



Child Protection Policy

September 2024

Agreed by Valour Trustees October 2nd 2024, review October 2025

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Valour Multi Academy Trust

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Children and young people have a fundamental right to be protected from harm.

Children and young people have a right to expect schools to provide a safe and secure environment.

Any fears or worries that children and young people bring into the classroom should not go unnoticed by staff.

It is a guiding principle of the law and child protection procedures that the protection and welfare of the child must always be the first priority. The protection of children and young people is a shared community responsibility. Failure to provide an effective response can have serious consequences for the child. Teachers and other education staff are in a unique position to identify and help abused children.

Valour Multi Academy Trust fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection.

Aims: We aim to provide a caring environment which will underpin the whole school aims and a curriculum where self-esteem can be nurtured and children empowered to protect themselves.

Our policy applies to all staff, trust members, the local advisory board and volunteers working in the school. There are five main elements to our policy:

- (1) Ensuring we practice safer 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.

We recognise that because of the day to day contact with children, school staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. The school will therefore:

- (i) Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- (ii) Ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried.
- (iii) Include opportunities in the PSHE curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

We will follow the procedures following Government Guidelines and Local Authority Safeguarding Partnership.

- (a) Ensure we have a designated teacher for child protection who has received appropriate training and support for this role.
- (b) Ensure we have a nominated local advisory board member responsible for child protection.
- (c) Ensure every member of staff, volunteer and LAB knows the name of the designated teacher responsible for child protection and their role.
- (d) Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated teacher responsible for child protection.
- (e) Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection by setting out its obligations in the staff induction handbook
- (f) Notify social services if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a pupil who is on the child protection register .
- (g) Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences.
- (h) Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately .
- (i) Ensure all records are kept securely, separate from the main pupil file, and in locked locations.
- (j) Develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.
- (k) 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 and loved
- * 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 they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
- * Liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as social services, CYPS, attendance service and educational psychology service.
- * Ensuring that, where a pupil on the child protection register leaves, their information is transferred to the new school immediately and that the child's social worker is informed.

Designated Teacher: Jess Eatock (Head Teacher)Beech Hill Primary

Child Protection Procedures

What do I do if I am worried that a child is being abused?

The designated child protection teacher in our school is Mrs Jess Eatock, Head Teacher

Chair Local Advisory Board, Lee Rochester

I have concerns about a child's welfare

I

I discuss the situation with the Designated Child Protection person – Mrs Jess Eatock

I

I still have concerns

I

The Head Teacher will refer the case to social services **within 48 hrs.**

What is abuse?

A person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to prevent harm. Children and young people may be abused in a family or an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

Physical Harm - 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, age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children, causing children frequently to feel frightened, or exploitation or corruption of children.

Sexual Abuse – involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not 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 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 needs.

All staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child on child abuse (please see child on child abuse policy). This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to bullying (including cyber bullying) gender based violence/sexual assaults and sexting. Staff should be aware that safeguarding incidents/behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and can occur between children outside the school. All staff (especially the safeguarding lead) should be considering the context within which such incidents occur. This is known as contextual safeguarding, which simply means assessments of children should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare.

What to do?

- * If you suspect that a child is being abused or is likely to suffer significant harm you **MUST** go and talk to the designated teacher.
- * You must complete a 'cause for concern' form located in the staff room and hand it to the designated person or discuss with the designated safeguarding member of staff and record incident on CPOMS.
- * If the problems continue or if the incidents are of a severe nature the designated teacher will approach social services immediately
You might be asked to provide support or further information but the designated teacher will help you.

Records

All Child Protection documents will be retained in a 'Child Protection' file, separate from the child's main file. This will be locked away and only accessible to Mrs Jess Eatock and designated senior persons. These records will be transferred to any school or setting the child moves to via CPOMS or clearly marked 'Child Protection, Confidential, for attention of Designated Person Child Protection.' If the child goes missing from education or is removed from roll to be educated at home then any Child Protection file should sent to the Local authority. Any information on the child will be destroyed on their 25th birthday.

Checking adults in school

All adults wanting to work in school will be required the online DBS form and have it returned before they start. (Police Checked Ref: DfES 0780/202) In certain circumstances the Head Teacher can agree to an adult working in school whilst their form is in the process of being checked provided that they are supervised at all times by another adult who has been checked.

Allegations against members of staff

If there is an allegation against a member of staff it will initially be dealt with by the CEO and Head Teacher and the Chair of the Local Advisory Board or in his or her absence the Vice Chair. If the CEO or Head Teacher is accused then the Chair of the Local Advisory Board will deal with the complaint initially.

Staff at Valour Multi Academy Trust are required to provide support for pupils as soon as a problem is identified. Staff are required to discuss any concerns with the designated safeguarding lead and work with other agencies to complete an early help assessment (previously known as CAF) The designated safeguarding person will support staff to liaise with other agencies to support the early help assessment.

SEN

Staff at Valour Multi Academy Trust are responsible for being aware that children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges.

The following must be challenged:

Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration.

The potential for children with SEN and disabilities being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs.

Allowing communication difficulties to be barrier to recognising signs of abuse. Staff must adopt appropriate strategies to deal with any communication issues.

Further information can be obtained in the Department of Health booklet entitled "What to Do if You're Worried A Child is Being Abused." A copy is in school. Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2024

Reviewed September 2024

Jess Eatock (Head Teacher) Beech Hill Primary