

GUIDANCE FOR SAFE WORKING PRACTICE

The aims of this guidance are to:

- Help all staff establish safe and responsive learning environments which safeguard children
- Reduce the risk of adults being unjustly accused of unprofessional or abusive conduct
- Ensure that all staff are aware of appropriate and inappropriate conduct and practice.

More detailed guidance on safe working is contained in;

- '*Guidance for Safer Working Practice for adults who Work with Children & Young People in Education Settings*' DCSF 2009 www.erseb.org.uk

This guidance should be read in conjunction with

- *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006 (DCSF)*
- *Safeguarding Children & Safer Recruitment in Education (DCSF) 2007*
www.eriding.net/childprotection

For advice and support on this guidance or Safeguarding & Child Protection see Mr Clarke (Child Protection Lead Teacher)

Basic Principles

- **If no specific advice, policies or guidelines for a specific situation exist, or if you are unsure consult the relevant member of Senior Management**
- **If you need to take a particular course of action in an unplanned circumstance, which may vary from policies or does not allow time for advice to be sought, record these actions with the relevant member of Senior Management**
- **If at any time you are concerned that an action or comment by yourself may be misinterpreted or that a child behaves or makes a comment in a way that causes you concern in this respect, log your concerns immediately and consult with Mr Clarke**

Staff Responsibilities

All staff have responsibilities to ensure the Safeguarding of children;

- Work and behave safely and responsibly at all times to fulfil your duty of care and not abuse in any way your position of trust
- Respond to any concerns about a child's wellbeing that you may have or are brought to your attention in line with the school policy (Protecting & Safeguarding Children) (On the VLE)
- Respond in the same way to concerns that involve the behaviour of other adults in the school by following the school procedures for 'Whistle Blowing' as outlined in the school policy guidelines. (See pages 10 and 11)
- Review your own practice and follow school policies and procedures and seek advice when unsure
- **Understand that it is professionally and morally unacceptable for staff not to carry out these responsibilities**

School Responsibilities

In order for staff to carry out these responsibilities the school will ensure that:

- All new and existing staff receive adequate CP training as laid down in the school CP and other related policies
- All staff are made aware and reminded of the school procedures for reporting concerns and related Safe School policies
- Staff concerns and opinions will be sought and taken into account in the regular review of related policies and procedures
- That all staff are aware of the School 'whistle Blowing' procedures by which adults can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion
- Provide a safe working environment for staff and provide guidance about safe working practices
- Ensure that employees are treated fairly and reasonably in all circumstances

Sharing Concerns and Recording Incidents

Do

- Be familiar with the schools system for recording Child Protection and other concerns about children and young people (see policy on VLE)
- Take responsibility for recording any incident, and passing on information where you have concerns or concerns are disclosed to you by, or about a child
- Report any behaviour by colleagues that raises concern

Confidentiality

Do

- Treat information you receive about children and young people in a discreet and confidential manner

Power and Positions of Trust

Do not use your position

- To intimidate, bully, humiliate, threaten, coerce or undermine children or young people
- To form or promote relationships which are of a sexual nature, or which may become so
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Propriety and Behaviour

Do

- Be aware that behaviour in your personal life may impact upon your work with children and young people
- Follow professional codes of conduct at all times

Do not

- Behave in a manner, which would lead any reasonable person to question your suitability to work with children or act as a role model
- Openly discuss in any media, the internal and personal matters of the school in a way which can compromise your position and the reputation of the school within the community
- Enter into discussions with pupils about your private and personal affairs beyond a reasonable professional level

Dress and Appearance

Do not

- Wear clothes that are likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative, distract or cause embarrassment
- Wear clothes or shoes that may be unsafe in the school environment

Gifts, Rewards and Favouritism

Do

- Ensure that gift received or given in situations which may be misconstrued are declared
- Only give gifts to an individual young person as part of the agreed reward system

Infatuations

Do

- Report and record any incidents (verbal, written or physical) that suggest a child or young person may have developed an infatuation with you or another adult
- Always maintain professional boundaries

Communication with Children and Young People (including the Use of Information Technology)

Do

- Ensure that you understand and follow the school Staff Internet and Email policy and Staff ICT usage guidelines
- Ensure that personal social networking sites are set at private and pupils are never listed as approved contact
- Be aware that text messaging should only be used as part of an agreed protocol and when other forms of communication are not possible
- Only use equipment e.g. mobile phones, provided by school to communicate with children, making sure that parents have given permission for this form of communication to be used in line with school policy
- Only make contact with children for professional reasons and in accordance with the above and school policies.
- Report any personal and inappropriate communication by a child or young person as soon as possible

Do not

- Give personal contact details to children or young people, including mobile telephone numbers, email addresses or website/social networking sites
- Use the internet or web based communication channels including social networking sites, mobile phones, web cams or written communication of any kind to send personal messages to a child/young person
- Use or access social networking sites of pupils

Social Contact

Do

- Always approve any planned school related social contact with children or parents with senior colleagues. For example when it is part of a reward scheme or pastoral care programme
- Ensure that social contact with children or their families in the community in your private life does not undermine appropriate working relationships in your school role
- Report any concerns you may have arising from contact with children or their families in the community or in your private life
- Consider the appropriateness of the social contact according to your role
- Be aware that social contact can be misconstrued as grooming

Do not

- Have secret social contact with children and young people or their parents
- Establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils or their families to pursue or strengthen a relationship with pupils

Sexual Contact

Do

- Ensure that your relationships with children and young people clearly take place within the boundaries of a respectful professional relationship
- Be aware that sexual relationship with a pupil under 18 is a criminal offence, regardless of consent

Do not

- Have sexual relationships with any pupil
- Have any form of communication with a child or young person which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative i.e. verbal comments, letters, notes, electronic mail, phone calls, texts, physical contact
- Make sexual remarks to, or about, a child/young person
- Discuss your own sexual relationships with or in the presence of children or young people

Physical Contact

Do

- Be aware there are occasions when it is entirely appropriate staff to have some physical contact with a child
- Be aware it is crucial that in all circumstances, staff should only touch children in ways which are appropriate to their professional or agreed role and responsibilities

- Be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described
- Never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent
- Always be prepared to report and explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny

Do not

- Indulge in horseplay

Activities that require Physical Contact

Do

- Always explain to a child the reason why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take
- Follow recommended guidance and protocols
- Conduct activities where they can be seen by others

Behaviour Management and Positive Handling

Do

- Adhere to the organisation's behaviour management and positive handling policy (see VLE)
- Avoid physical intervention whenever possible
- Record and report as soon as possible after the event any incident where physical intervention has been used

Do not

- Use force as a form of punishment
- Use sarcasm, demanding or insensitive comments or degrading treatment

Children and Young People in Distress

Do

- Consider the way in which they offer comfort and reassurance to a distressed child and do it in an age-appropriate way
- Record and report situations which may give rise to concern from either party

Respect and Privacy

Do

- Avoid any physical contact when children are in a state of undress
- Avoid any visually intrusive behaviour
- Follow the school procedures in ensuring privacy and safety in changing areas

First Aid

Do

- Adhere to the school's policy for administering first aid or medication
- Make other adults aware of the task being undertaken
- Explain to the child what is happening
- Report and record any administration of first aid or medication
- Have regard to any health plan which is in place

One to One Situations

Do

- Avoid meeting in remote or secluded parts of the school
- Inform other adults about meetings beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by
- Ensure there is an open door or visual access
- Consider the needs and circumstances of the child/children involved
- Use your professional judgement in such meetings and report any situation or comment that gives cause for concern
- For further guidance please refer to "Guidance on Working Alone"

Do not

- Arrange meetings with children or young people off the school site unless in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Headteacher
- Use 'engaged' or equivalent signs

Home Visits

Do

- Agree the purpose for any home visit with Senior Management
- Adhere to agreed risk management strategies
- Always make detailed records including times of arrival and departure and work undertaken
- Ensure any behaviour or situation of concern is reported

Transporting Children and Young People

Do

- Be aware that the safety and welfare of the child is your responsibility until they are safely passed over to a parent/carer
- Seek consent and record details of the journey in accordance with agreed procedures including parental consent
- Ensure that all arrangements ensure vehicle, passenger and driver safety including having proper and appropriate insurance for the type of vehicle being driven
- Ensure that any impromptu or emergency arrangements of lifts are logged and can be justified if questioned

Trips and Outings

Do

- Always have another adult present in out of school activities, unless otherwise agreed with a senior manager
- Undertake risk assessments in line with the school's policy where applicable
- Have parental consent to the activity
- Ensure that your behaviour remains professional at all times

Photography and Video

Do

- Be clear about the purpose of the activity and about what will happen to the images when the activity is concluded
- Be able to justify images of children in your possession
- Ensure the child/young person understands why the images are being taken
- Report any concerns about any inappropriate or intrusive photographs found

Do not

- Use equipment not provided or authorised by the school
- Take or display photographs without parental permission

Access to Inappropriate Images and Internet Usage

Do

- Ensure that school equipment is not used to view or download pornography or other inappropriate material

- Ensure that children and young people are not exposed to or have access to inappropriate material
- Ensure that school IT and internet policies are followed at all times

Do not

- Use personal IT equipment in school without arrangement with Senior Staff

Remember

- **If no specific advice, policies or guidelines for a specific situation exist, or if you are unsure consult a Senior Teacher**
- **If you need to take a particular course of action in an unplanned circumstance, which may vary from policies or does not allow time for advice to be sought, record these actions with a Senior Teacher**
- **If at any time you are concerned that an action or comment by yourself may be misinterpreted or that a child behaves or makes a comment in a way that causes you concern in this respect, log your concerns immediately with Mr Clarke.**

RYBURN VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN : WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY

Staff must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management. Although this can be difficult this is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

You may be the first to recognise that something is wrong but may not feel able to express your concerns out of a feeling that this would be disloyal to colleagues or you may fear harassment or victimisation. These feelings, however natural, must never result in a child or young person continuing to be unnecessarily at risk. Remember it is often the most vulnerable children or young person who are targeted. These children need someone like you to safeguard their welfare.

Don't think what if I'm wrong – think what if I'm right

Reasons for whistle blowing

- Each individual has a responsibility for raising concerns about unacceptable practice or behaviour
- To prevent the problem worsening or widening
- To protect or reduce risks to others
- To prevent becoming implicated yourself

What stops people from whistle blowing

- Starting a chain of events which spirals
- Disrupting the work or project
- Fear of getting it wrong
- Fear of repercussions or damaging careers
- Fear of not being believed

How to raise a concern

- You should voice your concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as you feel you can. The earlier a concern is expressed the easier and sooner action can be taken
- Try to pinpoint exactly what practice is concerning you and why
- Approach the Head of Child Protection Officer (Mr Clarke) or the Headteacher
- If your concern is about your lead Child Protection Teacher/Headteacher, or you feel you need to take it to someone outside the school, contact the Local Education Officer
- Make sure you get a satisfactory response – don't let matters rest

- Ideally, you should put your concerns in writing, outlining the background and history, giving names, dates and places where you can
- A member of staff is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation but will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern

What happens next

- You should be given information on the nature and progress of any enquiries.
- Your employer has a responsibility to protect you from harassment or victimisation
- No action will be taken against you if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith
- Malicious allegations may be considered as a disciplinary offence

Self reporting

There may be occasions where a member of staff has a personal difficulty, perhaps a physical or mental health problem, which they know to be impinging on their professional competence. Staff have a responsibility to discuss such a situation with their line manager so professional and personal support can be offered to the member of staff concerned. Whilst such reporting will remain confidential in most instances, this cannot be guaranteed where personal difficulties raise concerns about the welfare or safety of children.