

SWANMORE COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY

Child Protection Policy

Swanmore College of Technology fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection.

Our overall aim is to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children in our care.

The designated teacher for Child Protection is the Assistant Headteacher, Mrs. Carole Chadderton and in her absence the Headteacher, Mrs. Annette Hillier. Should both Mrs. Chadderton and Mrs. Hillier be absent the matter should then be referred to either of the two deputy headteachers.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To ensure there is a practice of safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children.
- To develop awareness in all staff of the need for Child Protection and their responsibilities in identifying abuse.
- To ensure that all staff are aware of the referral procedures in reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
- To ensure that outside agencies are involved where appropriate.
- To support pupils who have been abused in accordance with their agreed child protection plans.

Swanmore College of Technology recognises that because of day to day contact with children, staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. The college will therefore:

- Establish an environment which is safe and secure where children can learn and develop, are encouraged to talk and are listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the college who they can approach if they are worried.
- Provide opportunities within the PSHE curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

COLLEGE PROCEDURES

Staff should note **that under NO circumstances** should they offer **CONFIDENTIALITY**. It does not help the child and does not move the situation forward.

Members of staff with an issue or concern relating to Child Protection should immediately discuss it with the College CPO. Allegations of child abuse must always be given the highest priority.

HOW TO DEAL WITH DISCLOSURE

If possible find a quiet room where you can listen without interruptions.

Listen and reassure but do not react with shocked disbelief

Accept what is said calmly and acknowledge the child's bravery in telling.

Explain that you will refer the matter on to the Child Protection Liaison Officer

Accept what the child is saying.

Reassure the child and let them know they are doing the right thing by speaking to you.

Do not make the child tell anyone else. It is important that notes are written **WITHIN 24 HOURS** and preferably on the same day. Use factual language e.g. 'Maria cried' rather than 'Maria was upset'

Question the child normally without pressurising. Clarify what the child is saying.

Avoid

- asking leading questions.
- making promises you cannot keep.
- criticising the perpetrator.
- putting words into the child's mouth.
- giving your own opinions.
- getting emotionally involved.
- stopping free recall

Ask only the minimum which alerts you to the problem being faced by the child.

In the case of abuse too much questioning could compromise police action which may need to take place at a later date.

The CPLO will then decide on an appropriate course of action (based on ACPC guidelines). Information for parents/carers will be published in the College prospectus and/or in a college newsletter telling them that the members of staff are required to follow the procedures laid down by the Area Child Protection Committee.

If the child **refuses** to disclose when told by you that matters must be referred to the CPLO respect this decision but still pass on your concerns.

Do not discuss the issue with parents. This is because parents may inevitably feel they are being accused by the college. Also, it may allow parents time to create an explanation or may expose the child and others within the family to some risk such as pressure.

TYPES OF CHILD ABUSE

SIGNIFICANT HARM

Significant harm occurs when a child is suffering harm or is likely to suffer harm either because the care given to the child is not to a standard that apparent would reasonably be expected to give or because the child is beyond parents control.

HARM includes:

- Ill treatment
- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Impairment of physical or mental health
- Impairment of physical, intellectual or emotional development

NEGLECT

The persistent or severe failure to attend to a child's needs; or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold, starvation; or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including failure to thrive.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Actual or risk of physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury (or suffering) to a child; including deliberate poisoning, suffocation and Fabricated and Induced Illness

SEXUAL ABUSE

Actual or risk of sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent

N.B. Girls who become pregnant whilst still at college need to be referred to E.I.S. The possibility of sexual abuse needs to be considered and, if necessary, a referral made to Children's Services.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Actual or risk of severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection

N.B. All abuse involves some emotional ill-treatment and this category should only be used where it is the main or sole form of abuse.

SYMPTOMS

PHYSICAL

- Onset of anorexia or bulimia nervosa
- Headaches, migraines, nausea
- Dizzy spells/fainting
- Abdominal pain
- Unexplained pregnancy
- Self-mutilation
- Bite marks

EMOTIONAL

- Suicide attempts
- Feeling unsafe
- Persistent running away
- Reluctance to go home
- Anxiety in the presence of parent/adult
- Excessive tiredness linked with sleep disturbance
- Being withdrawn or preoccupied, underachieving
- Frequent absences from college (justified by note)

SOCIAL

- Delinquency, aggression, hostile outbursts
- Sexual acting out with peers
- Pre-occupation with sexual matters in poetry, drawings essays, etc
- Promiscuity, precocious comments/questions about sex
- Reluctance to undress/participate in college activities such as P.E.

Staff must keep the CPLO informed of:

Poor attendance and punctuality
Concerns over appearance and dress
Changed or unusual behaviour
Concerns over health and emotional well being
Deterioration in educational progress
Concerns over home conditions or situations
Concerns over pupil abuse (including serious bullying)

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST COLLEGE STAFF

Teachers must protect themselves especially when meeting on a one to one basis with students. Staff should be aware that even perfectly innocent actions can be misconstrued. Teachers who hear an allegation against another member of staff should report the matter immediately to the Headteacher. ACPC and DFEE circular10/95 procedures can then be

followed. If the allegation is against the Headteacher it should be taken directly to the CPLO and through her the Chair of Governors.

MONITORING AND RECORD KEEPING

Accurate records must be kept where there are concerns about the welfare of a child.

Records must be kept in secure, confidential files, which are separate from the child's college records.

Regulations published in 1989 do not authorise or require the disclosure to parents of any written information relating to Child Protection. However, the preferred practice is for parents to be informed of and agree to any referral being made (unless it relates to Sexual Abuse).

Reports may be needed for Child Protection case conferences or for criminal/civic courts. Consequently records and reports should be factual (no opinions), non-judgemental (no assumptions must be made), clear, accurate and relevant.

REFERRALS TO CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Following a disclosure it is prudent to inform Children's Services of the incident and seek advice of the actions necessary. **This will be done by the CPLO.**

Telephone referrals to Children's Services should be confirmed in writing.

A note should be made of the Duty Social worker and the time at which the call was made.

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