

Barley Lane School

Hard work, humility, kindness

Child protection: child sexual exploitation 2018-19

Our children and young people are often vulnerable sometimes risky and whilst they may present as streetwise they are children and need our vigilance and support and guidance to be and stay safe. We have a range of guidance and ways of working focussed on keeping them safe for example if they climbed on a roof or brought something to school they shouldn't; what are we doing about CSE?

- Every member of staff is clear they have a responsibility for the wellbeing, happiness and health and safety of the children and young people and that child protection and safeguarding their highest priority; they know they must be alive to risks and do something about them.
- We are all equally clear that risks are real and that bad things do happen and we are vigilant about any sense of "it couldn't happen here"; quite the opposite we are all powerfully aware many of us from direct experience that bad things do happen and we are not sceptical about CSE or radicalisation (the same approach is applied) or indeed abuse of all kinds be it sexual, physical, emotional or neglect
- We are trained but equally powerful is the daily dialogue about child protection and we see this as analogous to or like learning to play a musical instrument if we don't go on to use and practice new skills and knowledge they will be lost.
- The agenda for every morning briefing is prescriptive and begins; *"Are there serious concerns about any child's safety? (insights and knowledge, gut feelings too about actual or potential and serious and likely urgent threats to a child's safety and welfare) abuse: physical, sexual (CSE), emotional, neglect, radicalisation?"*
- There are thrice weekly best-practice sessions many dedicated to safeguarding where staff can develop their insights and concerns and reflect on their practice in child protection.
- We risk assess specifically for CSE and radicalisation and daily sharing informs these assessments and they are revisited each half-term to look for patterns and trends meaning risks rise and fall and our vigilance and or interventions will reflect this as children are judged more or less at risk.
- Risk assessment identifies a range of risks for example, "pupil's boundaries unsafe with peers and or younger children and often vulnerable also around unknown adults" or "vulnerable to manipulation and control from malign others."
- We are aware of the risks children and young people can present to each other and in our setting those risks are greater and there is a whole school approach to risk management set out in appendix 1 below.

- We seek help from colleagues in social care and Early Help to support the children and their families and these are powerful “protective factors” things that lessen the risks.
- Every child is accounted for every day; every absence explained and persistent absence supported and challenged (patterns are reviewed weekly and every half-term) because an absent child could be at risk? Absconding is a related risk we are powerfully aware of and we have a prescribed and prompt and rigorous response to it.
- And in school above all other things we seek to build safe supportive and positive relationships with the children and young people so we hear and listen to them and they speak freely to us about their lives and we are well placed to see or hear or sense if something is wrong and there is powerful evidence of this including successful criminal prosecution of an abuser in the wider community.
- We supervise the children and young people with vigilance and we hope tact alert always to their behaviours and feelings across the day; we work hard to be alive to changes in their behaviour that could indicate something is wrong.
- In our daily interactions with them we strive to be “good parents and carers” and offer guidance and support alongside their formal lessons in PSHE and Science for example where sex and relationships are learned about.
- Across school life every day we seeking successes for them as people and learners that build their confidence and self-esteem and their understanding of the world so they can develop the self-worth and self-confidence to know what is safe and acceptable and what is unsafe and unacceptable because tragic events tell us it is “vulnerable” children who lack these qualities and who are not well supervised who are targeted.

Appendix a

Child protection: managing student risk in our setting* :the biggest risks to health and safety in our school are rooted in the complexity and challenge of the student body (peer on peer) and our own inevitable frailties as people and our most important and pressing health and safety work is done to keep them safe

*The complex and mercurial nature of our young people and the shifting chemistry of their relationships with each other and the sometime turbulence of their lives and the latent quality of unknown and emerging risks in their nature and in their lives make the notion of “dynamic risk assessment” critical to keeping everybody safe.

This is a practicable and reasonable response to the anticipation that risk will be an ever moving target and to have nearly seventy individualised risk assessments not only bureaucratic but unworkable as staff would be overloaded with information and unable to act safely and decisively.

Student Risk	Managing that risk safely
<p>The student body by its nature as “stated” SEMH contains and presents a whole range of known and unknown (latent risk) and also emerging and shifting risks because being multiply and diversely risky is a core and common feature of the children and young people in our care</p> <p>There is also a risky “chemistry” in their interactions and relationships centrally with each other and all those they encounter from teachers through visiting professionals to delivery drivers and the neighbours....</p> <p>These risks are dynamic they shift and slide, rise and fall constantly in all the children as so many factors home and school can and do impact upon them</p> <p>Such potential for risk and difficulty can seem overwhelming and unmanageable; how can we, how should we respond?</p>	<p>Culture and ethos: bringing the right values and attitudes to our work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and apply the notion of personal responsibility for maintaining one’s own and the health and safety of others. • Understand too that we can only do what is reasonable and practicable about things we can reasonably anticipate. • A culture of no blame and one also where risk and its management are spoken of freely and frequently is essential • The application of dynamic risk assessment is critical; we are ever alert to emerging risk and take reasonable steps to manage risks in that context of personal responsibility • Particular to our own school culture is the benchmarking against what we would want for our own children that is the highest levels of care and vigilance and protecting against becoming institutionalised and desensitized. • A robust and relentless culture of praise, affirmation, compassion and forgiveness that promotes good and therefore less risky behaviours in the children and young people. <p>Rhythm and routine: making sure the framework and prompts for sharing risk and reflecting and acting are in place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The daily accessing of the dedicated safeguarding email account as risks emerge and our responses set out... • The daily ritual of our morning briefing and afternoon debriefing sessions each morning Tue-Thu and Mondays and Fridays for our more developed operational reflection and planning and the sharing of best practice respectively... • ... where every day the set agenda triggers sharing and discussion and plans for the safety and wellbeing of the children and the immediate operational risks and challenges plus any emerging burning issues: what do we need to do reliably well, differently or better today? • Whilst logistically more awkward because of staff working patterns we can and do regroup at the end of the day to share, reflect and plan and will continue to do so. • We have all accessed e-mail, text and mobile messages to share also and the conventional boundaries of the working day should not restrict our sharing and in practice we all often share significant insights, anxieties or practical operational information after the school day and then coalesce them at the following morning’s briefing <p>A way of working: once the day begins the dynamic and shifting and surprising nature of our work needs perpetual thinking about and constant intelligent tweaking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once the working day begins we must be rigorous in our professional housekeeping and if the conventional work-place deals with emerging trip hazards then we must be alive to who steps off a taxi in a risky frame of mind intent on dispute or how events and consequent tensions and risks unfold as the day progresses and so our working day begins and continues as the children are the risk as is our capacity for frailty and poor judgment so we must be vigilant about both. • The “walkabout” system is critical with staff offering not just practical help but a reference point for sharing with the nominated in-charge a member of the SLT there specifically to provide the capacity to absorb, think about and act on emerging risk and difficulty from small operational tweaks to more significant interventions. • Related to this is the massive significance always of putting children and their supervision first, no trips to make tea no brief stop-overs at the staff room as it is exactly in these nooks and crannies of staff frailty and absence that the student can do most mischief and harm and is most at risk. • Being prompt, punctual and visible; where we should be, when we should be, all these are essential to safety in our setting as are simple practical things like having a charged walkie-talkie on the right frequency, a school mobile that is similarly charged and a brain switched to super vigilance mode that expresses and shares emerging risk freely • If the daily morning briefings with their set agenda and prompts for risk awareness and management provide structured talking and sharing and action then once the day starts our established, ongoing and multiple and diverse professional conversations are critical and it is in habitually, obsessively and in time instinctively sharing with each other every significant nuance of the children’s behaviours, state of mind and physical movements that we keep everybody safe.