

Answers for Parents

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01. Where is the school's child protection policy freely available for parents to read?

Expected response:

Every school is expected to have a child protection policy that is revised annually and is made available to all staff and volunteers and is freely available to parent on request. Some schools will put this policy on the school's website to ensure ease of access.

There can be no good reason as to why this policy is not readily available to parents; indeed guidance from the Department of Children Schools and Families (DCSF) requires schools to make it available.

02. Who are the child protection officers at the school, other than the Headteacher?

Expected Response:

A named, senior member of staff is expected to take on the role of designated child protection officer. Some larger schools will need more than one such designated officer; and there should always be an identified deputy for occasions when the named designated officer is not available.

To equip them for their role, the designated child protection officers ought to receive basic child protection training (to understand the different categories of child abuse and signs to look out for); as well as training in inter-agency working, so that they understand the roles of the key statutory agencies (local authority children's services, health, police etc) as well as mechanisms for making a referral. They should attend refresher training at least every two years.

03. What training do staff receive in child protection? What does this training cover and is it ongoing?

All staff who work with children in schools are expected to have received, during their induction

period, basic child protection training, which is updated every three years. As well as being made aware of the categories of abuse (physical, sexual, emotional and neglect) and the identity of the designated child protection officer and his/her deputy, they should also be given a copy of the school's child protection policy, which will include details of how and where to take forward a concern or to report an allegation. Whilst the normal route for concerns and allegations will be through the designated child protection officer, staff should also be informed about how to take forward concerns or report allegations directly to the Local Authority or Police.

It is important that even temporary staff and volunteers are made aware of the school's child protection policy and mechanism for reporting any concerns and allegations.

04. Is it the school's written policy to report child protection allegations to the Local Authority Designated Officer ("LADO") or the Police?

Expected Response:

Where an allegation is received by a school that a staff member or volunteer has behaved in a way that has harmed a child (physically, emotionally, sexually or through neglect); or has behaved in a way that indicates that he or she is unsuitable to work with children, a referral should be made to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or to the police.

The LADO is readily available, including via telephone, to discuss and take referrals about allegations or concerns that may not, on the face of it, appear particularly serious. It is really important that schools ensure that all allegations are examined objectively by the LADO, so that an independent, expert view is obtained.