



Windlesham School

Child Protection Policy

“The child shall be protected against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation.”

Principle 9, United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child, (1959)

Introduction: Our Aim

Every child has the right to feel safe and secure. At Windlesham School we recognise that child protection is the responsibility of every member of staff, both teaching and non-teaching. This policy therefore applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the school. Windlesham School has a very special, caring atmosphere and yet each of us needs to be fully aware of the potential dangers to the children in our care. We must be confident in our ability to protect them against such dangers. We must also be aware of good practice regarding a) the identification of possible signs of neglect or abuse, and b) making appropriate interventions in such cases, according to clear procedural guidelines. This document aims to describe such practice explicitly.

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Objectives

- **When appointing new members of staff, Windlesham School carries out the required checks on staff as outlined in the guidance *Safeguarding Children and Safe Recruitment in Education*.**
- **Windlesham School will nominate a member of staff, and a governor, with responsibility for child protection.** We will ensure that these persons receive appropriate training and that all members of staff know who they are. **The member of staff who is currently our CPC is Mr James Nicholl. The Governor responsible for child protection is Dr Jane Eadie.**
- **Windlesham School will provide appropriate training and information for all staff.** This will enable them to
 - a) be aware of child protection issues, including any relevant legislation
 - b) spot signs of neglect and/or abuse
 - c) be fully aware of the school's policy on managing behaviour and discipline and apply it consistently. All staff must also have an up-to-date copy of this policy.
 - d) listen carefully to children at all times and encourage open and honest communication.
- **Windlesham School will develop and implement procedures for identifying and reporting suspected cases of abuse.** It is vital that all staff are made aware of and understand these procedures so that our practice is consistent across the school.
- **Windlesham will continue to develop effective links with local agencies involved with child protection,** such as the Sussex Police, Brighton and Hove Health Authority and Brighton and Hove Social Services. We have regular visits from, Mrs Vicky Jones, the Police School's Liaison Officer to discuss issues of personal safety.

- **Windlesham School will ensure that our school ethos provides a positive, supporting and caring environment where children can feel safe and develop a sense of self-worth.** Abused children often feel helpless, humiliated and guilty. School may be the only place in which they can feel secure.

- **The curriculum at Windlesham School will support children's well-being.** It will place strong emphasis on the identification of "right and wrong", in terms of our own and others' behaviour. Part of the School's Curriculum will focus on dealing with conflict and avoiding situations which are likely to cause unhappiness to themselves or others. The School's Police Liaison officer, Mrs Vicky Jones, will continue to make regular visits to talk to the children about their safety.

Identifying Abuse

Generally abuse may be in one of four categories. These are: **Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Sexual Abuse and Neglect.**

Physical Abuse: All children have accidents. Staff should use their knowledge of the child

concerned to consider whether the injury is suspicious. Also, the table (right) may be of use but is only a guide.

Common Sites of Accidental Injury	Common Sites of Non-Accidental Injury
Crown of head and forehead, nose, bony sections of spine, elbows, hands, knees, shins.	Eyes, cheeks, ears, mouth (inside and out), neck, shoulders, chest, upper and inner arms, back, stomach, genitals, buttocks, thighs, calves, feet.

Identifying physical abuse also involves being aware of furtive or secretive behaviour, uncharacteristic aggression or withdrawn behaviour, sudden change in appetite, sudden loss of co-ordination, constant sleepiness or repeated absence. Listen out for confused or conflicting explanations of how injuries

were sustained. Consider whether the explanation is in keeping with the nature age and location of the injury.

Emotional Abuse: This is harder to recognise and takes place over time based on observations of the quality of the child's relationships with family members.

Signs to watch out for from Parents/Carers include: Poor attachment with the child; unresponsive or neglectful behaviour towards the child's emotional or psychological needs; persistent negative comments about the child; inappropriate or inconsistent developmental expectations of their child; parental problems superseding the needs of the child; dysfunctional family relationships, including domestic violence.

Signs to watch out for from children include: Emotional Indicators (such as low self-esteem, unhappiness, fear, distress or anxiety); behavioural indicators (such as attention seeking, opposing, withdrawn or insecure behaviour); physical indicators (such as failure to thrive, developmental delays, etc.)

Sexual Abuse: Physical signs (such as bleeding, awkwardness in walking or sitting, tummy pains, regression into wetting, tiredness); behavioural signs (such as extreme variations in behaviour, sexually proactive behaviour which is incompatible with the child's age, explicit drawings and/or written work, or direct disclosure). Dealing with disclosure is dealt with on page 7.

Neglect: Physical signs (including abnormal growth, extremely high or low weight, recurring infections, unkempt dirty appearance, unwashed or inadequate clothing, hunger, listlessness); behavioural signs (attachment disorders, indiscriminate friendliness, poor social relationships, poor concentration, development delays, low self-esteem); environmental signs (insufficient food, heating or ventilation at home, risk from animals in the home, inappropriate sleeping arrangements).

Finally, the **presence of one or more of these indicators is not on its own proof that abuse is the cause**; we must not lose sight of the fact that some things are simply accidents.

School Procedures

Suspicion of Abuse

If a member of staff suspects abuse, they must report it immediately to the School's Child Protection Co-ordinator (CPC), **Mr James Nicholl**. Together they must discuss the member of staff's concerns. The CPC **must** keep a record of this meeting, together with any evidence, **even if no further action is taken**. If after this meeting one or both parties are still concerned that abuse is involved, they must inform the Headteacher.

The Headteacher and CPC then need to contact Social Services in order to get advice on how to proceed.

Disclosure of Abuse

If a child discloses that they or another child or adult have been abused, the member of staff to whom this disclosure is made must follow the following guidelines. This is vital for the protection of both child and adult.

When asking questions, here are some basic principles to which we should adhere:

- Listen carefully and with an open mind. Do not interrupt the child. Do not show anger, shock or anxiety, however much you may feel these things. Try to remain impartial.
- Support, say you believe them but *do not promise confidentiality*.
- Make a detailed and dated written record of the conversation and share this as soon as possible with the CPC or the Headteacher.
- Do not interrogate. Ask only enough questions to establish the basic nature of the allegation.
- Avoid leading questions. For example, ask “When did it happen?” rather than “Did it happen this morning?”. Ask “**When**” “**Where**” “**Who**” and “**What**” questions but *never suggest answers* to these questions. (i.e. you should not say “Was it your neighbour?” but you can say “Who was it?”). Do not ask “**How**” or “**Why**”; these questions are not appropriate during such disclosures.

Remember – do not ask anything which might be construed later as a leading question and do not promise confidentiality to the child. Keep written notes of the exact conversation and pass these as soon as possible to the CPC (Mr James Nicholl) or the Headteacher.

Allegations against members of staff (or volunteers) at Windlesham School

If there is an allegation that might indicate that a teacher, member of staff or school volunteer has behaved in a way that had 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 that s/he is unsuitable to work with children, the following procedure should be followed:

The allegations should be reported straight away to the Headteacher. In the absence of the Headteacher, or in a case where the Headteacher is the subject of the allegation or concern, the allegations should be reported to the School Governor, **Dr Jane Eadie**.

As a result of an allegation of abuse, Windlesham School may need to consider one or more of the following courses of action: a police investigation of a possible criminal offence; initiating enquiries and assessment by the children's social care about whether a child is in need of protection or in need of services; consider taking disciplinary action in respect of the individual.

Parents and carers of a child or children involved will be told about the allegation immediately if they do not already know about it. Parents and carers will also be told about the progress of any case, any disciplinary process, including the outcome where there is not a criminal offence.

Windlesham School will keep the person who is the subject of the allegations informed of the progress of any case and make consideration to support that individual member of staff (or volunteer). **If a member of staff is suspended, the school will keep him/her informed about developments at school and advise him/her to contact any union or professional association that he/she may be a member of.**

If a member of staff who has had allegations made against them tenders their resignation, this will not prevent Windlesham School following up these allegations in accordance with the procedures outlines in this document.

Suspension should be considered in any case where there is cause to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm, or the allegation warrants investigation by the police, or is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. However, the member of staff who has had allegations made against them must not be suspended automatically or without careful thought.

In all instances, clear and comprehensive records will be kept by the Headteacher unless the allegation is against the Headteacher when the records will be kept by the appropriate Governor. These will include a detailed summary of the allegations made and details of how the allegation is followed up and resolved. Records of any action taken and decisions made will be made and kept in the member of staff's personnel file. The member of staff concerned will also receive a copy of the notes to be kept in his/her personnel file.

If an allegation against a member of staff is determined to be false, Windlesham School will refer the matter to The Children and Young People's Trust (in the first instance Brighton and Hove Central Area Team Telephone 01273 – 294470) in order for them to determine whether the child concerned is in need of Social Services, or may have been abused by someone else.

Windlesham School will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

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