

Mossley Nursery School

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

Reviewed February 2019



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INTRODUCTION

The governors and staff of Mossley Nursery School fully recognise the contribution it makes to safe-guarding children. We recognise that all the staff, including volunteers, have a full and active part in protecting our pupils from harm.

All staff and Governors believe that our school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment, which promotes the social physical and moral development of the individual child.

This policy is informed by the guidance and procedures set out by DE 'Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection (1999) and the Area Child Protection Committees' (ACPC) Regional Policy and Procedures (2005).

The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 states that *the welfare of the child must be the paramount consideration* in all decisions concerning the child. This is also reflected in Article 3 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – *the best interests of the child shall be of primary consideration*. The 'paramountcy' of the child principle underpins our Child Protection policy and procedures.

Our policy applies to all staff, governors, students and volunteers working in the school. The purpose of the procedures set out in this policy is to safeguard and protect our pupils by ensuring that every adult who works in our school – teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers – has clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The issue of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school, and we know that some forms of child abuse are also a criminal offence.

There are five main elements to our policy:

1. Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop;
2. Developing and implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse;
3. Ensuring we practise safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children;
4. Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe;
5. Supporting pupils who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan.

THE SAFEGUARDING TEAM AT MOSSLEY NURSERY SCHOOL

Chair of Governors & Designated Governor for Child Protection Governance:

Ms Lynn Frazer

Principal & Designated Teacher for Child Protection:

Mrs Julia Henderson

Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection AM Class:

Mrs Lisa Beattie

Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection PM Class:

Mrs Ruth Moore

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

(A child is a person under the age of 18 years as defined in the Children Order)

Child Abuse occurs when 'a child is neglected, harmed or not provided with proper care. Children may be abused in many settings, in a family, in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them, or more rarely by a stranger.' (ACPC, 2005)

Types of Abuse

Physical Abuse – is the deliberate physical injury to a child, or the wilful neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour. (ACPC, 2005)

Possible signs or symptoms of physical abuse include:

- Unexplained bruises (in places difficult to spot)
- Human bite marks, welts or bald spots
- Unexplained lacerations, fractures or abrasions
- Untreated injuries
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Chronic runaway
- Fear of going home.

Emotional Abuse – is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that he is worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as he meets the needs of another person. It may involve causing a child frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child. Domestic violence, domestic abuse, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose a child to emotional abuse. (ACPC, 2005)

Possible signs or symptoms of emotional abuse include:

- Bullying of others
- Change in personality from outgoing to withdrawn
- Difficulty in forming / maintaining relationships with others
- Depression
- Signs of mutilation
- Attention seeking
- Chronic runaway
- Wetting and soiling
- Sudden speech disorders
- Low self-esteem.

Sexual Abuse – involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children to look at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. (ACPC, 2005)

Possible signs or symptoms of sexual abuse include:

- Bruised or sore genitals
- Genital infection
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Inappropriate sexualised language or behaviour
- Low self-esteem
- Chronic depression
- Substance abuse
- Personality changes
- Fear of going home.

Neglect – is the persistent failure to meet a child’s physical, emotional and/or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision. It may also include non-organic failure to thrive. (ACPC, 2005)

Possible signs or symptoms of neglect include:

- Poor hygiene
- Constant hunger/cramming food
- Inadequate / inappropriate clothing
- Constant tiredness
- Exposed to danger / lack of adequate supervision
- Untreated illness
- Lack of peer relationships
- Compulsive stealing / begging.

A child may suffer or be at risk of suffering from one or more types of abuse and abuse may take place on a single occasion or may occur repeatedly over time.

Exploitation- is the intentional ill treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, and engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purposes of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature. (DHSSPS 2016)

Bullying

(Please see Mossley Nursery School’s Anti-Bullying Policy in conjunction with Pastoral Care, CP & Safeguarding)

CONFIDENTIALITY

All staff and volunteers who receive sensitive information about children or parents in the course of their professional duties should be aware that such information is confidential and is not to be made the subject of general conversation, or disclosed outside the school other than statutory officials, as required by this policy.

All records of a safeguarding/ child protection nature, are held securely within the school. Access to such records is restricted to the Principal/Designated Teacher DT / Deputy Designated Teachers DDT for Safeguarding and Child Protection.

PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED (OR DISCLOSED) CHILD ABUSE

The designated teacher for child protection (DT) is Mrs Julia Henderson (Principal).

In her absence **the deputy designated teachers for child protection (DDT’s) Mrs Lisa Beattie and Mrs Ruth Moore** will assume responsibility for child protection. On the rare occasion that neither DT nor DDTs is in the school the designated governor, **Ms Lynn Frazer**, will assume responsibility for child protection.

If a child makes a disclosure to a teacher or other member of staff which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a child, **the member of staff must act calmly yet promptly.**

The staff member should exercise tact and sensitivity in responding to a disclosure of alleged abuse. They should;

- Remain calm and reassuring- children who have suffered abuse or trauma may withdraw if they sense signs of doubt.

- Listen carefully and quietly but never cross-examine the child or press them for evidence or ask leading questions.
- Retain the child's trust, whilst explaining that by telling you this, you may need to tell someone else in order to get the child help. Never promise confidentiality.

He/she should not investigate – this is a matter for social services – but should report these concerns immediately to the DT, discuss the matter with her, make full notes (signing and dating them), and hand the note to the DT.

The DT (Principal) will, as a matter of urgency plan a course of action, and ensure that a written record of decisions is made.

The DT (Principal) will decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to social services. **If there are concerns that the child may be at risk of significant harm, the school is obliged to make a referral to social services.** Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed immediately.

The DT may seek clarification or advice and consult with The Child Protection Support Service for Schools (CPSSS) - Designated Officer for Child Protection at the EANI, or a senior social worker in the Gateway team before a referral is made. No decisions to refer a child to social services will be made without full consideration and on appropriate advice. **The safety of the child is our first priority.**

Where there are concerns about possible abuse, the DT will inform:

- Gateway team- Social Services
- EANI Senior Officer for Child Protection & Safeguarding
- CPSSS Regional Officer

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal (DT) must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about the designated teacher or the Principal). Where the matter is referred to social services the member of staff may be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils, and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigations by social services. The Chairperson of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against the Principal, the DDT must be informed immediately. He/she will inform the Chairperson of the Board of Governors and together they will take appropriate advice and ensure the necessary action is taken.

If any member of staff feels unsure about what to do if he/she has concerns about a child, or unsure about being able to recognise signs or symptoms of possible child abuse, he/she should talk with the DT.

It should be noted that the information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held 'in confidence'. In the interests of the child, staff may need to share this information with other professionals. However, only those who need to know will be informed.

ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER (DT) AND DEPUTY DESIGNATED TEACHERS (DDT)

The DT:

- To provide training to all school staff including support staff
- Being available to discuss the child protection concerns of any member of staff
- Responsibility for recordkeeping of all child protection concerns
- Making referrals to Social Services or PSNI Public Protection Units
- Liaising with EANI/CCMS Designated Officers for Child Protection

- Keeping the school principal informed
- The lead responsibility for the development and updating of the school's child protection policy
- Ensures parents receive a copy of the child protection policy every 2 years which alerts them to the fact that referrals may be made to Social Services and the role of the school regarding this
- Promotion of a child protection ethos in the school
- Written reports to the Board of Governors regarding child protection
- Maintains all records pertaining to child protection in a secure location (accessed only by the Designated Teacher and the School Principal as appropriate).

DDT:

To support and undertake the duties of the Designated Teacher for Child Protection as required.

Board of Governors-

Chairperson and Designated Governor with responsibility for Child Protection and Safeguarding in **Ms Lynn Frazer**. The Role of the Designated Governor is to support the Principal and Designated Teacher for Child Protection where needed. The Chair is responsible for signing off the number of child protection entries at the end of an academic year.

It is mandatory for all members of the board of governors to complete Strand 1 training in Safeguarding and Child Protection. All Governors have either completed this in their initial governor training and a session was led by the Principal as part of a Board of Governor meetings.

MOSSLEY NURSERY SCHOOL'S VETTING PROCEDURES

As from April 2008 responsibility for undertaking criminal history background checks is the responsibility of an organisation called Access NI. The selection and appointment process is the starting point for ensuring that only those who are suitable are employed to work in close proximity with children.

Students coming into school already have had background checks carried out by Access NI and present their certificates indicating so. The school, through CCMS/NEELB carry out background checks of any volunteers who come into school. Students and volunteers are provided with a code of conduct outlining safeguarding and child protection procedures, confidentiality and this outlines what to do in the event of a disclosure. It also outlines duties they should not engage in without direct supervision of permanent vetted members of staff.

At Mossley Nursery, we follow guidance on pre-employment checks provided by the Department of Education and have adopted vetting procedures in line with DE requirements.

Photographs/ Videos of pupils

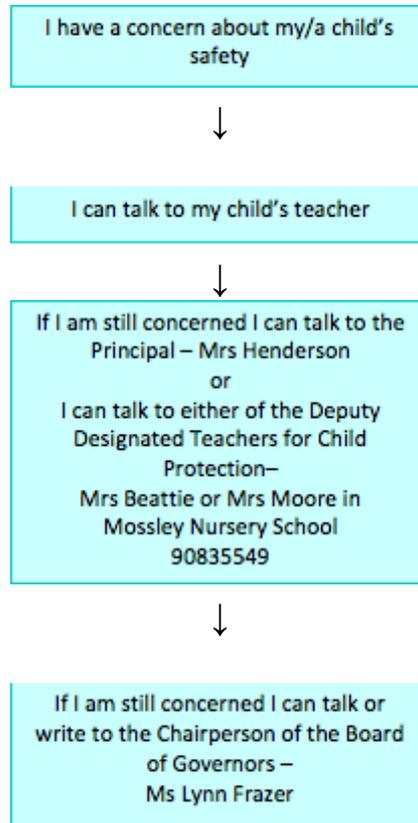
As part of our child protection procedures, we ask every parent to sign to give permission for their child's images to be used. Permission is sought on each level and parents can opt in and opt out at any time. These may be used for;

- Within school for observations or display.
- Externally for displays associated with the school.
- By local, national press or the Education Authority for training purposes
- On our website and on our parent app, Seesaw.

No photo is displayed with the child's full name or any personal details.

HOW A PARENT CAN MAKE A RAISE A CHILD PROTECTION CONCERN

If a parent has a child protection concern they can follow the guide below:



Reviewing our Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy

At Mossley Nursery School, our Child Protection Policy is reviewed and updated annually. Child Protection Training for Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teachers are completed on a 3 yearly basis and all staff (teaching, non-teaching and support staff) attend training within school on an annual basis. The Designated Governor for Child Protection Governance attends training on a 3 yearly basis. Training for Board of Governors Strand 1 training is mandatory for all serving governors and can be delivered by the EA or by Principals/ Designated Teachers within Mossley Nursery.

Date ratified by BOG:

Date of next review:

A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS WITHIN THE EDUCATION SECTOR WHOSE WORK BRINGS THEM INTO CONTACT WITH CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE

INTRODUCTION

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the child/young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust and that their behaviour towards the children and young people in their charge must be above reproach. Confidentiality is accepted by all staff, students and volunteers. This Code of Conduct is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children and young people gain from positive interaction with staff within the education sector. It is intended to assist staff, students and volunteers in respect of the complex issue of child abuse, by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on prudent conduct. It also ensures standardisation of behaviour towards the children and agrees a common approach to the handling of grey areas of practice.

This Code of Conduct applies to –

- ❖ Teaching staff – full, part-time, substitute, student
- ❖ Non-teaching staff – full, part-time, substitute, student
- ❖ Peripatetic staff
- ❖ Volunteers – parents, etc
- ❖ Any other adult with access to children in the nursery school/unit.

The Code of Conduct will be given to all of the above people through the provision of the Staff Handbook or the Student & Volunteers handbook.

It is part of the terms and conditions of employment contract / placement / volunteering contract within the nursery and must be adhered to. Failure to adhere to the code can invoke the school's discipline procedures.

Digital Technologies and Use of the Internet

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all circumstances in which staff interrelate with children and young people, or where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur.

In all circumstances, employees' professional judgement will be exercised and for the vast majority of employees this Code of Conduct will serve only to confirm what has always been their practice.

From time to time, however, it is prudent for all staff to reappraise their teaching styles, relationships with children/young people and their manner and approach to individual children/young people, to ensure that they give no grounds for doubt about their intentions, in the minds of colleagues, of children/young people or of their parents/guardians.

Within Mossley Nursery School, we have a Digital Technologies & Internet Policy. This outlines guidelines for both curriculum use, use of mobile phones and internet safety. It also outlines guidelines in relation to financial arrangements. (*see separate Digital Technologies and Use of the Internet Policy*)

THE PREVENTATIVE CURRICULUM

The staff of Mossley Nursery School recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at school their behaviour may be challenging or they may feel withdrawn.

Mossley Nursery School will endeavour to support the pupils who are exposed to risk of harm through supporting such pupils in accordance with his/her agreed protection plan.

Support for all pupils in the school in developing skills in self protection and developing confidence will be afforded as follows:

- The content of the curriculum, particularly Personal Development.
- The school ethos which promotes a positive supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued.
- The school behaviour policy which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the school. The school will ensure that pupils understand the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviours towards themselves and others
- Liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as Social Services, Education Welfare Service, Educational Psychology, PSNI and the school nurse.