

# Safeguarding children

Woodcroft School pupil policy 10.09.20

This policy has been developed with regard to the DfE statutory guidance. Woodcroft is located in Essex and the safeguarding children boards have been referred to in the development of this policy. The policy has been approved by the board of directors of Woodcroft School and is reviewed annually. The board of directors of Woodcroft School fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection and safeguarding children and recognises that the safety and welfare of children is paramount in all of the school's activities. The board also recognises that the policy and procedures apply to all children and young people regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or religion. The duties set out in this policy apply to all staff, directors, volunteers and contractors working for the school.

There are five main elements to the policy:

- Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children. See *Recruitment, selection and disclosure policy*.
- Raising awareness of safeguarding issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe. See *Appendix A*.
- Implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse. See *Appendix B*.
- Supporting pupils who have been abused.
- Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.

We recognise that because of the day to day contact with children, school staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. The school will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Include opportunities in the curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse, including Relationships, Health and Sex Education.

We will follow the procedures set out by the Essex Safeguarding Children Board and take account of guidance issued by the DfE to:

- Ensure we have a designated senior person for safeguarding children who has received appropriate training and support for this role.
- Ensure every member of staff (including temporary and supply staff and volunteers) and the board of directors knows the name of the designated senior person responsible for safeguarding children and their role.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated senior person responsible for safeguarding children. See *Appendices A, B, D, E*.
- Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and staff for safeguarding children. See *Parent handbook*.
- Notify social services if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a pupil who is on a child protection plan.
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding safeguarding matters, including attendance at case conferences.
- Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
- Ensure all records are kept securely, separate from the main pupil files, and in locked locations.
- Follow set procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer. See *Appendix C*.

- Ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed.
- Take seriously all concerns and allegations of abuse and respond appropriately, including making referrals to children's services or to the police in emergencies.

We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at school their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. The school will endeavour to support the pupil through:

- The content of the curriculum.
- The school ethos, which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued.
- The school behaviour policy, which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the school. The school will ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
- Liaison with other agencies that support the pupil, such as social services, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, education welfare service and educational psychology service.
- Ensuring that, where a pupil on a child protection plan leaves, their information is transferred to the new school immediately and that the child's social worker is informed.

## Designated senior person

The head teacher, Brian Sainsbury, is the person designated to be responsible for safeguarding children in the school. These responsibilities include: being the first point of contact for safeguarding concerns, allegations and other safeguarding issues; chairing the safeguarding panel; and ensuring the confidential storage of safeguarding children meeting minutes, records of concerns and other safeguarding documentation.

If the head teacher is off-site, then the head therapist, Genni Renehan, is the deputy designated senior person and the first point of contact for concerns, allegations or other safeguarding issues.

The managing director, Daniel Edwards, is nominated as the point of contact if there are safeguarding concerns that involve the designated senior person.

## Multi-disciplinary safeguarding team

Woodcroft multi-disciplinary safeguarding team meetings are attended by a core group consisting of the designated and deputy designated leads for safeguarding (the head teacher, head therapist and managing director) and, where required, additional professionals from Woodcroft and/or LAs. All are bound by a code of confidentiality.

The fundamental principle is to ensure a 'team around the child' approach to the work, emphasising collaborative working, consistent communication and the sharing of skills.

As part of this multi-disciplinary way of working all pupils are included in the confidential *Safeguarding meeting file* when starting at Woodcroft. New parents are informed of this and signed agreement is sought. Pupils who have left Woodcroft are retained on the file until the handover of safeguarding responsibilities has taken place, so that progress can be monitored and support provided to pupils' new schools.

Further meetings may occur as a result of these multi-disciplinary discussions. Should safeguarding issues arise from a safeguarding team meeting, the school's senior designated person will take them forward in line with the school's policy and procedures.

## Safeguarding children training

The designated senior person, deputy designated person, managing director and other members of the senior management team receive advanced level training every two years. There is yearly training for other staff and induction training for new staff and volunteers.

## Details of procedures and guidance

- DfE documents: *Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018; Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2020*
- Essex Safeguarding Children Board documents: *SET procedures*
- Woodcroft documents: *Single central record; Staff handbook; Staff induction pack*
- Woodcroft policies: *Anti-bullying, Recruitment, selection & disclosure; Behaviour management; Curriculum; Health and safety; Whistleblowing*

## Local and national priorities

### Child criminal exploitation

Criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity. This activity can include drug networks or gangs grooming and exploiting children and young people to carry drugs and money between rural, urban and suburban areas.

Staff must remain vigilant to the very real likelihood that children can be exploited by relatives, family friends or acquaintances to take part in criminal activities. This could include having in their possession such items as drugs, weapons, money or other valuables.

### Children Missing Education (CME)

Please see *Appendix F* below.

Where a pupil is absent and it has not been possible to communicate with parents to determine why, the school will contact the sending LA to make them aware.

When pupils leave, the office manager (and where appropriate, the head teacher) contact the new school to confirm enrolment and attendance, and to ensure transfer of any safeguarding information. Our multi-disciplinary safeguarding team tracks former pupils until a destination school has been confirmed. If a pupil leaves and no onward destination school is known, their details are reported to their LA.

### Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where children receive something (for example accommodation, drugs, alcohol, money or in some cases simply affection) as a result of engaging in sexual activities. Sexual exploitation can take many forms, ranging from the seemingly ‘consensual’ relationship, where sex is exchanged for affection or gifts, to serious organised crime by gangs and groups. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power in the relationship. The perpetrator always holds power over the victim, which increases as the exploitative relationship develops. Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying (including cyberbullying) and grooming. However, it is also important to recognise that some children who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse.

### Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.

Staff need to be aware of any comments or information that comes to light that suggests that a pupil is living in a home where domestic abuse is taking place. Even if the pupil is not the direct victim, the presence of such abuse within a household will have a detrimental impact on the welfare of all members of the family.

## **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and ‘honour based’ abuse (HBA)**

So-called ‘honour based’ abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the ‘honour’ of the family and/or the community, including FGM and forced marriage. Abuse committed in the context of preserving ‘honour’ often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such.

Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. There is a range of potential indicators that a child may be at risk of FGM, which individually may not indicate risk, but if there are two or more indicators present, this could signal a risk to the child. Victims of FGM are likely to come from a community that is known to practise FGM. Professionals should note that girls at risk of FGM may not yet be aware of it or that it may be conducted on them, so sensitivity should always be shown when approaching the subject. Warning signs that FGM may be about to take place, or may have taken place, can be found on pages 16 and 17 of the *Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines*. Staff should activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children’s social care. Any instances of FGM must be reported to the police. Teachers have a legal duty to personally report instances of FGM to the police.

## **Homelessness**

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child’s welfare. In the context of Woodcroft it is likely that families may be made homeless by being evicted from private rented accommodation. Subsequently, families may resort to staying as temporary residents in either other relatives or friends homes. The living conditions are likely to be crowded and stressful and may result in the family needing to abide by values different to those they usually live by.

## **Imprisoned, detained or extradited family members**

Children with family members in prison, detention or who have been extradited from the UK are at risk of poor outcomes, including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. The National Information Centre on Children of Offenders provides information designed to support professionals working with families in such circumstances, to help mitigate against negative consequences.

Because of the nature of the vulnerabilities of the children who attend Woodcroft, staff recognise the importance of maintaining a heightened level of vigilance towards pupils in these circumstances.

## **Looked after children (LAC)**

Looked after children (children who are in the care of the local authority) are at increased risk of abuse. This may be because the care givers may neglect to care appropriately for the child emotionally or materially. LAC are also likely to have experienced a level of developmental trauma and may have an emotional vulnerability. They may accept inappropriate interactions from others under the mistaken view that this is real affection or a price they are prepared to accept in order to secure such attention. Children who are LAC leavers (leaving the care of the local authority and moving back to live with their birth family or a relative) are also at a heightened level of risk of experiencing abuse.

The designated looked after children lead together with the designated safeguarding lead and colleagues need to maintain an appropriate level of vigilance and monitoring.

## Mental health and wellbeing

Schools have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils. Mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. The school's multi-disciplinary safeguarding team will work with classroom staff to identify possible mental health problems and where appropriate escalate referrals to CAMHS and/or social services for wellbeing or safeguarding support.

Further guidance can be found in the DfE document *Mental health and behaviour in schools*.

## Online safety

The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues including: child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and sexual predation. Technology often provides the platform that facilitates harm.

Woodcroft uses an internet filtering service for in-school computers and devices.

The online safety coordinator attended the CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection) Ambassador course and is responsible for cascading the training to others, where appropriate. Teachers, STAs and therapists will complete the Thinkuknow online training course, which has been jointly developed by the NSPCC and CEOP. Online safety and mobile technology issues are periodically brought to the attention of parents through parent newsletters, and questionnaires are used to gather information on pupil and parent training needs. Also see the *Online safety (E-safety) policy*, which is available from the school office.

Special arrangements for online safeguarding have been introduced for use if large numbers of school staff and pupils are working remotely from home during a pandemic. These were used in spring and summer 2020, but at the time of writing (September 2020) have been superseded by the regular safeguarding policy arrangements. They are available for reintroduction in any future lockdown. The document is *COVID-19 school closures: arrangements for safeguarding and child protection*.

## Peer on peer abuse

Peer on Peer abuse is sexual violence and/or sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges.

Children with special educational needs, who are on the Autistic spectrum, or with other conditions originating out of attachment and/or social, emotional and mental health needs, are at risk of both becoming victims and perpetrators of child on child abuse. Their understanding of social norms, lack of behavioural filters and drive to achieve what they desire can result in children acting out towards other children or accepting behaviours from others that are abusive in nature. This abusive behaviour can take the form of physical, emotional, sexual or cyber (via mobiles – youth produced sexual imagery and sending of indecent images) abuse. It is more prevalent in mainstream settings from male to female, although other forms are also possible. For example, children within the same gender group may instigate abusive relationships towards others of the same gender.

Woodcroft school takes this risk very seriously and highlights the possibility and appropriate actions in initial staff safeguarding training and subsequent refreshers. The high staffing ratio and working practice that pupils should not be left together without adult supervision helps to minimise the chance of such happenings occurring within school.

## Preventing radicalisation

All schools are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of their functions, to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'. This is known as the Prevent Duty and Woodcroft School follows the Prevent Duty Guidance (April 2019).

## Upskirting

'Upskirting' is now categorised as a criminal offence. Typically it involves the taking of a picture under a person's clothing without their knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. Because of the Woodcroft' pupil mobile phone procedures, the chance of such occurrences happening are very small. However, in keeping with the best safeguarding practices we must always be aware that such things can happen and therefore we must deny opportunity and maintain appropriate levels of vigilance.

## Appendix A – recognising the signs of abuse

Teachers and other adults in school are well placed to observe any physical, emotional or behavioural signs which indicate that a child may be suffering significant harm. The relationships between staff, pupils, parents and the public which foster respect, confidence and trust can lead to disclosures of abuse, and/or school staff being alerted to concerns.

### Definitions

**Abuse** a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

**Child protection** part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

**Children** anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change his/her status or entitlements to services or protection.

**Emotional abuse** 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 a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber 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** 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); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

**Physical abuse** a form of abuse which 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.

### **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children**

Defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances.

**Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Young carers** are children and young persons under 18 who provide or intend to provide care assistance or support to another family member. They carry out on a regular basis, significant or substantial caring tasks and assume a level of responsibility, which would usually be associated with an adult. The person receiving care is often a parent but can be a sibling, grandparent or other relative who is disabled, has some chronic illness, mental health problem or other condition connected with a need for care support or supervision.

## **Appendix B – what to do if you are concerned**

This guidance follows Southend Essex and Thurrock Child Protection Procedures which are consistent with the DfE documents *Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2019* and *Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2020*.

It is not the responsibility of the school staff to investigate welfare concerns or determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation. All staff, however, do have a duty to recognise concerns and maintain an open mind. Accordingly all concerns regarding the welfare of pupils will be recorded and discussed with the designated senior person with responsibility for child protection (or another senior member of staff in the absence of the designated person or their deputy) prior to any discussion with parents.

### **Staff must immediately report any:**

- suspicion that a child is injured, marked, or bruised in a way which is not readily attributable to the normal knocks or scrapes received in play;
- explanation given which appears inconsistent or suspicious;
- behaviours which give rise to suspicions that a child may have suffered harm (e.g. worrying drawings or play);

- concerns that a child may be suffering from inadequate care, ill treatment, or emotional maltreatment;
- concerns that a child is presenting signs or symptoms of abuse or neglect;
- significant changes in a child's presentation, including non-attendance;
- hint or disclosure of abuse from any person;
- concerns regarding person(s) who may pose a risk to children (e.g. living in a household with children present).

### **Duty to refer**

*Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2020* states that if there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child anyone can make a referral to social care. Whilst this remains the case, we believe that the best people to make referrals for our pupils are the senior designated person or their nominated deputy. Therefore, at Woodcroft during school hours, the procedures set out in this policy should be followed by staff, students, volunteers, visitors and any person on-site or involved in an off-site school activity with Woodcroft pupils. In exceptional circumstances (for example those involving the designated persons, or if there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child out of school hours) then direct referrals to social care may be appropriate.

## **1. Responding to disclosure**

Disclosures or information may be received from pupils, staff, parents or other members of the public. Woodcroft recognises that those who disclose such information may do so with difficulty, having chosen carefully to whom they will speak. Accordingly all staff will handle disclosures with sensitivity and communicate with pupils in a way suited to their level of communication need.

Such information cannot remain confidential and staff will immediately communicate what they have been told to the designated senior person and make a contemporaneous record.

## **2. Principles**

Staff will not investigate but will, wherever possible, elicit enough information to pass on to the designated person in order that s/he can make an informed decision of what to do next.

Staff will:

- listen to and take seriously any disclosure or information that a child may be at risk of harm;
- try to ensure that the person disclosing does not have to speak to another member of school staff;
- clarify the information;
- try to keep questions to a minimum and of an 'open' nature, e.g. 'Can you tell me what happened?' rather than 'Did x hit you?';
- try not to show signs of shock, horror or surprise;
- not express feelings or judgements about any person alleged to have harmed the child;
- explain sensitively to the person that they have a responsibility to refer the information to the senior designated person;
- reassure and support the person as far as possible;
- explain that only those who need to know will be told;
- explain what will happen next and that the person will be involved as appropriate;
- fill out a blue form from the school office (*Child protection record of concern*, see *Appendix E*) and hand it in person to the senior designated person.

### **3. Action by the designated senior person**

(or deputy designated senior person in their absence)

Following any information raising concern, the designated senior person will consider:

- any urgent medical needs of the child;
- consulting with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) (for Essex this means consulting the Essex Children and Families Hub – see *Appendix D*);
- making an enquiry to find out if the child is subject to a Child Protection Plan by ringing the relevant social care team in the child's sending authority;
- discussing the matter with other agencies involved with the family;
- consulting with appropriate persons, e.g. sending authority LSCB and/or social care;
- the child's wishes.

Then decide:

- wherever possible, to talk to parents, unless to do so may place a child at risk of significant harm, impede any police investigation and/or place the member of staff or others at risk;
- whether to make a child protection referral to social care because a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, and if this needs to be undertaken immediately;

OR

- not to make a referral at this stage;
- if further monitoring is necessary;
- if it would be appropriate to undertake the relevant local authority safeguarding assessment and/or make a referral for other services (for contacts see *Appendix D*).

All information and actions taken, including the reasons for any decisions made, will be fully documented. All referrals to social care will be followed up in writing within 24 hours using an inter-agency form.

The threshold for reporting concerns at Woodcroft is set very low, providing a contextual picture for information that does not in itself trigger a referral, but when viewed over time may present enough reason for the designated safeguarding lead to do so.

### **4. Action following a child protection referral**

The designated senior person or other appropriate member of staff will:

- make regular contact with the allocated social worker to stay informed;
- wherever possible, contribute to the Strategy Discussion;
- provide a report for, attend, and contribute to any subsequent Child Protection Conference;
- if the child or children are made the subject of a Child Protection Plan, contribute to the Child Protection Plan and attend Core Group Meetings and Review Conferences;
- where possible, share all reports with parents prior to meetings;
- where in disagreement with a decision made by social care, e.g. not to apply Child Protection Procedures or not to convene a Child Protection Conference, follow the guidance in the Southend Essex and Thurrock Child Protection Procedures for Resolving Professional Disagreements;
- where a child is on or is the subject of a child protection plan moves from the school or goes missing, immediately inform the allocated social worker.

### **5. Recording and monitoring**

Accurate records will be made as soon as practicable and will clearly distinguish between observation, fact, opinion and hypothesis. All records will be signed and dated, any information given will be recorded verbatim where possible, and a note made of the location and description of any injuries seen.

All child protection documents will be retained in a 'Child Protection' file, separate from the child's main file. This will be locked away and only accessible to the designated senior person. These records will be copied and transferred to any school or setting the child moves to, clearly marked 'Child Protection, Confidential, for attention of Designated Senior Person Safeguarding.' Original copies will be retained until the child's 25th birthday.

## **6. Supporting the child and partnership with parents**

- Woodcroft School recognises that the child's welfare is paramount, however good child protection practice and outcome relies on a positive, open and honest working partnership with parents.
- Whilst we may, on occasion, need to make referrals without consultation with parents, we will make every effort to maintain a positive working relationship with them whilst fulfilling our duties to protect any child.
- We will provide a secure, caring, supportive and protective relationship for the child.
- Children will be given a proper explanation (appropriate to age and understanding) of what action is being taken on their behalf and why.
- We will endeavour always to preserve the privacy, dignity and right to confidentiality of the child and parents. The designated senior person will determine which members of staff need to know personal information and what they need to know for the purpose of supporting and protecting the child.

## **Appendix c – allegations against staff or volunteers**

Where an allegation is made against any person working in or on behalf of the school that he or she has:

- 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;
- has behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with children; or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children;

we will apply the same principles as in the rest of this policy and we will always follow the Southend Essex and Thurrock Child Protection Procedures. Detailed records will be made to include decisions, actions taken, and reasons for these. All records will be retained securely by the senior designated person.

Whilst we acknowledge such allegations, (as all others), may be false, malicious or misplaced, we also acknowledge they may be founded. It is, therefore, essential that all allegations are investigated properly and in line with agreed procedures.

### **Initial action**

- The person who has received an allegation or witnessed an event will immediately inform the head teacher and make a record.
- In the event that an allegation is made against the head teacher the matter will be reported to the managing director who will proceed as described for the head teacher below.
- The head teacher will take steps, where necessary, to secure the immediate safety of children and any urgent medical needs.
- The member of staff will not be approached at this stage unless it is necessary to address the immediate safety of children.
- The head teacher may need to clarify any information regarding the allegation, however, no person will be interviewed at this stage.

- The head teacher will consult with the Essex Local Authority Designated Officer in order to determine if it is appropriate for the allegation to be dealt with by the school or if there needs to be a referral to social care and/or the police for investigation.
- Consideration will be given throughout to the support and information needs of pupils, parents and staff.
- The head teacher will inform and consult the managing director (or, if unavailable, the finance director) of any allegation.

### Further action

- Following the advice of the LSCB and the school's legal advisers, the matter will be dealt with according to the relevant procedures set out in the document *Southend, Essex and Thurrock Safeguarding and child protection procedures* and where relevant Woodcroft School's *Disciplinary policy*, both of which are available on request from the head teacher.

## Appendix D – local and national safeguarding contacts

- 0345 603 7627 Essex Children and Families Hub  
*Members of the public should speak to a Family Adviser. Professionals should speak to the Consultation Line (for advice) or in an emergency ask for the Priority Line.*
- 0345 606 1212 Emergency Duty Team – out of office hours  
*(emergency.dutyteamoutofhours@essex.gov.uk)*
- 999 Police or ambulance emergency service
- 101 Police non-emergency line  
 (control room will direct you to the relevant child abuse office)
- Note:** *more details on when to contact the police can be found in the National Police Chiefs Council booklet When to Call the Police – guidance for schools and colleges.*
- 020 8539 5522 Whipps Cross Hospital
- 0808 800 5000 NSPCC: help for adults concerned about a child
- 0800 1111 Childline: help for children and young people
- Note:** *a list of the current social care contacts for each pupil's LA is kept in the school office.*

## Appendix E – child protection record of concern (blue form)

Blue forms are available from the school office. They must be put in an envelope with a blue sticker (also available from the office) and handed in person to the designated senior person, or in their absence the deputy designated senior person.

Example:

**Safeguarding record of concerns** Woodcroft School 01/20 Private and confidential

Pupil's name \_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_

Please record your concerns below, place in a sealed envelope marked 'Private and confidential' and hand in person to the head teacher or in their absence to the deputy safeguarding lead.  
Please include the following information regarding your concerns:

- The date, time and context
- The sequence of events
- Your actual concerns
- The pupil's actual words, if applicable

Staff member recording concerns \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Today's date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix F – Children Missing Education (CME)**

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. CME are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. The CME category also includes those children or young people who are on roll at a school but cease to attend and where contact cannot be made with the family or emergency contacts to establish the pupil's whereabouts or reasons for absence. CME are at significant risk of underachieving; being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation; and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

Effective information sharing between parents, schools and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education.

Local authorities have a duty under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to make arrangements to establish the identities of children in their area who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise. This duty only relates to children of compulsory school age. Woodcroft will work with the relevant education compliance team within each sending authority to establish whether a child for whom we have concerns should be subject of a referral.

### **Parental duty under section 7 Education Act 1996**

Parents have a duty, under this Act, to ensure that their children of compulsory school age are receiving suitable full-time education. Some parents may elect to educate their children at home and may withdraw them from school at any time to do so, unless they are subject to a School Attendance Order.

Local authority education compliance officers will seek to consult the parents/carers of a child when establishing whether the child is receiving suitable education. Where children are identified as not receiving suitable education, the team will take action to return these children to full time education, either at a school or in alternative provision. Prompt action and early intervention are crucial to discharging this duty effectively and in ensuring that children are safe and receiving suitable education. Woodcroft is committed to intervening early in the lives of vulnerable children to help prevent poor outcomes.

### **When will Woodcroft make a referral to the local authority?**

Schools are required to inform the local authority – as stated within The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations, 2006 – of the details of pupils who have been absent from school for ten continuous school days and where contact cannot be made with the parent/carer to establish the reason for the absence and the absence has not been reported. In Essex, schools are required to notify the local authority of any child falling into one of the following categories:

- A pupil has gone missing and no contact can be made with their parent/carer to establish the reason for absence;
- A pupil has ceased to attend Woodcroft and the families forwarding address is unknown;
- A pupil has not returned from holiday within ten school days of their expected return;
- A pupil fails to take up their place at the start of the academic year and the whereabouts of the child is unknown.

## **Pupils deemed at high risk**

If a pupil is missing from school and the child is subject to a child protection plan and/or is a looked after child, the school must notify the key worker within the first 24 hours of the unauthorised absence, if contact cannot be made with the family home.

Where it is suspected or known that a pupil is at potential risk of harm, or where the school has information or reason to suspect that the pupil has been the victim of criminal activity or is at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation, the school should notify the relevant local authority Children and Families Hub (or equivalent) and/or police without delay and then make a referral to the education compliance team as soon as possible afterwards.

## **Adding or deleting a pupil from the school admissions register**

All schools (including academies and independent schools) must notify their local authority when they are about to remove a pupil's name from the school admission register under any of the grounds listed in the regulations. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at a standard transition point – when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school.

All schools must also notify the local authority within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register at a non-standard transition point. The notification must include all the details contained in the admission register for the new pupil. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is entered in the admission register at a standard transition point – at the start of the first year of education normally provided by that school.

These duties are outlined within the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016, which came into force as from 1 September 2016.

Regulation 5 within the 2016 amendment specifically places additional responsibilities on all schools in relation to Regulation 12 Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, requiring them to make returns to the local authority each time a pupil is added to the school admissions register or deleted from the school's register.

## **Further guidance**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following DfE guidance documents:

- *Children Missing Education – statutory guidance for local authorities*
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children*