

Child Protection

Gateway Christian School fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection. Our policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the school. There are six main elements to our policy:

1. Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children;
2. Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe;
3. Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse;
4. Supporting pupils who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan;
5. Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop;
6. Establishing a clear procedure to be followed in the event of allegations made against staff.

We will have regard to the procedures set out by the Diocesan Safeguarding Children Board and guidance issued by the Department for Children, Schools and Families. We will in particular:

- Ensure we have a designated senior person for child protection who has received appropriate training every two years (in his or her absence the Head Teacher will deputise);
- Ensure we have an nominated governor to champion Child Protection issues as part of governors' deliberations and decisions;
- Ensure every member of staff (including temporary and supply staff and volunteers) and governor knows the name of the designated senior person responsible for child protection and their role;
- Ensure all staff and volunteers are aware of their responsibilities to prevent abuse and, so far as reasonably possible, the opportunities for abuse;
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse:
 - Physical abuse - unexplained bruises or injuries. Uncharacteristic changes in behaviour;

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- Sexual abuse - changes in behaviour. Inappropriate conversations or knowledge;
- Neglect – unkempt or dirty appearance. Poor nourishment. Indications of lack of parental or adult supervision;
- Emotional abuse - signs of increased anxiety and/or behaviour problems.

Where staff are concerned about a child in their care, because there are possible signs of abuse **they should not question the child**. They should refer their concerns directly to the designated senior person with responsibility for Child Protection who will decide whether to take the matter further. If he/she considers that no action is needed he/she will record the details, date the entry and keep the record in a secure place. Should further action be considered necessary the case would be referred to The Diocesan Adviser for Child Protection and the police and/or social services would be involved as appropriate.

A similar procedure would be followed if a child alleged any abuse to a member of staff.

In the event of any allegation being made against a member of staff the details would be forwarded straight away to the designated senior person with responsibility for Child Protection who would refer it to the Diocesan Adviser for Child Protection if deemed necessary. From this point we would follow the advice of the Diocesan Adviser and would liaise with any outside agencies as necessary (or if we were unhappy with the advice of the Diocesan Adviser or it was not available in good time we would seek further guidance from social services). The police would, of course, be involved immediately should that appear appropriate.

The Chair of Governors would also be involved at as early a stage as possible in all of the above (unless, of course, the issue involved the Chair of Governors).

We would also seek to:

- Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection;
- Notify social services if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a pupil who is on the child protection register;

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- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences;
- Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately;
- Ensure all records are kept secure and separate from the main pupil file, and in locked locations;
- Develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer;
- Ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed.

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 blame. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at school their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. The school will endeavour to support the pupil through:

- The content of the curriculum;
- The school ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued;
- The school behaviour policy which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the school - the school will ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but that they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred;
- Liaison with other agencies which support the pupil;
- Ensuring that, where a pupil on the child protection register leaves, his or her information is transferred to the new school immediately and that the child's social worker is informed.

Child protection training is scheduled for all staff on a three yearly cycle, and for the designated senior person for child protection on a two yearly cycle.

Date of last Child Protection training for staff – January 2007;

For designated senior person for child protection - January 2009.

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Date reviewed **19.10.09**

NB – this policy to be reviewed annually

Signed _____ (Head Teacher)

_____ (Chair of the Governors)