



Peacehaven Community School

Child Protection Policy

This policy has been read and adopted by the Governing Body on:

Date: _____

Signed: _____
For and on behalf of the Governing Body

Signed: _____

Helen Cryer
Headteacher

1. Purpose and aim of the PCS Child Protection Policy

- 1.1 The aim of the PCS Whole School Child Protection Policy is to safeguard and promote our student's welfare, safety, health and guidance by fostering an honest, open, caring and supportive climate. The student's welfare is of paramount importance.
- 1.2 The PCS Child Protection Policy aims to provide clear direction to staff, Governors, and visitors to the school on the expected codes of behaviour in dealing with child protection issues.
- 1.3 The policy also aims to make explicit the school's commitment to the development of good practice and sound procedures. The purpose of the policy is therefore to ensure child protection concerns and referrals are handled sensitively and professionally, in ways which support the needs of the child.
- 1.4 The PCS Child Protection Policy should be read in conjunction with the Appendix.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 Peacehaven Community School fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect the students in its care.
- 2.2 There are three main elements to our policy:

1. Prevention:

Positive school atmosphere, careful & vigilant teaching, support of students, and providing good adult role models.

2. Protection:

Staff training to ensure that all staff respond appropriately and sensitively to child protection concerns.

3. Support:

To students and staff and to children who may have been abused.

This Policy applies to all employees of Peacehaven Community School.

3. School Commitment

3.1 We recognise that high esteem, confidence, supportive friends and clear lines of communication with a trusted adult helps all children, and especially those at risk of, or suffering from, abuse.

PCS will therefore aim to:

- I. Establish and maintain an ethos where students feel secure and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to;
- II. Ensure that students know that there are adults in school who they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty.
- III. Include in the curriculum activities and opportunities for PSHE which equip students with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse and which will help them develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly with regard to childcare and parenting skills.
- IV. Ensure that whenever possible every effort will be made to establish effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from other agencies.

4. Framework

Schools do not operate in isolation. Child protection is the responsibility of all adults and especially those working with children. The welfare of children is a corporate responsibility of the entire local authority, working in partnership with other public agencies, the voluntary sector, and service users and carers.

Peacehaven Community School aims to protect the students in its care by working consistently and appropriately with child protection agencies.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to protect children.

Within Peacehaven Community School the following individuals have special responsibilities:

- **Designated Child Protection Coordinator and deputy designated coordinator**

Role: to coordinate all matters relating to child protection issues. These will include:

- Dealing with reports of abuse against children
- Being involved in the process if complaints are made against staff (employees of PCS) by children
- Making referrals to child protection agencies if appropriate
- Keeping the head teacher & strategic leadership team informed of all child protection issues that may arise
- Ensuring all staff (employees of PCS) receive training in basic child protection
- Ensuring all new staff are properly inducted apropos child protection
- Liaising with the school governor with special responsibility for child protection
- Ensuring the school governor with special responsibility for child protection receives appropriate training in child protection

SLT staff member with responsibility for child protection issues

- To provide management and support to the CP Coordinator and deputy and coordinate all matters relating to child protection issues in the absence of the CP Coordinator

▪ **School Governor with special responsibility for child protection**

Role: to liaise with the designated child protection coordinator as appropriate and participate in the annual review of the policy.

6. Procedures

6.1 The designated child protection coordinator will be informed immediately by an employee of the school, student of the school, parent of the school, other persons, in the following circumstances:

- If there is suspicion that a child is being abused
- If there is evidence that a child is being abused

The designated child protection coordinator will keep a full record of reports made and make referrals to child protection agencies if necessary. The designated child protection coordinator will contact parents regarding any concerns, unless to do so would place the child at risk. The head teacher and strategic leadership team will be kept informed at all times.

6.2 In the event of a complaint being made by a child against an employee of the school, incidents or concerns should be recorded and passed to the head teacher or a member of SLT as appropriate. The designated child protection coordinator will then be involved as appropriate.

See Appendix section 7

7. Training and Support

PCS will ensure that the Head teacher, Strategic Leadership Team, Governor with special responsibility for CP and Designated Child Protection Coordinator receive child protection training relevant to their role.

8. Professional Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. PCS recognises that the only purpose of confidentiality in this respect is to benefit the child.

See Appendix Section 6

9. Records and Monitoring

Well kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Peacehaven Community School is clear about the need to record any concerns held about a student, the status of such records and when these records should be passed over to other agencies.

10. Attendance at Child Protection Conferences

In the event of PCS being invited to attend a child protection case conference, the designated child protection coordinator will represent the school and will provide relevant information to the conference.

In the absence of the designated child protection coordinator, the Conference will be attended by the deputy designated child protection coordinator or a member of the strategic leadership team.

11. Supporting Students at Risk

At PCS we recognise that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth and to view the world in a positive way. PCS may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of students who are at risk. Whilst at school, their behaviour might be challenging and defiant and we will take careful note of the context of such behaviour.

PCS also recognises that some children who have experienced abuse may in turn abuse others. This requires a considered and sensitive approach in order that the child can receive appropriate help and support.

Peacehaven Community School will endeavour to support all its students through:

- The curriculum, to encourage self-esteem and self-motivation.
- The school ethos, which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and which gives all students and adults a sense of being respected and valued.
- Coherent management of behaviour.
- A consistent approach, which recognises and separates the causes of behaviour from that which the student displays. This is vital to ensure that all children are supported within the school setting.
- Liaison with other professionals and agencies who support the students and their families.
- A commitment to develop productive, supportive relationships with parents, whenever it is in the student's interests to do so.
- The development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable staff group trained to respond appropriately in child protection situations.

Peacehaven Community School recognises that statistically, children with behavioural difficulties, learning difficulties and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse. School staff who work in any capacity with students with profound and multiple disabilities, sensory impairment, and/or emotional and behaviour problems will need to be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse.

PCS also recognises that in a home environment where there is domestic abuse, drug or alcohol abuse, students may also be vulnerable and in need of support and protection.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other related policies in school. These include:

- Anti-bullying Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- PSHE Policy
- Disability Policies
- Grievance & Complaints Policy
- Confidential Reporting Policy
- Off Site Educational Policy (including use of private car)
- Visitors Policy

Policy established: September 2007

Review date: September 2010

Appendix to PCS Child Protection Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 Children trust and depend on adults to protect and safeguard them from harm. It is therefore our responsibility, as adults who come into contact with children and young people on a daily basis, to report any suspicions and evidence of abuse which may have occurred, or is occurring, to a young person whether it is outside or inside the school.

2. Our role:

- To keep our eyes and ears open.
- To report
- To be excellent adult role models.

NB. Identifying and investigating actual child abuse is the responsibility of child protection agencies.

3. Definition

1. *'Child abuse and neglect'* is a generic term encompassing all ill treatment of children including serious physical and sexual assaults as well as cases where the standard of care does not adequately support the child's health or development.
2. Children may be abused in a family, or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them, or more rarely by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult, adults or another child or children.
3. *'Working together to safeguard children'* sets out definitions and examples of the four broad categories of abuse which are used for the purposes of recognition:
 - **Physical abuse** 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, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.
 - Feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. This includes interactions beyond the child's

developmental capability, as well as over protection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child's participating in normal social interaction.

- Involve seeing and hearing the ill treatment of another.
- Involve serious bullying causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in most types of ill treatment of a child, though emotional abuse may occur alone.

- **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (eg rape, burglary or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts.

They may include 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.

- **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.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse.

Once the child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer:

- Failing to provide adequate food and clothing or shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment).
- Failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- Failing to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers.
- Failing to access appropriate medical care or treatment.
- Failing to meet a child's basic emotional needs.

Severe neglect of young children is associated with major impairment of growth and intellectual development.

Persistent neglect can lead to serious impairment of health and development, long term difficulties with social functioning, relationships and educational progress. Neglect can also result, in extreme cases, in death.

4. Risk indicators

- 4.1 The factors described in this section are frequently found in cases of child abuse. Their presence is not proof that child

abuse has occurred, but must be regarded as indicators of possible significant harm and prompt the professional to seek further information.

4.2 These indicators justify the need for careful assessment and discussion with the Designated Child Protection Co-ordinator.

4.3 The presence of a risk indicator may require consultation or referral to Children's social care.

4.4 In an abusive relationship the child may:

- Appear frightened of the parent (s)
- Act in a way that is inappropriate to her/his development (though full account needs to be taken of different patterns of development and different ethnic groups).

4.5 In an abusive relationship the parent/carer may:

- Persistently avoid child health services and treatment of the child's illnesses.
- Have unrealistic expectations of the child.
- Frequently complain about/to the child and fail to provide attention or praise (a high criticism/low warmth environment).
 - Be absent
 - Be misusing substances
 - Be socially isolated

4.6 Consideration must be given to the impact on the care of the child of any issues/problems affecting the parents e.g substance misuse, mental health problems, learning disabilities, childhood experiences of severe neglect.

4.7 Staff should be aware of the potential risk to children when individuals previously known, or suspected to have abused children, move into or have substantial access in the household.

4.8 It should be recognised that those who pose a risk to children often will not be honest with others. Staff should be mindful of this. Of particular note are carers who present a risk due to either fabricating or inducing illnesses within the children they are responsible for.

5. How to respond if a student confides in you

It can take a great deal of courage for a child or young person to talk to an adult about their abuse because the child is 'telling' on someone more

powerful than they are. It is important to keep in mind that by speaking out the child may be having to betray a person who may be close to them and may be loved by them. They may be risking a great deal in the hope that you will believe what they say.

5.1 Helpful Responses:

- Remain calm, approachable and receptive. Do not pre-judge.
- Listen carefully, without interrupting.
- Make it clear that you are taking them seriously.
- Acknowledge their courage and good sense and reassure them that they are right to tell you.
- Reassure them that they should not feel guilty and that you're sorry that this has happened to them.
- Let them know that you will do all you can to help them and what may happen as a result of their disclosure.

6. What to do next

- You must make an immediate careful record of what has been said, using the student's actual words wherever possible (not your interpretation of them). If you record your opinion ensure it is clear that this is so and that it cannot be confused with fact. Staff should use the 'Child Protection Staff Record of Concern' form. There are hard copies in the main staff base or in the main staff share folder.
- Immediately contact the Designated Child Protection Coordinator, who will make a decision, based on your report, judging whether the issue should be reported to outside agencies or not. This will be recorded on the Record of Concern. In the absence of the Designated Child Protection Coordinator, staff should pass their concern to the Deputy Designated Child Protection Coordinator. In the absence of the Deputy, staff should pass their concerns to a member of the Strategic Leadership team.
- It is your responsibility to ensure that this information has been received. The Designated Child Protection Coordinator should confirm in writing (this may be via e-mail) that your concern has been received. This is for your own protection.
- Remain caring and supportive to the student.

In exceptional circumstances where you fear for the immediate safety of a child, contact the police or social services, stating that you are making a child protection referral. When you have done this, follow the normal procedures as laid down in the PCS child protection policy.

Contacts:

Youth Support Team – 01273 481802

Duty and Assessment Team – 01323 747094

Emergency Duty Team (if it is out of office hours) - 07699 391462

Police Child Protection Team – 01323 414074
Police – 999

If you have any doubts about making a report, remember the possible consequences of not reporting, ie consequences for both the student and yourself. (Not to report may be construed as neglect of care.)

7. What to do if you are concerned about a student but they have not made a disclosure.

7.1 It might happen that you become worried about a student's behaviour or injuries, but the student says nothing to suggest they are being abused. In this situation you can:

- Be the sort of person they can talk to.
- Be available and prepared to listen.
- Discuss your concerns with the designated child protection coordinator.
- Do not rely on someone else to take action.

7.2 If a disclosure is made to you do not:

- Allow your shock or distaste to show.
- Probe for more information than is offered. You must not question the student or attempt to counsel them.
- Speculate or make assumptions.
- Make negative comments about the alleged abuser.
- Make promises that you cannot keep, such as 'everything will be alright'.
- Agree to keep the information a secret. Make sure the student knows that the information will be passed on to the designated child protection coordinator.

7.3 Your role is to:

- **Be vigilant and responsible.**
- **Report accurately and carefully to the child protection officer.**
- **Support the student by being caring.**

8. Sharing Concerns with Parents

8.1 In cases which may come under the child protection umbrella sharing of concerns will be done by the designated child protection coordinator after discussion with the concerned member of staff.

8.2 If you are unsure as to whether a concern you have constitutes child protection, you should consult the designated child protection coordinator.

9. Handling Inappropriate Behaviour from Colleagues

- 9.1 It is our responsibility to behave well in all our dealings with children and young people and specifically those for whom we have a duty of care.
- 9.2 If, however, you believe a colleague is behaving inappropriately, you must immediately follow the procedures laid down in the Child Protection policy; that is report immediately to the Headteacher or a member of the Strategic Leadership Team.
- 9.3 Loyalty to colleagues should not and must not deflect us in our duty of care to the students within the school. The rule is: **the safety and well-being of the students comes first.**
- 9.4 If you receive an allegation about any adult (or even about yourself) you must report it immediately. Record the facts as you know them and follow the child protection procedures. Try to ensure that no one is placed in a position which could cause further compromise and remember: **always refer, never investigate.**
- 9.5 Once you have reported a concern to the Headteacher, or member of the strategic leadership team, a decision will be made about the status of the concern (whether it is child protection or not) and the Local Authority Designated Officer will be consulted. **Staff may refer to ESCC Confidential Reporting Policy 2004**