

**Ralston Primary School and
Early Learning and Childcare Class
Child Protection Policy**

Protecting Children and Ensuring their Well-Being

Rationale:

The health, safety and well-being of all our children has to be a prime concern for all staff and is of paramount importance to the school. Each child has a right to protection, regardless of age, gender, race, culture or disability. Each child has a right to be safe in our school. The protection of children is a shared responsibility and staff will work collectively to create a climate of mutual trust, respect and confidence.

Aims:

- To ensure that children learn in a safe environment where they feel secure and respected.
- To develop attitudes and beliefs which will help children to understand and value themselves as individuals.
- To ensure that children feel confident and able to approach adults about matters which concern them.
- To ensure that all staff are fully aware of the Authority's guidelines and procedures on protecting children and ensuring their well-being.
- To ensure effective communication between staff when dealing with child protection issues.
- To ensure that staff have access to appropriate training on child protection matters.

Definitions of Abuse:

Physical Abuse:

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

Sexual Abuse:

A child has indicated sexual activity through words, play, drawing or had an excessive pre-occupation with sexual matters or had an inappropriate knowledge of adult sexual behaviour.

Emotional Abuse:

There has been a severe, adverse effect on the behaviour and the emotional development of a child caused by persistent or severe ill treatment or rejection.

Neglect:

There has been persistent or severe neglect of a child (e.g. by exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation) which results in serious impairment of the child's health or development, including no-organic failure to thrive.

Grounds for Concern:

When there is a ground for concern, a member of staff must alert the Head Teacher or Child Protection Co-ordinator immediately. Any of the following may have taken place:

- A specific incident.
- A disclosure made by a child or parent or carer.
- Information from a third party.
- Adult behaviour or circumstances that may place the child at risk of harm.
- Child behaviour or circumstances that may place the child at risk of harm.
- A culmination of minor concerns over a period of time.

Concerns should be confirmed in writing by completing Appendix 3 Record of Concern Alert for Staff. These are kept in register folders. A copy of Standard Circular 57 is on staff notice board in staffroom.

Roles and Responsibilities of Staff:

All staff should:

- Be familiar with the Authority's Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures. (A full copy is retained in the staff room for guidance and reference)
- Develop skills, values and knowledge to enable children to report unacceptable behaviour.
- Teach children how to keep safe, healthy, able to make choices and say 'No'.
- Work in partnership with parents, carers and other agencies.
- Listen carefully and calmly if a child reports abuse, without detailed questioning or comment. Observe carefully the demeanour or behaviour of the child.
- Record in detail what has been seen or heard as soon as possible. (This should include date, time and signature of staff **directly below** the written statement).
- Remember that they must not promise confidentiality.
- Inform the Head Teacher or Child Co-ordinator, Kerry Montgomery **immediately**.

Procedures:

When a member of staff reports concerns about a child's welfare, the following procedures will be followed by the Head Teacher or Child Protection Co-ordinator.

- Action will be taken in line with the guidance on child protection provided by the Authority.
- The Head Teacher or Child Protection Co-ordinator (in the absence of the Head Teacher) will work closely with the Social Services Department, Police Protection Unit and the Education Authority when there are investigations regarding any allegations of abuse. All parties involved handle any such investigations in a sensitive manner, but the interests of the child must always be of paramount importance.
- If a child alleges abuse, the school usually makes a referral without communicating with parents first.

- If a child protection referral is made, a case conference is usually held. This offers the opportunity to share information and formulate a plan of action.
- All information relating to individual child protection issues are regarded as confidential. Information is only passed on, on a need to know basis to appropriate persons. Children are informed at all stages about who is involved and what information has been given to them.
- All child protection records are stored securely within the Head Teacher's office.
- If a child protection referral is made, a notification should be made to the Care Inspectorate immediately. (For ELCC Only)

All permanent staff will be trained in Part 1 of Child Protection and will have the opportunity to participate in Part 2.

An annual update and review of the policy takes place in August.

Confidentially:

Our staff have an agreed statement on confidentiality. It is expected that all teachers will read and adhere to this policy. Ralston Primary School and Ralston Early Learning and Childcare Class staff recognise that children and parents and other staff have a right to expect that confidentiality be maintained. To ensure that all those working in our educational establishment can do so with confidence, we will respect confidentiality in the following ways.

- Pupil files will be kept in areas with restricted access limitations.
- Parents be advised they can have ready access to the files and records of their own children when requests are made but will not have access to information about any other child.
- Parents requesting access to their child's files must discuss this with the DHT's or HT to ensure all other pupil records remain confidential.
- Staff will not discuss individual children, other than for the purpose of curriculum planning, with people other than the parents or carers of the child.
- Sensitive or confidential information given by parents/carers to staff at the school/nursery will be passed only to significant adults and never without seeking the permission from the parent **except** in cases of Child Protection.
- Any anxieties or evidence relating to a child's personal safety will be kept in a confidential file at the Head Teacher's discretion.
- Students on courses involving visits to the school or nursery are advised of the confidentiality policy and will be required to respect it.
- Parents must be consulted before referral to other agencies if there are concerns about a child's development.
- Staff discussing personal, private or sensitive information in connection with pupils must do so only in acceptable and appropriate locations.
- Issues relating to the employment of staff remains confidential to the people directly involved with personnel decisions.