

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

1. Rationale:

"Because of their day to day contact with individual children during the school terms, teachers and other school staff are particularly well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour or failure to develop."(Working Together 2006)

Edison International Academy fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection. This policy, therefore, applies to all stakeholders involved in the daily running of the school.

2. Aims:

With this policy, Edison International Academy aims to:

- Ensure that it practises safe recruitment in checking the suitability of all staff and volunteers to work with children.
- Raise awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe.
- Develop and implement procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
- Support pupils who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan.
- Establish a safe environment in which children can learn and develop

Together with all stakeholders, Edison International Academy will further:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Include opportunities in the PSHE curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to protect them. There are, however, key people within Edison International Academy who have specific responsibilities under child protection procedures.

It is the role of the School Management to ensure that these key people are properly supported to carry out this task and that they are given time to fulfil the duties that their role demands. The School Management will further ensure that these key people are adequately trained and that they are given the opportunity to refresh and further their skills every 2 years.

It is the responsibility of the School Principal to ensure that the child protection procedures are followed within the school, and to make appropriate, and timely decisions on referred cases. Additionally, it is the responsibility of the School Principal to ensure that all staff employed at Edison International Academy are aware of the school's internal procedures, to advise staff and to offer support to those requiring this.

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4. Ethos

Edison International Academy recognises the importance of creating an ethos within school that will help children feel safe and confident that they will be listened to.

Edison International Academy also recognises that children who are abused or witness violence are likely to have low self-esteem and may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The school environment may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in their lives.

Edison International Academy will therefore endeavour to support all pupils through:

- Ensuring the content of the curriculum includes social and emotional aspects of learning.
- Ensuring that child protection is included in the curriculum to help children recognise when they don't feel safe and to identify who they should tell.
- Promoting a positive, supportive and secure environment where pupils can develop a sense of being valued.
- The school's behaviour & anti-bullying policies are aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the school.
- The school will ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.

5. Confidentiality

All staff at Edison International Academy are aware that they must not promise to keep, 'secrets' with children and that if children disclose abuse this must be passed on to the School Principal and/or the key person as soon as possible and the child should be told who their disclosure will be shared with.

Staff will be informed of relevant information in respect of individual cases regarding child protection on a "need to know basis" only.

6. Record Keeping

Child Protection records are kept securely by the School Principal. Staff are aware that they must make a record of child protection issues and events as soon as possible and that these records must be signed and dated. Child protection records must not be made in the child's curriculum file.

7. Allegations against members of staff

Edison International Academy recognises that it is possible for staff and volunteers to behave in a manner that causes harm to children and takes any allegation made against members of staff seriously and an investigation will be conducted in accordance with the Staff Discipline Policy. The local arrangements for managing allegations are understood and followed. All staff know who to talk to if they are concerned about the behaviour of an adult.

8. Policy Review

This policy is subject to annual review.

Appendix 1

Definitions and indicators of Abuse

1. Neglect:

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may involve a parent or a carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision, or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care and treatment

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs

Indicators of neglect may be:

- constant hunger
- stealing, scavenging or hoarding food
- frequent tiredness or listlessness
- frequently dirty or unkempt
- often poorly or inappropriately dressed
- poor school attendance or lateness
- poor concentration
- affection or attention seeking behaviour
- illness or injuries that are left untreated
- failure to achieve developmental milestones (i.e. growth, weight, etc.)
- failure to develop intellectually or socially
- responsibility for activity that is not age appropriate such as cooking, cleaning, caring for younger siblings
- if the child is regularly not collected or received from school

2. Physical Abuse:

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Indicators of physical abuse may be:

- multiple bruises in clusters, or of uniform shape
- bruises that carry an imprint, such as a hand or a belt
- bite marks
- burn marks
- multiple burn marks and burns on unusual areas of the body such as the back, shoulders and buttocks
- an injury that is not consistent with the account given
- changing or different accounts of how an injury occurred
- bald patches
- unaccountable covering of limbs, even in hot weather
- fear of going home or fear of parents being contacted
- fear of medical help
- fear of changing for and participating in PE
- inexplicable fear of adults or over-compliance
- violence or aggression towards others including bullying; or
- isolation from peers

3. Sexual Abuse:

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or a young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault (i.e. rape) or non-penetrative acts. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Indicators of sexual abuse may be:

- sexually explicit play or behaviour or age-inappropriate knowledge
- soreness
- reluctance to go home
- inability to concentrate, tiredness
- refusal to communicate
- thrush, persistent complaints of stomach disorders or pains
- eating disorders
- attention seeking behaviour
- aggressive behaviour, including harassment and molestation of others
- unusual compliance
- regressive behaviour
- isolation from peer group
- reluctance to undress for PE and/or swimming

4. Emotional Abuse:

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may also involve serious bullying, causing children to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment.

Indicators of emotional abuse may be:

- the child consistently describes himself/herself in very negative ways – as stupid, naughty, hopeless, ugly
- over-reaction to mistakes
- delayed physical, mental or emotional development
- sudden speech or sensory disorders
- inappropriate emotional responses, fantasies
- neurotic behaviour: rocking, banging head, regression, tics and twitches
- self-harm
- fear of parents being contacted
- running away
- compulsive stealing
- appetite disorders

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6. Responses from parents:

Research indicates that the following responses from parents may suggest a cause for concern across all categories:

- delay in seeking treatment that is obviously needed
- unawareness or denial of any injury, pain or loss of function
- incompatible explanations offered, several different explanations or the child is said to have acted in a way that is inappropriate to his/her age and development
- reluctance to give information or failure to mention other known relevant injuries
- frequent presentation of minor injuries
- a persistently negative attitude towards the child
- unrealistic expectations or constant complaints about the child
- violence between adults in the household

Appendix 2

Dealing with a disclosure of abuse

When a child tells you about abuse he/she has suffered, what must you remember?

- stay calm
- do not communicate shock, anger or embarrassment
- reassure the child – tell him/her you are pleased he/she is speaking to you
- never enter into a pact of secrecy with the child. Assure him/her that you will try to help but let the child know that you will have to tell other people in order to do so. State who these persons will be and why.
- tell him/her that you believe in them. Children very rarely lie about abuse; but he/she may have tried to tell others and not been heard or believed.
- tell the child that it is not his/her fault
- encourage the child to talk but do not ask 'leading questions' or press for information
- listen and remember
- check that you have understood correctly what the child is trying to tell you
- praise the child for telling you. Communicate that he/she has a right to be safe and protected
- do not tell the child that what he/she has experienced is dirty, naughty or bad
- it is inappropriate to make any comments about the alleged offender
- be aware that the child may retract what he/she has told you. It is essential that you record all
- at the end of the conversation, tell the child again who you are going to tell and why that person or those people need to know
- as soon as you can, afterwards, make a detailed record of the conversation using the child's own language. Include any questions you may have asked. Do not add any opinions or interpretations.

Afterwards:

You must not deal with this yourself. Clear indications or disclosure of abuse must be reported to the School Principal who will then make the decision to take the case further.

Children making a disclosure may do so with difficulty, having chosen carefully to whom they will speak. Listening to and supporting a child who has been abused can be traumatic for the adults involved. Support will be available from your School Principal.

Appendix 3

Allegations made against a member of staff

1. If a child makes an allegation about a member of staff, the School Principal must be informed immediately. The School Principal must carry out an urgent initial enquiry in order to establish whether there is substance to the allegation.
2. The School Principal must exercise, and be accountable for, their professional judgement on the action to be taken:
 - If the School Principal finds that the actions of a member of staff, and the consequences of these actions, raise credible child protection concerns, the School Principal will act according to the Staff Disciplinary Policy
 - If the actions of the member of staff, and the consequences of the actions, do not raise credible child protection concerns, but do raise other issues in relation to the conduct of the member of staff or the pupil, these should also be addressed through the school's own internal procedures.
 - If the School Principal decides that the allegation is without foundation and no further formal action is necessary, all those involved should be informed of this conclusion, and the reasons for the decision should be recorded on file.