



VULNERABLE CHILD POLICY

Our Vision:

We are committed to quality learning in a positive, happy and Christian atmosphere where everyone within the school community is valued as an individual. We expect everyone to, 'Treat others as you want them to treat you.' (Matthew 7:12-14). We have high expectations of all and strive to provide a safe, challenging, exciting and stimulating environment.

Our Values:

To ensure the safety, physical, mental health and well being of our pupils are met and effectively supported through our school values of:

Respect – by respecting the individual needs of all our children and effectively supporting them with appropriate strategies to promote their well being.

Compassion – by showing compassion and understanding for each individual situation that a child finds themselves in.

Creation – creating a safe and secure environment which allows children to be effectively supported, helping them to thrive and flourish.

Perseverance – by persevering with challenges which may arise, in dealing with situations that children and families find themselves in. Always acting in the best interests of the child.

Service – by building trusting relationships with children and their families as we serve to help to keep children safe.

Introduction

As set out in the 2002 Education Act, we have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote every child and ensure all teachers are aware of the procedures and duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in its charge. Education has a key role to play in dispensing that duty and all teachers must be aware of procedures.

The school is committed to creating and maintaining a safe learning environment for children and young people, identifying where there are child welfare concerns and taking action to address them, in partnership with families and other agencies. This policy reflects the policies of Cheshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership <http://www.cheshirewestscp.co.uk/> and is in line with "Working Together to

Safeguard Children” (2018) <http://www.workingtogetheronline.co.uk/>

The school will also contribute through the curriculum by developing children’s understanding, awareness and promoting their resilience by providing a safe environment within schools.

To create this safe environment the school has certain statutory duties and responsibilities set out within:

- The Education Act, 2002, HM Guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2021
- Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018
- The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

All staff have access to the Safeguarding Policy (and all other policies) online – Staff Share folder, Updated Policies.

The full documents (in printed format) can be found in the school office.

The procedures for dealing with suspected child protection issues are detailed in the safeguarding policy. The role of Designated Safeguarding Lead is Mr G Graham, Acting Headteacher. In his absence Mrs B Lamb, Acting Deputy Headteacher will deputise. Miss Chapman, and Miss Richardson are also trained to the same level.

Mr A Hart is the designated Safeguarding Governor.

Definition

We consider a vulnerable child to be any child who has been exposed to risk factors that may jeopardise their emotional health, general wellbeing, behaviour, motivation or ability to learn.

These risk factors could include bereavement, separation, bullying, domestic violence, emotional & behavioural difficulties, looked after and accommodated children, children with disabilities, English as an additional language, minority groups, persistent absenteeism and persistent lateness, children underachieving, achieving academically and not working to their full potential.

Aims

The aims of this policy are to ensure all school staff are aware of key principles and legislation.

‘Working together to Safeguard Children, March 2015’ states, safeguarding children and protecting them from harm is everyone’s responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play. The Children Act 2004 states that ‘a school must safeguard the welfare of looked after children and provide for the welfare of all children in need.’

The document 'Safeguarding Vulnerable Children in Education' September 2004 DfES states that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- Each child should be treated as an individual.
- Each child who can form a view on matters affecting him or her has the right to express those views if he she so wishes.
- Each child has the right to protection from all forms of abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- Parents should normally be responsible for the upbringing of their children and should share that responsibility.
- So far as is consistent with safeguarding and promoting the child's welfare, we promote the upbringing of children by their families.
- Any intervention by the local authority in the life of a child must be properly justified and should be supported by services from all relevant agencies working in collaboration.
- Child abuse is described under one of five categories on the Child Protection Register. These are:
 - Physical injury
 - Sexual abuse
 - Failure to thrive
 - Emotional abuse
 - Physical neglect
- All adults who have the charge of children have a responsibility to ensure that children are not harmed and are properly cared for. Children with a problem will choose to speak to a person they trust, irrespective of the role and status of that person. It is therefore essential that all education staff are familiar with the issue of child protection, take the child's story seriously and avoid either interrogating the child or silencing the child by indications of disbelief.
- The role of education employees in circumstances where there are concerns that a child may have been abused is to observe, report, record, co-operate (with social services and other relevant agencies such as police, and appropriate medical personnel) and support the child within the framework of a Child Protection Support Plan.

Identifying Vulnerable Children

Willaston CE Primary School aims to provide support to meet the needs of all pupils and their families. As a school we want to support the 'whole family'.

Integrated practice identifies and supports vulnerable children. Our Learning Mentor, Miss Richardson works alongside all staff to identify and support those children who are recognised as being 'vulnerable'. Miss Richardson monitors attendance registers and holds regular meetings with staff regarding pastoral care and parents needing support. Cases where there are serious concerns are immediately referred to Mrs J Chambers, Headteacher. Our named Governor Representative for safeguarding vulnerable pupils is Mr Hart.

We recognise that, statistically, children with behavioural difficulties and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse. Staff who work, in any capacity, with children with profound and multiple disabilities, sensory impairment and/or emotional and behaviour problems will need to be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse.

In addition, we are aware that some children can be vulnerable to extremist influence and that those pupils may become susceptible to radicalisation through a range of social, personal and environmental factors - it is known that violent extremists exploit vulnerabilities in individuals to drive a wedge between them and their families and communities. It is vital that school staff are able to recognise those vulnerabilities.

It is recognised that Looked After and Accommodated children are a particularly vulnerable group who need additional support.

It must also be stressed that in a home environment where there is domestic violence, drug or alcohol abuse, children may also be vulnerable and in need of support or protection.

Vulnerable children are recorded on our Vulnerable Child Record which enables us to identify support and strategies used, and record the impact of different strategies. It also ensures all adults working with these children are fully aware of their individual challenges.

Strategies used to support Vulnerable Children

- 1. Learning Mentor** – A learning mentor will build a relationship with a vulnerable child based on trust and respect and with the aim to overcome barriers to learning. A learning mentor is available to help and support children who have any worries or concerns and to provide a nurturing environment during difficult times. This could be either inside or outside the class :-
 - Observing children in the playground.
 - Monitoring new children settling in.
 - Family bereavement or illness, loss of pet.
 - Friendship groups.
 - Anger management.
 - Social skills.
 - Separation anxiety.
 - Self-esteem.
 - Emotional literacy.
 - Relaxation and mindfulness.
- 2. ELSA – Emotional Literacy Support Assistant.** An ELSA is a specialist teaching assistant with a wealth of experience working with children. ELSA's are

trained and regularly supervised by the Educational Psychologist from the LA. Miss Richardson, our Learning Mentor is an ELSA for our school. ELSA will provide support in either an individual or group session usually consisting of several parts :-

- Emotional check in
- Main activity – in relation to worry or concern.
- Relaxation

ELSA's can help with :-

- Loss & Bereavement
- Self Esteem
- Social Skills
- Emotions
- Friendship Issues
- Anger Management
- Behaviour
- Anxiety
- Relaxation Techniques

3. YMHFA – Youth Mental Health First Aid – To provide support through learning mentor and ELSA and to improve mental health and where appropriate suggest outside agencies:-

- GP
- Paediatrician
- CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)
- Childline
- Mind
- RSPCC

Miss Richardson, our Learning Mentor is trained in Mental Health First Aid.

- 4. Sleep** – Can offer help and advice to establish a good bedtime routine as sleep deprivation may have an impact on child development. Miss Richardson can provide a behaviour chart to record sleep and then help to provide strategies and action plan to work in partnership with the family to improve sleep issues.
- 5. Pupil Progress Meetings** – Teachers meet with Senior Leaders, half termly to identify and discuss any underachievement. Our SENCO also attends other meetings for our SEN children. Strategies are actioned depending on the individual needs of the child. This could include academic interventions, meetings with parents, support of Learning Mentor.
- 6. My Happy Mind** – is delivered weekly to every child in every year group to build resilience, self esteem and confidence.
- 7. Individuals** – All children are treated as individuals and support provided will recognise this.

- 8. Training** – Staff attend regular training through staff meetings, meeting with SENCO/Learning Mentor or external training providers to ensure they are adequately trained to deal with the different contexts that they are dealing with.
- 9. TAF (Team Around the Family)** – TAF is initiated where a multi- agency response is required for a family in challenging circumstances to ensure families in our school receive appropriate support and help from professional expertise. The Headteacher, SENCO and Learning Mentor have all had TAF Training.

It is important to note that this policy dealing with vulnerable children should be considered alongside other related policies in school. These include:

- Safeguarding Pupils Who are Vulnerable to Extremism
- Child Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Anti Bullying Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Children in Cheshire's Care & Adopted Children Policy
- Health & Safety Policy

Approved by Governors December 2023



Signed Chair of Governors