

Winterhill School

Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

The Department of Education, Culture and Leisure Services is a member of the South Yorkshire Safeguarding Children's Board (SYSCB) and this policy accords with the SYSCB procedures. This policy follows the guidance presented in the DfES document "Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010".

Winterhill School recognises the responsibility placed upon its staff to deal with actual and suspected child abuse in a positive and effective way. Staff will endeavour to recognise and deal with concerns as quickly as possible and in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy, which is intended to provide guidance and protection for children, parents and school staff.

Allegations of physical/sexual abuse made against school staff will be dealt with under agreed procedures (Circular 61A), which will be used in conjunction with the SYSCB procedures.

What is child abuse?

The working definition used in Rotherham is:

"Child abuse is intended or unintended act or omission (which is avoidable) which adversely affects a child's health, physical growth or psychological development whether or not the child or adult are aware of the abuse".

References in this policy to child, children, student or children and young people, are references to people who are under 18 years of age. (see Safeguarding Children in Education para.5).

Abuse may fall into a number of categories: - **physical injury, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect.** Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, by failing to act to prevent harm, or by failing to ensure safety and adequate care. Harm may occur intentionally or unintentionally. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

Suspensions/concerns

All staff, whether voluntary or paid, acting in a position of responsibility with children, are required to discuss any suspicions or concerns with the Designated Teacher for child protection. Where there is suspicion or knowledge that a child is being abused there is a duty for the Designated Teacher to refer the concerns immediately to either Social Care or the Police who are the only two agencies with statutory duties and/or power to investigate and intervene. To ignore suspicion or concern may leave a child at risk.

Disclosure

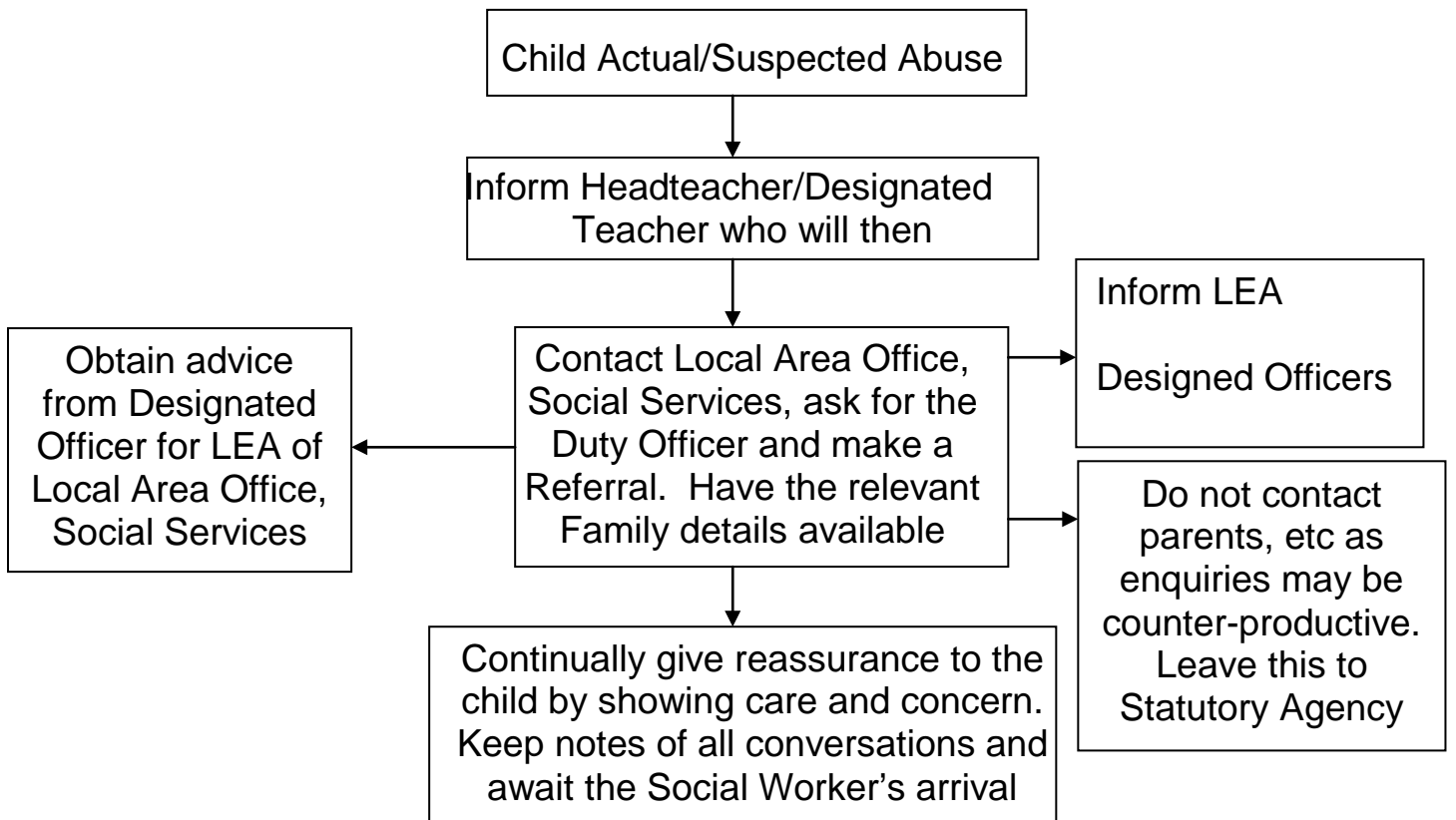
Disclosure may occur through class activity or directly to a member of staff. Students sometimes disclose to support staff and they will be made aware of child protection procedures and their duty to refer actual or suspected abuse. When children disclose abuse to members of staff, their account must be listened to and taken seriously. Staff are responsible for ensuring that any concerns/suspensions arising from disclosures are referred immediately to the Designated Teacher. The Child Protection teacher will follow SYSCB child protection procedures.

If a student discloses to you it is important that you:

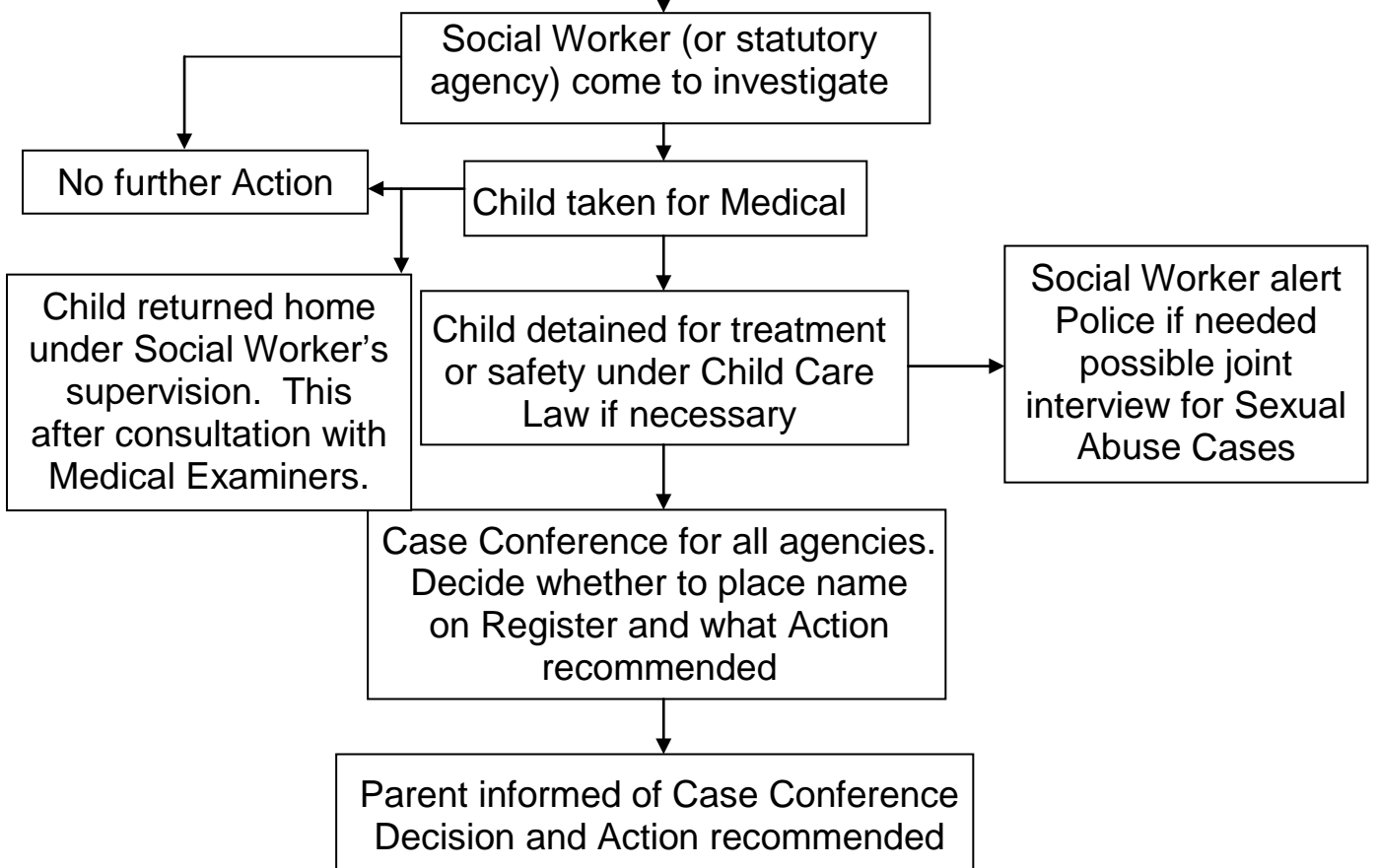
- Stay calm and reassuring
- Explain that you cannot keep what the child tells you a secret
- Must not press for details – it is better if the child does not have to repeat details unnecessarily
- Reassure the student that they have done the right thing to tell you
- Accounts should be as factual and objective as possible. Write down everything the student told you, verbatim if possible. If there are bruises etc if visible, do a sketch. Be specific about where, size, when etc but do not examine the students and do not ask leading questions. Do not take photos or electronically record the student's speech.
- Anything you record should be passed on immediately to Heather Walker, Lesley Sowerby or, failing that, the Headteacher. This should be done in person and as quickly as is possible.

Dealing with Child Abuse in Schools

Stage 1



Stage 2



More guidance is given in the DfES publication 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' (this is available at www.teachernet.gov.uk/childprotection/guidance.html)

Child Protection Records

Under any circumstances where a child leaves the school, any confidential child protection records eg case conference minutes relating to the child will be forwarded without delay to the new school.

Training

All lead staff will undergo training every 2 years.

All staff have training every 3 years delivered by the in-house team.

Temporary and/or supply staff will be given written information to ensure they understand their role and procedures to follow.

All staff new to the school are inducted into our policy and practice.

Allegations Against Staff

Any allegations will be dealt with in accordance with the DCFS.

All staff are informed in the safeguarding training of the importance of keeping themselves safe and of the appropriate way to act when dealing with students on any issue.

The role of the Designated Teacher – Child Protection

The Designated Teacher is responsible for advising staff and acting as liaison between other agencies when actual or suspected cases of abuse relate to students at the school. Information about children for whom there is child protection concerns will be shared on a 'need to know' basis.

The Designated Teacher for child protection in Winterhill School is Heather Walker, who is supported by Lesley Sowerby. In the absence of these members of staff, responsibility for child protection will pass to the Headteacher, Mr Burman.

Monitoring and Evaluation

A monthly meeting of the Safeguarding Team ensures ongoing monitoring. The Governor responsible for Safeguarding will attend at least one of these. A further annual report to Governors is presented to the Welfare Governors Sub Committee.

The role of the nominated Governor

This person will be responsible for liaising with the Headteacher, Designated Teacher and LEA regarding child protection issues.

The nominated Governor for Winterhill School is Carl Gager.

Parents

This policy is available on our website.

Further detailed information on Safeguarding Procedures in Rotherham Schools is contained in the South Yorkshire Safeguarding Children's Board website: southyorkscb.proceduresonline.com.

Attached to this document is Appendix 1. General Guidance to staff and on Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Board website.

Policy updated September 2011
In line with LEA Circular 61
H Walker



GENERAL GUIDANCE TO STAFF

Heather Walker is our lead child protection designated teacher.

She is supported in this work by Lesley Sowerby.

The Headteacher, **Roger Burman**, oversees this work.

The decision to refer a child to the safeguarding designated teacher only requires a strong suspicion. You do **not** need to confirm your suspicions or seek a disclosure – in fact seeking that may increase the risks to the child.

If you do refer to Heather or Lesley they will discuss your concerns with you and then either refer at once to one of the investigating agencies (social care or police).

Many children do decide to disclose to a member of staff. If this were to happen to you the following guidelines protect you and the child.

- You should not and cannot promise a child confidentiality – ie that you will tell no-one. If a child begins to tell you something you should make it clear that you may need to pass this on. If they then choose not to tell you, there is little you can do except explain you will do all you can to help them and that they can come back and talk later if they change their mind. You should at this point inform HRW or LYS if you feel there is sufficient concern.
- You should **not** inform parents – that will be done, if appropriate, by HRW or LYS.
- You should **listen** to the child, reassure them that they have done the right thing to tell you and explain what you will do now, ie talk to HRW or LYS. Do **not** question or interrogate the information the child has told you – it is the responsibility of social care and the police to investigate child abuse, not the school. If you question the child you could compromise any future police investigation.
- Keep a **handwritten** record of what the child said – as verbatim as possible, with your comments and your next actions. This should be timed and dated and kept securely until you can give it directly to HRW or LYS. This should be written immediately after the child has left you and passed on the same day or within 24 hours. Notes should be made of any marks, signs and symptoms which you have observed or which have been brought to your attention by the child or another person. Do not however ask to see any of the marks mentioned.

Please keep this documentation in a secure place



- You should continue to do the same with any further contact you have with the child.
- Under no circumstances should the child's clothes be removed if abuse is suspected or if the child says for example they have bruises on their back. Any examination will be carried out by a doctor as part of the investigation.
 - don't delay if they need urgent medical attention
 - share the information only with staff on a need to know basis
- If HRW or LYS are unavailable you should speak immediately to a senior member of staff.
- It is important that your concern for the child remains at all times on a professional level. Do not give out your private telephone number or address and ensure your meetings with the student are on the school site where other staff can be called upon.
- If you have any concern about a child's increasing dependency on you or if you feel their behaviour towards you to be in any way inappropriate you should inform HRW or LYS (or a senior member of staff) immediately of your concerns.
- In all cases where a referral is made, it is entirely appropriate that you should seek to know the outcome as far as the school is informed – do feel free to talk about the child with Heather – but it is not appropriate for you then to pass this on to others, however well intentioned. Decisions on informing staff will be made by HRW or LYS and SLT.
- The dilemmas often facing teachers when dealing with possible or actual abuse can be intimidating. We worry perhaps about what if we are wrong, if the child or the parents blame me, what happens the next time we see the child..... the list can seem daunting. However, balanced against this are our responsibilities to the children in our care. It is no accident that children most frequently confide in teachers – we are for some, the only lifeline out of abuse. Always remember, the safety of the child is paramount, we have the privilege of helping we do not have the choice of ignoring.

APPENDIX 1

Safeguarding and E safety

For all staff

To be read as an appendix to our Safeguarding Policy

E safety is not an ICT issue but a safeguarding issue and as a result you need to think of it as part of our overall arrangements that are in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

As with all forms of harm or abuse, there is no exhaustive list of signs or indicators to watch out for. But these can include: changes in children's behaviour, demeanour, physical appearance and presentation, language or progress.

If you are concerned that a child's safety is at risk because you suspect someone is using communication technologies (such as social networking sites) to make inappropriate contact with the child

- Report to and discuss with our Safeguarding Officers (HRW, LYS)
- Advise the child on how to terminate the communication and save all evidence.
- The Officer will then determine further action which may include:
 - contacting parents guardians
 - Contact CEOP <http://www.ceop.gov.uk/>.
 - Consider the involvement of police and social services.
 - Inform LA Safeguarding team.

Children should be confident in a no-blame culture when it comes to reporting inappropriate incidents involving the internet or mobile technology: they must be able to do this without fear.