



CALLINGTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE (ACADEMY TRUST)

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Rationale

Everyone in our College community has a responsibility for child protection. In most cases this will be the referral of concerns to the trained personnel responsible for child protection. Through day-to-day contact with children at risk, we have the opportunity to note concerns and to meet with parents and other associated adults.

Increasingly, we are expected to work with, support and sometimes lead different agencies to enable the most appropriate form of intervention to take place. This policy aims to outline this role, the procedures that staff should take and guidance on issues related to child protection generally. It is not exhaustive. All staff should put the needs and safety of the child at the centre of any decision they need to take.

Aim

We aim to secure the safety of the children in our care through identifying emerging issues, intervening early and liaising effectively with other agencies – always placing the child's welfare at the centre of our actions.

Objectives

- To develop and maintain an ethos in which that the whole community 'look out' for children.
- To work effectively with other agencies, ensuring that the needs of families are met.
- To have effective systems in place to identify at an early stage emerging issues and put strategies in place to deal with them.
- To have effective systems in place to react quickly to child protection concerns and ensure that referrals are followed up and acted upon.
- To ensure that all staff are clear about their responsibilities and alert to signs of abuse.
- To ensure that training needs and requirements are met.
- To equip children with the skills they need to help look after themselves and to help prevent putting themselves at risk.

Responsibilities

Governing Body

The Governing Body has a key responsibility for monitoring child protection in the college.

Responsibilities include:

- having a child protection policy in place;
- having procedures in place for dealing with allegations against a member of staff;

- having a designated person responsible for child protection;
- ensuring that the appropriate training for staff is in place;
- ensuring that there is a member of the Governing Body who has particular responsibility for safeguarding and child protection;
- reviewing policies and procedures annually;
- receiving regular reports from the Headteacher or Deputy, on child protection.

Designated teacher for child protection

The designated person for child protection should lead the child protection team and be responsible for the whole college approach to child protection. In his/her absence another level three child protection teacher should be contacted. For information on who the designated person is and other members of the team please refer to the child protection notice board in the staffroom.

The designated person is responsible for:

- co-ordinating action within the college and liaising with social care and other agencies over cases of abuse and suspected abuse;
- acting as a source of advice within the college;
- ensuring that staff are familiar with the child protection policy and procedures;
- referral of individual cases of suspected abuse to the relevant social care agency;
- liaising with agencies about individual cases;
- organising training on child protection within the college;
- informing parents/carers of the responsibilities of staff members with regard to child protection procedures;
- ensuring that any student currently on the child protection register who is absent without explanation is referred to social care.

Where referrals are made to Social Services, these should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours. The person of the CP team that is making the referral is responsible for following up any referrals where concerns remain or there is no communication about actions taken. Any referrals made by the team should be reported to the designated person.

Where there is uncertainty about making a full referral, advice can still be sought from the Social Services department without giving the child's details.

Teachers and support staff

New teachers and support staff are familiarised with this Child Protection policy as part of their induction. Supply staff have a summarised form made available to them on their first day. However, if they are employed by the school for any longer period of time (over two weeks) they are inducted in the same way as an appointed member of staff.

Regular staff training aims to ensure that all staff are familiar with the signs of possible abuse, know how to deal with a disclosure and how to refer any concerns that they have.

Teachers and support staff are responsible for:

- keeping alert for potential signs of abuse amongst children within the college;

- referring any concerns to the designated person;
- supporting students in understanding how they can help keep themselves safe;
- providing information for use in multi-agency meetings and attending themselves where necessary;
- receiving and applying any recommendations resulting from a multi-agency meeting;
- supporting students who wish to make a disclosure.

Support staff will assist teachers with their responsibilities but will also take responsibility themselves for being alert to signs of abuse and receiving any disclosures when a child indicates that they would like to. Support staff need to feel confident if approached and understand what they should do.

The curriculum

The Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHEE) units of work include schemes that encourage students to discuss ways of keeping safe and who they might speak to if they have worries either about themselves or a friend. Many lessons use circle time which encourages a safe space for discussions.

Year Group	Term	Unit
Year 7	Autumn term	E-safety/Cyber bullying, Alcohol and Drugs, En-Route and Tic-Tac induction
Year 8	Module 1	Friendships, How to access help
Year 9	Summer term	Domestic violence, Homophobia
Year 10	Summer term	Stress Management, Preparation for Work Experience/Child Protection
Year 11	Spring term	Parenting, Sexuality

Every year each class covers aspects of internet safety as part of their Information and Communication Technology (ICT) curriculum. Other reminders are discussed during tutor lesson.

For example:

- What to do if you have worries or concerns
- College code of conduct
- Looking out for one another

Procedures and practice

Guidance on recognising suspected abuse

Child abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children are harmed by someone, often in a position of power. It may not be our responsibility to decide whether child abuse is occurring but we are required to act on any concerns and report them to the appropriate party. The health, safety and protection of the child is paramount.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse can include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, suffocating or causing any form of physical harm to a child.

Possible signs of physical abuse include:

- unexplained injuries or burns
- refusal to discuss injuries
- improbable explanations of injuries
- untreated injuries or lingering illness
- admission of punishment which appears excessive
- shrinking from physical contact
- fear of returning home or parents being contacted
- fear of undressing
- fear of medical help
- aggression/bullying
- over-compliant behaviour
- running away
- significant changes in behaviour
- deterioration in work
- unexplained pattern of absences.

Emotional abuse

This is persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development. It can include:

- conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved;
- placing inappropriate age-related expectations on children;
- making children feel frightened or in danger on a regular basis.

Possible signs of emotional abuse include:

- continual self-deprecation
- fear of new situations
- inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- self-harm or mutilation
- compulsive stealing/scrounging
- drug/solvent abuse
- 'neurotic' behaviour – obsessive rocking, thumb-sucking
- air of detachment; 'don't care' attitude
- social isolation
- attention-seeking behaviour
- eating problems
- depression or withdrawal.

Sexual abuse

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. These can include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Possible signs of sexual abuse include:

- bruises, scratches, burns or bite marks
- scratches, abrasions or persistent infection in the anal or genital regions
- pregnancy
- sexual awareness inappropriate to the child's age
- frequent public masturbation
- attempts to teach other children about sexual activity
- refusing to stay with certain people or go to certain places
- aggressiveness, anger, anxiety, tearfulness
- withdrawal from friends.

Neglect

Neglect is also a form of abuse. This is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs and can affect the child's health and development. It might include failure to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failure to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or failure to ensure appropriate access to medical care and treatment.

Possible signs of neglect include:

- constant hunger
- poor personal hygiene
- inappropriate clothing
- frequent lateness or non-attendance
- untreated medical problems
- low self-esteem
- poor social relationships
- compulsive stealing or scrounging
- constant tiredness.

Bullying

Bullying can be defined as using deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves.

Possible signs of bullying include:

- frightened or unwilling to come to college
- absent from college more than usual
- withdrawn and anxious
- starting to stammer
- running away from college
- crying at night or having nightmares

- performing less well at college
- coming home with damaged belongings or has possessions going missing
- asking for money or stealing money
- losing money on a regular basis
- suffering from unexplained cuts and bruises
- becoming more aggressive and bullying others
- losing appetite or complaining of being hungry.

All incidents of bullying should be dealt with firmly according to the College's Anti-Bullying policy.

Self-harm

If it comes to the attention of a teacher/member of staff that a child is self-harming, they should alert the designated teacher for child protection. Actions might include:

- contacting parents
- contacting Child Adolescent Mental Health Services
- contacting social care if the child meets the referral criteria.

Guidance on dealing with a disclosure

All staff should refer concerns to the designated teacher as soon as possible. In the meantime, they should do the following.

- Listen to the student, keeping calm and offering reassurance.
- Observe bruises but not ask a child to remove or adjust their clothing to observe them.
- Allow the child to lead the discussion if a disclosure is made. Do not press for details by asking questions such as 'what did they do next?'
- Listen – don't investigate using questions such as 'is there anything else you'd like to tell me?'
- Accept what the student says without challenge – reassure them that they are doing the right thing and that you recognise how hard it is for them.
- Don't lay blame or criticise either the child or the perpetrator.
- Don't promise confidentiality – explain that they have done the right thing and who you will need to tell and why.

Record-keeping

When it happens

Brief notes at the time or immediately after will help you to complete the *significant incident sheet* when you are able. You should note:

- date and time
- place and context of disclosure or concern
- facts you need to remember

When you can

Complete a *significant incident sheet*, which is available the Headteacher's PA. This should then be copied to the designated person.

In the case of bruises or observed injuries the *body map* should be completed.

In addition a 'cause for concern' file is kept in the College office in which small concerns can be noted. Please contact Support Unit administrative staff for its location.

Remember to keep to factual information and not assumption or interpretation. Use the child's own language to quote rather than translating into your own terms. These sheets may be used at a later date to support a referral to an external agency.

It is important that concerns are followed up. It is everyone's responsibility to make sure that they are. If you do not hear what the outcome of your referral has been then ask the designated member of staff. If you are still not happy with the outcome of this and remain concerned then the Safeguarding Governor might be contacted.

Following a referral

Following referral the CP team member that made the referral will:

- Follow-up the referral using the critical incident sheet as a basis for consideration before action.
- Make additional records of discussions and any investigation that takes place.
- Make a decision whether to continue to monitor the situation or take the referral further. This decision should be communicated to the individual making the initial referral.
- Where a child is referred to social care a referral form will be completed and sent within 24 hours.

Recorded information from social services meetings and other reports are stored in separate document wallets next to the child's records in secure cabinets in the College office. Any documents for inclusion in this folder should be given directly to the Support Unit administrator.

Additional incidental referrals and contacts are recorded in the 'individual notes' file kept by the Support Unit administrator. Each child with a child protection plan has their own section. An additional miscellaneous section is used for other 'one-off' notes and referrals. Each incident is also accompanied by an action.

Where children have their own section, copies of incident notes should be included too.

Allegations against staff

There may be occasions when a child makes an allegation against a member of staff. In this case, the member of staff informed should let the Headteacher know as soon as possible. The Headteacher will then discuss this with the Local Authority's Safeguarding Children Manager.

If the allegation includes reference to the Headteacher, the Chair of Governors should be informed via the designated teacher. The Chair of Governors will then consult with the Safeguarding Children Manager.

Guidance for these referrals can be found in the child protection guidance booklet in the staffroom.

Multi-agency meetings

Social care meetings

At times college staff will be called to participate in meetings organised and chaired by social care.

These might be:

- review meetings;
- case conferences;
- professionals' meetings – in which representative professionals from different agencies are asked to meet to discuss children and their families with a view to providing support or making recommendations in terms of next stages of involvement;
- core group meetings – meeting in which a 'core' group of professionals associated with the family are asked to meet to review the progress of actions decided at case conferences and register reviews;
- Common Assessment Framework (CAF) meetings in which a range of professionals are brought together to help address the needs of a particular family.

At these meetings, representatives from the College should be ready to report back, providing information about:

- attendance and punctuality;
- academic achievement;
- the child's behaviour and attitude;
- relationships with peer group and social skills generally;
- the child's appearance and readiness for college;
- contact with parents/carers
- any specific incidents that need reporting.

Prior to the meeting, teachers and other adults working closely with the child should be asked for their comments. Following the meeting feedback should be given and staff brought up-to-date with any actions that are needed.

Multi-agency meeting (in school)

Multi-agency meetings are conducted on a termly basis or as required and provide an opportunity for external agencies linked to schools and school staff to discuss individuals about whom there have been/are concerns. The meeting will usually include a representative from the following:

- Health Service – School Nurse;
- Pastoral Care Worker;
- nurture group;
- Attendance Officer;
- Social Services;
- Senior Management of the College.

Any member of staff is welcome to bring an individual to the attention of the group for discussion.

Care should be taken in terms of breaches of confidentiality between departments. Parents' permission must be sought prior to the meeting if their child may be discussed.

There may be times when additional professionals are requested to attend and/or parents themselves.

Confidentiality

Where children are known to social care and leave one school for another the designated teacher must inform the receiving school and the key worker at the social care department. If the child leaves the school with no receiving school, details should be passed to the principal educational social worker.

Education staff have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with the investigative agencies. Members of staff should not promise confidentiality but can let the child making a disclosure know that only those who need to know will be informed and that this will be for the child's own sake. They should listen sympathetically and non-judgementally, and take time to reassure the child and confirm that the information given will be treated sensitively.

Staff should be careful and ensure that sensitive information is only given to the appropriate person. All staff should be kept aware of issues relating to confidentiality and the status of information they may hold.

Members of staff, other than the designated member and those closely involved, should only have enough details in order to help them to act sensitively and appropriately to the child. Sensitive information regarding pastoral issues and for children who have a child protection plan is kept separately in a folder in the closed section of the office.

Discretion should be used when talking about the personal and changing circumstances of children, for example when a child goes into care. It is necessary to take special care of information received at child protection meetings; this should be treated sensitively, and discretion will be needed as issues emerge on a formal and informal basis.

Working with parents

It is important that the College has an established approach to working with parents. Parents' and children's need for privacy should be respected. Attitudes to and contact with parents should be non-judgemental in order to maintain a good working relationship. The priority is the needs of the child and effective liaison is crucial for this.

It should be recognised that families from different backgrounds and cultures will have different approaches to child-rearing. These differences should be acknowledged and respected, provided they do not place the child at risk as defined earlier in this document. We have access to support for parents where it is felt that this would be useful.

Some of the key points from this policy are sent out to parents at the beginning of the school year. This bulletin draws attention to key procedures. Parents are also invited to read a copy of the policy.

Special needs

Many of the children who are the subject of multi-agency work have special needs. There are many reasons why children with challenging home lives may also have learning/and or behavioural needs too. The difficulties children have often compound one another and can be difficult to separate. Where students have special needs it is important that time is taken by college staff to identify any barriers to learning there may be. In some cases other agencies will need to be involved in supporting the College to address these barriers. It may be necessary to call a CAF or other multi-agency meeting to find ways of supporting the family.

Monitoring and evaluation

Consultation

1. Consultation with whole staff on Child Protection policy.
2. Senior Leadership Team discussion.
3. Headteacher or designated teacher to draft new version.
4. Draft version to all staff and Governors.
5. Amendments made.
6. Approval by Governing Body.

Success criteria for this policy

- Does this policy provide clear guidance for college staff on how to protect students?
- Is the policy accessible and understood by all members of staff?
- Is the referral process clearly outlined and implemented? Do records confirm this?
- Do all members of the college community understand their role in relation to child protection?
- Has training been given on induction for new members of staff and as a regular entitlement for others?
- Are staff aware of the possible signs of abuse?
- Are staff aware of what to do if a child makes a disclosure?
- Does this policy enable early intervention and support to take place where issues are identified?
- Are parents aware of the existence of this policy and that they are entitled to see it?

Linked policies

- Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policy.
- Equal Opportunities policy.
- Health and Safety policy.
- Special Educational Needs policy.

Signed:

Dated:

Policy reference number and version:

Author: PJ 14/4/11

Implementation date:

Next review date: