Pontnewydd

Primary School

Child Protection Policy

"The curriculum needs to be delivered in a school with an ethos which empowers children; a school which allows them to voice ideas, feelings and opinions, treats them with respect, values their contribution and lets parents make a contribution to the educational process"

(From "Responding to Child Abuse")

INTRODUCTION

It is recognised that staff play an important role in identifying potential cases of child abuse. It is also important that all relevant agencies involved in child protection co-operate together for the benefit of the child. All schools have a designated teacher for child protection, who liaises with Social Service departments and with teachers in school. For this procedure to work, it relies on the skills and expertise of every class teacher and adult within school to recognise or report concerns.

At Pontnewydd Primary School Mr Geraint Rowlands is the designated person for child protection. The Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher also know the procedures and have undertaken Level 2 Child Protection Training. In the absence of Mr Rowlands, any concerns should be directed to the Headteacher. The designated governor representative is Mr David Williams. All staff and Governors have total commitment to child protection. Staff raise children's awareness about themselves through SEAL (Social, Emotional Aspects to Learning) and develop a trusting climate so that children feel able to talk and share their thoughts and feelings.

Pontnewydd Primary School has a policy of partnership between home and school, but with child abuse, or suspicion of child abuse, our first and only responsibility is to the child. This may mean that parents are not informed or consulted in some instances. We may not be able to prevent child abuse, but by following child protection procedures, we are trying our best to protect all our children and this is our first and foremost responsibility.

All staff make sure, through their care of children, to try to ensure that children keep safe, remain healthy and are able to say "NO ". Suspected cases are reported, procedures adhered to and subsequent actions are left to the appropriate agencies. We also care for children who have been abused and understand their problems.

The school uses the Brook Sexual Health traffic light toolkit to support our judgements on any concerns we may have with regards to child protection and the Torfaen Threshold of Need document.

AIMS

Pontnewydd Primary School fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection.

There are five main elements to our policy:-

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

Our policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the school. Learning support assistants, mid-day supervisors, caretakers, secretaries as well as teachers can be the first point of disclosure for a child.

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

Neglect: The persistent or severe neglect of a child (for example, by exposure to any kind of danger including cold and starvation) which results in serious impairment of the child's health and development.

Physical Abuse: Physical injury to a child including deliberate poisoning burns and scalds, where there is definite knowledge or a reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

Sexual Abuse: The involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children and adolescents in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate the social taboos of family roles.

Emotional Abuse: The severe adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection.

PREVENTION

We recognise that because of the day to day contact with children, school staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse.
We recognise that high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and good lines of communication with a trusted adult helps prevention.

The school will therefore:-

- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and 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 or in difficulty.
- Include in the curriculum, activities and opportunities for Healthy & Wellbeing which equip children with the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

PROCEDURES

We will follow the procedures set out in guidance produced by our Local Safeguarding Children Board, which are in line with the All Wales Child Protection Procedures and the LA Safeguarding policy and procedures.

Pontnewydd Primary School will:-

- Ensure it has a designated senior member of staff, who has undertaken the appropriate training and support provided by the local authority.
- Recognise the role of the designated person and arrange support and training.
- Ensure every member of staff (including temporary and supply staff and volunteers) knows:-

~ the name of the designated person and their role;
~ that they have an individual responsibility for referring child protection concerns using the proper channels and within the timescales agreed with the Local Safeguarding Children Board;
~ how to take forward those concerns where the designated person is unavailable.

- Ensure that all members of staff are aware of the need to be alert to signs of abuse and know how to respond to a pupil who may tell of abuse.
- Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection by setting out its obligation in the school prospectus.
- Provide training for all staff so that they know:-

~ their personal responsibility
~ the agreed local procedures
~ the need to be vigilant in identifying cases of abuse
~ how to support a child who tells of abuse.

- Notify the local social services team if:

~ it should have to exclude a pupil on the child protection register for a fixed term or permanently.

~ If there is an unexplained absence of a pupil on the child protection register of more than two days duration from school (or one day following a weekend).

- Work to develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at initial case conferences, core groups and child protection review conferences.
- Keep electronic records (noting the date, event and action taken), even where there is no need to refer the matter to social services immediately.
- Ensure all records are kept secure and in locked locations,
- Adhere to the procedures set out in the Welsh Assembly Government guidance circular "Child Protection: Preventing Unsuitable People from working with Children in the Education Sector"
- Designate a governor for child protection who will oversee the school's child protection policy and practice.

SUPPORTING THE PUPIL AT RISK

We 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 self-blame.

This school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. Nevertheless, when at school their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn.

This school will endeavour to support the pupil through-

~ the content of the curriculum to encourage self esteem and self motivation.
~ the school ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued.

The school's behaviour policy is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the school. All staff will agree on a consistent approach which focuses on the inappropriate but does not damage the pupil's sense of self worth. The school will endeavour to ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable, but he/she is valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.

- Liaison with other agencies who support the pupil such as Social Services. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, the Educational Psychology Service, Behaviour Support Services and the Education Welfare Officer.
- Keeping records and notifying Social Services as soon as there is a recurrence of a concern.

When a pupil on the child protection register leaves, we will transfer information to the new school immediately and inform Social Services.

WHAT ACTION DO I TAKE IF I SUSPECT A CHILD IS BEING ABUSED?

Staff **must:**

· Remember that the priority is to protect the child.
· Treat the matter seriously.
· Receive the child's story if appropriate, listen but do not judge.
· React to what the child tells you with belief and tell the child that they have done the right thing in telling you.
· Indicate to the child what action you will take and make it clear that you will have to inform others (no secrets). Only inform those with a need to know.
· Keep an accurate record of what you have become aware of and what you have done using MyConcern
· Limit any questioning bearing in mind the '**must not**' points below.

Staff **must not:**

· Contact the parents again – this is the job of social services.
· Interrogate the child if that child has disclosed information or ask leading questions.
· Speak to anyone about whom allegations are made (including colleagues).
· Promise to keep secrets/confidentiality.
· Ask a child outright if they or others have suffered abuse

Staff **Need to:**

- Establish what it is that is causing you concern.
- Discuss your concern with the Designated Child Protection Officer or the Headteacher immediately.
- Keep a written record of what led you to be concerned – include details of injuries, behaviour or verbal disclosures that prompted you to take action.
- Keep a detailed record of your actions.
- Understand that it is the Designated Child Protection Officer who, after consulting with the Headteacher, will assess the situation and decide whether to inform the statutory authorities.
- Remember to trust your own judgement and intuition and act on it in order to safeguard the child.

Unconfirmed worries about child abuse

Staff often have unconfirmed worries about pupils, but little real evidence, and so feel unsure about how to proceed. Many cases have shown that these unconfirmed worries are in fact the tip of the iceberg; that if the Teacher's information was placed alongside that of say, the LSA or a Midday Supervisor, it all added up to a serious cause for concern.

It is vital, therefore, that even vague worries are passed on at the earliest stage to Mr Rowlands who is in a position to involve other agencies, collate information and make decisions about further referral.

Again, staff should record incidents or suspicions on MYCONCERN, dating and signing the record.

Immediate response to the child

It is vital that our actions do not abuse the child further or prejudice further enquiries, for example:

- Listen to the pupil, if you are shocked by what is being said try not to show it
- It is OK to observe bruises but not to ask a child to remove or adjust their clothing to observe them
- If a disclosure is made the pace should be dictated by the pupil without them being pressed for detail by being asked such questions as "what did they do next?" or "where did they touch you?". It is our role to listen not to investigate. Use open questions such as "is there anything else you want to tell me?" or "yes?" or "and?"
- Accept what the pupil says. Be careful not to burden them with guilt by asking questions such as "why didn't you tell me before?"
- Reassure the child that he/she is right to tell and is not to blame.
- Do acknowledge how hard it was for them to tell you this
- Don't criticise the perpetrator, this may be someone they love
- **Don't promise confidentiality**, reassure the pupil that they have done the right thing, explain whom you will have to tell (the designated teacher) and why. It is important that you don't make promises that you cannot keep such as "I'll stay with you all the time" or "it will be alright now".

Recording Information

- Make some brief notes at the time or immediately afterwards; record the date, time, place and context of the disclosure or concern using MyConcern , recording facts and not assumption and interpretation. Notes must be signed and dated by the end of the school day.
- Note the non-verbal behaviour and the key words in the language used by the pupil (do not translate into "proper terms").

- It is important that the original notes are attached to the MyConcern and then shredded. If the concern is about a child in a different class then ensure that the classteacher is informed.

Actions to be taken by Designated Child Protection Officer in cases of suspected child abuse.

1. Assess the situation immediately.

2. If assessment confirms suspicions, contact the Team leader at the Social Services Department. Following verbal referral, the Social Services Team Leader will decide on appropriate action to take.

3. Phoned referrals should be followed up by a written statement.

Note: Designated Child Protection Officers or the Headteacher may discuss the case with other professionals within the local child protection network prior to making the official referral as long as this does not place the child at further risk or unnecessarily delay the referral.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

This is intended as a guide. Please remember that the presence of one or more factors does not necessarily give proof that child abuse has occurred. It may, however, indicate that investigation should take place.

- Unexplained delay in seeking treatment which is needed.
- Incompatible explanations
- Constant minor injuries
- Unexplained bruising

~ Bruise marks in or around mouth
~ Black eyes, especially if both eyes are black and there are no marks on forehead or nose.
~ Grasp marks
~ Finger marks
~ Bruising of the ears
~ Linear bruising (buttocks or back)
~ Differing age bruising

- Bite marks
- Burns and scalds
- Cigarette burns
- General physical disability
- Unresponsiveness in the child
- Soiling and wetting

- Change in behavioural pattern
- "Frozen" look
- Attention seeking
- Apprehension
- Antisocial behaviour
- Unkempt appearance
- Sexually precocious behaviour
- Sexualised drawings and play
- Sudden poor performance in school
- Poor self esteem
- Self mutilation
- Withdrawal
- Running away
- Resistance to return home after school
- Resistance to PE (undressing)
- Difficulty in forming relationships
- Confusing affectionate displays
- Poor attendance-repeated infections etc

BULLYING

Our policy on bullying is set out in a separate document and is reviewed regularly by the governing body.

POSITIVE HANDLING

Our policy on Positive Handling is set out in a separate document and is reviewed regularly by the governing body.

CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS

We recognise that statistically children with behavioural difficulties and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse. All members of staff who deal with children with moderate or profound disabilities, physical disabilities, sensory impairment, speech/language difficulties, emotional and behaviour difficulties will be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse. All incidents of behaviour will be recorded on MyConcern.
We consider the Child Protection policy to be vital to protecting our children and we undertake a thorough review of both policy and practice each year.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST SCHOOL STAFF

Staff must protect themselves and should bear in mind that even perfectly innocent actions can sometimes be misconstrued. It is important not to touch pupils however casually, in ways or on parts of the body that might be considered indecent. When pupils make such an allegation against a member of staff, Local Safeguarding Children's Board Procedures must be followed.
If a child discloses an allegation against a member of staff or a Governor, the Designated Safeguarding Officer Mr Geraint Rowlands should be informed.

In the case of suspected or identified abuse of a child by a Headteacher, the police and/or Social Services have a duty to investigate. National guidelines have been produced and the first person to receive an allegation regarding a Headteacher should take it directly to the Chair of Governors or in their absence the Governor with responsibility for Child Protection . At this stage, after hearing a child's allegation, no discussion should be initiated by school staff with the Headteacher.

Any allegations made against staff would be dealt with through the Staff Disciplinary Procedures.

Keeping Our Children Safe

Mr Rowlands is our Designated Person for child protection.



If you have any concerns about one of the children then please speak to Mr Rowlands LRB Class 14.

Alternatively, if Mr Rowlands is not available, then please take your concerns to either:
Miss Rowland Deputy Headteacher or Mrs Maloney Headteacher

This policy was last reviewed on 7/7/26

This policy will be reviewed annually