

## CHILD PROTECTION GUIDELINES

Teachers are uniquely placed as far as child protection is concerned. They must adopt a positive role to further the personal and social development of children. Dealing with child abuse is rarely straightforward however and these are some general guidelines in Practices and Procedures.

### SIGNS AND SYMBOLS

If you suspect child abuse you need to identify what is specifically causing concern. Even when suspicions are vague, it is vital to establish if they have any foundation. If you are undecided, discuss your concerns with the senior member of staff specially designated to have responsibility for child protection issues in your school – Deputy Head.

### DISCLOSURES

When dealing with a disclosure:

- RECEIVE - what is said and accept it impartially
- REASSURE - the pupil, alleviate guilt
- REACT - without judgment  
- with sensitivity  
- without criticism  
- with open questions
- RECORD - make brief notes – retain them  
- record data – time, place  
- record statements and observations
- REMEMBER - to follow school policy i.e.
  1. Follow LEA Guidelines
  2. Ensure the pupil is looked after by an appropriate adult e.g. Head of House, Subject Teacher, Office Manager
  3. Inform Deputy Head IMMEDIATELY
  4. Provide Deputy Head Pastoral with written and verbal accounts
- RELAX - keep control  
- do not rush or speak too quickly  
- you will not have to investigate this

### CONFIDENTIALITY

Teachers cannot promise total confidentiality to pupils who make allegations. You have a professional responsibility to share relevant information with the Child Protection Officer in the school. It is essential that you do not make promises you cannot keep especially before it is known what is to be confided. The child must not feel that their trust has been breached and should be assured that the matter will only be discussed on a need to know basis.

## REFERRAL PROCESS

You will need to refer the issue to your Line Manager e.g. Head of House or other appropriate pastoral staff. Be aware of the systems and processes in your school for dealing with child protection issues.

## SAFE PRACTICE

Ensure that you handle the issue in such a way that you avoid criticisms of yourself:

- Be aware of room layout
- Avoid physical contact
- Be non-judgmental
- Act as professional teacher
- Be aware of existing good practise in your school

Finally, encountering instances of child abuse are rare but teachers have a personal and professional responsibility to familiarise themselves with school policy. Opportunities for further training and In-Service are available from the LEA and Gateshead LSCB (Local Safeguarding Children Board).