

## CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

As a visitor to our school, either as a helper, supply teacher or someone who has come to work with our children in any other capacity, it is important that you are aware of our Child Protection procedures.

As required, we have a designated Child Protection teacher who is Yvonne Bundy, Deputy Head. In her absence, you need to address any concerns to Catriona Williamson, Headteacher.

### *There are four categories of abuse*

- *Physical abuse*
- *Sexual abuse*
- *Emotional abuse*
- *Neglect*

It may be that you are approached by a child who wants to talk to you about something that has or is happening to them. They will tend to choose someone that they trust or know well and this will not always be their own class teacher. It may be someone that reads with them regularly and with whom they have formed a good relationship.

There may however be occasions when you have cause for concern either about marks or bruises on a child, about something that say or the condition that they are in at school, e.g. dirty, smelly or hungry.

### *Disclosure of abuse by a child*

If you are approached by a child wanting to talk, you should listen positively and reassure the child. If you can, try and ensure a degree of privacy, but this may not always be possible.

*Whilst this can be an alarming situation to find yourself in, it is important not to let the*

*moment pass – for every child that does finally disclose information, evidence shows that they have usually tried up to 12 times before.*

### *Helping the child when abuse is disclosed:*

- Be prepared to listen and comfort.
- Do not show revulsion or distress, however distasteful the events are.
- Stay and calm and controlled.
- **Do not make false promises, i.e. that you will keep the abuse a secret or that the police will not be involved. Do not promise confidentiality.**
- Let the child know at once that it was not his/her fault and keep restating this.
- Be aware of your own feelings about abuse and find someone you can share those feelings with once the procedures have been completed.
- Reassure the child that they were right to tell, even though the abuse may have happened a long time ago.
- Reassure the child that you still care for them and that what they have said does not make you care for them less.
- As soon as possible write a first hand account of what was said and done.
- Make them aware that their disclosure will be reported only to those who need to know and can help.
- **Do not question a child; try to limit your involvement to listening. A child can be interviewed only once.**

*It is also important to remember that it is not your responsibility to investigate suspected cases of abuse, only to report them to the designated Child Protection teacher.*

### *If you have concerns about a child's welfare*

- It may be that you might have concerns about a child's well-being, but they have not actually said anything to you. If such a situation arises, you should speak to the designated child protection teacher.
- Abuse or neglect can have a damaging effect on a child's health, educational attainment and emotional well-being. If you have worked with a group of children over many weeks, you may see changes in behaviour. Such changes may not necessarily indicate that a child is suffering abuse or neglect. In some cases those changes may be the symptoms of a hidden disability or undiagnosed medical condition, and the need to distinguish those cases reinforces the need for a careful and thorough assessment of the child and his/her needs when concerns are passed on.
- **It is important you do not feel afraid about passing on their concerns. The information may be a small piece in a bigger jigsaw and help to get a better understanding of a child's predicament. Any concerns, however seemingly trivial, should be passed on to the designated child protection officer.**
- Once again, you should put your concerns in writing as well as talking to the designated Child Protection teacher.

### *Guidance for recording information*

You should record your concerns as soon as possible and any note should include the following:

- *The nature of your concern;*
- *what is the evidence that led to the concern;*
- *what the child said (if a discussion has taken place; and,*
- *what you did or said in response (if a discussion has taken place).*

*It may be that you have a concern which feels very vague and would simply like to discuss your concerns with the designated Child Protection teacher, or in her absence, the headteacher. Please feel free to do so.*

Dealing with issues of child abuse can be distressing for the adult to whom the abuse is disclosed or who has concerns. It is terribly important that you talk about your feelings after the event. However, it is also very important to remember that children's details and names must remain confidential and any discussion that you feel you need to undertake does not allow the child to be identified to anyone else.

*If you have any queries regarding the information contained in this leaflet, or require further clarification of any points, please do not hesitate to contact either Yvonne Bundy or Catriona Williamson.*

## **MERE SCHOOL**

**Designated Child Protection  
Teacher: Yvonne Bundy**

**Tel No: 01747 860515**

## **MERE SCHOOL**



## **CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES**

**An information leaflet  
for volunteers and  
visitors to the school**