

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The Meden school's Child Protection Officer is **John Gorman**. He teaches, mostly, in A9 (tel. 211) but can also be found in the **Student Support Centre (171)** and **Learning Support (174)**. Should a problem arise please contact him as soon as possible. If he is not in school please contact **Janet Brashaw** (Deputy Head Telephone 145).

The Governor with responsibility for Child Protection is **Pat Kennedy**.

As well as a statutory duty schools have a pastoral responsibility towards their pupils and should recognise that pupils have a fundamental right to be protected against harm. Children cannot learn effectively unless they feel secure. Every school should therefore develop a child protection policy which reflects its statutory duties and pastoral responsibilities and gives clear guidance to those involved with and impacted on by child protection activities.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the governing body and the school's responsibility towards children at risk is fully met.

### **The Meden school's Child Protection policy requires that -**

- ❖ All staff should be alert to signs of abuse and neglect and know to whom they should report concerns and suspicions.
- ❖ The school should designate a member of staff who will have responsibility for the provision of training and support of staff in respect of child abuse and protection. The designated teacher will have knowledge and skills in recognising and acting upon child protection concerns and should act as a source of expertise and advice. The designated teacher will be responsible for co-ordinating action within the school and liaising with other agencies.
- ❖ The governing body will ensure that a suitable governor is appointed to act as a liaison between the Child Protection Officer and the Governing body. Governors should receive information about the number of child protection referrals made to Social Services by the school during the period covered by the Head Teachers termly report.
- ❖ The designated teacher will ensure that the confidentiality of those children concerned is maintained at all times and will guarantee that confidential information concerning individual children is not disclosed inappropriately to any other person except with the authorisation of the Head Teacher or Child Protection Officer.

### **Significant Harm: The impact of abuse and neglect**

The abuse or neglect of children physically, emotionally or sexually can have major long term effects on all aspects of a child's health, development and well-being. Sustained abuse is likely to have a deep impact on a child's self-image and self esteem and on his or her future life with difficulties which extend well into their adult life. The experience

of long-term abuse may lead to difficulties in forming and sustaining relationships, establishing themselves in the workforce and to extra difficulties in developing the attitude and skills needed to be an effective parent.

## Definitions of Abuse

- ❖ **Physical Abuse** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child, including by fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately causing, ill health to a child.
- ❖ **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 children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. Imposing age or developmentally inappropriate expectations on children causing them to feel frightened, corruption or exploitation of children also constitutes emotional abuse.
- ❖ **Sexual Abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or no the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may also include involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- ❖ **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development, such as failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, or neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

## The Impact of abuse

**Physical** abuse can lead directly to neurological damage, physical injuries, pain and disability or possibly death. Harm may be caused to children both by the abuse itself and by the abuse taking place in the wider family or institutional context of conflict and aggression. Physical abuse has been linked to aggressive behaviour, emotional and behavioural problems and learning difficulties in general.

**Emotional** abuse has an important impact on a developing child's mental health, behaviour and self-esteem. Underlying emotional abuse may be as important if not more so than other, more visible, forms of abuse in terms of its impact on the child. In families where the child experiences a low level of emotional warmth and a high level of criticism negative incidents may have a more damaging impact on the child.

**Sexual abuse** may lead to self-harm, inappropriate sexual behaviour on the part of the child, sadness and depression and a loss of self esteem. The impact of sexual abuse may endure long into adult life and the severity of impact increases the longer the abuse

continues. A child's ability to cope with the experience of sexual abuse once recognised or disclosed is strengthened by the support of a non-abusive adult carer who believes the child and is able to offer help and protection.

**Neglect** of a child may lead to major impairment of growth and intellectual development. Persistent neglect can lead to serious impairment of health and development and long term difficulties with social functioning, relationships and educational progress.

### **Dealing with disclosure of abuse**

It is important to be sympathetic and supportive.

- ❖ Believe what the child is saying.
- ❖ Remain calm and reassuring.
- ❖ Listen carefully and quietly but never attempt to cross examine the child or press for evidence.
- ❖ **DO NOT MAKE ANY PROMISES.**
- ❖ Don't agree to keep secrets.
- ❖ Never tell a child that everything will be alright.

### *Things which you can say*

- ❖ It isn't your fault.
- ❖ I'm sorry it has happened to you.
- ❖ I'm glad that you told me
- ❖ I'm going to make sure you get some help.

### **Record Keeping**

The attention of all the staff working at the school is drawn to the importance of recording information in connection with actual, suspected or alleged child abuse. Full and accurate accounts should be made of all events, changes to physical appearance, conversations and behaviour with relation to any child about whom there are concerns and his/her family. Written notes of communications should be kept. The Child Protection Officer should be informed as soon as possible and all contemporaneous records passed on for safe keeping as they might have to be used in a court of law at some time in the future. Please keep originals of any notes made even if typed copies are later produced.

### **Allegations about members of Staff**

From time to time a few children may make an allegation that they have been abused by a member of staff. The school will have a separate policy for dealing with such an eventuality and it will be in line with ACPC guidance and policy. Suspension will not be automatic and the Head teacher will be responsible for carefully considering the action to be taken.

In the event that an allegation is made against the Head teacher the nominated Governor will have over site of the procedure relating to the allegation. In considering

these procedures due regard will be made to the internal complaints procedure, discipline and grievance procedure of the school.

### **Children transferring between schools**

When a school is concerned that a child may have 'disappeared' or about any other aspect of a pupil's transfer between schools leading to concern about a child's welfare it should report its concern to the person specified in the ACPC guidance or to the LEA officer with designated responsibility for Child Protection.

### **Photographs of Children**

Under Child protection legislation the school must make parents aware of our policy regarding the use of photographs of their children taken by themselves, by the school or by representatives of the media. The Data protection Act requires that parental consent be obtained for the use of photographs and videos in promotional material and activities.

It should be noted that:

- ❖ In general photographs no child is named.
- ❖ Parents of individual pupils, photographed for specific events, will always be asked to give permission if the child's name is to be supplied.
- ❖ Addresses are never supplied.
- ❖ Specific forms to obtain parental consent will be issued by the school as and when necessary.

### **Reference:**

- ❖ A guide to the Law for school governors (Jan 2000)
- ❖ Area Child Protection Committee procedures manual (2001)
- ❖ Children's behaviour in schools (July 1999)
- ❖ Derbyshire ACPC procedure guidance to Education staff (Oct 2001)
- ❖ Inter-agency guidance on the assessment of children in need and the ACPC child protection procedure for Notts. (June 2001)
- ❖ Working together to Safeguard children (1999)
- ❖ Seeking Consent: Working with Children (DH 2001)
- ❖ What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (DH 2003)