



## Policy and Procedures on Child Protection (June 2021)

### Article 19

Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for, and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents, or anyone else who looks after them.'

Rathmore Primary School has a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of our pupils. We will carry out this duty through our pastoral care policy, which aims to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment, valuing individuals for their unique talents and abilities, in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential.

This policy is also based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child with particular reference to Article 19 which states that children should be safe from harm.

One way in which we seek to protect our pupils is by helping them learn about the risks of possible abuse, helping them to recognise unwelcome behaviour in others and acquire the confidence and skills they need to keep themselves safe.

All our staff and volunteers have been subject to appropriate background checks. The staff of our school have also adopted a Code of Practice for our behaviour towards pupils. All staff are trained every two years in child protection procedures, as are new staff as they arrive.

The purpose of the following procedures on Child Protection is to protect our pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in our school- teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers- has clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The overriding concern of all caring adults must be the care, welfare and safety of the child, and the welfare of each child is our paramount consideration. The problem of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school. We know that some forms of child abuse are also a criminal offence.

### What is child abuse?

We use the following definition:

*Neglect* - the persistent or significant neglect of a child, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation, or persistent failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development.

*Physical* - physical injury to a child, whether deliberately inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

*Sexual* - the sexual exploitation of a child or young person for an adult's or another young person's own sexual gratification: the involvement of children or young people in sexual activities of any kind which they do not understand, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate normal family roles.

*Emotional* - persistent or significant emotional ill-treatment or rejection, resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/ or behavioural development of a child.

*Exploitation* is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain.

### Bullying

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in our school. All the staff are vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring, and will take immediate steps to stop it happening, to protect and reassure the victim and to discipline the bully. Parents of those children involved will be contacted.

A complaint by a parent that their child is, or may be, being bullied will be fully investigated first by the class teacher and then if required, by the designated teacher for child protection, and team action will be taken to protect the victim. A parent making a complaint about bullying will have a response within one week of making the complaint, indicating the investigation which has been carried out and the action being taken.

The sanctions taken against a pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case. His/ her behaviour will be carefully monitored until staff are satisfied that the problem has stopped.

*For further information refer to Anti-Bullying Policy*

## Procedures for Reporting Suspected (or Disclosed) Child Abuse

The designated teacher for child protection is Dr R Mitchell-Barrett. The deputy designated teacher is Mrs D Davies. The designated teacher for Rathmore Nursery is Ms Cranston.

If a child makes a disclosure to a teacher or other member of staff which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a child, the member of staff will act promptly.

She will not investigate- this is a matter for the Social Services- but will report these concerns immediately to the designated teacher, discuss the matter with her, and make full notes.

In the event of an allegation of child abuse, the member of staff will:

*Receive:*

Listen to the child and accept what is said and record statements.

*Reassure*

Reassure the child, without promising confidentiality.

*React:*

Explain that information must be passed on to the designated teacher.

*Record:*

Make notes as soon as possible.

The designated teacher will discuss the matter with the Principal as a matter of urgency to plan a course of action, and ensure that a written record is made.

The Principal, in consultation with the designated teacher, will decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to Social Services. If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral. Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed.

The Principal may seek clarification or advice and consult with the EA's Designated Officer or the Senior Social Worker before a referral is made. No decision to refer a case to Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice. The safety of the child is our first priority.

Where there are concerns about possible abuse, the Principal will inform:

- The Social Services
- The EA's Designated Officer for Child Protection

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal (or the designated teacher if she is not available) will be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about the designated teacher). Where the matter is referred to Social Services, the member of staff will be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils, and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by Social Services. The Chairman of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

If a complaint is made against the Principal, the designated teacher (or her deputy) must be informed immediately. She will inform the Chairman of the Board of Governors and together they will ensure that the necessary action is taken.

If any member of staff feels unsure about what to do if he/she has concerns about a child, or unsure about being able to recognise the signs or symptoms of possible abuse, he /she should speak to the designated teacher.

It should be noted that information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held 'in confidence'. In the interests of the child, staff may need to share this information with other professionals. However, only those who need to know will be told.

This policy is kept under review by the Board of Governors and should be read in conjunction with a range of other school policies including:

- Anti-bullying;
- Acceptable Use of the Internet;
- Images;
- Intimate Care; and
- Code of Conduct for Staff.