

Appendix 1

RECOGNITION OF SIGNS OF ABUSE

What To Watch For

Abuse typified as physical, sexual, emotional, neglect or bullying may cause any of the following:

Sexual abuse

Physical signs of abuse

- pain, itching, bruising or bleeding in the genital or anal areas
- genital discharge or urinary tract infections
- stomach pains or discomfort walking or sitting
- sexually transmitted infections.

Behavioural signs of abuse

These might include a marked change in the child's general behaviour. For example, they may become unusually quiet and withdrawn, or unusually aggressive. Or they may start suffering from what may seem to be physical ailments, but which can't be explained medically.

- The child may refuse to attend school or start to have difficulty concentrating so that their schoolwork is affected.
- They may show unexpected fear or distrust of a particular adult or refuse to continue with their usual social activities.
- They may start using sexually explicit behaviour or language, particularly if the behaviour or language is not appropriate for their age.
- The child may describe receiving special attention from a particular adult, or refer to a new, "secret" friendship with an adult or young person.

Physical abuse

Bruises, black eyes and broken bones are obvious signs of physical abuse. Other signs might include:

- Injuries that the child cannot explain or explains unconvincingly
- Untreated or inadequately treated injuries

- Injuries to parts of the body where accidents are unlikely, such as thighs, back, abdomen
- Bruising which looks like hand or finger marks
- Cigarette burns, human bites
- Scalds and burns.

Behavioural signs

If a child is being physically abused, their behaviour may change in one or more of the following ways. They may:

- become sad, withdrawn or depressed
- have trouble sleeping
- behave aggressively or be disruptive
- show fear of certain adults
- have a lack of confidence and low self-esteem
- use drugs or alcohol

Neglect

Signs of Neglect

- if the child seems underweight and is very small for their age
- if they are poorly clothed, with inadequate protection from the weather
- if they are often absent from school for no apparent reason
- if they are regularly left alone, or in charge of younger brothers or sisters.

Bullying

Signs of Bullying

Staff at Eastcourt keep an eye open for the following [from *The Staff Handbook* and PD08 *Bullying*]:

- children on the ground
- simulated combat, esp. kicking (“martial arts”)
- crowds or knots of children
- chanting or rhythmical shouting

as warning signs that all may not be well. They are also aware [from *Safe to Learn*] that “apparent fighting or bullying can simply be rough-and-tumble play or 'play-fighting', which some children enjoy.” They distinguish, on the one hand, between behaviour involving:

- smiling or laughing
- 'mock' blows or kicks which do not connect - or do so only softly

- taking turns at being on top - or chasing the other

which may require no more than careful surveillance, and on the other those children who may:

- frown or look unhappy or angry
- try to move away from the aggressor
- do not take turns, the aggressor remaining dominant throughout
- attract other pupils' attention

and thus be genuine actual or potential victims of bullying.

Emotional Abuse

Signs of emotional abuse

- Physical, mental and emotional development lags
- Sudden speech disorders
- Continual self-deprecation ('I'm stupid, ugly, worthless', *etc.*)
- Overreaction to mistakes
- Extreme fear of any new situation
- Inappropriate response to pain ('I deserve this')
- Neurotic behaviour (rocking, hair twisting, self-mutilation)
- Extremes of passivity or aggression

Be aware of any experience previous teachers of possible victims may have had

– *i.e.* **share your concern.**

Appendix 2

DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST STAFF (INCLUDING VOLUNTEERS)

Allegations that might indicate that a person is unsuitable to continue 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.

The procedures to be followed are:

- ❑ that all allegations are reported immediately to Mrs Redgrave
- ❑ in the absence of Mrs Redgrave, or where there are concerns about her, Mrs Forbes would be informed
- ❑ The local authority (LA) officer from the Redbridge Child Protection Assessment Team (0208 708 3885) is responsible for providing advice and monitoring cases.

Detail of procedures

- ❑ procedures must be applied with common sense and judgement - in rare cases the allegations will be so serious as to warrant police / social care investigation
- ❑ most will seem much less serious but they must be followed up and taken seriously
- ❑ the local authority (LA) officer should be informed of all allegations
- ❑ at this point, within 14 days Ofsted must also be informed
- ❑ the LA officer will discuss the allegation with Mrs Redgrave to confirm details
- ❑ the school will need to inform parents (if they are not already aware) but should discuss the best way of approaching this with the LA officer
- ❑ Mrs Redgrave should inform the accused person about the allegation after consulting the LA officer (if a strategy meeting is required then this is carried out afterwards)
- ❑ if the allegation is not false or unfounded and there is cause to suspect a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, a strategy meeting should be convened (which should include a representative from the school)

- if the threshold of significant harm is not reached the LA officer may hold meetings with other agencies, such as the police
- if the allegation is about physical contact, the initial evaluation with the police should take into account that staff are entitled to use reasonable force.
- if it is the case that other inter-agency involvement is not required the LA officer should discuss the next steps with Mrs Redgrave – action will include taking no further action to dismissal or a decision not to use that person’s services in the future
- schools can call upon the services of an independent investigator (which many LAs already provide)
- suspension should be considered (by Mrs Redgrave) in any case where there is cause to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm, the allegations warrants investigation by the police, or that there might be grounds for dismissal. However, a person must not be automatically suspended
- if the allegation is substantiated, the person is dismissed or the school no longer uses his/her services, then the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) must be told.
- if an allegation is not substantiated and the person returns to work, the school must decide how best to facilitate that.