

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES
POLICY NO. 19

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Management and staff at Philpots Manor are committed to the principle that issues relating to the care and protection of the children here are central to our work. The principle that their welfare is the paramount consideration is fundamental and underlies all our policies.
- 1.2 This policy and procedure has been drawn up in conjunction with West Sussex County Council Child Protection and Education staff and is consistent with the West Sussex Area Child Protection Committee Child Protection Procedures (copies of which can be found in the Reception back office and in the Teachers room). It has been subsequently amended to reflect the requirements of the Care Standards Act 2000 and the Education Act 2002.
- 1.3 The school is committed to ensuring that all staff will receive training in child protection to help them to recognise abuse or potential abuse and to be confident about what action to take.
- 1.4 It is the responsibility of ALL members of staff within the school to be alert to incidents which may involve child protection issues (suspected child abuse) and to follow the procedures outlined below.
- 1.5 The designated Child Protection Officer (CPO) will take overall responsibility for co-ordinating action within the school and for referring to and liaising with other agencies, except in any case where an allegation is made against a member of staff (or volunteer) in which case inter-agency liaison is the responsibility of the Education Co-ordinator in consultation with the CPO.
- 1.6 Any member of staff reporting a concern about possible child abuse, which they believe is not dealt with according to these procedures, should immediately make a referral themselves to Social Services at Haywards Heath.

2. PROCEDURE

What Action To Take -

a) Suspected or Alleged Abuse Outside the School

Any observations made by any staff regarding a child on return to school indicating possible abuse or neglect, or any report of suspected abuse or neglect received from a child, should be immediately reported to the CPO. The CPO will immediately contact the relevant Social Services Department (SSD) in the area where the child lives and inform the Assessment Team at the Haywards Heath Social Services Department (Mid-Sussex Locality). The CPO will decide, in conjunction with the SSDs, who else needs to be informed. This will include key people within the school. The CPO will inform the child's parents/carers of the investigation and outcome, unless such a notification is likely to put the child's welfare at risk. The CPO will notify the Commission for Social Care Inspection and the child's placing authority of the instigation and outcome of any formal child protection enquiry.

b) Suspected or Alleged Abuse Within the School

1. If at any time, a member of staff believes that a child has been or may be being abused by an adult (including the Registered Person or the person in charge of the school at that time) or another child within the school, either as a result of something they have observed or because any child has said something directly, they should immediately inform the CPO.
2. If an allegation is made against a member of staff (or volunteer) the CPO will refer the matter immediately to the Education Co-ordinator.
3. If the matter concerns another child (or an adult not employed by the school), the CPO will refer the matter immediately to the Assessment Team at the Haywards Heath Social Services Office and staff there will decide how to proceed.
4. In situations where allegations are made against a member of staff, consideration must always be given to suspending that member of staff pending the outcome of the Child Protection Investigation. Advice should be sought by the Education Co-ordinator from the Designated Officer Children's Safeguarding West Sussex County Council's Children's Services Education Department in all cases in which it is alleged that a member of staff 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 he/she is unsuitable to work with children

A member of staff may be suspended from work at any time, without prejudice, and outwith the disciplinary procedure, pending the outcome of inquiries into any concerns regarding child protection or safety. In these circumstances, a member of staff may be sent home immediately by any two of the Management Group. Staff who normally reside on School premises will have alternative accommodation provided for the duration of the investigation.

No disciplinary action will be taken against a member of staff until the case has been fully investigated.

At every stage in the procedure, the member of staff will be advised of the nature of the complaint against him/her and will be given the opportunity to state his/her case before any decision is made.

The member of staff will have the right to be accompanied by a colleague, friend, union representative or any other person of their choosing during any interview.

Failure by a staff member to report to a Child Protection Officer any concerns regarding the child protection of a Philpots Manor School student is a ground for implementation of the staff disciplinary procedure.

5. If the CPO is not sure whether what has been reported is a child protection matter, contact should be made immediately with the Haywards Heath Social Services Office for advice.
6. If the concern is reported outside normal office hours (ie 5pm to 9am) the matter should be referred to the 'Out of Hours' Emergency Service on 01903 694422.
7. The CPO will notify the CSCI and the child's Placing Authority of the instigation and outcome of any formal SSD Child Protection investigation.

c) Disclosure of Suspected or Alleged Abuse

If a member of staff receives any report of suspected abuse of a child or young person, they must follow the steps below:

1. Stop and listen to what they are being told, interrupting any other activity they are carrying out if necessary. Responding to an allegation or suspicion of abuse of a child takes priority over other duties.
2. Takes notes of what is said, as it is being said, if appropriate to do this. If it is not possible to take notes at the time, they should be made immediately afterwards. Keep the notes taken at the time, without amendment, omission or addition, whatever subsequent reports may be written. Keep a note of the child's demeanour and activities and any contact with parents etc. following any disclosures.
3. Do not promise confidentiality or agree to "keep it a secret". You can assure the child or anyone else giving you information that you will only tell those you have to tell to try to get the matter dealt with, and will not tell anyone who does not need to know.
4. Do not ask leading questions like "did he do X to you?", but open questions like "can you tell me what happened?". Leading questions – anything likely to suggest ideas, occurrences or interpretations – are likely to damage any chance of subsequent investigations or criminal proceedings. Avoid expressing opinions. You can express support for the child or person giving you information in getting the matter sorted out.
5. Always consider whether any child who has told you of concerns about abuse, or any other child, is in need of immediate protection in the light of what you have been told or suspect. If so, initiate or take the necessary temporary protective action – eg by staying with the child until satisfactory arrangements for the child are made. You can ask and take into account the child's wishes about any immediate protection. You should aim to transfer protection of any child into the normally expected arrangements as soon as you are satisfied that these are safe.
6. Do not tell the person against whom you have received an allegation of abuse, or who you suspect of abuse, of that allegation or suspicion – that may put a child at further risk and damage any subsequent social services or criminal investigation.
7. Immediately inform the CPO, who will then follow the procedure outlined in either 2 a) or b) as appropriate.

d) Children involved in Prostitution

The involvement of a child or young person in prostitution and particularly if the child is under 16 years of age, is abuse in itself, over and above any question of the legality of either the child's activities or the adults involved with him/her.

Evidence of a child becoming involved in prostitution, or of unauthorised persons picking children up, contacting children in the home, or observed trying to make contact with children outside the home must be immediately reported to the CPO. The CPO will immediately follow the action set-out in paragraph a) abuse outside the school and will in addition contact the police.

e) Confidentiality

All incidents dealt with according to these procedures must be recorded by the CPO and securely filed to protect confidentiality.