



The Harefield Academy Child Protection Policy

January 2009

*Compiled by: SLT
Date: Jan 2009 (Version 2)*

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Academy recognises that all staff who are in regular and frequent contact with children are particularly well placed to observe signs of abuse. We are aware of the responsibilities that all staff have in regard to the protection of children from abuse and from inappropriate and inadequate care. Therefore, we are committed to reacting in accordance with the Local Authority procedures in all cases where there is concern.

2 Designated Child Protection Manager

- 2.1 The Principal shall designate a member of staff to act as the Child Protection Manager (CPM) for The Academy. This would normally be the Senior Assistant Principal. The Principal shall advise the Governing Body and all members of staff of the name of The Academy's CPM and inform them of any changes.
- 2.2 The Principal shall also ensure that all staff and Governors are aware that the CPM's responsibilities include:
- i ensuring that effective communication and liaison take place between The Academy and the Social Services, and any other relevant agencies, where there is a child protection concern in relation to an Academy student
 - ii ensuring that all staff have an understanding of child abuse and its main indicators; and
 - iii advising staff on The Academy's and their own child protection responsibilities and supporting staff in their child protection role.

3 Reporting Concern

- 3.1 In the event of a member of staff being concerned about the welfare of a student, he or she must immediately report that concern to the CPM. The member of staff will be asked by the CPM briefly to document the events which have given rise to the concern.
- 3.2 The Academy follows the Local Government guidelines for Child Protection, liaising with the Social Services and other agencies, as appropriate. The action taken by the CPM will, therefore, be in line with the Local Authority guidelines.

4 Record keeping

- 4.1 The CPM is required to manage the keeping of records in relation to child protection matters. These records must be stored securely. Where a person makes an oral statement, a written record should be produced and it should be signed and dated by the author. This should not be in pencil.
- 4.2 Staff should be given as much information as necessary in order to help the child concerned. In general, this will mean that, where a child is on the Child Protection register, or where there are concerns about a child, the student's tutor, any other relevant staff and any member of staff chosen by the student to provide support will be kept informed. It may be appropriate in some cases to inform other staff, giving few details but raising general awareness, that there are issues that may affect a student's behaviour and level of achievement at that time.
- 4.3 In the event of a student who is causing concern transferring to another school, The Academy will:
- i find out the name of the receiving school
 - ii contact the relevant member of staff at that school to discuss the transfer
 - iii send all information relating to the student to the receiving school
 - iv check with the receiving school that the student has actually arrived there on the expected day, and
 - v inform all of the relevant agencies of the transfer.

5 Listening to students

- 5.1 We recognise the importance of listening to students at all times, particularly when they are distressed, worried or concerned. We appreciate that at times students may feel stressed and confused. Therefore, quiet areas will be designated to provide the opportunity for students to take respite from the normal day when necessary.
- 5.2 All staff shall be made aware that children who are not known to be the subjects of concern may, however, be experiencing ill treatment, neglect or abuse. This means that staff should be aware of the need for sensitivity when dealing with students at all times.
- 5.3 We recognise that students who are distressed through experiences outside the classroom may be less able to achieve their potential. While it is clear that

such students need firm boundaries, staff will take into account the student's distress when managing behaviour.

6 Confidentiality

- 6.1 The Academy's Confidentiality Policy is set out in the Sex and Relationship Education policy.
- 6.2 Students should be reassured that their best interests will be maintained. However, staff cannot offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality. If confidentiality has to be broken, the student should be informed first and then supported, as appropriate.
- 6.3 Parents should not be informed of concerns unless staff are certain that the child would not be put at risk by their doing so. In any case, communication with parents on these matters must only be through the CPM. (In this policy statement, "parents" means all those having a parental responsibility for a child.)

7 Procedure to Follow in the Disclosure of Abuse

- 7.1 All disclosures must be handled with sensitivity and awareness of The Academy's procedure. If a conversation with a student develops in such a way that a disclosure of abuse is likely, the member of staff involved must state that he or she cannot treat this information as confidential but must inform the CPM Vice Principal so that appropriate decisions can be made in the interests of the student.
- 7.2 The member of staff involved should suggest that the CPM (named) is invited into the conversation but if the student does not wish this to happen, the discussion should continue, following this advice:
 - Offer the student time to talk, preferably immediately. If this is not possible, agree a later time
 - Listen to the student without being judgmental or expressing feelings of anger or horror. The student may feel shame or guilt at what has happened and may have conflicting feelings of love or respect for the suspected abuser
 - Limit questions and make them open-ended. Any probing or leading questions could contaminate evidence that may be needed in the future. Simply listen to the story
 - Do not promise confidentiality because you must report to the CPM. A phrase such as "I may need to tell someone about this if I feel that you are at risk" is appropriate
 - Ask the student if she or he minds if you take notes – it is important to remember everything that is said. (If the student does mind, write up your account immediately after the conversation.) Where possible write down key sentences as spoken by the student. Make sure you record dates,

places, and names. You should also record the student's emotions e.g. crying, twisting hands, not making eye contact. Read back your notes to the student to confirm correct details

- If you write up notes later, attach your original jottings
- If the allegation is of physical abuse, ask the student to show you any visible marks. Marks not directly accessible should not be examined by you. Make a note of what you see. Photographs must not be taken.

8 Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

- 8.1 The Governing Body will review this policy at least every two years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout The Academy

References

DFEE Circular 10/95 Protecting Children from Abuse: The role of the Education Service