

Safeguards and policies to protect children from harm



Protecting children from harm

When children are attending school, their parents and carers expect them to be learning and enjoying their day in a safe and secure environment. The Health and Safety at work Act 1974 has been put into place to ensure the environment the children work in is safe and well maintained and safe for children to move around in. The environment in which the children and adults are working within should be safe and clean, and any equipment and resources that are being used by the children should be safe and in good working condition to ensure they are protected from any harm. Children should be able to learn in a safe environment and being able to learn and thrive to their full potential without the risks of illness or injury. Safeguarding is not just about protecting children from harm it also includes issues such the following.

- Children's health and safety
- Bullying
- Racist abuse
- Harassment and discrimination
- Use of physical intervention
- Meeting the needs of children with medical conditions
- Providing first aid
- Drug and substance misuse
- Internet safety

Safeguarding children is the responsibility of all school staff members and governors. They should do the following to protect children from harm.

- Provide an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to
- Ensure children know that there are adults in school who they can approach with any concerns
- Provide information that enables children to develop the skills they need to recognise how to stay safe and free from harm

Children should be able to feel safe and secure in the school setting. Staff should receive the sufficient training relating to safeguarding children and should identify signs of abuse in order to protect the child from any harm. Children who are protected enjoy and thrive at what they like to do best and this motivates them and gives them a self belief of all the things they enjoy. Children who are not protected in the school setting lack self esteem issues and this would also have a negative impact on their development.

Safe guards have been put into place to ensure the following.

- Protects children and young people from harm and abuse
- Enables staff to know what to do if they are worried
- Shows that the group is responsible and has pride in its work
- Prevents children from under developing
- Builds children self esteem and self belief
- Builds confidence in the child
- Gives the opportunity for the child to enjoy childhood and have no worries that they should not have
- Gives them a good start to life

- Prevents them from being under bad influence that could cause long term effects

References/bibliography

www.gov.uk

www.safeguardingchildren

(3. 4) Policies and Procedures

In a school environment there are a range of policies and procedures in place to protect the children and the adults who are working at the school. Policies and procedures are important in schools because they help to ensure that staff and children know what is expected of them, they would receive fair treatment and enjoy the safest conditions possible. Safety in schools is better assured when clear policies and procedures exist. Everyone works better when there are rules that are understood clearly. Policies and procedures set out the rules that must be followed and if not followed there would be consequences. Children behave and perform better when they know the guidelines and when teachers are consistent with enforcing the rules. Some of the procedures set in a school are.

- Safeguarding and welfare of children policy
- Safeguarding and school security procedures
- Statutory school policies
- School health and safety procedures
- School improvement policies
- School support and healthy lifestyle policies

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- General school policies
- Special educational needs policies
- School premises policies

Educational policies are rules that are used in schools to effectively and efficiently teach children and keep them safe. Policies and procedures enable schools to make good decisions that optimise well being. Schools do this by the following.

- Involving children in school decision making about governance and policy
- Involving children and parents in the regular review of school policies and procedures and the determination of computer use, class and playground rules
- Encouraging children to take active steps in tackling bullying, prejudice and other behaviours that have a negative impact on wellbeing
- Aligning policy and curriculum

References/bibliography

www.safenetwork.org.uk

(3. 5) Reporting poor practice

When working with children it is very important that any concerns regarding poor practice are reported. Also to ensure those who's behaviour is causing concern is reported to protect those who have reported the concern are protected. Reporting concerns about poor practice is very serious and needs to be dealt with as soon as possible. Within the school setting there will be procedures put into place for reporting concerns. When discussing poor

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practice with the manager poor practice should be accurately identified and if possible, include dates, times and situations when the issue occurred. It is essential to provide as much information as possible. Whistleblowers are protected by law as long as certain criteria are met. The types of whistle blowing eligible for protection (called qualifying disclosures), they include when someone reports the following.

- That someone's health and safety is in danger
- Damage to the environment
- A criminal offence
- That the company is not obeying the law
- That someone is covering up wrongdoing

Whistleblowers are protected by law as long as they believe that what they are doing is right and that it is in the public interest. The human resource department will usually play a large role in ensuring that the correct procedures are followed. The human resources department will provide information on the employee's rights, including their right to representation.

If a young person or adult has concerns, it is important that they are able to report them to someone at the school. It is therefore important that the school know how to respond, and who will do this. Once a concern has been reported, it is important that appropriate action be taken. It will not be the school's responsibility to decide if action needs to be taken, unless a child is at immediate risk of harm. It is however the schools responsibility to respect the concerns appropriately in accordance with the policies, procedures and systems that have been put into place.

When someone is reporting their concerns the following should be used to help the situation.

- Stay calm
- Reassure the person reporting their concerns that they have done the right thing in telling you
- Keep an open mind
- Listen carefully to what is said and take them seriously
- Explain that the information would have to be shared with others and do not promise to keep secrets.

Child abuse can and does occur inside and outside the family environment. It is not always easy for teachers to identify where abuse has occurred.

However, all teachers working with children have a duty of care to be vigilant and respond appropriately to suspicions of poor practice, abuse or bullying.

Whistle blowing is the process of disclosing wrong doing. Within the school setting this may mean exposing a member of staff to poor practice or behaviour. This could be a member of staff bullying a pupil or a colleague.

The way a worker can blow the whistle on wrong doing depends on whether they feel they can tell their employer. A worker cannot be dismissed because of whistle blowing. If they are, they can claim unfair dismissal they will be protected by law as long as certain criteria are met. The following people are protected.

- Employees
- A agency worker
- People that are training with an employer

- Self employed workers
- Work in a school

A worker will be eligible for protection if

- They honestly think what they're reporting is true
- They think they are telling the right person
- They believe that their disclosure is in the public interest

Reference/bibliography

www.whistleblowing.uk

www.gov.uk

(3. 6) Protecting yourself during everyday practice

In the school setting there are various policies and procedures in place which support assistants must adhere to in order to protect themselves. The safeguarding of children are usually covered within the induction programme and this will inform teaching assistants of the roles and responsibilities with regard to children and how teaching assistants can be protected against unwanted allegations. Policies within the school setting should be followed to protect you from harm. This includes health and safety policies for example, not standing on the tables to pin a poster on the wall. If an incident is witnessed by another member of staff, they should be asked to document what they have witnessed, sign and date it as evidence

When a school trip has been arranged, the teacher and support assistant will usually carry out a risk assessment to ensure that the venue is safe for the class to visit. They will usually need to do the following.

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- Ensure the risk assessments are completed and when appropriate individual safety plans and safe working practices
- Support the governing body in any decision on approval
- Assign competent staff to lead and help with trips
- Verify that all accompanying adults have been CRB checked
- Make sure that all consent and medical forms are obtained
- Keep records of visits and provide after visit evaluation to aid future visits

All relevant risk assessments must be carried out by the teacher before any proposed visit or activity takes place. Key issues from the risk assessment or safe working procedures completed for the trip must be communicated to all adults before the visit commences. Risk assessments must also be completed for the transport. When hiring a coach or minibus drivers of the transport must have received training within the last four years. The risk assessments are completed to ensure the safety of the teachers and children and are covered if anything does go wrong (insurance).

References/bibliography

www.gov.uk