



Thomas's
LONDON DAY SCHOOLS

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Thomas's London Day Schools fully recognise their responsibilities for child protection. This policy complies with DCSF Guidance 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (DCSF 2007)'.

Thomas's Battersea

Child Protection Officer: Nicola Diggle
Deputy Child Protection Officer: Clare Oswald

Thomas's Clapham

Child Protection Officer: Jonathan Chesworth
Deputy Child Protection Officer: Shazia Chand

Thomas's Fulham

Child Protection Officer: Annette Dobson
Deputy Child Protection Officer: Paul Wild

Thomas's Kensington

Child Protection Officer: Diana Maine
Deputy Child Protection Officer: Richard LeBoutillier

Thomas's Kindergarten, Battersea

Child Protection Officer: Sophie Bignold

Thomas's Kindergarten, Pimlico

Child Protection Officer: Tamara Spierenburg

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers working in the school.

Aims:

- To practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children

- To raise awareness of child protection issues and equip children with the skills needed to keep them safe
- To establish a safe environment in which children can learn and develop
- To develop and implement procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse
- To support children who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan

We recognise that teachers are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. The school will create a positive ethos amongst the staff so that we can:

- 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 PSHE curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

We will follow the procedures set out by the LSCB and take into account the guidance Safeguarding Children in Education from the DCSF (2007) in order to:

- Ensure that we have in each of our settings a designated teacher for child protection who has received appropriate training and support for the role
- Ensure that every member of staff and volunteer knows the name of the designated teacher and their role
- Ensure that every member of staff and volunteer understand their responsibilities in being alert to signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated teacher
- Develop links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection 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 written records are kept securely, separate from the main pupil file, and in a locked location
- Develop and follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer
- Ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed
- Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection
- Ensure that pupils who have been abused are supported in line with the child protection plan
- Ensure that the child welfare office of Wandsworth LA is informed of any unexplained absence of two days for pupils on the CP register and ten consecutive days for others
- Ensure that information is passed to relevant bodies, especially when a pupil moves school.

PROCEDURES

The role of the Principals

- To ensure that safe recruitment procedures are followed and that all appropriate checks are carried out on all staff
- To provide sufficient resources to enable appropriate training to be given to the Head, the designated teacher and other staff
- To ensure that the school has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff that comply with the London Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)
- To ensure that the policy and procedures are reviewed annually

The role of the Head

- Understand procedures set out by the London Safeguarding Children Board and the role of the designated teacher
- Monitor the effectiveness of the policy and these procedures and liaise with the Vice Principal over amendments
- Ensure that the designated teacher receives sufficient support and training
- Ensure that all staff know and are alert to possible signs of abuse and know what to do if they have any concerns or suspicions
- Create a safe environment and a caring ethos within the school
- Make parents aware of the school's Child Protection Policy
- Support pupils through related policies (anti-bullying, behaviour, equal opportunities, anti-racism)

The role of the designated teacher

- Be familiar with and understand the DCSF guidance "Safeguarding Children in Education", LSCB procedures and the Department of Health guidance "What to do if you're worried a child is being abused".
- Be responsible for referring cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the relevant agencies according to the LSCB. This includes dealing with allegations against members of staff
- Ensure each staff member is aware of and has access to the school's Child Protection policy and has received appropriate training to be refreshed every three years
- Act as a source of advice and co-ordinate action in school over any case of abuse
- Keep written records that are detailed, accurate and kept secure
- Liaise with the Head over any issues
- Monitor the effectiveness of the policy and procedures and report, at least annually, any need for amendment to the Head
- Keep up to date with training in identifying and referring suspected cases of abuse and pass new information to staff, Head and Vice-Principal – refresh training every two years

The role of the teacher

- Be aware of the contents of the Child Protection policy and procedures and the identity of the designated teacher
- Undertake training to identify possible causes of abuse
- Be open, accepting and ready to listen to a child. Take the child's worries seriously. Do not interrupt if he or she is recalling a significant event; the first account is usually the most accurate.
- Do not guarantee confidentiality; referrals may have to be made in order to safeguard the child
- If you need to ask questions to clarify understanding, do not lead the child, but make the questions as open as possible
- Report orally to the designated teacher as soon as possible
- Make a written note of the discussion within twenty-four hours to give to the designated teacher. Note time, date, place, people present and what was said. Try to make the record verbatim; your notes may be needed in subsequent court proceedings
- You are not required to investigate further, but you may be required to support or monitor the child in the future.

Dealing with allegations of abuse against staff

Allegations that might indicate that a person is unsuitable to continue to work with children are where a person has

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may harm a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against a child
- Behaved towards a child that indicates that he/she is unsuitable to work with children

If any allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff, the LSCB procedures will be followed and we shall have regard to the guidelines on practice and procedure given in Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (2007).

1. A member of staff receiving an allegation of abuse against another member of staff should report this immediately to the Head, unless the Head is the one against whom the allegation is made. An allegation against the Head should be reported to a Principal. If the Head is absent, the report should be made to a Principal.
2. The Head (or Principal) should consult the local authority Child Protection Referral & Assessment Team and obtain written details of the allegation, signed and dated, from the person who received the allegation (not the child).
3. The Head (or Principal) should record any information about dates, times, locations and names of potential witnesses.

4. An initial assessment of an allegation should be made by the duty officer and the Head (or Principal) to judge whether there is need for immediate action to protect the child, the allegation is demonstrably false, there has been inappropriate behaviour or poor practice that can be dealt with through the school's disciplinary procedures.
5. Where a referral is made because the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm, or the alleged abuse is a criminal offence, the LSCB procedures will be followed.
6. The local authority (Wandsworth: Joan Edwards/Paul Secker – tel 020 8871 6321) will be informed of all allegations and be invited to discuss the allegation with the Head to confirm details and the best way of informing parents (if they are not already aware).
7. The Head will inform the accused person about the allegation after consulting the LA officer
8. If the allegation is not false or unfounded and there is cause to suspect a child is suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm, a strategy meeting will be convened
9. The LA officer may hold meetings with other agencies e.g. the police, if it is judged that the threshold of significant harm has not been reached.
10. Teachers are permitted to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils in certain circumstances, including dealing with disruptive behaviour. This should be taken into account if the allegation is about physical contact.
11. In cases where other interagency involvement is not required, the LA officer will discuss with the Head what steps to take. The Head may decide to take no further action, to dismiss the person or not to use that person's services in the future.
12. Where further investigations are required before deciding how to proceed, the Head will decide, with the LA officer, who will investigate; this may be an independent investigator provided provided by the LA.
13. The Head will make the decision whether or not to suspend, given the risk to the child and where the allegations warrant investigation by police.
14. If the allegation is substantiated, the person is dismissed or the school no longer uses his/her services, then the LA officer will discuss with the school whether a referral should be made to DCSF re L99 action or to the GTC
15. If an allegation is not substantiated and the person returns to work, the school will support that person through offering for example, a phased return or a mentor.

STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING CHILD PROTECTION

Recognising indicators of abuse

Staff in schools are uniquely placed to observe outward signs of abuse, unexplained changes in behaviour or failure to develop. Children who are victims of abuse often display emotional and behavioural difficulties. Staff should also be aware that children with special educational needs may be especially vulnerable to abuse and, therefore, extra care should be taken to correctly interpret apparent signs of abuse or neglect.

The following signs may not be proof that abuse has occurred but they should give rise to suspicion:

Physical abuse

- Bruises particularly on parts of the body where they are not normally seen after simply falling over or bumping into things
- Lacerations or burns
- Other unusual marks or injuries

Neglect

- Inadequate clothing
- Poor growth
- Hunger or apparent deficient nutrition

Emotional abuse and sexual abuse

- Excessive dependence
- Attention-seeking and/or strong need for affection
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour

If there is a belief that a child may be suffering, or may be at risk of suffering significant harm, then the concerns should always be referred to the local authority social services department.

1. Telephone the duty social worker
2. Follow up with a written referral

In general, if there are concerns about a child's welfare:

1. Always record concerns in writing whether or not action is taken
2. Always record any discussions about the welfare of the child
3. at the close of any discussions always reach a decision: either what action will be taken and by whom or that no action will follow

If a child tells a teacher that they have been abused in some way

1. Carefully record what they say at the time, or as soon as possible afterwards, using the words used by the child

2. Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you
3. Never promise absolute confidentiality. The degree of confidentiality must be governed by the need to protect the child. Explain to the child that you may have to tell others in order to make sure they are safe.
4. Listen to the child. Do not ask leading questions.
5. Report to and give written notes to the designated teacher as soon as possible.

This policy will be reviewed annually.			
Reviewed:	January 2008	By:	NTL Thomas and BVR Thomas, Principals and Jill Kelham Vice Principal
Reviewed:	December 2008	By:	NTL Thomas and BVR Thomas, Principals and Jill Kelham Vice Principal
Next Review:	December 2009	By:	NTL Thomas and BVR Thomas, Principals and Jill Kelham, Vice Principal