



Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children

This policy aims to ensure that all children who attend West Herts Community Free School Trust (WHCFST) schools are safeguarded and protected from harm and should be read in conjunction with other policies relevant to safeguarding: child protection, looked after children, safer recruitment, community cohesion, health and safety, equality, prevention of bullying and teaching and learning.

All members of staff will be expected to act in accordance with the law and statutory guidance and schools and Trust will comply with 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (DfE March 2010) to fulfil its obligations in relation to safeguarding.

Principles

The principles that underpin this policy mean that WHCFST will:

- uphold the belief that the safety and welfare of the children is of paramount importance and where there is conflict between the interests of a child and an adult, the interests of the child will take precedence;
- uphold the right of all children be protected from abuse, regardless of race, culture, religion, gender, sexuality, or disability;
- promote a culture where children are listened to and encouraged to raise concerns with staff;
- work in close partnership with other agencies and organisations to safeguard children;
- have good information sharing protocols in place;
- ensure that every child has access to help and advice to support their learning and their personal, social, emotional, health needs.

All adults employed in the schools will be fully aware of their duty of care towards children's health and safety, including child protection. The child's class teacher will usually be the most important of these adults to the individual child.

The policy in action

The Trust is committed to safeguarding children from risk and harm and will realise this commitment through:

- selecting safe staff and volunteers and ensuring that CRB checks are carried out;
- ensuring that the work of staff and volunteers is regularly supervised, monitored and assessed;
- training staff in child protection procedures;
- ensuring that concerns are reported to the principals of the schools;
- identifying early children who may be vulnerable to abuse, exploitation or neglect;
- dealing quickly and effectively with suspicions, allegations or disclosures;
- clear and speedy procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made



against staff and volunteers.

The Trust will endeavour to prevent significant harm to children by protecting them through prompt notification of a concern to child protection agencies as set out in guidance from the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Board.

There will be a named person for safeguarding children (in the first instance the principals) in each school referred to as the child protection officer (CPO). The CPO will be responsible for linking with other agencies and for carrying out the procedures set out in the guidance.

The principals will be responsible for carrying out all child protection actions with regard to child abuse. In the case of an allegation being made against one of the principals as CPO this role will be passed to the chair of the governing body.

All staff immediately refer any concerns they have about children to the designated CPO.

Dealing effectively with allegations or disclosures of abuse or risk of abuse

WHCFST treats all suspicions, allegations and disclosures of abuse or risk of abuse, seriously and handles them in accordance with the requirements of:

- 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (DfE 2010);
- Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board procedures;
- WHCFST Child protection policy.

Dealing effectively with allegations of abuse made against staff and volunteers

WHCFST treats all allegations against its staff and volunteers seriously and will deal with them in accordance with the Hertfordshire Child Protection Procedures and the Trust policy for dealing with allegations against staff.

Induction and training

The policy and procedures for safeguarding children will be included in:

- staff induction;
- annual refresher training;

and in the event of a risk assessment signalling the need revisit the procedures.

Accountability



In each of the Trust schools:

- the principal and chair of governors have overall responsibility for safeguarding arrangements;
- there is a designated governor for safeguarding who will ensure that an annual report is presented to the governing body and will attend training on their behalf;
- the CPO and designated governor have responsibility for ensuring that the safeguarding policy is implemented;
- each member of staff and volunteer has responsibility for ensuring that children are safeguarded.

Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

WHCFST recognises that every person working with children and young people needs to be able to recognise a child's need for support. The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) aims to help identify the need for services beyond the school including health, social care, police, behaviour specialists and educational psychologists.

The schools will use the CAF to identify needs early and provide appropriate support for individual children. A CAF will be used when:

- there is a concern about a child's health, welfare or progress with learning;
- the child's needs are broader than those the school can address;
- it will help to access other services.

The CAF process may involve sharing information in the following areas:

- general health;
- physical development;
- speech, language and communication;
- emotional and social development;
- behaviour;
- self-esteem and self-image;
- family and social relationships;
- self-care and independence skills;
- learning, attainment, progress, access and participation;
- parental care and guidance;
- family history, stability and wellbeing;
- the extended family;
- housing and financial concerns;
- social and community factors.

Completing the CAF



It may be necessary to complete a common assessment on a child at any time. The decision should be taken jointly by the class teacher, a senior leader, the child (where possible) and parent/carers and the guidelines below followed:

- concerns should be discussed with the child, parents and any agencies already involved with the child;
- where a parent refuses to cooperate this should be recorded;
- in cases where there are very serious concerns a CAF may be completed without parental consent;
- where there are serious concerns about a child's welfare or safety immediate advice should be sought from the Child Protection Duty Officer, Intake and Assessment Team in social care;
- a senior leader should be involved in the completion the assessment with the class teacher, child and parents and actions can be agreed that can be undertaken by the teacher and the school;
- in discussion with other agencies involved in the assessment a lead professional will be appointed and this may be someone from the school;
- the lead professional will co-ordinate actions, act as the main point of contact for the family and to monitor the child's progress.

The assessment will result in one of the following:

- concerns are resolved with no further action needed;
- actions have been agreed and there are arrangements in place for monitoring progress;
- a number of agencies have identified actions that are needed and the lead professional takes responsibility for producing a co-ordinated plan and monitoring progress against it.

Procedure for the collection of children from school

In order to afford children full protection the Trust has a strict policy about the collection of children from school:

- any person who arrives to collect a child must already have their details entered into the central school database;
- the parent/carer is responsible for providing up-to-date information for the database;
- an exception can be made where a parent/carer has given prior written permission to the school for someone else to collect their child;
- passwords will be in place for the younger children to aid security;
- staff will challenge anyone who comes to collect a child who they do not know;
- children are expected to arrive at school and depart from school at the designated times;
- in the case of lateness or absence parents are asked to inform the school;
- staff will seek advice from a senior member of staff before releasing any child



they feel may be at risk.

Procedure for children not collected from school

The following protocols have been developed by Hertfordshire in partnership with headteachers, social care professionals, the police and the education welfare services:

- schools are responsible for maintaining up to date parent/carer information, which includes contact numbers and emergency contact numbers. This information should be held in a central location accessible to all staff;
- children who are not collected at the end of the day should be taken to the main office by a member of staff and signed in
- when an adult arrives to collect the child they will be asked to sign out the child and record the reason for their delay;
- a meeting will be held by a senior leader with any parent/carer who persistently collects their child late to discuss concerns and this may be followed up by the educational welfare service;
- if the school has not been contacted within a reasonable time (10/15 minutes after the end of the school day) a member of staff will try to contact the parent/carer and/or the emergency contact and record what they have done;
- if the school is unable to make contact, the child/children will be given a temporary place at an after school club;
- after an hour a referral will be made to children's services to alert them that a child may need to be accommodated;
- if the child/children is already known to social services the school should contact the allocated social worker;
- when the children's service professional arrives the school must have ready a notice to the parent/carer to affix on the main school gate and a letter to be delivered to the home address.

Agreed by Trust	
Agreed by Executive Principal	
Next update due	