



Safeguarding Children Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1** The purpose of The Pegasus Academy Trust's (PAT) and Thornton Heath Nursery School's (THNS) safeguarding policy is to ensure every child who is a registered pupil at our schools is safe and protected. This policy will give clear direction to staff, volunteers, visitors, parents and carers about the expected behaviour and responsibility when managing safeguarding concerns. It should be read in conjunction with the following policies: Attendance; Anti-Bullying; Behaviour; Child Protection; Critical incident, E-Safety; Equalities, Health, Safety and Welfare; Staff Handbook; Whistleblowing and our Code of Conduct.
- 1.2** Our school fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect children from harm and to support and promote the welfare of all who are registered pupils. The elements of our policy are prevention, protection and support. Our policy applies to all staff, parents, carers, governors, volunteers, visitors and pupils.
- 1.3** At THNS we work with children, parents and our local community to ensure the safety and welfare of children.
- 1.4** We are committed to:
- a) building a 'culture of safety' in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of its delivery;
 - b) responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures at PAT;
 - c) promoting awareness of child abuse issues through training and learning programmes for adults. We are also committed to empowering young children to promote their right to be strong, resilient and listened to.
 - d) protecting children from maltreatment;
 - e) preventing impairment of children's health and development;
 - f) ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
 - g) undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successively.
- 1.5** This policy relates to the HM Government document "Working together to safeguard children" which establishes the fundamental principle of a child-centred approach to safeguarding and child protection procedures and services. It sets out detailed procedures for inter-agency working at each stage and highlights the need for a strong culture of continuous learning and improvements.
- 1.6** We also adhere to "Keeping Children Safe in Education (updated Sep18) which provides statutory safeguarding regulations for all staff. All staff within THNS are given a copy of Part One of this on at least an annual basis and must sign to confirm receipt.
- 1.7** "Safeguarding" is taken to mean all agencies working with children, young people and their families take all reasonable measures to ensure that the risk of harm to children's welfare is minimised and "where there are concerns about children and young people's welfare, all agencies take all appropriate actions to address those concerns, working to agreed local policies and procedures in full partnership with other agencies"

- 1.8 Within the area in which THNS is located we have identified a range of local risks particular to Thornton Heath. These include gang and knife culture, drug culture including County Lines, the impact of homelessness, FGM, radicalization, children with families in prison and grooming of pupils by older pupils and adults. The Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) within THNS have experience of dealing with each of these issues and when concerns arise they are dealt with appropriately.

2. Aims

- 2.1 Our aims are to carry out this policy by:

- a) promoting children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to by creating an environment in our setting that encourages children to develop a positive self-image which includes their heritage arising from their colour and ethnicity, their languages spoken at home, their religious beliefs, cultural traditions and home background;
- b) promoting children's right to be strong, resilient and listened to by encouraging them to develop a sense of autonomy and independence;
- c) promoting children's rights to be strong, resilient and listened to by enabling them to have the self confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches.
- d) helping children to establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their families, with peers and with other adults; and
- e) working with parents to build their understanding of, and commitment to, the principles of safeguarding all our children.

3. Roles and responsibilities

- 3.1 At THNS there are a number of designated safeguarding lead persons with responsibility for safeguarding. Through appropriate training, knowledge and experience, they are able to liaise with Children's Services and other agencies where necessary and make referrals to Children's Services.
- 3.2 Any concern for a child's safety or welfare will be recorded in writing and given to the Head of Nursery and in his/her absence Executive Headteacher (PAT).
- 3.3 A designated safeguarding lead person will represent our school at child protection conferences and, where deemed necessary, core group meetings and will be responsible for ensuring that all staff members and volunteers are aware of our policy and the procedure they need to follow.
- 3.4 A designated safeguarding lead person will ensure that all staff, volunteers and regular visitors have received appropriate child protection information during induction and have access to single agency training.
- 3.5 The Governors of THNS will ensure that our safeguarding policy is in place and is reviewed regularly. The content of our policy has been written following consultation with the Local Authority and the requirements of the Safeguarding Children's Board Policies and Procedures.
- 3.6 The Governors will receive a safeguarding report that will record training that has taken place, the number of staff attending and any outstanding training requirements for the school. It will also record all safeguarding activity that has taken place, for example, meetings attended, reports written, training or induction given. It will not identify any individual pupil.

3.7 Should an allegation be made against the Head of Nursery or one of the Executive Headteachers (PAT), the Chair of Governors will be responsible for liaising with the Local Authority.

3.8 At all times, the Head of Nursery, Executive Headteachers (PAT) and Governing Body will ensure that safer recruitment practices are followed. We require evidence of original academic certificates. We do not accept testimonials and insist on taking up references prior to interview. We will question the contents of application forms if we are unclear about them, we will undertake enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks and use any other means of ensuring we are recruiting and selecting the most suitable people to work with our children.

4. Training

4.1 Every member of our staff undertakes child protection training on at least an annual basis; this may be more frequent if there are changes to legislation or to local requirements. Our child protection policy and procedures are reviewed with all staff at the beginning of each academic year. Staff must sign to confirm that training has been attended.

4.2 Each of the Nursery's designated safeguarding leads has access to up to date information and should be used as a first point of contact for concerns and queries regarding any safeguarding concern. No member of staff may work at THNS until they have undertaken child protection training.

5. Recruitment

5.1 At THNS the Head of Nursery and the Executive Headteachers (PAT) have undertaken accredited NCSL Safer Recruitment Training. We operate robust safer recruitment procedures and ensure all appropriate checks are carried out on new staff, governors and volunteers. At least one interviewer at every interview will have received training in safer recruitment.

5.2 All applicants for employment will be required to complete an application form containing questions about their academic and employment history and their suitability for the role. Incomplete application forms will be returned to the applicant where the deadline for completed application forms has not passed. A curriculum vitae will not be accepted in place of the completed application form. The applicant may then be invited to attend a formal interview at which his/her relevant skills and experience will be discussed in more detail. Any gaps in terms of employment history will be challenged.

5.3 If it is decided to make an offer of employment following the formal interview, any such offer will be conditional on the following:

- a) The agreement of a mutually acceptable start date and the signing of a contract incorporating the Trust's standard terms and conditions of employment;
- b) The receipt of at least two references (one of which must be from the applicant's most recent employer) which the Trust considers satisfactory; and
- c) The receipt of a Disclosure from the DBS with which the Trust is satisfied. If the offer is accepted and the above conditions are satisfied, the applicant will be issued with a contract of employment as confirmation of employment.

5.4 THNS will apply for a DBS Certificate only for applicants offered a position. The information obtained will be used to help establish whether that person has a background that might make him/her unsuitable for the job or voluntary position in question. THNS will not apply to the

DBS to run a check without the knowledge and consent of the person concerned. The forms of unsuccessful applicants will be destroyed after a period of six months.

- 5.5** If a DBS Certificate reveals any convictions, the person concerned will be invited to attend an interview with the Head of Nursery or one of the Executive Headteachers (PAT) to discuss the conviction(s) and circumstances. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar applicants from working within THNS. This will depend on the nature, circumstances and background of the offence, and the time elapsed since the offence. However, failure to reveal information directly relevant to the position sought could lead to the withdrawal of any offer of employment.
- 5.6** We do not repeat DBS checks once completed, unless there is a break in service of more than three months or we have concerns about a member of staff's suitability to work with children.
- 5.7** Section 128 checks are carried out on all members of Thornton Heath Nursery School's senior leadership team, PATs Executive Heads and THNS Governors. This ensures no individual who has been prohibited from the management of a school is involved in the work at THNS.
- 5.8** Our induction programme for new staff includes basic safeguarding information relating to signs and symptoms of abuse, how to manage a disclosure from a child, how to record and to whom the pass information should be passed.
- 5.9** New staff are requested to sign our School Staff Suitability Form in which they declare that there is no-one living in their household who may pose a risk to children. The form also asks new staff to confirm that they will disclose any future changes to their own circumstances including criminal charges and convictions. On the first training day in each academic year staff are required to sign to confirm that there have been no changes to their status within the last year. The signed lists are kept by the Head of Nursery who, on receipt, would speak to the Executive Heads (PAT) about any declaration causing concern.

6 Whistleblowing procedures

- 6.1** Procedures to deal with in school allegations against other members of staff
- a) It is important that staff and volunteers share in confidence, with the designated person, concerns they may have about another member of staff or volunteers;
 - b) All staff have a duty to report concerns about a member of staff or volunteers;
 - c) It is important that any concerns for the welfare of the child arising from suspected abuse, harassment or bullying, by a member of staff or volunteer should be reported immediately;
 - d) Staff and volunteers who report their concerns that a colleague is or may be abusing a child will be fully supported by the schools. The whistleblower will be treated as a witness, not a complainant;
 - e) Allegations of abuse against a member of staff or volunteer should be fully recorded and reported appropriately;
 - f) Every effort should be made to maintain confidentiality for all concerned, and consideration will be given to what support may be appropriate to children, parents, members of staff and volunteers. (See also the THNS Whistleblowing policy)

7. Child protection conferences

- 7.1** On rare occasions staff members (e.g. key workers, class teachers) may be asked to attend a child protection or child in need conference on behalf of the school in respect of individual children. Usually the person attending from school will be the Head of Nursery. In any case, the person attending will need to have as much relevant up to date information about the child as possible.
- 7.2** A child protection or child in need conference will be convened if a referral has been made and the following investigation findings have considered the child to be at risk of harm, or the child is already on the child protection register and a review conference is held to monitor the safety of the child and the required reduction in risk. Staff may be required to attend child protection or child in need conferences or core group meetings to represent the school.
- 7.3** Clearly child protection conferences can be upsetting for parents. We recognise that we are likely to have more contact with parents than other professionals involved. We will work in an open and honest way with any parent whose child has been referred to Children's Services or whose child is on the child protection register. Our responsibility is to promote the protection and welfare of all children and our aim is to achieve this in partnership with parents and carers.

8. Children missing from education

- 8.1** Children missing from education are defined by the DfE as 'children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school.' We work closely with our families to ensure that the attendance of all children is tracked and monitored closely. Where appropriate we will refer children who are 'missing from education' to relevant services, although we recognise that children at THNS are not of compulsory school age.
- 8.2** We follow the procedures outlined in our attendance policy including undertaking first day calling and monitoring data to ensure we intervene early in cases of poor attendance and/or unexplained absences.
- 8.3** When removing a child from roll at the standard and non-standard transition points we inform the local authority in accordance with statutory requirements and pass on all safeguarding files.
- 8.4** In order to keep children safe and provide appropriate care for them, THNS requires parents and carers to provide accurate and up to date information regarding:
- full names and contact details of all adults with whom the child normally lives;
 - full names and contact details of all persons with parental responsibility (if different from above);
 - emergency contact details (if different from above) of at least two adults;
 - full details of any other adult authorised by the parent to collect the child from school (if different from the above).
- 8.5** Staff should be aware of the safeguarding responsibilities for children who are missing education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

9. Early Help

9.1 As part of our responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, we provide a co-ordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified. These may include if a child:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs;
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory education, health and care plan);
- is a young carer;
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups;
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home;
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation;
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, drug/ alcohol abuse, adult mental health problems or domestic abuse;
- has returned home to their family from care;
- is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect;
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited;
- is a privately fostered child.

10. Contextual safeguarding

10.1 We recognise that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside of the school environment and/or can occur between children outside of the school. This is known as contextual safeguarding. It is key that all THNS staff are aware of the definition of contextual safeguarding and when reporting concerns, they include as much information and background detail as possible so the DSL can make a referral with a holistic view of the child. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and the full context of any abuse.

10.2 We recognise that children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can face additional safeguarding challenges and these are discussed in staff training. These additional barriers can include:

assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
 children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying- without outwardly showing any signs;
 and communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

10.3 We recognise that a previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable and all staff should have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe and, when necessary, take prompt action.

10.4 We work with other agencies as required to respond to concerns about sexual violence and harassment. We seek consultation where there are concerns or worries about developmentally inappropriate or harmful sexual behaviour as required so that we ensure we are offering the right support to the child(ren). Support will depend on the circumstances of each case and the needs of the child, it may include completion of risk assessments to support children to remain in school whilst safeguarding other children and the victim.

11. Keeping staff safe

11.1 There are sometimes occasions when some form of physical contact is inevitable, for example if a child has an accident or is hurt or is in a situation of danger to themselves or others

around them. Staff in our schools know that they should avoid placing themselves in vulnerable situations and always ensure there are two members of staff present when for example a child needs to remove an article of clothing or needs changing following a toileting accident.

- 11.2 If staff, visitors, volunteers or parent helpers are working with children alone they will, wherever possible, be visible to other members of staff. They will be expected to inform another member of staff of their whereabouts in school, who they are with and for how long. A visitor, volunteer or parent helper may only work in one of our schools if an appropriate risk assessment has been completed.
- 11.3 Doors, ideally, should have a clear glass panel in them and be left open, although at THNS many doors are closed with high locks or keypads for the children's safety. Sometimes allegations are made against adults who come in to contact with children. We have a responsibility to ensure that we adhere to the requirements of '*Safeguarding children in education: Dealing with allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff*'
- 11.4 There are sensible steps that every adult should take in their daily professional conduct with children. These can be found in the Investigation, Referral and Support Coordinator guidance for *Safe working practice for the protection of children and staff in education settings*.
- 11.5 All adults who come into contact with children will be made aware of the steps that will be taken if an allegation is made. At THNS we adhere to the guidance laid down in Croydon council's guidance and if necessary we seek appropriate advice from the Safeguarding Children Co-ordinator. Neither the Executive Headteachers (PAT), Head of Nursery nor any other member of school staff will investigate these matters. We will seek and work with the advice that is provided. Should an allegation be made against the Head of Nursery or either Executive Headteacher (PAT), this will be reported to the chair of our Governors who will liaise with Croydon's Safeguarding Children Co-ordinator.

12. Physical Intervention/Positive Handling

- 12.1 Our policy on physical intervention/positive handling by staff is set out separately, as part of our Behaviour Policy. It complies with the DCSF non -statutory guidance "Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils" 2007. Such events should be recorded and signed by a witness.

13. Children at risk of fleeing from school premises

- 13.1 In the event of a child attempting to flee from school premises we would aim to prevent them from doing so using appropriate physical intervention if necessary.
- 13.2 Where a child is known to be a flight risk we undertake a specific risk assessment outlining strategies to keep the child on site and make any necessary preventative measures while not compromising our accessibility arrangements.

14. Bullying and cyberbullying

- 14.1 Our procedures on the prevention and management of bullying are set out in separate policies (e-Safety and Anti-Bullying) and acknowledge that to allow or condone bullying may lead to considerable under achievement for children.

15. Self Harming & Suicidal Behaviour

15.1 Self-harm and suicide threats and gestures by a child put the child at risk of significant harm, and should always be taken seriously. They may also be indicative of psychological or emotional disturbance triggered by physical, sexual and / or emotional abuse or chronic neglect which may also constitute significant harm.

16. Young carers

16.1 In many families, children contribute to family care and well-being as a part of normal family life. A young carer is a child who is responsible for caring on a regular basis for a relative (usually a parent, grandparent, sometimes a sibling or very occasionally a friend) who has an illness, disability or an alcohol or substance dependency. Many young carers may experience:

- a) Social isolation;
- b) A low level of school attendance;
- c) Some educational difficulties;
- d) Impaired development of their identity and potential;
- e) Low self-esteem;
- f) Emotional and physical neglect;
- g) Conflict between loyalty to their family and their wish to have their own needs met.

16.2 Where a young carer is identified, the child's needs will be considered, using an Early Help Assessment (EHA).

17. Mobile phones

17.1 Due to the significant advances in mobile phone technology, there is the potential for both mobile phones and cameras to be used inappropriately and compromise the confidentiality of the children in our care. In order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children in our Nursery and to prevent images being recorded and inappropriately use we prohibit the use of personal mobile phones by staff when working with children both on and off site and prohibit the use of personal mobile phones and other mobile devices such as tablets by volunteers or visitors when on the school premises.

17.2 THNS accepts that employees/volunteers/parents will bring their mobile phones/devices to work and onto the school premises.

17.3 Mobile phones should not be used in a space where children are, or could be, present (e.g. classroom, outside area or corridors).

17.4 Mobile phones and cameras should only be used away from the children and where possible, off site.

17.5 Staff/volunteers are not permitted to make or receive call or texts while in classrooms/learning areas or the playground. Calls/texts/personal emails can be made at break and lunchtimes in the staffroom, empty classrooms and offices if they are not being used by other staff and if no children are present.

17.6 Staff/volunteers should ensure that mobile phones are locked and turned off or silent at all times while on school premises. They should be kept in a bag that is locked in the classroom cupboard, away from public view.

17.7 Staff/volunteers/parents/visitors are not at any time permitted to use recording equipment on their mobile phones/devices - for example: to take photographs or videos of children.

- 17.8 The Nursery main telephone number can be used for emergencies by staff or volunteers or by people who need to contact them.
- 17.9 We prefer that parents, carers and visitors do not use their mobile phones when on school premises and have signs requesting this. However, we recognise that a complete ban on the use of mobile phones is unrealistic and impossible to regulate as many people see them as essential means of communication at all times. We therefore monitor usage of mobile phones, while in school to ensure it is courteous and appropriate to the school environment.
- 17.10 We allow parents and carers to photograph or video school events such as shows or sports day using their mobile phones – but insist that parents do not publish images (e.g. on social networking sites) that include any children other than their own.

16. Sexting

- 16.1 There is no clear definition of 'sexting' although many professionals consider sexting to be 'sending or posting sexually suggestive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs, via mobiles or over the Internet.' However, many young people are more likely to interpret sexting as 'writing and sharing explicit messages with people they know'. Similarly, many parents think of sexting as flirty or sexual text messages rather than images.
- 16.2 We take any direct disclosure by a young person should be taken very seriously and our designated lead professionals would follow the procedures outlined in our child protection policy when considering a referral.
- 16.3 A young person who discloses they are the subject of sexual imagery is likely to be embarrassed and worried about the consequences. It is likely that disclosure in school is a last resort and they may have already tried to resolve the issue themselves. Parents (or carers) should be informed and involved in the process at an early stage unless informing the parent will put the young person at risk of harm.
- 16.4 Any decision not to inform the parents would generally be made in conjunction with other services such as children's social care and/or the police, who would take the lead in deciding when the parents should be informed.

17. Records and monitoring

- 17.1 Any adult who is concerned about the welfare or safety of any child records their concerns and passes them immediately to a designated safeguarding lead who may then ask them to complete an expression of concerns form or may do this themselves keeping all original documentation. Any information recorded is kept in a separate named file, in a secure drawer and not with the child's academic file. These files are the responsibility of the designated safeguarding lead and information will only be shared within school on a need to know basis for the protection of the child.
- 17.2 Any safeguarding information is kept in the safeguarding file and is added to as necessary. Copies of referrals, invitations to child protection conferences, core groups and reports are stored here.
- 17.3 If a child leaves our school the designated safeguarding lead makes contact with the designated safeguarding lead at the following school and the file will be forwarded in an envelope marked "confidential."