

CARRICK ACADEMY GUIDELINES

Child Protection

We all have a responsibility to make sure that children are safe and protected from abuse, neglect and harm. The following information is to help your understanding of child abuse, child protection and what to do if you have a concern about a child's safety and protection.

What is child abuse?

There are different types of abuse:

- Physical injury (hit, kicked, punched)
- Physical neglect (not being properly fed or clothed, poor hygiene)
- Sexual Abuse (inappropriate sexual behaviour or language, indecent assault, sexual intercourse)
- Emotional abuse (constantly criticised, ignored, humiliated, exposed to domestic abuse)

Children will no longer be registered according to categories of abuse – the focus will be on the risk (s) they face.

How concerns may arise:

- **Member of staff** has concerns arising from knowledge of the child and from observing changes, e.g. the child's behaviour or appearance, or from things the child has said.
- **A child** discloses to a teacher or member of staff that abuse has taken place or that the child feels unsafe
- **A third party** expresses concern to a member of staff; this could be a parent, guardian or other pupil.
- **An anonymous allegation** is received.

What might make you concerned?

Children rarely tell if they are being abused, however, there may be signs which make you concerned and may be an indication of a child being abused or neglected:

The child may:

- Have unexplained bruising or bruising in an unusual place
- Appear afraid, quiet or withdrawn
- Be afraid to go home
- Appear hungry, tired or unkempt
- Be left unattended or unsupervised
- Have too much responsibility for their age
- Be acting out in a sexually inappropriate way
- Be misusing drugs or alcohol

Not all children who are abused or neglected will display these signs and equally a child may display some of these signs and symptoms for other reasons. These are some examples of what might make you worried about a child, however, you may know of other things that are happening which means you need to take action to protect a child.

If a child tells you something has happened:

It is essential that you do not promise confidentiality to the child.

Do:

- Stay calm
- Listen to the child
- Keep any questions to a minimum
- Reassure the child they were right to tell

- Tell the child what you're going to do next
- Record in the child's own words what has been said
- Act promptly and immediately report to your line manager or designated child protection officer

Don't:

- Ask too many questions
- Make any false promises
- Express shock or anger at what is being said to you
- Interpret what the child is saying to you – just record and report
- Delay listening to the child or passing on your concerns
- Carry out an 'investigation' into the allegation

Record:

- R Respond without showing signs of anxiety or shock
- E Enquire casually about how an injury was sustained or why a child appears upset.
- C Confidentiality **should not** be promised to children or adults.
- O Observe carefully the behaviour or demeanour of the child or person expressing concern.
- R Record in detail what you have seen and heard (using the language of the child)
- D Do not interrogate or enter into detailed investigations

What do I do next?

Report your concerns **immediately** to **Mr Rusk**, the **Child Protection Co-ordinator** (Mrs McKnight is the deputy in his absence, then Mrs Stevens). **Do not** wait until the end of the school day.

Write up a full report of the incident and submit it to Mr Rusk as soon as possible after the referral.

What happens next?

All information received is treated seriously and will be acted upon.

If a concern is raised about a child in the school it is the role of the Child Protection Co-ordinator to:

- Collate all known relevant information about the child.
- Refer to social work or decide no referral is required.
- Decide who will inform parents.
- Check that all relevant agencies are informed if referring.
- Check all records are complete and kept in a confidential file.
- Ensures the school receives written feedback from social work; which will be filed with the child's records.

Where Child Protection concerns are identified

A meeting with all agencies involved will be held to decide the best way to protect the child. This will include people who have a knowledge of the child and family e.g. health visitor, police, teacher, social worker and parents/carers. In a small number of cases, immediate, emergency action may be necessary to protect the child.