

Austhorpe Primary School



SAFER WORKING PRACTICE POLICY

Academic Year 2023/2024

Austhorpe Primary School

Safer Working Practice Policy.

Contents

Section		Page
a	Definitions	3
b	Overview	3
c	General Professional Conduct	3
d	Underpinning Principles	4
1	Introduction	5
2	Status of Document	5
3	Duty of Care	5
4	Exercise of Professional Judgement	5
5	Power and Positions of Trust	6
6	Confidentiality	6
7	Propriety and Behaviour	7
8	Dress and Appearance	7
9	Gifts	7
10	Infatuations	8
11	Social Contact	8
12	Physical Contact	9
13	Physical Education and Other Activities that require Physical Contact	10
14	Showers and Changing	10
15	Pupils in Distress	10
16	Care, Control and Physical Intervention	11
17	Sexual Contact with Young People	11
18	One to One Situations	12
19	Overnight Supervision and Examinations	12
20	Transporting Children	13
21	Educational Visits and After School Clubs	14
22	First Aid	14
23	Administration of Medication	14
24	Intimate Care	15
25	25 Curriculum	15
26	Photography, Video and other Creative Arts	16
27	Internet Use	16
28	Whistleblowing	17
29	Sharing Concerns and Recording Incidents	17

a. Definitions

Throughout this guidance document references are made to "children", "young people" and "pupils". These terms are interchangeable. All refer to children under the age of 18 years and for vulnerable adults.

This guidance has been drawn up for all educational establishments. These include schools, specialist inclusive learning centres (SiLCS), Pupil Referral Units and any other educational establishment.

References to "staff" or "adults" include teachers, support and other staff, governors, and volunteers, working in or on behalf of a Local Authority, a school, a specialist inclusive learning centre or other education setting, in either a paid or unpaid capacity.

b. Overview

The Children Act 2004, through the Stay Safe outcome of the Every Child Matters Change for Children programme, places a duty on organisations and individuals to safeguard and promote the well-being of children. The vast majority of adults who work with children act professionally and aim to provide a safe and supportive environment, which secures the well-being and very best outcomes for children and young people in their care

c. General professional conduct whilst working in a school or visiting an educational setting

As an employee of a school or Leeds City Council there is an expectation that all staff exercise the greatest care in their relationship with all stakeholders. The school expects a high standard of integrity and conduct. It also expects that staff should avoid occasion for suspicion or the appearance of improper conduct.

All staff should seek to provide a safe and supportive environment, which secures the well-being and very best outcomes for children and young people in their care. It is recognised that achieving these aims is not always straightforward. Much relies on pupil and staff interactions where tensions and misunderstandings can occur. Allegations may be genuine, malicious or misplaced. They may arise from differing perceptions of the same event, but when they occur, they are inevitably distressing and difficult for all concerned. Schools and Leeds City Council will take steps to discourage malicious allegations and take appropriate action (See Section 8 of Personnel Handbook for School – Appendix A)

Employers have a duty to provide all staff with clear advice about what constitutes illegal behaviour and what might be considered as misconduct. This guidance for safe working practice (Code of Conduct relating to safe practice) provides practical advice to staff about which behaviours constitute safe practice and which behaviours should be avoided.

The document will seek to ensure that the duty of care towards pupils and staff is promoted by raising awareness of illegal, unsafe and unwise behaviour. It is hoped that it will also assist staff to monitor their own standards and practice.

The guidance will also support headteachers and senior school managers in giving a clear message that unlawful or unsafe behaviour will not be tolerated and that where appropriate, legal or disciplinary action is likely to follow.

This guidance document has been produced in response to these concerns. It seeks to ensure that the duty of care towards pupils and staff is promoted by raising awareness of illegal, unsafe and unwise behaviour. The guidance also outlines to staff professional behaviours that are expected during their day to day working lives.

Whilst every attempt has been made to cover a wide range of situations, it is recognised that any such guidance cannot cover all eventualities. There may be times when professional judgements are made in situations not covered by this document, or which directly contravene the guidance given by their employer. It is expected that in these circumstances staff will always advise their senior colleagues of any such action already taken or proposed.

This document should be read in conjunction with the associated Guidance documents (see appendix A)

d. Underpinning Principles

The welfare of the child is paramount (Children Act 1989).

Staff are responsible for their own actions, attitudes and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.

Staff should work, and be seen to work in an open and transparent way.

Staff should discuss and/or take advice promptly from their line manager or another senior member of staff over any incident, which may give rise to concern. Records should be made of any incidents and of decisions made/further actions agreed, in accordance with school policy for keeping and maintaining records.

Staff should have regards for equal opportunities.

All staff should know the name of their designated person for child protection and be familiar with the child protection procedures.

Developing Safe Working Practices for the Protection of Children and Staff in Educational Establishments

1 Introduction

This guidance has been produced to help all staff/adults establish the safest possible learning and working environments. The aims are to safeguard young people and reduce the risk of staff being falsely accused of improper or unprofessional conduct.

2 Status of Document

This guidance document has been produced by The LCC HR Schools Team inline the Allegations Management Advisers Network established by the DCSF. It does not replace or take priority over other advice or codes of conduct produced by Leeds City Council, schools or other sources but is intended to inform and assist schools/establishments and individuals to develop and review their guidelines on safe working practices.

3 Duty of Care

All staff are accountable for the way in which they exercise authority; manage risk; use resources; and protect pupils from discrimination and avoidable harm.

All staff, whether paid or voluntary, have a duty to keep young people safe and to protect them from physical and emotional harm.

This means that adults should:

- understand the responsibilities, which are part of their employment or role, and be aware that sanctions will be applied if these provisions are breached
- always act, and be seen to act, in the child's best interests
- avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions
- take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour

Leeds City Council, schools and parents have legitimate expectations about the nature of professional involvement in the lives of pupils. When individuals accept a role that involves working with children and young people, they need to understand and acknowledge the responsibilities and trust inherent in that role.

Employers have a duty of care towards their employees under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 which requires them to provide a safe working environment for staff and guidance about safe working practices. The Act also imposes a duty on employees to take care of themselves and anyone else who may be affected by their actions or failings.

4 Exercise of Professional Judgement

This guidance cannot provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour for staff. It does highlight however, behaviour that is illegal, inappropriate or inadvisable. There will be occasions and circumstances in which staff have to make decisions or take action in the best interests of the child or young person which could contravene this guidance or where no guidance exists. Individuals are expected to make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the children in their charge and in so doing, will be seen to be acting reasonably.

This means that where no specific guidance exists staff should:

- discuss the circumstances that informed their action, or their proposed action, with a senior manager. This will help to ensure that the safest practices are employed and reduce the risk of actions being misinterpreted
- always discuss any misunderstanding, accidents or threats with a senior manager
- always record discussions and actions taken with their justifications
- always alert the senior manager where pupils have tried to engage them in discussions of an inappropriate nature

5 Power and Positions of Trust

As a result of their knowledge, position and/or the authority invested in their role, all adults working with children and young people in educational establishments are in positions of trust in relation to the young people in their care. A relationship between a member of staff and a pupil/young person cannot be a relationship between equals. There is potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable young people and staff have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification.

Where a person aged 18 or over is in a position of trust with a child under 18, it is illegal for that person to engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of that child, or to cause or incite that child to engage in or watch sexual activity

This means that adults should not:

- use their position to gain access to information for their own advantage and/or a child's or family's detriment
- use their power to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine pupils
- use their status and standing to form or promote relationships with children, which are of a sexual nature or may become so

6 Confidentiality

Members of staff may have access to confidential information about pupils in order to undertake their every day responsibilities. In some circumstances staff may be given additional highly sensitive or private information. They should never use confidential or personal information about a pupil or her/his family for their own, or others' advantage (including that of partners, friends, relatives or other organisations). Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the pupil or young person.

Confidential information about a child or young person should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need to know basis. In circumstances where the child's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously.

There are some circumstances in which a member of staff may be expected to share information about a child, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a duty to pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated child protection responsibilities or a senior member of staff.

Members of staff must not promise confidentiality to pupils who make allegations. However, a member of staff presented with an allegation against another member of staff should aim to involve the child in any decision to take the allegation further, which could result in following formal procedures. Where a child says he or she does not wish to take the matter further, consideration should be given to the age and understanding of the child and whether the child or others may be at risk of significant harm. If a member of staff is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential he or she should seek guidance from a senior member of staff. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to senior management.

The storing and processing of personal information about pupils is governed by the Data Protection Act 1998. Employers should provide clear advice to staff about their responsibilities under this legislation.

7 Propriety and Behaviour

All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children and young people. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their peers, pupils and the public in general.

This means that adults should not:

- behave in a manner, which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children or act as a role model
- make (or encourage others to make) unprofessional personal comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate, or might be interpreted as such

An individual's behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, should not compromise her/his position within the work setting.

This means that adults should not:

- make sexual remarks to a pupil (inc email, text messages, phone or letter) discuss their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of, pupils
- discuss a pupil's sexual relationships in inappropriate settings or contexts

8 Dress and Appearance

A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However staff should consider the manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role, which may be, different to that adopted in their personal life. Those staff who dress or appear in a manner which could be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegation.

This means that adults should wear clothing which:

- promotes a positive and professional image
- is appropriate to their role
- is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative
- does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding
- is absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans

9 Gifts

It is against the law for public servants to take bribes. Staff need to take care that they do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment.

This means that adults should:

- ensure that gifts received or given in situations which may be misconstrued are declared
- generally, only give gifts to an individual young person as part of an agreed reward system
- where giving gifts other than as above, ensure that these are of insignificant value and given to all children equally

There are occasions when children or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff e.g. at Christmas or as a thank-you and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.

Similarly, it is inadvisable for staff to give such personal gifts to pupils. This could be misinterpreted as a gesture either to bribe, or single out the young person. It might be perceived that a 'favour' of some kind is expected in return.

10 Infatuations

Staff need to be aware that it is not uncommon for pupils to be strongly attracted to a member of staff and/or develop a heterosexual or homosexual infatuation. All situations should be responded to sensitively to maintain the dignity of all concerned. Staff should also be aware that such circumstances always carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and for allegations to be made against staff.

This means that adults should:

- report any indications (verbal, written or physical) that suggest a pupil may be infatuated with a member of staff

A member of staff, who becomes aware that a pupil may be infatuated with themselves or a colleague, should discuss this at the earliest opportunity with the headteacher or a senior manager so that appropriate action can be taken. In this way, steps can be taken to avoid hurt and distress for all concerned.

11 Social Contact

Staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. Even if a young person seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the member of staff should exercise her/his professional judgement in making a response and be aware that such social contact could be misconstrued as grooming.

Staff should not give, nor be required to give their personal details such as home/mobile phone number; home or e-mail address to pupils.

Internal e-mail systems should only be used in accordance with school policy.

This means that adults should:

- always seek approval from senior management for any planned social contact with pupils for example when it is part of a reward scheme or pastoral care programme
- advise senior management of any regular social contact they have with a pupil which may give rise to concern
- report and record any situation, which they feel, might compromise the school or their own professional standing

12 Physical Contact

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role.

A 'no touch' approach is impractical for most staff and may in some circumstances be inappropriate. When physical contact is made with pupils this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate given their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. Appropriate physical contact in schools may occur most often with younger pupils. Staff should use their professional judgment at all times.

If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be recorded as soon as possible in the school's incident book and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the child's file.

Physical contact, which occurs regularly with an individual child or young person, is likely to raise questions unless the justification for this is part of a formally agreed plan (for example in P.E. or relation to pupils with SEN or physical disabilities). Any such contact should be the subject of an agreed and open school policy and subject to review. Where feasible, staff should inform the child of their intentions before initiating contact. Staff should listen, observe and take note of the child's reaction or feelings and – so far as is possible – use a level of contact which is acceptable to the child for the minimum time necessary.

Extra caution may be required where it is known that a child has suffered previous abuse or neglect. In the child's view, physical contact might be associated with such experiences and lead to staff being vulnerable to allegations of abuse. It is recognised that many such children are extremely needy and seek out inappropriate physical contact. In such circumstances staff should deter the child sensitively by helping them to understand the importance of personal boundaries.

The general culture of 'limited touch' should be adapted, where appropriate, to the individual requirements of each child. Children with special needs may require more physical contact to assist their everyday learning. The arrangements should be understood and agreed by all concerned, justified in terms of the child's needs, consistently applied and open to scrutiny.

This means that adults should:

- be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described
- never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent
- always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny
- never indulge in horseplay, tickling or fun fights This means that schools should:
 - ensure they have a system in place for recording serious incidents and the means by which information about incidents and outcomes can be easily accessed by senior management
 - provide staff, on a "need to know" basis, with relevant information about vulnerable pupils in their care
 - make staff aware of the DCSF guidance in respect of physical contact with pupils and meeting medical needs of children and young people in school

13 Physical Education and Other Activities that Require Physical Contact

Some staff, for example, those who teach PE and games, or who offer music tuition will on occasions have to initiate physical contact with pupils in order to support a child so they can perform a task safely, to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument or assist them with an exercise. This should be done with the pupil's agreement and explained as part of the lesson plan.

Contact under these circumstances should be for the minimum time necessary to complete the activity and take place in an open environment (see section 19, one-to-one situations, below). Staff should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the child.

This means that adults should:

- consider alternatives, where it is anticipated that a pupil might misinterpret any such contact, perhaps involving another member of staff, or a less vulnerable pupil in the demonstration
- be familiar with and follow recommended DCSF guidance (see Appendix A)
- always explain to a pupil the reason why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take

14 Showers and Changing

Young people are entitled to respect and privacy when changing clothes or taking a shower. However, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard young people, satisfy health and safety considerations and ensure that bullying or teasing does not occur. This supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the young people concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

Staff should ensure they follow agreed guidelines and be mindful of the needs of the pupils.

This means that adults should:

- avoid any physical contact when children are in a state of undress
- avoid any visually intrusive behaviour and where there are changing rooms
- announce their intention of entering
- avoid remaining in the room unless pupil needs require it

This means that adults should not:

- change in the same place as children
- shower with children

15 Pupils in Distress

There may be occasions when a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance. This may include age-appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.

Where a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance s/he should seek further advice from a senior manager.

16 Care, Control and Physical Intervention

The circumstances in which staff can intervene with a pupil are covered by the 2006 Education Act. Staff may legitimately intervene to prevent a pupil from committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others, causing damage to property, engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order and to maintain good order and discipline. Staff should have regard to the health and safety of themselves and others.

This means that schools should:

- have regard to the Education Act 2006 in relation to the use of physical intervention
- regularly acquaint staff with relevant school policy and DCSF Guidance
- ensure that staff are provided with appropriate policies and training
- always seek to defuse situations
- always use minimum force for the shortest period necessary

All pupils have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. Corporal punishment is unlawful in all schools. Equally, staff should not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a pupil. The use of humour can help to defuse a situation. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards pupils is not acceptable in any situation.

This means that adults should:

- not use force as a form of punishment
- keep parents informed of any sanctions
- adhere to the school's behaviour management policy

This is a complex area and staff must have regard to Leeds City Council guidance - Section 8 of the Personnel Handbook for Schools. (see Appendix A)

Under no circumstances should physical force be used as a form of punishment. The use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence.

In all cases where physical intervention is deemed necessary, the incident and subsequent actions should be documented and reported.

17 Sexual Contact with Young People

Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a child or young person is both inappropriate and illegal. Children and young people are protected by the same laws as adults in relation to non-consensual sexual behaviour. They are additionally protected by specific legal provisions regardless of whether the child or young person consents or not. This includes the prohibition on adults in a position of trust (see Section 5).

The sexual activity referred to does not just involve physical contact. It may also include non-contact activities, such as causing children to engage in or watch sexual activity or the production of pornographic material. 'Working Together to Safeguard Children re-defines sexual abuse as "forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening'.

There are occasions when adults embark on a course of behaviour known as 'grooming' where the sole purpose is to gain the trust of a child, and manipulate that relationship so sexual abuse can take place. Staff should be aware that conferring special attention and favour upon a child might be construed as being part of a 'grooming' process, which is an offence.

This means that adults should:

- not pursue sexual relationships with children and young people either in or out of school
- avoid any form of communication with a child or young person which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative i.e. verbal comments, letters, notes, electronic mail, phone calls, texts, physical contact

18 One to One Situations

Staff working in one to one situations with children and young people may be more vulnerable to allegations. All staff should recognise this possibility and plan and conduct such meetings accordingly. Every attempt should be made to ensure the safety and security needs of both staff and pupils are met.

Schools need to consider these issues in drawing up their school policies and offer clear training and guidance for the use of any areas of the school which place staff or children in vulnerable situations e.g. photographic darkrooms, counselling rooms, detentions. This applies to any other activities which involve one to one situations

Headteachers and managers should undertake a risk assessment in relation to the nature and implications of one to one working. Any arrangements should be reviewed on a regular basis. It may be necessary to amend these to take account of particular pupil needs.

Meetings with pupils away from the school premises should not be permitted unless approval is obtained from their parent and the headteacher or other senior managers with delegated authority.

This means that adults should:

- avoid meetings with pupils in remote, secluded areas of school
- ensure there is visual access and/or an open door in one to one situations
- inform other staff of the meeting beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by
- avoid use of 'engaged' or equivalent signs wherever possible. Such signs may create an opportunity for secrecy or the impression of secrecy
- always report any situation where a child becomes distressed or angry to a Senior Manager
- consider the needs and circumstances of the child/children involved

19 Overnight Supervision and Examinations

There are occasions during exam periods when timetables clash and arrangements need to be made to preserve the integrity of the examination process. In these circumstances staff may be asked to volunteer to supervise students perhaps in their own homes.

Where there are no staff volunteers, the examination awarding bodies allow for alternative supervisory arrangements to be made.

When staff do volunteer, efforts should be made to balance the purpose of the arrangement with the need to safeguard and protect the wellbeing of all parties.

This means that:

- a full health and safety risk assessment should have been undertaken
- all members of the household should have the appropriate checks made
- all arrangements should be made in partnership and agreement with the student and parents/carers
- arrangements involving one to one supervision should be avoided wherever possible
- staff should have regard to any guidance that exists
- as much choice, flexibility and contact with 'the outside world', should be incorporated into any arrangement so far as is consistent with appropriate supervision
- whenever possible, independent oversight of arrangements should be made
- any situation which gives rise to complaint, disagreement or misunderstanding should be reported
- Leeds City Council and schools should ensure that all arrangements reflect a duty of care towards pupils and staff

20 Transporting Children

In certain situations e.g. out of school activities, staff or volunteers may agree to transport children. A designated member of staff should be appointed to plan and provide oversight of all transporting arrangements and respond to any difficulties that may arise.

Wherever possible and practicable it is advisable that transport is undertaken other than in private vehicles, with at least one adult additional to the driver acting as an escort.

Staff should ensure that their behaviour is safe and that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. They should ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy and appropriately insured for business purposes and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded. All adults whether staff or volunteers should have satisfactory enhanced current CRB checks

This means that adults should:

- plan and agree arrangements with all parties in advance, responding sensitively and flexibly to disagreements
- ensure where possible that they are not alone with a child
- be aware that the safety and welfare of the child is their responsibility until this is safely passed over to a parent/carer
- report the nature of the journey, the route and expected time of arrival in accordance with agreed procedures
- ensure that their behaviour and all arrangements ensure vehicle, passenger and driver safety
- take into account any specific needs that the child may have
- ensure that appropriate seat restraints are used on all journeys (see Appendix A)

21 Educational Visits and After School Clubs

Staff should take particular care when supervising pupils in the less formal atmosphere of a residential setting or after-school activity.

During school activities that take place off the school site or out of school hours, a more relaxed discipline or informal dress and language code may differ from those accepted in schools. However, staff remain in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour cannot be interpreted as seeking to establish an inappropriate relationship or friendship. (See Education Visits handbook appendix A)

Where out of school activities include overnight stays, careful consideration needs to be given to sleeping arrangements. Pupils, staff and parents should be informed of these prior to the start of the trip.

Health and Safety arrangements require members of staff to keep colleagues/employers aware of their whereabouts, especially when involved in an out of school activity. Staff must be aware of and follow guidance. (Health and Safety Handbook for Schools – Appendix A)

This means that adults should:

- always have another adult present in out of school activities, unless otherwise agreed with senior staff in school
- undertake a risk assessments
- have parental consent to the activity
- ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times

22 First Aid

All schools must have trained first aiders/appointed persons. Teachers may volunteer to undertake this task but it is not a contractual requirement. Staff should receive appropriate training before administering first aid or medication.

23 Administration of Medication

Pupils may need medication during school hours. In circumstances where children need medication regularly a health care plan should be drawn up to ensure the safety and protection of pupils and staff. With the permission of parents, the children should be encouraged to administer the medication themselves. Please refer to the Health and Safety Handbook.

If a member of staff is concerned or uncertain about the amount or type of medication being given to a pupil, this should be discussed with the appropriate senior colleague at the earliest opportunity. When administering first aid, wherever possible, staff should ensure that another adult is present, or aware of the action being taken. Parents should always be informed when first aid has been administered.

There should be due regard to DCSF guidance “Supporting children with medical need”.

This means that adults should:

- adhere to the school’s safety policy
- adhere to the school’s intimate care policy

- make other staff aware of the task being undertaken
- explain to the child what is happening

24 Intimate Care

All children have a right to safety, privacy and dignity when contact of an intimate nature is required (for example assisting with toileting or removing wet/soiled clothing). A care plan should be drawn up and agreed with parents for all children who require intimate care on a regular basis.

Children should be encouraged to act as independently as possible and to undertake as much of their own personal care as is practicable. When assistance may be required, staff should ensure that another appropriate adult is in the vicinity and is aware of the task to be undertaken.

Additional vulnerabilities that may arise from a physical disability or learning difficulty should be considered with regard to individual teaching and care plans for each child. As with all arrangements for intimate care needs, agreements between the child, their parents/carers and the organisation must be negotiated, agreed and recorded. In addition, the views and/or emotional responses of children with special educational needs, regardless of age and ability must be actively sought in regular reviews of these arrangements.

This means that adults should:

- adhere to the school's intimate care guidelines
- make other staff aware of the task being undertaken
- explain to the child what is happening
- consult with colleagues where any variation from agreed procedure/care plan is necessary
- record the justification for any variations to the agreed procedure/care plan and share this information with parents

25 Curriculum

Some areas of the curriculum can include or raise subject matter which is sexually explicit, or of an otherwise sensitive nature. Care should be taken to ensure that resource materials cannot be misinterpreted. The lesson plan should highlight particular areas of risk and sensitivity.

This means that adults should not:

- enter into or encourage inappropriate or offensive discussion about sexual activity

The curriculum can sometimes include or lead to unplanned discussion about subject matter of a sexually explicit or otherwise sensitive nature. Responding to pupils' questions can require careful judgement and staff may wish to take guidance in these circumstances from a senior member of staff.

Care should also be taken to abide by the governing body's required policy on sex and relationships education and the wishes of parents. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of any sex education provided (but not from the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction necessary under the science curriculum).

26 Photography, Video and Other Creative Arts

Many school activities involve recording images. These may be undertaken as part of the curriculum, extra school activities, for publicity, or to celebrate achievement.

Staff need to be aware of the potential for these aspects of teaching to be misused for pornographic or 'grooming' purposes. Careful consideration should be given as to how these activities are organised and undertaken. Particular regard needs to be given when they involve young or vulnerable pupils who may be unable to question why or how the activities are taking place.

Children who have been previously abused in this way may feel threatened by the use of photography, filming.

Staff should remain sensitive to any children who appear uncomfortable and should recognise the potential for misinterpretation.

Using images of children for publicity purposes requires the age - appropriate consent of the individual concerned and their legal guardians. Images should not be displayed on websites, in publications or in a public place without such consent. The definition of a public place includes areas where visitors to the school have access.

This means that adults should:

- be clear about the purpose of the activity and about what will happen to the photographs when the lesson/activity is concluded
- ensure that senior management is aware that photography/image equipment is being used and for what purpose
- ensure that all images are available for scrutiny in order to screen for acceptability
- be able to justify images of children in their possession
- avoid making images in one to one situations

This means that adults must not; take, display or distribute images of children unless they have consent to do so.

It is recommended that when using a photograph the following guidance should be followed:

- if the photograph is used, avoid naming the pupil
- if the pupil is named, avoid using their photograph
- schools should establish whether the image will be retained for further use
- images should be securely stored and used only by those authorised to do so

27 Internet Use

Schools should have clear policies about access to and the use of the Internet and have regard to guidance produced by Leeds City Council and DCSF Guidance "Superhighway Safety Pack" reference.

This means that adults should:

- follow the school policy on the use of IT equipment

This means that adults should not share logins or password information with others. Under no circumstances should adults in school access inappropriate images. Accessing child pornography or indecent images of children on the internet, and making, storing or disseminating such material is illegal and if proven will invariably lead to the individual being barred from work with children and young people.

Using school or college equipment to access inappropriate or indecent material, including adult pornography, will give cause for concern particularly if as a result pupils might be exposed to inappropriate or indecent material and may lead to disciplinary action.

28 Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. Leeds City Council have produced a clear and accessible whistleblowing policy that meets the terms of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (Section 6 of the Personnel Handbook – Appendix A)

Staff have a responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant external agencies. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

29 Sharing Concerns and Recording Incidents

All staff should be aware of the school's child protection procedures, including procedures for dealing with allegations against staff (Section 8 of the Personnel Handbook – Appendix A). Staff who are the subject of allegations are advised to contact their professional association.

This means that adults:

- should be familiar with their school system for recording concerns
- should take responsibility for recording any incident, and passing on that information where they have concerns about any matter pertaining to the welfare of an individual in the school or workplace

In the event of an incident occurring, which may result in an action being misinterpreted and/or an allegation being made against a member of staff, the relevant information should be clearly and promptly recorded and reported to senior management. Early discussion with a parent or carer could avoid any misunderstanding.

This means that schools:

- should have an effective, transparent and accessible system for recording and managing concerns raised by any individual in school or the workplace

Members of staff should feel able to discuss with their line manager any difficulties or problems that may affect their relationship with pupils so that appropriate support can be provided or action can be taken.

Reference and Source Documents

[Health and Safety Handbook for Schools](#)

[Educational Visits Handbook](#)

[Guidance – Medication in Schools](#)

[Policy – Care and Control – “Use of positive handling to manage physically challenging behaviour”](#)

[Guidance – The use of reasonable force to control or restrain pupils](#)

[Guidance – Staff facing allegations of abuse, guidelines on practice and procedure](#)

[Guidance – Staff facing allegations of abuse](#)

[Guidance – Definitions and thresholds for managing allegations](#)

[Guidance – Managing the aftermath of unfounded, unsubstantiated and malicious allegations](#)

[DCSF Guidance “Supporting children with medical needs”](#)

[DCSF Guidance – “Superhighway Safety Pack”](#)

[Policy – Whistle blowing](#)

[Guidance – “Use of appropriate seat belt restraints”](#)

[Home office \(1999\) Caring for young people and the vulnerable? Guidance for preventing abuse of trust](#)

[Safer Recruitment January 2007](#)

[DCSF Guidance on physical contact](#)