



# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

## Safeguarding And Child Protection Procedures

This policy is one of a series in the school's integrated safeguarding portfolio. Our core safeguarding principles are:

- It is the school's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- Children who are and feel safe make more successful learners.
- Representatives of the whole-school community of pupils, parents, staff and governors will be involved in policy development and review.
- Policies will be reviewed annually; unless an incident or new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an earlier date of review.

### 1. Policy statement

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.

The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff and governors and are consistent with those of United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)

### 2. Definitions of the four categories of child abuse

Child abuse can be categorised into four different types: emotional abuse, sexual abuse, physical abuse and neglect.

A child may be subjected to one or more forms of abuse at any given time. Definition of 'emotional abuse.'

Emotional abuse is normally to be found in the relationship between a parent carer and a child rather than in a specific event or pattern of events. It occurs when a child's developmental need for affection, approval, consistency and security are not met. Unless other forms of abuse are present, it is rarely manifested in terms of physical signs or symptoms. Emotional abuse can be manifested in terms of the child's behavioural, cognitive, affective or physical functioning.

Examples of these include insecure attachment, unhappiness, low self-esteem, educational and developmental underachievement, and oppositional behaviour. The threshold of significant harm is reached when abusive interactions dominate and become typical of the relationship between the child and the parent/carers.

#### Definition of 'sexual abuse'

Sexual abuse occurs when a child is used by another person for his or her gratification or sexual arousal, or for that of others. It should be noted that the definition of child sexual abuse



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presented in this section is not a legal definition and is not intended to be a description of the criminal offence of sexual assault.

## **Definition of 'physical abuse'**

Physical abuse of a child is that which results in actual or potential physical harm from an interaction, or lack of interaction, which is reasonably within the control of a parent or person in a position of responsibility, power or trust. There may be single or repeated incidents.

## **Fabricated/Induced Illness**

This is a form of physical abuse and occurs where parents fabricate stories of illness about their child or cause physical signs of illness, e.g. through secretly administering dangerous drugs or other substances to the child or by smothering.

The symptoms that alert to the possibility of fabricated/ induced illness include:

- symptoms that cannot be explained by any medical tests; symptoms never observed by anyone other than the parent/carer;
- symptoms reported to occur only at home or when a parent/carer visits a child in hospital; high level of demand for investigation of symptoms without any
- documented physical signs; unexplained problems with medical treatment, such as drips coming out or lines being interfered with: presence of un prescribed medication or poisons in the blood or urine.

## **Definition of 'neglect'**

Neglect can be defined in terms of an omission, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment to and affection from adults, and/or medical care. Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific point. For example, a child who suffers a series of minor injuries may not be having his or her needs met in terms of necessary supervision and safety. A child whose height or weight is significantly below average may be being deprived of adequate nutrition. A child who consistently misses school may be being deprived of intellectual stimulation.

## **3. Instances of neglect**

Instances of neglect can be measured under the following:

- **Mild neglect:** Usually does not warrant a report to the Child Protection Agency, but might necessitate a community-based intervention (e.g. a parent failing to put the child in a car safety seat).
- **Moderate neglect:** Occurs when less intrusive measures, such as community interventions, have failed or some moderate harm to the child has occurred (e.g. a child consistently is inappropriately dressed as per occasion demands). For moderate neglect,



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the Social Work Agency may be involved in working in partnership with community support.

- **Severe neglect:** Occurs when severe or long-term harm has been done to the child (e.g. a child with asthma who has not received appropriate medications over a long period of time and is frequently admitted to hospital. In these cases, the necessary agencies may be involved if the situation is seen as affecting or endangering the child's life who will undertake an investigation, which may involve legal proceedings.
- **Chronic neglect:** Can be defined as 'patterns of the same acts or omissions that extend over time or recur over time'. An example of chronic neglect would be parents with substance abuse problems who do not provide for the basic needs of their children on an ongoing basis. Because some behaviours are considered as neglect only if they occur on a frequent basis, it is important to look at the history of behaviour rather than focusing on one particular incident.

## Policy Statement

Cornelia International School is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for children in which to be cared and educated. We believe that it is always unacceptable for a child to experience abuse of any kind and we recognise our responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children, by a commitment to practice which protects them.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide protection for all the children who are in our care.
- provide all staff with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child may be experiencing, or be at risk of, harm - including how to make a referral.
- provide all staff with guidance on what will happen if an allegation is made against them. This policy applies to all staff including nursery, office, agency staff as well as pupils, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of the institution.

We recognise that:

- the welfare of the child is paramount.
  - all children regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, or identity have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse and have the right to freedom from abuse.
  - working in partnership with children, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.
  - all our staff need to be carefully selected and trained, and accept responsibility for safeguarding children in their care. We will endeavour to safeguard children by:
    - valuing them, listening to and respecting them. adopting child protection guidelines and statutory requirements through detailed procedures. adopting a code of conduct for staff, parents and



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visitors.

- responding quickly and appropriately to all suspicions or allegations of abuse or issues relating to child welfare.
- working in partnership with parents, carers, families and children and providing them with the opportunities to voice any concerns they may have.
- recruiting staff safely and ensuring all necessary checks are made.
- sharing information about child protection and good practice with parents and staff.
- sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.
- providing effective management for all staff through induction, supervision, support and appropriate safeguarding training.
- ensuring that confidential information is stored and managed in accordance with national guidance

We are also committed to ensuring that our Safeguarding Children policies and procedures are live documents that are continually reviewed and updated.

## Principles

- The school will ensure that the welfare of children is given paramount consideration when developing and delivering all school activity.
- All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion, have equal rights to protection.
- All staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm in accordance with this guidance.
- All pupils and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support from the senior management of the school who will follow this policy guidance in doing so.

## Aims

- To provide all staff with the necessary information to enable them to meet their statutory responsibilities to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of children.
- To ensure consistent good practice across the school.
- To demonstrate the school's commitment with regard to safeguarding children.

## If you suspect a child is at risk of harm

There will be occasions when you suspect that a child may be at serious risk, but you have no 'real' evidence. The child's behaviour may have changed; their artwork could be bizarre or you



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may have noticed other physical but inconclusive signs. In these circumstances, you should try to:

- **give the child the opportunity to talk.** The signs you have noticed may be due to a variety of factors and it is fine to ask the child if they are alright or if you can help in any way.
- **Use the welfare concern form (for staff) to record these early concerns.** If the child does begin to reveal that they are being harmed, you should follow the advice in the section 'If a child discloses to you' as found in the full policy.
- **If, following your conversation, you remain concerned;** you should discuss your concerns with the designated person.
- **If a child discloses information to you** It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose that they are being neglected and or abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual, their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell, they may have lost all trust in adults, or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault.
- **If a child talks to you about any risks to their safety or wellbeing** you will need to let them know that you must pass the information on - you are not allowed to keep secrets. The point at which you do this is a matter for professional judgement. If you jump in immediately the child may think that you do not want to listen, if you leave it till the very end of the conversation, the child may feel that you have misled them into revealing more than they would have otherwise.

During your conversation with the child:

- Allow them to speak freely.
- Remain calm and do not over react - the child may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting you.
- Give reassuring nods or words of comfort - 'I'm so sorry this has happened', 'I want to help', 'this isn't your fault', 'You are doing the right thing in talking to me'.
- Do not be afraid of silences - remember how hard this must be for the child.
- Under no circumstances ask investigative questions - such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings too, or what does the child's mother think about all this.
- At an appropriate time tell the child that in order to help them you must pass the information on.
- Do not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort. It may be anything but comforting to a child who has been abused.
- Avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing earlier. Saying 'I do wish you had told me about this when it started' or 'I can't believe what I'm hearing' may be



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your way of being supportive but the child may interpret it that they have done something wrong.

- Tell the child what will happen next. The child may agree to go with you to see the designated person. Otherwise let them know that someone will come to see them before the end of the day.
- Report verbally to the designated person.
- Write up your conversation as soon as possible on the record of concern form and hand it to the designated person.
- Seek support if you feel distressed.

## **Notifying parents**

The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a child with their parents. This must be handled sensitively and Management will make contact with the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure.

However, if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, and then advice will first be sought from children's social care/Welfare agencies.

## **Children with sexually harmful behaviour**

Children may be harmed by other children or young people. Staff will be aware of the harm caused by bullying and will use the school's anti-bullying procedures where necessary.

However, there will be occasions when a child's behaviour warrants a response under child protection rather than anti-bullying procedures.

In particular, research suggests that up to 30 per cent of child sexual abuse is committed by someone under the age of 18.

The management of children and young people with sexually harmful behaviour is complex and the school will work with other relevant agencies to maintain the safety of the whole school community. Young people who display such behaviour may be victims of abuse themselves and the child protection procedures will be followed for both victim and perpetrator.

## **Confidentiality and sharing information**

All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the child and staff involved but also to ensure that being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

Staff should only discuss concerns with the designated person, head teacher or chair of governors (depending on who is the subject of the concern). That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with the principles of the Child Protection policy.



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Information is:

- Processed for limited purposes
- Adequate, relevant and not excessive
- Accurate
- Kept no longer than necessary
- Processed in accordance with the data subject's rights.
- Secure.

Staff will follow the reporting procedures outlined in our Child Protection policy.

## 5. Good Practice Guidelines

- To meet and maintain our responsibilities towards children, the school community agrees to the following standards of good practice;
- Treating all children with respect
- Setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately.
- Involving children in decision-making which affects them.
- Encouraging positive and safe behaviour among children.
- Being a good listener
- Being alert to changes in child's behaviour
- Recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse.
- Reading and understanding all of the schools safeguarding and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues, for example bullying, physical contact, e-safety plans and information-sharing.

Asking the child's permission before doing anything for them which is of a physical nature, such as assisting with dressing, physical support during PE or administering first aid.

- Maintaining appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between children and avoiding the use of sexualised or derogatory language.
- Being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some children lead to an increased risk of neglect and or abuse.

## 6. Abuse of Trust

All school staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards children is unacceptable and that their conduct towards all children must be beyond reproach.

In addition, staff should understand that it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual. This means that any sexual activity between a member of the school staff and a child under 18 may be a criminal offence, even if that child is over the age of consent.



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## 7. Children who may be particularly vulnerable

Some children may be at increased risk of neglect and or abuse. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse happens, or who have a high level of tolerance in respect of neglect.

To ensure that all of our children receive equal protection, we will give special consideration and attention to children who are:

- Disabled or have special educational needs
- Living in a known domestic abuse situation
- Affected by known parental substance misuse
- Living away from home
- Vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying
- Living in temporary accommodation
- Living transient lifestyles
- Living in chaotic, neglectful and unsupportive home situations
- Vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, etc.
- Involved directly or indirectly in prostitution or child trafficking
- Do not have English as a first language.

## 8. Support for those involved in a child protection issue

Child neglect and abuse is devastating for the child and can also result in distress and anxiety for staff who become involved. We will support the children and their families and staff by:

- Taking all suspicions and disclosures seriously  
Nominating a link person who will keep all parties informed and be the central point of contact.
- Where a member of staff is the subject of an allegation made by a child, a separate link person will be nominated to avoid any conflict of interest Responding sympathetically to any request from a child or member of staff for time out to deal with distress or anxiety.
- Maintaining confidentiality and sharing information on a need-to-know basis only with relevant individuals and agencies.
- Storing records securely
- Offering details of help lines, counselling or other avenues of external support.
- Following the procedures laid down in our complaints and disciplinary procedures.
- Cooperating fully with relevant statutory agencies.



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## **9. Complaints procedure in respect of poor practice behaviour**

Our complaints procedure will be followed where a child or parent raises a concern about poor practice towards a child that initially does not reach the threshold for child protection action. Poor practice examples include unfairly singling out a child, using sarcasm or humiliation as a form of control, bullying or belittling a child or discriminating against them in some way. Complaints are managed by senior staff, and governors. Complaints from staff are dealt with under the schools complaints and disciplinary and grievance procedures.

## **10. Safer Recruitment**

Our school endeavours to ensure that we do our utmost to employ 'safe' staff by following the guidance in Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education together with the local authority and the school's individual procedures.

Safer recruitment means that all applicants will:

- Complete an application form
- Provide two referees, including at least one who can comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children
- Provide evidence of identity and qualifications
- Background checks will be thoroughly carried out, and in the event that any information of concern is brought in as a school, we shall do the needful and carry out an independent investigation on such a staff.
- Be interviewed.

All new members of staff will undergo an induction that includes familiarisation with the school's safeguarding and child protection policy and identification of their own safeguarding and child protection training needs. All staff sign to confirm they have received a copy of the child protection policy.

## **11. Extended school and off-site arrangements**

Where extended school activities are provided by and managed by the school, our own safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures apply. If other organisations provide services or activities on our site we will check that they have appropriate procedures in place, including safer recruitment procedures.

When our pupils attend off-site activities, we will check that effective child protection arrangements are in place.

## **12. Photography and Images**

The vast majority of people who take or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely innocent, understandable and acceptable reasons. Sadly, some people abuse children



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through taking or using images, so we must ensure that we have some safeguards in place. To protect children we will:

- Seek their consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications).
- Seek parental consent.
- Use only the child's first name (when necessary), with an image.
- Ensure that children are appropriately dressed
- Encourage children to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them.

## 13. E-Safety

Most of our children will use mobile phones and computers at some time. They are a source of fun, entertainment, communication and education. However, we know that some men, women and young people will use these technologies to harm children.

The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails, to enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, webcam photography or face-to-face meetings. The school's e-safety policy explains how we try to keep children safe in school. Cyber-bullying by children, via texts and emails, will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures.

Chat rooms and social networking sites are the more obvious sources of inappropriate and harmful behaviour and children are not allowed to access these sites whilst in school. Some children will undoubtedly be 'chatting' on mobiles or social networking sites at home and we request of parents to get involved in everything their child is about and know your child's friends and the family of these friends.

Also speak to your child and make them understand the possible risks of very careless behaviours.

## Appendix

### Code of Ethical Practice for School Staff

All school staff are valued members of the school community. Everyone is expected to set and maintain the highest standards for their own performance, to work as part of a team and to be an excellent role model for our children.

All school staff should:

- Place the safety and welfare of children above all other considerations.
- Treat all members of the school community, including children, parents, colleagues and governors with consideration and respect.
- Adhere to the principles and procedures contained in the policies in our safeguarding portfolio and in teaching and learning policies.



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- Treat each child as an individual and make adjustments to meet individual need.
- Demonstrate a clear understanding of and commitment to non-discriminatory practice.
- Recognise the power imbalances between children and staff, and different levels of seniority of staff and ensure that power and authority are never misused.
- Understand that school staff are in a position of trust and that sexual relationships with a child, even over the age of 18, may be an offence.
- Be alert to, and report appropriately, any behaviour that may indicate that a child is at risk of harm.
- Encourage all children to reach their full potential.
- Never condone inappropriate behaviour by children or staff.
- Take responsibility for their own continuing professional development.
- Refrain from any action that would bring the school into disrepute.
- Value them and seek appropriate support for any issue that may have an adverse effect on their professional practice.

This is only an extract from the complete policy document, though this gives our parents an over view of what Cornelia International School (CIS) has put in place to protect and safe guard our pupils. We believe that as partners, we shall work together to provide a safe haven where our pupils/children can flourish as they reach full potentials as young people.