

**CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

**DESIGNATED MEMBER OF STAFF:**

**MR MARK FOGARTY**

## **INTRODUCTION**

It is important that ALL people in contact with children be vigilant and observant in order to recognise early warning signs of possible child abuse.

“The protection of the child is the over-riding aim of any intervention. Children should be seen as individuals and their rights, needs and welfare must remain paramount. In any conflict of interest this principal must be upheld”

(Children Act 1989)

## **POSSIBLE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF CHILD ABUSE**

- Repeated minor physical injuries e.g. bruising, cuts etc.
- Children who are dirty, smelly, and poorly clothed or who appear underfed.
- Deterioration in schoolwork or significant changes in behaviour without explanation.
- Aggressive behaviour, severe tantrums.
- An air of ‘detachment’ or ‘don’t care’ attitude.
- Overly complaint behaviour, ‘watchful’ attitude.
- Sexually explicit behaviour e.g. playing games and showing awareness, which is inappropriate for the child’s age.
- Continual open masturbation, aggressive and inappropriate sex play.
- The child is reluctant to go home or is kept away from school by a parent for no apparent reason.
- Does not join in school social activities, has few school friends.
- Does not trust adults, particularly those who are close.
- ‘Tummy pains’ with no medical reason.
- Eating problems, including overeating, loss of appetite.
- Disturbed sleep, nightmares, bedwetting.
- Running away from home. Self-inflicted wounds.
- Reverting to younger behaviour, depression and withdrawal.
- Relationships between the child and adults, which are secretive and exclude others.

The signs and type of behaviour listed above are not in themselves evidence of abuse, but may suggest abuse, particularly if a child exhibits several of them, or if a pattern emerges of when or how a child exhibits such signs or behaviours.

The telephone numbers for Social Services are:

Solihull: 0121 704 6777

Out of hours: 0121 605 6060

SAY:

‘I wish to discuss a child who may be at risk’

This will ensure that staff who are familiar with child abuse deal with your call.

## **ACTION TO BE TAKEN**

If you have ANY concerns about a child the matter should be discussed with Mark Fogarty. If Mark Fogarty is not available the matter should be immediately referred to designated C.P.O. of venue or F.A./NSPCC Child Protection Helpline: 0808 800 5000

## **RESPONDING TO THE CHILD**

In the light of the recent Criminal Justice Act it has become important that when a child gives information which may lead to a child protection investigation, that the following principles are adhered to:

1. Do not promise confidentiality
2. Listen to the child rather than directly question him/her
3. Never stop a child who is freely recalling significant events
4. Do not ask a child to repeat a disclosure to another adult
5. Make a note of the discussion, taking care to record the timing, setting and personnel present as well as what was said
6. Complete Child Protection form with Mr Mark Fogarty

## **REFERRAL TO SOCIAL SERVICES**

The investigation of child abuse is the responsibility of the social services department and the police. It is their task to establish whether abuse has occurred.

Any person who has reason to suspect that a child may have been the subject of child abuse must inform the Social Services immediately in line with the Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) procedures and taking into account school policy.

If Mark Fogarty were not present the responsibility of contacting F.A./NSPCC Helpline would rest with the person to whom the child has spoken.