

Staff Protection.

There are occasions when pupils accuse teachers, or other members of staff of physically or sexually abusing them. In some cases those allegations are false or unfounded. Regrettably however, in some cases, the allegations are true. At this school procedures are in place for dealing with such allegations, which are in line with Local Authority practice. These procedures do not compromise Child Protection, but help to keep the damaging effects of false allegations to a minimum.

As a caring school, we not only protect children, but also our staff. This policy **MUST** be regarded as mandatory rather than advisory.

- Staff must always make every effort to ensure that they are not placed in a compromising situation with a child.
- Paragraph 49 of DfEE Circular 10/95, 'Protecting Pupils from Abuse' states
- *It is unnecessary and unrealistic to suggest that teachers should touch pupils only in emergencies. Particularly with younger pupils, touching them is inevitable and can give welcome reassurance to the child. However, teachers must bear in mind that even particularly innocent actions can sometimes be misconstrued. Children may find being touched uncomfortable or distressing for a variety of reasons. It is important for teachers to be sensitive to a child's reaction to physical contact and to act appropriately. It is also important not to touch pupils, however casually, in ways or on parts of the body that might be considered indecent.*
- For advice on restraining pupils, all staff should ensure that they have a copy of **The Use Of Force To Control Or Restrain Pupils A Summary of the DCSF Guidance - October 2007** (attached as appendix I). Staff must ensure that they read this document and refresh themselves regularly with its content.
- The Education Act 1996 forbids corporal punishment, but allows all teachers to use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from:
 - committing a criminal offence
 - injuring themselves or others
 - damaging property
 - acting in a way that is counter to maintaining good order and discipline at the school.
- The Act does not cover more extreme cases, such as action in self-defence or in an emergency, when it might be reasonable for someone to use a degree of force.
- Staff other than teachers and volunteer helpers are also able to use force if necessary, provided they have been authorised by the Head Teacher to have control or charge of pupils and have been appropriately trained.
- People with such authorisation might include teaching assistants, midday supervisors, specialist support assistants, Education Welfare Officers, people accompanying pupils on visits, etc.
- The Head Teachers should keep an up-to-date list of authorised people and may find it helpful to provide training or guidance to ensure that everyone is clear on the policy.
- Detailed and up-to-date records should also be kept of any incidents where force is used. A positive handling support and intervention form (PHSIF) must always be completed and countersigned by all adults and witnesses involved, and the Headteacher. It is always advisable to inform parents of such an incident and to then allow an opportunity to discuss it.
- Records of incidents should include the following information:
 - the name(s) of the pupil(s) involved
 - when and where the incident took place
 - why the use of force was deemed necessary
 - details of the incident, including all steps taken to diffuse the situation and resolve it without force and the nature of the force used
 - the pupil's response
 - the outcome of the incident

- a description of any injuries suffered by the pupil or others and/or any property damaged during the incident.
- During **sporting, games, dancing** activities, staff must ensure that they **do not touch** children unless it is **absolutely essential** in order to avoid injury. Allegations are most frequently made after Physical Education activities. **The BALPE book, which advises on correct holding of children during PE activities, 'Safe Practice in Physical Education', is kept in the PE store; staff are advised to consult this document.**
- When **supervising swimming** and pupils **changing before and after** swimming, staff and helpers must remain within sight and sound of another member of staff/helper. No helper or member of staff should find themselves alone with a child/children in this circumstance.
- **Staff should avoid giving casual cuddles** to children. If this is unavoidable because either the child is very young or is deeply distressed, then cuddles must be given with others present and without inappropriate holding. If a child has **wet him/herself**, even the youngest child can change his/her own underwear. If the **child has soiled, parents must be contacted** to come at once to change and clean him/her. If no one can be contacted, then two members of staff must clean the child. This must not be done by a member of staff alone.
- When **transporting children** in their own vehicles to/from events, staff must firstly check with their car insurers that they are **insured for this purpose**. *Staff are not covered by any school insurance for this activity, and staff must understand that they do this as a voluntary activity.* Since September 2006, child safety seats must be used for transporting children under 145cm in height. If in any doubt about this regulation, please seek advice from Highways.
- When transporting children in their own vehicles to/from events, staff must not find themselves alone in the car with a child. Where no other adult is present, the last child to be delivered home must be strapped with his or her safety belt into the **back seat** of the car.
- Staff must be aware that they are subject to being accused of **verbal abuse** as well as sexual or physical abuse. It is expected of EVERY member of staff, that they afford children the dignity of respect and that therefore they do not speak to children in an abusive manner.
- Volunteer helpers must **be within sight and/or sound of the teacher** to whom they have been assigned. All volunteer helpers must sign the necessary consent and insurance forms which the School Administrator keeps. Routine police checks are made on all staff on appointment and this now applies to all volunteer helpers.
- When dealing with children in her office, the Head will keep the door open unless another member of staff is present. When dealing with an individual child, he/she will be dealt with outside the office.

If a member of staff witnesses any behaviour by another member of staff towards a child, which they feel is **inappropriate**, or where a child alleges abuse, that member of staff **must inform the Head Teacher** immediately. The Head will then follow LA guidelines. The issue must NOT be discussed with anyone else as it may be necessary to involve the Police and Social Services. Discussion with others jeopardises the integrity of a Police investigation. Where the member of staff who has allegedly abused is the Headteacher, **the nominated officer Sheridan Dodsworth**, at Lincolnshire Education Authority responsible for Child Protection must be informed.

This policy was agreed by the full Governing Body on 13th October 2009 in consultation with the staff.

September 2009