

The Meadow School for Steiner Education Ltd.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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All Staff will be regularly updated on child protection issues and the policy will be revised on a regular basis.

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INTRODUCTION

In Steiner Waldorf education we constantly seek, within a school/early childhood setting, to nourish the emerging individuality of each child. This is done in many ways but one principle through which we work is that of protection: of protecting children from premature exposure to the harsh realities of life, and maintaining and developing their faith in common humanity.

Nevertheless for some young people this will be challenged early in life. Whatever position we hold in the school, it is our responsibility to be alert to this possibility and to acknowledge and alleviate, where possible, any suffering a child experiences, by giving support to pupils who may have been abused.

This we may do through working with the insights into human nature and child development given by Rudolf Steiner; by working with our Anthroposophical school doctors and curative teams; and through working in co-operation with outside agencies where appropriate and necessary.

The School follows procedures contained in the local LEA area Child Protection Committee's Interagency procedure and the Child Protection Committee's document "**Working Together for Child Protection**" - a guide to procedure and practice for all professional staff who work with children and **Basic Child Protection Information Booklet** (BCPI) (full copy kept in the School office).

The School has a designated member of staff for child protection and works with the Somerset Direct Children and Young People's Team (0845 345 9122).

STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

"Working Together to Safeguard Children Under The Children Act, 1989" requires all schools to follow the procedures for protecting children from abuse which are established by the Area Child Protection Committee. Schools are also expected to ensure that they have appropriate procedures in place for responding to situations in which they believe that a child has been abused or is at risk of abuse - these procedures should also cover circumstances in which a member of staff is accused or suspected of abuse.

DFEE Circular 10/95 (Protecting Children From Abuse: The Role Of The Education Service) places the following responsibilities on all schools:

- ✦ Staff should be alert to signs of abuse and know to whom they should report any concerns or suspicions
- ✦ A designated teacher should have responsibility for coordinating action within the school and liaising with other agencies
- ✦ Staff with designated responsibility for child protection should receive appropriate training
- ✦ Schools should be aware of and follow the procedures established by the Area Education Child Protection Service

- ✦ Schools should have procedures (of which staff are aware) for handling suspected cases of abuse of pupils, including procedures to be followed if a member of staff is accused of abuse.

Circular 10/95 also states “parents should be made aware of the child’s protection policy and the fact that this may require cases to be referred to the investigative agencies in the interests of the child.”

Our policy applies to all staff and volunteers working in the school. This includes the School Management, Trustees, Committee’s, Administrator, SEN and peripatetic staff, as well as teachers and assistant teachers. Any of the above can be the first point of disclosure for a child. Concerned parents may also contact any of the above.

THE DESIGNATED STAFF MEMBERS

The Designated Staff Members for Child Protection are Sarah-Jo Richardson and .

Their role is to:

- ✦ Ensure that the local area’s Child Protection Committee’s procedures are followed in the school
- ✦ Ensure that all staff are aware of these procedures
- ✦ Ensure that appropriate training and support is provided to all staff
- ✦ Develop effective working relationships with other agencies and services
- ✦ Decide whether to take further action about specific concerns (e.g., refer to Social Services)
- ✦ Liaise with Social Services teams over suspected cases of child abuse
- ✦ Ensure that accurate records relating to individual children are kept in a secure place and marked ‘strictly confidential’
- ✦ Submit reports to, and attend, Child Protection Conferences
- ✦ Ensure that the school effectively monitors children who have been identified as at risk
- ✦ Provide guidance to parents, children and staff about obtaining suitable support
- ✦ Ensure that everyone in the school community is aware of the Designated Staff Members names.

SCHOOL PROCEDURES

- ✦ If any member of staff is concerned about a child he or she must inform a designated staff member immediately
- ✦ The member of staff must record information regarding the concerns on the same day. The recording must be a clear, precise, factual account of the observations

- ✦ The designated staff member will decide whether the concerns should be referred to the Social Services Department. If it is decided to make a referral to Social Services this will be done without prior discussions with the parents. If the concerns are of neglect of an emotional nature, discussion with parent/s should take place. However, if further harm is likely, or if the nature of the abuse is violent or sexual, do not on any account discuss with parent/s.
- ✦ If a referral is made to Social Services, the designated staff member will ensure a written report of the concerns is sent to the Social Services dealing with the case **within 24 hours**.
- ✦ Ensure all records are kept secure in a locked location.
- ✦ Particular attention will be paid to the attendance and development of any child who has been identified as at risk or who has been placed on the Child Protection Register. Notify Social Services team if the school should have to exclude a pupil who is on the Child Protection Register, either for a fixed term or permanently. Contact the above, also, if there is any unexplained absence of a pupil on the Child Protection Register, of more than two days' duration, or one following a weekend.
- ✦ If a pupil who is known to be on the Child Protection Register changes school, the designated staff member will inform the Social Services responsible for the case and transfer the appropriate records to the receiving school.
- ✦ Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and staff, for Child Protection, by referring them to its obligations in the school brochure.
- ✦ Provide training for all staff so that they know:
 1. Their personal responsibility
 2. The BCPI book procedure
 3. The need to be vigilant in identifying cases of abuse
 4. How to support a child who tells of abuse
- ✦ Work to develop effective links with relevant agencies, and co-operate as required with their inquiries regarding Child Protection matters. This may include attendance at initial case conferences, core group meetings and Child Protection review conferences.
- ✦ Adhere to procedures set out in the BCPI booklet when an allegation is made against a member of staff.
- ✦ Ensure that applicants for all vacant posts are checked in accordance with circular 9/93 Protection of Children: Disclosure of Criminal Background.