

# MILLBURN PRIMARY SCHOOL

## CHILD PROTECTION GUIDELINES

All children have the right to grow up in a safe, loving and happy environment. It is the intention of school staff to take all reasonable steps to ensure that the welfare of children is safeguarded and their safety is preserved.

There are four main kinds of child abuse. The following are details and possible symptoms:

**Neglect**: The confirmed or suspected persistent or significant neglect of a child. Symptoms may include hunger, inadequate clothing, and constant lack of cleanliness and regular tiredness or failure to thrive.

**Physical Abuse**: Confirmed or suspected deliberate injury to a child, or wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical suffering to a child. Symptoms may include unexplained injuries, bruises or burns, especially repeated ones. There may be a refusal to explain these and/ or fear of physical contact.

**Emotional Abuse**: Emotional ill-treatment or rejection. Symptoms may include delays in physical, mental and emotional development and unexplained fears.

**Sexual Abuse**: Confirmed or suspected exploitation of a child; where any adult touches a child's private parts in a way which makes the child feel unhappy and embarrassed. Symptoms may include an unusual sexual awareness (evidenced in behaviour, conversation or in artwork) or affection expressed sexually, which appears inappropriate to the child's age. The child may, on the other hand, appear unusually withdrawn and unhappy.

It is always possible that the above symptoms could be attributed to other family situations and certain other causes. However, the fact that they may be attributed to child abuse must not be ignored.

### **What to do if concerned about the possibility of child abuse:**

The school has designated teachers whose role is to take responsibility for liaising with the social services and other agencies over cases of abuse. The interim designated teachers are **Mr Handforth and Mr Gilchrist**.

Where non-teaching staff are alerted to the possibility of abuse they should inform either the **class teacher or the designated teacher immediately**. The teacher will then seek some clarification from the child. No promise of confidentiality can or should ever be given where abuse is alleged.

The chief task at this stage is to listen and not to interrupt or ask any direct questions. The information disclosed should be recorded accurately.

### **Procedures for dealing with:**

**Bullying:** Procedures for dealing with bullying as a form of abuse are held in a separate anti-bullying policy.

**Peer Abuse:** Where there is suspected abuse of a child by another child or young person then the appropriate child protection procedures should be followed both for the victim and for the alleged abuser.

## INFORMATION AND PROCEDURES INVOLVING STAFF

### **Conduct of staff:**

The conduct of staff towards the children must always be above reproach at all times. In safeguarding the welfare of the children, staff must never abuse their position of trust. Staff should be alert to any suspicion of physical or sexual abuse. They should also be aware of the negative aspect of emotional abuse in the form of persistent sarcasm or verbal bullying. Members of staff should ensure that their contact with the children could never be perceived or alleged as abusive.

### **Training:**

The subject will also be addressed in the induction of newly appointed staff, both teaching and non-teaching.

### **Guidelines covering Physical Contact with Children:**

It is important for staff to be sensitive to a child's reaction to physical contact and to act appropriately. It is also important not to touch children, however casually, on parts of the body or in circumstances, which may be considered indecent.

### **Allegations against Staff:**

Any complaints made that a member of staff has abused a pupil will be thoroughly investigated using the child protection procedures. Advice will immediately be sought from the designated child protection officer, Education Authority and Social Services. Preliminary enquiries will be carried out with an open mind. These enquiries will have regard to the welfare of the child concerned and of the other children in school, to the efficient functioning of the school and to the rights of the individual against whom the complaint has been made. (The absolute right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty.)

**Remember:** Are you concerned about the welfare of a child?

Have you reason to suspect a form of abuse may be involved?

Have you been informed about a case of suspected abuse?

REPORT YOUR CONCERN IMMEDIATELY TO THE DESIGNATED TEACHER, Mr A Handforth. He will investigate the concern and note your comments.

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