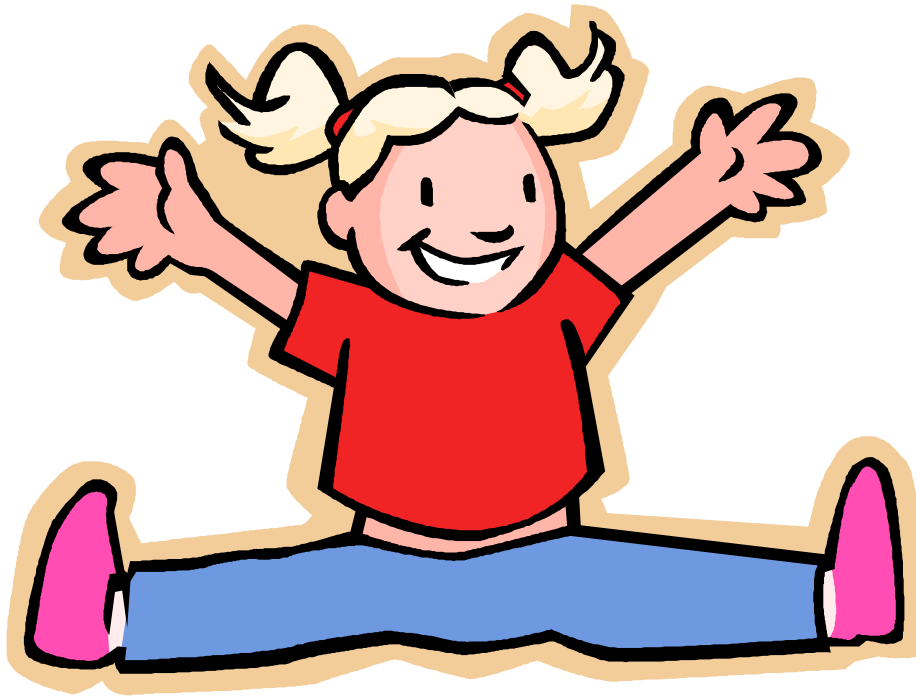


# **Linaker Primary School & Children's Centre**

## **Safeguarding Policy**

**January 2010**



Linaker Primary School  
and Children's Centre

# Linaker Primary School & Children's Centre

## Safeguarding Policy

### Introduction

*It should be noted that this policy should not be read in isolation. It links with a range of other policies and procedures within the school. Staff should refer to their Safeguarding Handbook and Personnel Handbook in addition, for further clarification of the broad range of issues and guidance offered here.*

Linaker Primary School and Children's Centre recognises its legal duty under s175 Education Act 2002 and the 1989 Children Act and takes seriously its responsibilities to protect and safeguard the interests of all children. The school recognises that effective child protection work requires sound procedures, good inter-agency co-operation and a workforce that is competent and confident in responding to child protection situations

This procedures document provides the basis for good practice within the school for Child Protection work. It should be read in conjunction with Sefton's's Local Safeguarding Children Board Policies and Procedures. These are in keeping with relevant national procedures and reflect what the Directorate considers to be safe and professional practice in this context. Child Protection has to be considered within professionals' wider "safeguarding" responsibilities that include a duty to co-operate under the Children Act 2004. Within the context of Every Child Matters, this takes account of the need for children "being healthy and staying safe".

These procedures aim to provide a framework which ensures that all practice in the area of child protection is consistent with stated values and procedures that underpin all work with children and young people.

This document also seeks to make the professional responsibilities clear to all staff to ensure that statutory and other duties are met in accordance with Sefton's's Safeguarding Children Board requirements and procedures.

### Underpinning values

Where there is a safeguarding issue, Linaker Primary School and Children's Centre will work in accordance with the principles outlined in the Sefton's Safeguarding Children Board Inter-agency Child Protection procedures:

- A child's welfare is paramount. Each child has a right to be protected from harm and exploitation and to have their welfare safeguarded.
- Each child is unique. Action taken by child welfare organisations should be child-centred, taking account of a child's cultural, ethnic and religious background, their gender, their sexual orientation, their individual ability and any special needs.
- Children, parents and other carers should be made aware of their responsibilities and their rights, together with advice about the power of professionals to intervene in their family circumstances.
- Each child has a right to be consulted about actions taken by others on his/her behalf. The concerns of children and their families should be listened to and due consideration given to their understanding, wishes and feelings.
- Individual family members must be involved in decisions affecting them. They must be treated with courtesy and respect and with due regard given to working with them in a spirit of partnership in safeguarding children's welfare.
- Open-mindedness and honesty must guide each stage of assessment and of operational practice. The strengths of individual family members, as well as their needs, should be given due consideration.
- Personal information is usually confidential. It should only be shared with the permission of the individual concerned, or unless the disclosure of confidential personal information is necessary in order to protect a child. In all circumstances, information must be confined to those people directly involved in the professional network of each individual child and on a strict "need to know" basis.
- Professionals should be aware of the effects of outside intervention upon children, upon family life and the impact and implications of what they say and do.
- Explanations by professionals to children, their families and other carers should be plainly stated and jargon-free. Unavoidable technical and professional terminology should be explained in simple terms.
- Sound professional practice is based upon positive inter-agency collaboration, evidence-based research and effective supervision and evaluation.
- Early intervention in providing support services under Section 17 of the Children Act (1989) is an important principle of practice in inter-agency arrangements for safeguarding the welfare of children.

## **Guidance on ‘Whether this is a Child Protection Matter’**

**If staff have significant concerns about any child they should make them known to the schools Designated or Deputy Designated Child Protection Teachers. These concerns may include:**

### **Physical abuse:**

May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

### **Emotional abuse:**

Is the persistent emotional maltreatment 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, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child’s developmental capability, as well as over protection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another. It may 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 all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

### **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 abuse.

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

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

### **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 (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

There are three thresholds for and types of referral that need to be considered:

Is this a child with additional needs where their health, development or achievement may be adversely affected? Sefton’s Children and Young People’s Framework says practitioners should complete a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) when:

- Age appropriate progress is not being made and the causes are unclear or
- The support of more than one agency is needed to meet the child or young person’s needs.

If this is a child with additional needs discuss the issues with the CAF trained practitioner in your school, the child and parents. You will need to obtain parental consent for a CAF to be completed.

Is this child in need? Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 says:

- they are unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have opportunity to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development, without the provision of services by a local authority.
- their health or development is likely to be impaired, or further impaired without the provision of such services.
- they are disabled.

Is this a child protection matter? Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 says:

- children at risk or who are suffering significant harm.
- children suffering the effects of significant harm
- serious health problems.

If this is a child in need, discuss the issues with the designated child protection teacher and parents.

If this is a child protection matter, this should be discussed with the designated teacher and will need to be referred to Sefton LA by the school as soon as possible.

It is the 'significant harm' threshold that justifies statutory intervention into family life. A professional making a child protection referral under Section 47 must therefore provide information which clearly outlines that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

It is not possible to rely on one absolute criterion when judging what constitutes significant harm. Consideration of the severity of ill-treatment may include the extent of the harm suffered, the context within which it occurred and its duration.

Significant harm may also arise from a combination of significant events which are both acute and long standing and which may impair the child's physical, psychological and social development. In order to both understand and establish significant harm, it is necessary to consider the family context, together with the child's development within their wider social and cultural environment. It is also necessary to consider any special needs, e.g. medical condition, communication difficulties or disability that may affect the child's development and care within the family. The nature of harm, in terms of ill-treatment or failure to provide adequate care also needs consideration alongside the impact on the child's health and development and the adequacy of care provided.

## **Making referrals**

Where a child is registered at school, consultation must take place with the school's designated teacher or Child Protection co-ordinator who will often be the most appropriate person to initiate any referral. A written record of your concerns should be made using the schools internal recording form. This should then be given to the Designated Child Protection teacher who will then make the decision if a referral is needed.

For referral to Sefton Social Care phone 0151 934 3737 and speak to the operator. You will need to follow this up with written confirmation on the referral form.

## **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is an issue that needs to be understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. This is a complex area and involves consideration of a number of pieces of legislation.

You can never guarantee confidentiality to a child as some kinds of information may need to be shared with others. A suggested form of words that may help when talking to children is as follows:

"I will keep our conversation confidential and agree with you what information I can share, unless you tell me something that will affect your personal safety or that is illegal, but I will tell you if I am going to pass information on and who to."

Professionals can only work together to safeguard children if there is an exchange of relevant information between them. This has been recognised in principle by the courts. However, any disclosure of personal information to others, included social service departments, must always have regard to both common and statute law.

Normally, personal information should only be disclosed to third parties (including other agencies) with the consent of the subject of that information (Data Protection Act 1998 European Convention on Human Rights, Article 8). Wherever possible consent should be obtained before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances, however, consent may not be possible or desirable but the safety and welfare of the child dictate that the information should be shared.

The law requires the disclosure of confidential information necessary to safeguard a child or children. Under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 statutory agencies have a duty to co-operate. Therefore, if the Police or Social Care/Services are conducting a Section 47 investigation under the 1989 Children Act, staff must share requested information relevant to the investigation.

## **Talking to and listening to children**

If a child chooses to disclose, you SHOULD:

- be accessible and receptive;
- listen carefully and uncritically at the child's pace;

- take what is said seriously;
- reassure the child that they are right to tell;
- tell the child that you must pass this information on;
- make a careful record of what was said.

You should NEVER:

- take photographs or examine an injury;
- investigate or probe aiming to prove or disprove possible abuse – never ask leading questions;
- make promises to children about confidentiality or keeping ‘secrets’;
- assume that someone else will take the necessary action;
- jump to conclusions or react with shock, anger or horror;
- speculate or accuse anybody;
- confront another person (adult or child) allegedly involved;
- offer opinions about what is being said or about the persons allegedly involved;
- forget to record what you have been told;
- fail to pass the information on to the correct person;
- ask a child to sign a written copy of the disclosure.

For children with communication difficulties or who use alternative/augmented communication systems, you may need to take extra care to ensure that signs of abuse and neglect are identified and interpreted correctly, but concerns should be reported in exactly the same manner as for other children.

## **Record keeping**

Well kept records are essential in situations where it is suspected or believed that a child may be at risk from harm.

Records should:

- state who was present, time, date and place;
- use the child’s words wherever possible;
- be factual/state exactly what was said;
- differentiate clearly between fact, opinion, interpretation, observation and/or allegation;
- be written in ink and signed by the recorder;

## **Attendance at Child Protection Conferences**

The Designated Child Protection Teacher / Officer will be expected to attend the initial Child Protection Conference, where practically possible.

If a child is made subject to a Child Protection Plan it may be more relevant for the class teacher or head of year to attend the subsequent core group meetings.

## **Protecting yourself against allegations of abuse**

You should seek to keep your personal contact with children under review and seek to minimise the risk of any situation arising in which misunderstandings can occur. The following sensible precautions can be taken when working alone with children:

- work in a room where there is a glass panel in the door or leave the door open
- make sure that other adults visit the room occasionally.
- avoid working in isolation with children unless thought has been given to safeguards.
- must not give out personal mobile phone numbers or private e-mail addresses
- must not give pupils lifts home in your cars
- must not arrange to meet them outside of school hours
- must not chat to pupils on the social websites

Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 it is a criminal offence for anyone working in an education setting to have a sexual relationship with a pupil even when the pupil is over the age of consent.

Any use of physical force or restraint against pupils will be carried out and documented in accordance with the relevant physical restraint policy. If it is necessary to use physical action to prevent a child from injury to themselves or others parents will be informed.

Children will not be punished by any form of hitting, slapping, shaking or other degrading treatment.

## **Allegations of abuse against a professional**

Children can be the victims of abuse by those who work with them in any setting. All allegations of abuse of children carried out by any staff member or volunteer should therefore be taken seriously.

If an allegation is received by the Headteacher or Chair of Governors the following should be considered

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children

Allegations of abuse made against staff, should follow the school and LA's agreed procedure.

This initial conversation will establish the validity of any allegation and if a referral is needed to First Response. If this is the case a strategy meeting will be called that the Head / Chair should attend.

The decision of the strategy meeting could be:

- investigation by children's social care
- police investigation if there is a criminal element to the allegation
- single agency investigation completed by the school

The fact that a member of staff offers to resign should not prevent the allegation procedure reaching a conclusion.

## **Recruitment, supervision and training for staff**

When recruiting new members of staff the school follows the guidance given in the Safeguarding Children: Safer Recruitment in Education, Sefton's guidelines and the schools own safer Recruitment procedures. The school ensures that CRB checks are undertaken in line with the Council CRB policy and guidelines and that references are taken up and obtained and that qualifications are verified.

Newly appointed staff will have initial training in Child Protection as part of their induction programme. They should be aware of the Sefton's Safeguarding Children Board procedures as part of that induction programme, and be given a copy of the schools Safeguarding Handbook and "*What to do if you are worried a child is being abused*".

All childcare staff should undertake Level 1 CP training. The initial Child Protection training given to each member of the service should be updated every three years and recorded.

Level Two courses are also available for the Designated and Deputy Designated Child Protection Teachers through the Sefton's Safeguarding Children Board Training Programme.

## **E-Safety**

The growth of different electronic media in everyday life and an ever developing variety of devices including PC's, laptops, mobile phones, webcams etc place an additional risk on our children.

Internet chat rooms, discussion forums or social networks can all be used as a means of contacting children and young people with a view to grooming them for inappropriate or abusive relationships. The anonymity of the internet allows adults, often pretending to be children, to have conversations with children and in some cases arrange to meet them.

Access to abusive images is not a 'victimless' act as it has already involved the abuse of children. The internet has become a significant tool in the distribution of indecent photographs of children and should be a concern to all those working with pupils at this school.

Pupils can engage in or be a target of bullying using a range of methods including text and instant messaging to reach their target. Mobile phones are also used to capture violent assaults of other children for circulation (happy slapping).

The best protection is to make pupils aware of the dangers through curriculum teaching particularly PSHE and sex education.

Protection is Prevention

- Software is in place to minimise access and to highlight any person accessing inappropriate sites or information.
- Pupils will be encouraged to discuss openly their use of technology and anything which makes them feel uncomfortable. (If this results in child protection concerns the schools designated child protection teacher should be informed immediately)
- Pupils should not give out their personal details, phone numbers, schools, home address, computer passwords etc
- Pupils should adhere to the school policy on internet safety.

The police will be involved if there is any criminal element to misuse of the internet, phones or any other form of electronic media.

## Links with other policies

1. This procedures document should also be considered within the context of other policies and documents relating to our work with children and young people. These might include, for example, documents concerning drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, neglect and families where there are mental health concerns.
2. Key documents are:
  - Sefton's Safeguarding Children Board procedures
  - Safeguarding Children: Safer Recruitment in Education: January 2007
  - Every Child Matters
  - Linaker's Personnel Handbook
  - School policies, including :
    1. Equal Opportunity
    2. Disability Non-discrimination
    3. Attendance
    4. Restraint
    5. Anti-bullying
    6. Child Protection
    7. Health & Safety (Including First Aid)
    8. Medical Records
    9. Behaviour
    10. E-safety
    11. Complaints
    12. Use of Images
  - Sefton's Whistle Blowing policy

## Resources

Safeguarding is important to all members of staff.

The governing body have to ensure that sufficient resources are made available to enable the necessary tasks to be carried out properly under Sefton's Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures including attending meetings, collating and writing assessment reports, and staff training. The Governing Body will also ensure that all Governors have an understanding of safeguarding issues and that policies and procedures are in place in school to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils in the school.

Safeguarding awareness will be addressed through the curriculum as appropriate to ensure all the pupils understand what is meant by safeguarding and how they can be safe.

***The Designated Child Protection Teacher in this school is :*** Mrs Sue Wilson (Asst Headteacher)

***The Designated Child Protection Officer in the centre is :*** Mrs Linda Caven (Centre Manager)

***The Deputy Designated Child Protection Teacher & Officer in this school is :*** Mrs Lisa Brown (Deputy Headteacher)

***The nominated Governor for Safeguarding is :*** Dr Martina Cornwell

***The Local Authority contacts are:***

EWO Service : 0151 934 3359 (Julie Palin / Tracy Keating)

LADO : 0151 934 3234

HR : 0151 934 3209 (Paul Cunningham)

ADOPTED BY GOVERNORS ON 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2010

Any of these people can be contacted if you have a safeguarding concern in the school :

Colin Coleman – Headteacher

Mrs Sue Wilson – Asst Headteacher

Mrs Lisa Brown – Deputy Headteacher

Mrs Linda Caven – Centre Manager

## **Level Descriptors – Children In Need (Reference for Threshold Referral)**

### **Level 1**

#### **Children with no additional needs**

Children and young people where there is no concern regarding their health and development

#### **Possible Indicators/Descriptors to Be Determined By Assessment:**

Children attending school regularly  
Children meeting developmental mile stones  
Children who appear happy psychologically and emotionally  
Children who have all their cultural, racial and religious needs met  
Children who have a stable home environment with good attachments  
Children who have good and effective support networks  
Children whose carers take advantage of universal services

### **Level 2**

#### **Children with additional needs**

Children whose health and development may be adversely affected

#### **Possible Indicators / Descriptors to Be Determined By Assessment:**

Children who have missed important health or education appointments  
Children who are isolated with unsupported carers  
Families with a high number of children or more than two under five  
Concerns re: possible parenting difficulties (unborn babies)  
Children or parents with mental or physical disability  
Young carers  
Children with additional needs  
Children who present management problems to their parents/carers  
Children in families where there is poor hygiene  
Children identified by schools as requiring additional educational support  
Children of parents where there are concerns regarding violence  
Children who have started involvement in criminal activities  
Children returning home after previously being looked after  
Children who are privately fostered  
Children involved in contact/residence disputes  
Children of parents involved in substance misuse  
Children who are starting to have absences from school  
Children significantly under achieving at school  
Children experimenting with alcohol/drugs and other substances  
Children who are unnecessarily accessing health services, e.g. walk in clinics, A&E and GP's  
Children who are subjected to Antisocial Behaviour Orders (ASBO's)  
Children who are subject to all forms of bullying  
Children whose parents are frequently imprisoned  
Young women under the age of 16 expecting a child where the sexual relationship may be consensual, may have support of her family and may be engaged with health staff to support her and her pregnancy  
Children with chronic ill health or terminal illness

### **Level 3**

#### **Children with complex needs**

Children whose health or development is being impaired or there is a high risk of impairment

#### **Possible Indicators/Descriptors to Be Determined By Assessment:**

Children with emotional/behavioural disorder/s  
Children regularly absent from school/outside school altogether  
Children beyond parental control  
Children on an Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBO's)  
Children with chronic ill health or terminal illness with additional needs  
Children whose parents life styles means that they are unable to meet their basic needs

Children previously on the Child Protection register or siblings of a child on the register  
Siblings of children or Looked after Children with mental health/wellbeing issues  
Parents who have a mental illness or personality disorder  
Children in families where there is a history of domestic violence/abuse increasing in severity  
Children in civil proceedings who are subject to multiple assessments  
Children who are engaging in criminal activities  
Children with severe/multiple disability  
Children in families where parents have substance/alcohol dependency  
Children/young people with substance/alcohol dependency  
Parents who pose a risk to professionals  
Children who have frequent minor injuries and there is a delay in presentation to medical staff  
Children returning home after previously being 'Looked After'  
Referral from a pre-birth assessment that indicates an unborn child's health/development may be impaired

#### **Level 4**

##### **Children in need of protection**

Children who are experiencing significant harm or where there's a likelihood of significant harm  
Children at risk of removal from home

##### **Possible Indicators/Descriptors to Be Determined By Assessment**

Children who have been physically, sexually, and /or emotionally abused  
Children who are subject to proceedings in the Family Court  
Children on the Child Protection Register  
Children from families experiencing a crisis likely to result in a breakdown of care arrangements  
Children whose parents are unable to provide care whether for physical, intellectual, emotional or social reasons  
Children whose behaviour is sufficiently extreme to place them at risk of removal from home  
(E.g. control issues, risk taking, dangerous behaviour, sexual exploitation)  
Children who disappear or are missing from home regularly, or for long periods  
Children in a household where parents/carers have all the following problems: mental health, substance/alcohol dependency and domestic violence  
Unaccompanied asylum seeking children  
Household members who have convictions for serious offences  
Household members subject to MAPPA or MARAC meetings  
Referral for a pre-birth assessment where a pre-birth assessment has identified that an unborn child is at risk from physical harm

***Taken From Sefton LA Safeguarding Guidance Jan 2010***

