

## Child Protection Policy Statement

**English in Chester fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection. Our policy applies to all staff working in the school setting, and to people who have unsupervised access to children in the home setting. We will ensure we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff to work with children. We will develop and implement procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse. We will establish a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.**

### Recruitment

In early 2011, the government reviewed the operation of the Vetting and Barring Scheme and Criminals Record Bureau and recommended that:

- vetting checks are not the only safeguarding measure that organisations should apply at the point of selecting an individual to work closely with children. Government guidance always reminds organisations to take up references and check employment history, and think carefully about the final decision that only they can take – is this person suitable for this post?
- in addition, after recruitment, safe practice should also be followed, with procedures for acting if any concerns arise;
- the previous proposals, by placing too much emphasis on state vetting, would tend to encourage risk aversion rather than risk management.

The school's policies in this area therefore take full account of these recommendations. The school will ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed by always requesting a CRB check for staff who are likely to have unsupervised contact with under 18 year olds, requiring a statement from all staff, and requiring references for all new employees in which referees will be asked if there are any reasons why the potential member of staff should not be employed with under 18 year olds.

All teaching and administrative staff, homestay providers and service providers (taxi and bus companies, for example) are subject to the school's CRB disclosure policy, which is set out in a separate document.

### School safeguarding procedures and policy

**We recognise that because of the day to day contact with children, school staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. The school will therefore:**

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Ensure we have a designated Child Protection Officer, who is the Student Services Officer and/or Assistant.
- Ensure every member of staff with significant contact with children (including temporary staff and volunteers) knows the name of the designated person responsible for child protection and their role.

- Ensure all staff and volunteers with significant contact with children understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated person responsible for child protection (see Appendix attached).
- Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
- Ensure all records are kept securely, separate from the main student files, and in locked locations, by the Student Services Officer/Child Protection Officer.
- Follow procedures (see appendix below) if an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.

### **Private fostering**

Cheshire West and Cheshire requires notification if any person under the age of 16 is placed with a local family for more than 28 days, and for the homestay family to be registered as a private fosterer. The school has a policy of not providing accommodation for any student under the age of 16 for more than 28 days. The school does not offer courses to under 16 year olds that last more than 28 days.

## Appendix

### Procedures for reporting suspected abuse

These procedures relate to concerns about the welfare of children and young people up to the age of 18 years. They specifically concern suspected abuse either in the school or home setting. Any concerns about suspected abuse by strangers to the child, outside of these settings, are matters for criminal investigation and should be referred directly to the police.

**Guidance for anyone who may have concerns about a child (under the age of 18) (adapted from advice from Chester West and Cheshire Council).** *These guidelines are to be read in conjunction with the school's **Equality, Relationship, Harassment and Abuse Policies and Procedures***

This section of the procedures is for everybody who has direct or indirect involvement with children. These are people who work with, or have actual contact with, children or work with family members or others who have contact with children.

These people should be able to recognise, and know how to act upon, evidence that a child's welfare may be a cause for concern. The leaflet "**Child Abuse? How to recognise the signs and what to do next**" is available from the school's Child Protection Officer, and outlines the key signs.

#### **The first things to do if there are concerns about a child:**

It is not unusual to have concerns about children for all sorts of reasons. Staff should therefore discuss any concerns they have with a senior colleague, a manager, or the school's Child Protection Officer, to clarify their understanding of the child's circumstances.

If there are still unresolved concerns that may be of a child protection nature, discussions can then take place - without identifying the child in question if necessary - with the front line staff in Children's Social Care or the Safeguarding Unit. Should child protection concerns then be established, it is necessary to identify the child at that point.

Whatever discussions take place, the staff and manager(s) involved must:

- never delay emergency action to protect a child from harm, ensuring that they take any
- necessary action on the same working day
- always record in writing their concerns, whether or not further action is taken
- always record in writing their discussions about a child's welfare.

At the close of discussions, there should always be a clear and explicit recorded agreement about who will be taking what action, or that no further action will be taken.

#### **Making a referral to Children's Social Care**

If the concerns remain after discussions, then the child should be referred to the local authority's Children's Social Care, normally by the Child Protection Officer, the Principal or other senior member of staff. Referrals must be made as soon as abuse or neglect is suspected, by a telephone call to, or a meeting with, staff from Children's Social Care and followed up in writing within 48 hours.

## **Clarifying the information**

The person making the referral should provide, wherever possible:

- the child's name, including any alternatives known
- the child's date of birth and gender
- the child's address, any previous addresses
- the current whereabouts of the child
- any other information about the child
- all other children in the household
- other household members
- any other information that is important (e.g. any special needs, family composition, relevant family history, family members who may present a risk to the child or workers, other adults who have regular care of the child)
- the child's GP
- the child's ethnic background and language
- the referrer's own contact details in case of the need to make further enquiries

The following information may also be clarified:

- the nature of the concerns, including detailed information regarding any specific injuries
- how and why they have arisen, including the explanations given by the parents/carers or others who were caring for the child at the time when any when abuse is suspected as having taken place
- any suspected impact on other children who may be at risk
- what appear to be the needs of the child and family
- any action the referrer has already taken
- what, if anything, has been said by the child and/or carers about the concerns
- dates, times and location of any specific incidents
- details (names/addresses/telephone numbers) of any witnesses
- whether any urgent action is needed to make the child safe

## **Confirming in writing**

It is essential that the person who has made the referral to Children's Social Care verbally, confirm that referral in writing within 48 hours. If the referrer has not received an acknowledgement within 3 working days, they should contact Children's Social Care again.

Policy reviewed November 2011