policies for the teaching of PSHE, the policy for promoting good behaviour (including our policy on anti-bullying) and our health and safety policy.