



**Blossom Lower School and  
Upper House**

**Policy for  
Safeguarding Children  
and  
Child Protection**

Policy last reviewed by **Susan Sandler** Child Protection Officer – March 2014

Date of next review: March 2015

**Introduction:**

The protection and welfare of pupils at Foundation stage, Blossom Lower School , Upper House and post sixteen (hereafter The School) is of paramount importance. Children and parents have a right to expect the school to provide a safe and secure environment and the school has a general duty for children’s welfare as part of its role “*in loco parentis*”

*The policy applies to the Principal, and all staff and volunteers working in the school. There are five main elements:*

- *Ensuring 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.*
- *Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.*
- *In accordance with his/her child protection plan, supporting pupils who have been abused.*

**Safeguarding children statement**

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children’s health or development
- Ensuring children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.

All staff should aim to proactively safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils so that the need for action to protect them from harm is reduced.

**Good Practice for safeguarding children**

The School believes in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children through the curriculum, by developing children’s understanding, awareness, and resilience. This is

addressed specifically in PHSE and Social and Life Skills lessons and is highlighted throughout the curriculum

In addition, all staff should adhere to and be alert to the following principles and action:

- Always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets)
- Promote fairness, confront and deal with all forms of bullying
- Treat all young people equally and with respect and dignity
- Always put the welfare of the young person first.
- Maintain a safe and appropriate distance with pupils (e.g. it is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child. It is not advisable to share a room with them on away trips other than in exceptional, necessary circumstances )
- Gain written parental consent for any significant travel arrangements (e.g. overnight stays)
- Ensure that if mixed groups of pupils are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a male and a female member of staff
- Ensure that on away trips adults should not enter a young person's room or invite young people to their rooms other than in necessary, witnessed circumstances.
- Be an excellent role model, this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of pupils/students
- Always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- Secure written parental consent for the school to act in "*loco parentis*", to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical treatment if the need arises

- Keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given - to be kept in the office.
- Follow guidelines in Social Networks Policy
- Follow safe recruitment practices.

**N.B.** See **Appendix 3** for what to do when helping a child to change or shower.

### **Staff Recruitment**

The School recognises the need to be alert to the risks posed by strangers or others who may wish to harm children in school or travelling to and from school and their homes and will co-operate as far as possible with any initiative which is designed to lessen such risks.

Correct procedures will be followed to ensure that all staff recruited are subject to the appropriate regulatory checks.

Please refer to the **Staff Recruitment Policy**

### **Safe Use of Children's Photographs and Videos**

Photographs must be used in a responsible way. Schools need to respect children's and parents' rights of privacy and be aware of potential child protection issues.

Blossom House School reserves the right to decline photos/videos being distributed externally and would only do so with parental consent.

### **Child Protection**

There may be a risk when individual pupils can be identified in photographs.

In the event of the inappropriate use of children's photographs the school will inform the Social Services and / or the Police. Blossom House School will not display images of pupils or staff on websites, in publications or in a public place without parental consent.

### **Filming Events**

It is usual for parents to take photographs and videos of children at school events such as the annual Nativity Play and Sports Day. Any objections should be addressed to the Principal.

### **Child Protection Statement**

All children have a right to be safe. The welfare and safety of all the children are our first priority. Therefore, all adults in the School are obliged to follow this policy and have a duty to recognise and report concerns.

**Child protection** is a part of **safeguarding** and promoting welfare. It refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. Effective child protection is essential as part of wider work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

This policy details the procedures for reporting any concerns about child safety. It also describes possible signs of potential child abuse in all its forms and the positive ways in which the school works to prevent abuse.

The School has a guiding principle of partnership between home and school, but with child abuse, or suspicion of child abuse, our first and only responsibility is to the child. This may mean that parents are not informed or consulted in some instances.

We may not be able to prevent child abuse, but by following child protection procedures, we are trying our best to protect all our children.

All adults at the School do their best to ensure that the children are kept safe, remain healthy and are able to say "NO". This means that staff get to know each child as an individual and, as a matter of routine, consider how their situation feels to them.

Staff listen to what pupils say, observe how they are from day to day, and take serious account of their views in supporting their needs.

Staff recognise that it is important that children in their care view the adults in the school as significant and trustworthy adults.

Suspected cases of child abuse are reported, procedures adhered to and subsequent actions are left to the appropriate agencies. In addition, we know that some of the children in our care have previously been abused and we make every effort to understand their situation.

## **CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES**

### **Designated Members of Staff for Child Protection:**

The Child Protection Officer (CPO) at the school is **Susan Sandler**

The Deputy CPO is the Principal, **Joanna Burgess**.

(In addition, in the Foundation Stage, the person responsible for child protection is **Ruth Lo**)

### **Reasons for Following Procedures:**

- It protects the child to the best of our ability
- It avoids delay
- It provides consistency
- It protects all staff

Staff are in contact with children all day and are in a position to detect possible abuse. They must not think that by voicing concern they are necessarily starting procedures. The criteria should be that they have reasonable suspicion that the child is being or has been abused, or may suffer in future.

Child abuse is taken to refer to any child under the age of 18 years who, through the actions of parents or other carers, or through their failure to act, has suffered or is likely to suffer harm.

### **If you see possible signs of injury or of abuse you should:**

- Ask the child how it happened. You must listen carefully to what the child is saying, treat it seriously, and value what they say. Record what you have seen and heard in the pupil log. If the child is unable to tell you anything you should also record that. *(If you can, write brief notes of what they are telling you while they are speaking-keep your original notes, however rough, they may help you later if you have to remember exactly what was said.)*
- Record what has been observed & said as soon as possible after speaking to the child in the child's PUPIL LOG
- Email what you have written to the **CPO** and **Deputy CPO**, and **Head of Foundation stage if appropriate**

- **Do not promise the pupil that it will be kept a secret.** You have a responsibility to report it so that action can be taken. Give reassurance that only those who need to know will be told.
- **It is crucial not to ask leading questions.** These might give your own idea of what might have happened (*E.g. "Did he do X to you?"*). Just ask open questions such as *"What happened?"*; *"Is there anything else that you want to say?"*
- At the margin of pupil logs where entries concerning CP have been made, including minor and unsubstantiated ones, the following will be placed by the CPO:

CP

**N.B.** In circumstances where a child has a suspicious injury which requires urgent medical attention, the CP referral process should **not** delay the administration of First Aid or emergency medical assistance.

If a pupil is thought to be at immediate risk because of, for example, parental violence, drunkenness or other incapacity; or threats to remove the child during the school day without reasonable cause, urgent police intervention will be requested.

In the unlikely event of the CPO or the Principal not being available to deal with an emergency involving Child Protection issues, then the staff member must speak to a member of the Leadership Team, and/or Heads of House who will deal with the matter.

### **When suspicion falls on colleagues**

Any staff member who suspects that a colleague is acting in a way that may jeopardise children's, or a child's, welfare should inform the Principal, CPO or their line manager immediately. Pupils and parents are encouraged to have the confidence to talk frankly should they feel a member of staff has acted inappropriately. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will always be informed of allegations and the steps the school has taken to investigate. If there is a good reason not to inform the LADO, this will be documented and signed by the Principal and an independent member of the school's Advisory Board.

Please refer to **Appendix 1** for categories of abuse and

**Appendix 2** for signs of abuse

**Appendix 3** for what to do when a child needs to be helped to change or shower.

**Appendix 4** for contact details for referrals

**Following notification of possible abuses the CPO or Deputy CPO will:**

- Decide in discussion with relevant staff and, *if necessary*, Merton's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), how to proceed;
- Discuss low level concerns with parents or carers, or delegate to someone more appropriate to do so;
- Monitor low level concerns to ensure that they are not accumulating to the extent that they become major concerns
- If the CPO or Deputy CPO deems it necessary to take further steps the relevant members of staff will discuss matters of major concern with Merton's MASH team. A decision will be made as to whether the pupil's home LA needs to be involved (in conjunction with the MASH team) and what further action needs to be taken. Parents' agreement will be sought unless seeking agreement is likely to place the child at risk of significant harm through delay or the parent's actions or reactions.
- Record all decisions and actions taken in the Pupil Log

**Staff Child Protection Training:**

All new staff will be required to undergo induction in Child Protection issues with the designated CPO within one term of starting to work at the school. CP procedures will be explained to them on their first day at work.

The CPO and Deputy CPO will undergo training every two years and record this training in the school training records.

All staff will undergo full training every three years and an annual INSET session will be devoted to reviewing the policy with all staff in the years when a full training is not undertaken.



All staff were NSPCC trained by the Autumn term 2011.

**Relevant School policies and Guidelines that should also be referred to:**

- Policy for promoting Racial Equality
- Health and Safety policy
- Policy for Physical Intervention
- Touch policy
- School Discipline and Behaviour
- Staff Induction
- Staff Training
- Cyber Bullying
- Code of Conduct policy
- Staff recruitment policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Pastoral Care policy
- PSHE and Citizenship
- Behaviour policy
- Whistle blowing policy

**This policy has been written with reference to:**

- London Child Protection Procedures-5<sup>th</sup> Edition 2013
- Munro Review-May 2011
- NSPCC guidelines
- Working together to safeguard children- 2010
- Working Together Guidance 2013
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2014

### **Appendix 1: Categories of Abuse**

**The following are different types of abuse for which to be vigilant-**

**Physical abuse-** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**Emotional abuse-** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying, causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

**Neglect –** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/ or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food ,clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision( including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

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

Sexual abuse includes non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, including online and with mobile phones, or in the production of pornographic materials, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

In addition; Sexual abuse includes abuse of children through sexual exploitation. Penetrative sex where one of the partners is under the age of 16 is illegal, although prosecution of similar age, consenting partners is not usual. However, where a child is under the age of 13 it is classified as rape under s5 Sexual Offences Act 2003. See Part B1, Practice Guidance.

Included in the four categories of child abuse and neglect above, are a number of factors relating to the behaviour of the parents and carers which have significant impact on children such as **domestic violence**. Research analysing Serious Case Reviews has demonstrated a significant prevalence of domestic abuse in the history of families with children who are subject of Child Protection Plans. Children can be affected by seeing, hearing and living with domestic violence and abuse as well as being caught up in any incidents directly, whether to protect someone or as a target. It should also be noted that the age group of 16 and 17 year olds have been found in recent studies to be increasingly affected by domestic violence in their peer relationships.

The Home Office definition of Domestic violence and abuse was updated in March 2013 as:

"Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence and abuse between those aged 16 or over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender and sexuality."

This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse:

Psychological

Physical

Sexual

Financial

Emotional

## Appendix 2 : Signs of Abuse

<p><b><u>Indicators of Physical abuse</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unexplained injuries, bruising or burns/scalds</li> <li>• recurring injuries</li> <li>• untreated injuries</li> <li>• admission of punishment which appears excessive</li> <li>• bald patches</li> <li>• head/abdominal injuries</li> <li>• soft tissue injury is <b><i>very much a cause for concern.</i></b></li> <li>• Bruise marks in or around the mouth</li> <li>• Black eyes, especially if both eyes are black and there are no marks to forehead or nose</li> <li>• Grasp marks</li> <li>• Finger marks</li> <li>• Bruising of the ears</li> <li>• Linear bruising (particularly buttocks or back)</li> <li>• Bruising of differing age</li> <li>• injuries to genital areas</li> <li>• Bite marks</li> <li>• Unexplained burns ,cigarette burns ,rope burns (<i>these are rarely accidental</i>)</li> <li>• General physical disability</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Behavioural indicators</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• behavioural extremes (withdrawal, aggression, regression, depression)</li> <li>• inappropriate or excessive fear of parent or caretaker</li> <li>• Antisocial behaviour such as substance abuse, running away, truancy, fear of going home.</li> <li>• Unbelievable or inconsistent explanation for injuries</li> <li>• refusal to discuss injuries</li> <li>• withdrawal from physical contact</li> <li>• Sudden poor performance in school</li> <li>• self destructive tendencies</li> <li>• aggression towards others</li> <li>• over compliance</li> <li>• Resistance to PE (undressing)</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Indicators of Emotional Abuse</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• physical, mental and emotional development lags</li> <li>• low self-esteem</li> <li>• sudden speech disorders</li> <li>• fear of new situations</li> <li>• inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations</li> <li>• Eating disorders, including obesity or anorexia</li> <li>• Nervous disorders (rashes, hives, facial tics, stomach aches)</li> <li>• self mutilation</li> <li>• fear of parents being contacted</li> <li>• running away</li> <li>• compulsive stealing, scavenging</li> <li>• Difficulty in forming relationships</li> <li>• Soiling and wetting</li> <li>• Unresponsiveness in the child</li> <li>• Change in behavioural pattern</li> <li>• ‘Frozen’ look</li> <li>• Attention seeking</li> <li>• Sudden poor performance in school</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Behavioural indicators</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• habit disorders (biting, rocking, head-banging)</li> <li>• behaviours such as rocking, hair twisting etc</li> <li>• cruel behaviour, seeming to get pleasure from hurting children, adults or animals</li> <li>• Age inappropriate behaviours (bedwetting, wetting, soiling)</li> <li>• Behavioural extremes, such as overly compliant-demanding; withdrawn-aggressive; listless-excitabile.</li> <li>• acceptance of excessive punishment</li> <li>• over-reaction to mistakes</li> <li>• continual self deprecation</li> </ul>
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<p><b><u>Physical Indicators of neglect</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• constant hunger</li> <li>• constant tiredness</li> <li>• frequent lateness or non-attendance</li> <li>• untreated medical problems</li> <li>• no social relationships</li> <li>• poor personal hygiene</li> <li>• low self –esteem</li> <li>• poor state of clothing</li> <li>• unsuitable clothing; missing key articles of clothing(underwear, socks)</li> <li>• Repeated infections etc.</li> <li>• untreated injury or illness</li> <li>• lack of immunisations</li> <li>• indications of prolonged exposure to elements( excessive sunburn, insect bites, colds)</li> <li>• Unkempt appearance</li> <li>• Height and weight significantly below age level</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Behavioural indicators</u></b></p> <p>Unusual school attendance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sudden poor performance in school</li> <li>• compulsive stealing or scavenging</li> <li>• destructive tendencies</li> <li>• neurotic behaviour</li> <li>• running away</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Physical Indicators of sexual abuse</u></b></p> <p>torn stained or bloody underclothes Frequent unexplained sore throats, yeast or urinary infections Somatic complaints, including pain and irritation of the genitals. Sexually transmitted diseases Bruises or bleeding from external genitalia, vaginal or anal region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• self mutilation</li> <li>• extremes of passivity or aggression</li> <li>• withdrawal from physical contact</li> <li>• fear of returning home</li> <li>• emotionally distant</li> <li>• self destructive tendencies</li> <li>• Confusing affectionate displays</li> <li>• Sexualised drawings and play</li> <li>• Soiling and wetting</li> <li>• Sexually precocious behaviour</li> <li>• Attention seeking</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Behavioural indicators</u></b></p> <p>victims disclosure of sexual abuse regressive behaviours(thumb sucking, bed wetting, fear of the dark) Promiscuity or seductive behaviours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sexually explicit behaviour</li> <li>• disturbed sleep patterns (recurrent nightmares)</li> <li>• unusual and age <i>inappropriate</i> interest in sexual matters</li> <li>• avoidance of undressing or wearing extra layers of clothes</li> <li>• Sudden decline in school performance, truancy</li> <li>• Difficulty in walking or sitting.</li> <li>• low self-esteem</li> <li>• self mutilation</li> <li>• extremes of passivity or aggression</li> <li>• drug/solvent abuse</li> <li>• running away</li> <li>• neurotic behaviour</li> <li>• sexually inappropriate play for age of child</li> <li>• withdrawal from physical contact</li> <li>• fear of returning home</li> <li>• emotionally distant</li> <li>• self destructive tendencies</li> <li>• Confusing affectionate displays Sexualised drawings and play Soiling and wetting</li> <li>• Sexually precocious behaviour Attention seeking</li> <li>• Sudden poor performance in school</li> </ul>
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**This is intended as a guide. Please remember that the presence of one or more factors does not necessarily give proof that child abuse has occurred. It may, however, indicate that investigation should take place.**

**No list of abuse or neglect indicators can include all signs, and staff are advised to use their best judgement.**

### **Appendix 3 : What to do when helping a child to shower or change in The Lower School and Upper House**

- The pupil's right to privacy needs to be considered as far as is practicable;
- There should always be two members of staff present: one who is helping the child and who is of the same gender as the child, and one other member of staff who stays nearby and is able to hear what is going on and, ideally, monitor what the other adult is doing without intruding upon the child's privacy;
- Members of staff who are handling the child's soiled clothes should be provided with protective gloves;
- No member of staff should touch the child; they should direct them using words and actions if needed;
- Parents should be informed of what has happened preferably immediately and certainly before the child goes home.
- An entry should be made in the pupil log saying what happened and who was involved, and the Head of House and Group Leader should be informed.

## **Appendix 4: Safeguarding and Child Protection Contact List:**

### **Merton's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH):**

A child being abused or at significant risk of being abused; or in need of enhanced preventative services. The duty officer can also give advice on whether to take a concern further.

Monday-Friday 9:00am - 5:00pm: 020 8545 4226/4227

Out of Hours Emergency Team (EDT): 020 8770 5000

### **Police:**

A child being abused or at significant risk of being abused.

Non-emergency: 101

Emergency: 999

### **Merton Supporting Families Advice Team:**

020 8646 4038

### **Merton LADO:**

Allegations against members of staff. Contact should be made within 4 hours of the allegation being made.

Early Years Team: 020 8545 3140

LADO: 0208 274 4993

### **Catch 22 Merton Substance Abuse Service**

Advice and Consultation: 020 3701 8641 [msm@catch-22.org.uk](mailto:msm@catch-22.org.uk)