

New Hope Christian Academy Children Policy and Procedures (NHCA)

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Contents

- Aims
- Definitions of Abuse
- Historical Abuse
- Domestic Abuse
- Organised Abuse
- Confidentiality and Appropriate Disclosure of Information
- Recognising Abuse
- What to do if Abuse is Disclosed
- What to do if Abuse is Suspected
- If You Suspect a Member of Staff or Volunteer of Abuse or Inappropriate Behaviour
- When an allegation has been made against a Member of Staff or Volunteer of Abuse or Inappropriate Behaviour
- Support to Staff and Volunteers
- Recruitment of Staff and Volunteers
- Implementation and Monitoring
- Further Information
- Appendix A
- Appendix B
- Appendix C
- Appendix D

This child protection policy and procedure forms part of our safeguarding children arrangements.

Aims

- We consider it the duty of members, staff and volunteers to protect children and young people who they come into contact with from abuse. This is part of our safeguarding children procedure.
- Not all concerns about children or young people relate to abuse, there may well be other explanations. It is important to keep an open mind and consider what you know about the child and their circumstances.
- If you are worried, it is not your responsibility to investigate and decide if it is abuse. It is your responsibility to act on your concerns and do something about it.

Definitions of Abuse

The 1989 Children Act recognises four categories of abuse:

- **Physical Abuse** - actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury.
- **Sexual Abuse** - actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent. The child may be dependent or developmentally immature.
- **Emotional Abuse** - severe or persistent emotional ill treatment or rejection likely to cause adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child. All abuse involves some emotional ill treatment.
- **Neglect** - the persistent or severe neglect of a child, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, resulting in the significant impairment of a child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

Historical Abuse

There may be occasions when a child will disclose abuse (either sexual or physical) which occurred in the past. This information needs to be treated in exactly the same way as a disclosure of current child abuse. The reason for this is that the abuser may still represent a risk to children now.

Domestic Abuse

Staff may be working with children experiencing violence at home. Children experiencing this may demonstrate many of the above symptoms. Staff will need to treat them sensitively, record their concerns and consider informing Social Services.

Organised Abuse

Organised or multiple abuse is abuse involving one or more abusers and a number of related or non-related abused children and young people. The abusers may be acting in concert to abuse children, sometimes acting in isolation or may be using an institutional framework or position of authority to recruit children for abuse. Organised and multiple abuse occur both as a network of abuse across a family or community and within institutions such as residential homes or schools.

Confidentiality and Appropriate Disclosure of Information

Confidentiality is crucial to all our relationships, but the welfare of the child is paramount. The law does not allow anyone to keep concerns relating to abuse to themselves. Therefore, confidentiality may not be maintained if the withholding of information will prejudice the welfare of the child.

- All information that has been collected on any child will be kept locked and secure and access will be limited to the appropriate staff, management and relevant agencies.
- In the event of an investigation it is essential that no information on child protection concerns relating to a child are disclosed inappropriately. Any such leaks could have serious consequences for both the child concerned and any investigation.
- Whilst parents / carers have the right to see any records kept on their child. This might not always be appropriate, and should not put the child or yourself at risk.
- It is very important that only those who need to know, actually know, to avoid rumour and gossip that could affect the child, parent / carer and the group.

Recognising Abuse

Recognising abuse is one of the first steps in protecting children and young people. There could be signs or behaviour that make you feel concerned. All staff should be alert to the following types of behaviour in the children. These signs may or may not be a sign that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered:

Physical Signs of Abuse

- Any injuries not consistent with the reasons given for them; including bruising and burns.
- Injuries which occur to the body in places that are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc.
- Injuries that have not received medical attention.
- Neglect: under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care, etc.
- Reluctance to change for, or take part in swimming.
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains.
- Bruises, bites, burns, fractures etc, which do not have an accidental explanation.
- Cuts, scratches, substance abuse.

Indicators of Possible Sexual Abuse

- Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse.
- Child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play: acting out in an inappropriate way perhaps with adults, other children, toys or objects and sexually explicit language or actions.
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing.
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults.
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home.
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or sexual connotations.
- Eating disorders such as anorexia or bulimia.

Emotional Signs of Abuse

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clingy.
- Depression, aggression or extreme anxiety.
- Obsessions or phobias, including unreasonable fear of certain people or places.
- Sudden under achievement or lack of concentration.
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults.
- Attention seeking behaviour.
- Persistent tiredness.

- Running away, stealing, lying.
- Seeming to be keeping a secret.

Staff should be equally vigilant regarding signs relating to disabled children and not automatically assume that any of the above relates to their impairment.

What to do if Abuse is Disclosed

The Setting is committed to ensuring that it meets its responsibilities in respect of child protection by treating any allegation seriously and sensitively. In addition to these points, Child Protection Briefing Notes will be referred to in training sessions (see Appendix C).

- Stay calm.
- Listen to what the child / young person is actually saying.
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing by telling you.
- Do not promise the child that this can be kept secret, as subsequent disclosure could then lead to the child feeling betrayed. Explain that you are obliged to inform other people.
- Reassure the child that the people who will be informed will be sensitive to their needs and will be looking to help protect them. Inform them that it is not in their interests to keep the disclosure confidential and it will have to be passed on to the appropriate agencies.
- Make a note of any conversations with the child, trying to make these as detailed as possible, including when and where the conversations took place. Draw a diagram, if appropriate, to show the position of any bruises or marks the child or young person shows you, trying to indicate the size, shape and colour.
- Record as soon as possible and use the **actual words** used by the child.
- Keep all records factual. Be aware of not making assumptions or interpretations of what the child / young person is telling you. Store all records securely.
- **Do not interrogate** the child, or push for more information. Ensure that any questions asked are open, not leading closed questions. Do not ask the child / young person to repeat what they have they told you, for another worker or committee member. Record accurately.
- If possible, report this information yourself to an appropriate agency. Children's Social Care Referral and Assessment Team [Social Services], and OFSTED will need to be informed (see Appendix A).
- Discuss your concerns with the Child Protection Officer. If the allegations implicate the Child Protection Officer, the concerns should be discussed with the next tier of line management - the named committee member responsible for child protection.
- The person to whom the disclosure was made should ensure that the child who has disclosed the information is informed about what will happen next, so they can be reassured about what to expect.

What to do if Abuse is Suspected

- The member of staff should keep monitoring the child's behaviour, making a note of any particular concerns (when, where and what happened).
- Discuss concerns with the Child Protection Officer. The child's parents / carers should be seen at the earliest opportunity to ascertain if there is a known reason for a change in behaviour (eg, a change in family make-up, death of family member, pet).
- You should remember that if abuse is taking place, it is often not the parents but other family members or friends who are causing it. Parents are often the last to know.
- Any member of staff or volunteer can contact the relevant agency (as listed in appendix A), to discuss any concerns they have and seek guidance before actually reporting any child protection issues. It is appropriate to seek support from the nominated person/s in the organisation, as to how to deal with situations and confirm appropriate action to take.

- If you are still concerned about the welfare of the child / young person, this information must be passed on to the appropriate agency. It is important to remember that if you report concerns, you are not reporting the parents / carers – you are reporting to protect the welfare of the child.
- If appropriate, inform parents / carers that you are going to report your suspicions / concerns. This might not always be possible and should not put the child or yourself at risk. When you report an incident, the duty officer will ask you if the parent / carer has been informed. If they haven't, they will want to know the reasons why.
- If the Children's' Social Care Referral and Assessment Team (Social Services) has been contacted, they should let you know that they are responding to what you have told them. It is unlikely that you will be told what action has been taken unless it has implications for the school. If you have not heard from the Referral and Assessment Team, it may be appropriate to contact them to ensure that the details you gave them have been taken into consideration and acted upon.

If You Suspect a Member of Staff or Volunteer of Abuse or Inappropriate Behaviour

If it appears that a staff member or volunteer has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, or,
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, or,
- behaved in an inappropriate way towards a child which may indicate that he or she is unsuitable to work with children,

then these procedures must be followed:

- Record your concerns and report them to the Principal.
- The Principal should take steps to ensure that during the remainder of the working day that particular member of staff is not left in sole charge of the children or any child.
- At the earliest opportunity, the Principal will contact one of the committee members responsible for child protection (see list in Appendix A).
- The Child Protection Officer will contact the Chair of Governors and the CCPAS for advice on how to proceed and to give details of the concern.
- The school should then follow the CCPAS's advice on how to deal with allegations against staff.
- OFSTED will be informed of any allegations of abuse against a member of staff, student or volunteer, or any abuse that is alleged to have taken place on the premises or during a visit or outing (see Appendix A).
- While support will be offered to the staff member involved, the staff and committee will ensure that the agencies concerned are given all assistance in pursuing any investigation. The disciplinary procedure may be implemented.

Support to Staff and Volunteers

The management committee will fully support all members of staff in following this procedure. Following an allegation or investigation:

- Staff and volunteers can talk to the child abuse representatives from the management committee and any of the appropriate agencies listed in Appendix A.

When an allegation has been made against a Member of Staff or Volunteer of Abuse or Inappropriate Behaviour

- The Principal should immediately remove the person from all contact with children.
- At the earliest opportunity, the Principal will contact one of the committee members responsible for child protection (see list in Appendix A).
- The Child Protection Officer will contact the Chair of Governors and the CCPAS for advice on how to proceed and to give details of the concern.
- The school should then follow the CCPAS's advice on how to deal with allegations against staff.

- Bristol Safeguarding Children's Board will be informed.
- While support will be offered to the staff member involved, the staff and committee will ensure that the agencies concerned are given all assistance in pursuing any investigation. The disciplinary procedure may be implemented.

Support to Staff and Volunteers

The management committee will fully support all members of staff in following this procedure. Following an allegation or investigation:

- Staff and volunteers can talk to the child abuse representatives from the management committee and any of the appropriate agencies listed in Appendix A.

Recruitment of Staff and Volunteers

We acknowledge that paedophiles and those that pose a threat to children may be attracted to employment that allows them access to children and young people. As part of this policy we will ensure that people working with the children are safe to do so.

- All staff and volunteers will be checked by the Criminal Records Bureau on joining the scheme, to be renewed every 3 years.
- Two references will be taken up prior to appointment for new staff and volunteers and a medical reference may also be required.
- Staff will be expected to attend training to keep up to date and informed on child protection issues.
- The selection and interview procedure of the school will be adhered to.

Implementation and Monitoring

- The school management has appointed a Child Protection Officer.
- A role of the Child Protection Officer will take the lead responsibility for safeguarding children within the school and liaising with local statutory children's services agencies as appropriate. The Officer must also attend a child protection training course.
- This Officer will receive all reports from the staff and volunteers of any occasions when there are concerns or issues of Child Protection.
- The school will review this policy annually, to ensure it is being implemented. Appropriate action will be taken if deemed necessary, through consultation with the agencies listed in Appendix A.
- The Human Resource department of Carmel Ministries International will provide relevant training resources and the Principal will ensure that all staff and volunteers are given support and training in child protection.
- The contents of this policy form the basis for staff training and will be discussed with staff.
- See Appendix B for training on touching for those who work with children.
- See Appendix D for guidelines and procedures for working with children and young people groups.

Further Information

South West Child Protection Procedures – provide detailed online information on all aspects of child protection – www.swcpp.org.uk

Welfare Requirements – Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare.

Appendix A – Useful Contacts

1. Committee Members responsible for Child Protection

Errol Blackburn Chair of Senior Management team
Shantelle Albert Principal
Eleanor Westfield Pre-School-Learning Centre Supervisor
Ms Monali Browne ABC's Learning Centre Supervisor

2. Staff Practitioner responsible for Child Protection

Ms Maonali Broiwe Child Protection Officer

3. Referral Agencies

- Social Services, Soutwark Council – Tel: 020 7252 1921
- Emergency / Out of Hours – Tel: 020 7252 5000
- Rad@southwark.gov.uk
- Southwark children safeguarding board Tel 020 7252 3306
- Immediate help tel; 999

4. For Staff Allegations Contact:

- [NAME & TELEPHONE NUMBER] (Early Years and Childcare Service)

5. Ofsted

Registered providers must inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse as soon as reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days of the allegations being made.

Ofsted Compliance and Investigation Team (For reporting any Child Protection concerns).-Tel: 08456 014772

6. Support and advice

- South West Child Protection Procedures (online guidance) www.swcpp.org.uk
- Childline -Tel : 0800 1111 (open 24 hours)
- National Association for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) -Tel: 0800 800 500
- Bristol Safeguarding Children Board (training) -Tel: 0117 3532505
- CCPAS – Tel: 01322 660 011, or 01322 667 207
- CCPAS, PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7UQ
- Childline – Tel: 0800 1111 (specifically for children's use)
- Childline, Freepost 1111, London, N1 0BR, Tel: 020 7239 1000
- Kidscape, 152 Buckingham Palace Road, London, SW1W 9TR, Tel: 020 7730 3300
- Association of Christian Counsellors, 173a Wokingham Road, Reading, Berks, RG6 1LT, Tel: 01734 662 207
- Christian Survivors of Sexual Abuse, BM-CSSA, London, WC1N 3XX
- CCI (Christian Camping International), PO Box 169, Coventry, CV1 4PW, Tel: 01203 559 099

Appendix B – Child Protection Briefing Notes: Physical Touch

Here are the guidelines all staff and volunteers will be provided with on touch when working with children:

- Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
- Touch should be related to the child's needs, and no one else's.
- Touch should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child and not the adult.
- Avoid any physical activity that is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating to either the child or the adult.
- Children have the right to decide how much physical contact they have with others, except in exceptional circumstances when they need medical attention.
- All staff members and volunteers should monitor one another in the area of physical contact. They should be free to help each other, by pointing out anything which could be misconstrued. For instance, it is not appropriate to touch a child when correcting them verbally. Physical contact in the context of correction is only in the context of necessary restraint.
- Concerns about abuse should always be reported.

Appendix C – Child Protection Briefing Notes: Allegations

Handling Allegations of Abuse

Allegations of Physical Injury or Neglect

If a child has a physical injury or symptom of neglect, the Child Protection Officer will:

1. Contact Social Services or CCPAS for advice in cases of deliberate injury or where concerned about child safety. The parents should not be informed by the school in these circumstances.
2. Where emergency medical attention is necessary it will be sought immediately. The Child Protection Officer will inform the doctors of any suspicions of abuse.
3. In other circumstances speak with the parent/carer and suggest that medical attention/help is sought for the child. The doctor (or health visitor) will then initiate further action, if necessary.
4. If appropriate, the parent/carer will be encouraged to seek help from the Social Services department.
5. Where the parent/carer is unwilling to seek help, if appropriate, the Child Protection Officer will offer to go with them. If they fail to act, in cases of real concern contact Social Services for advice.
6. Where the co-ordinator is unsure whether or not to refer a case to the Social Services then advice from CCPAS will be sought and followed. CCPAS will confirm its advice in writing in case this method is needed for reference purposes in the future.

Allegations of Sexual Abuse

In the event of allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse, the Child Protection Officer will:

1. Contact the Social Services duty social worker, for children and families of the Police child protection team directly. The Child Protection Officer will not speak to the parents or anyone else.
2. If for any reason the Child Protection Officer is unsure whether to follow the above, then advice from CCPAS will be sought and followed. CCPAS will confirm its advice in writing in case this is needed for reference purposes in the future.
3. Under no circumstances will the Child Protection Officer attempt to carry out an investigation into the allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse. The role of the Child Protection Officer is to collect and clarify the precise details of the allegations or suspicions and to provide the information to the Social Services department whose task it is to investigate the matter under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.
4. Whilst allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse will normally be reported to the Child Protection Officer, the absence of the Child Protection Officer should not delay referral to the Social Services department.
5. Exceptionally, should there be any disagreement between the person in receipt of the allegation or suspicion and the Child Protection Officer as to the appropriateness of a referral to the Social Services department, the person retains a responsibility as a member of the public to report serious matters to the Social Services department, and should do so without hesitation.
6. The governors and staff will support the Child Protection Officer in their role and accept that any information they may have in their possession will be shared in a strictly limited way on a need to know basis.

Appendix D – Child Protection Briefing Notes: Working with Children

These guidelines have been set out in order to develop and maintain good practice within our school:

“Whoever welcomes this little child in My name welcomes Me ... For he who is least among you all – he is the greatest.” Luke 9:48

We, as a school will ensure that:

1. As far as possible a staff member or volunteer is not alone with a child where their activity cannot be seen.
2. On the school premises there should always be someone else in the building, and the young person should be aware of their presence.
3. In a counselling situation where privacy and confidentiality are important, we will endeavour to make sure that another adult knows the interview is taking place and with whom.
4. Access to and from the building is safe and well-lit.

You, the adult, should know:

1. Always aim to present and uphold the Christian faith by example.
2. Treat all children and young people with respect and dignity befitting their age; watch language, tone of voice, and where you put your body, or how tactile you are with the children.
3. Not engage in any of the following:
 - invading the privacy of children when they are toileting,
 - rough, physical or overly tactile games,
 - inappropriate touching, tickling or kissing,
 - scapegoating or ridiculing.
4. Not let youngsters involve you in excessive attention seeking that is overly physical and emotional.
5. Avoid giving lifts to children or young people on their own. If they are alone, ask them to sit in the back of the car.