

## **Bledlow Ridge School**

### **Child Protection Advice for Volunteers**

Thank you for your interest in becoming a volunteer. This leaflet is designed to provide some useful advice.

Buckinghamshire County Council is committed to safeguarding and meeting the needs of children, young people and vulnerable adults. This leaflet will provide some useful advice and information when working with children in schools.

#### **DBS Checks**

Part of the safeguarding policy requirement is that volunteers working in schools are checked by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). This is just to help ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children. You should also inform the Headteacher immediately if you become subject to any criminal investigation, caution or conviction. This helps to protect you as well as the young people in your care.

#### **What are my responsibilities as a Volunteer?**

All those who come into contact with children through their everyday work whether paid or voluntary have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. In every school you will find a child protection policy document - at Bledlow Ridge School, you can find a copy on the School's website. It is very helpful to read it through.

#### **Which children need protection?**

You may become aware whilst working with a child that there are some problems at home or elsewhere that give you cause for concern. You may become aware of unexplained marks or bruising or changes in the child's behaviour or demeanour. Sometimes children display aggressive behaviour, become withdrawn and uncommunicative or unable to concentrate.

#### **What should I do if I am worried about a child?**

In every school there is a Designated Person specially trained in child protection who will know what to do. You should report your concerns to them that day. They will deal with the matter in an appropriate way.

#### **What should I do if a child discloses that s/he is being harmed?**

Although the likelihood of this is small it is important to know what to do in such an eventuality. Listen to the child, without making judgements. Take what they tell you seriously, children rarely lie about such matters. Explain that you can't keep the information secret and must pass it on to someone who will know what to do. Don't interrogate the child and ask leading questions, such as "What did he do next?". Try to convey to the child that they are not to blame for what has happened; though at the same time avoid criticising the abuser. Don't make promises that you can't keep but tell the child what you are going to do.

#### **What shall I do next?**

Find the Designated Person – the Headteacher – and pass the information on as soon as possible.

#### **What should I do if the alleged abuser is a member of the school staff?**

You should report such allegations to the Headteacher. If the allegation is about the Headteacher contact the Chair of Governors – Mr Hugh Gage or Mr Dirmuid Jennings, via the school office.

#### **How do I assure that my behaviour is always appropriate?**

Appropriate relationships with children should be based on mutual trust and respect. As a volunteer you may well be working closely with children sometimes on a one to one basis. Children, especially when they are young are often spontaneously affectionate and tactile and it is important not to alienate them through lack of response or by appearing to reject this. You should, however, be careful about touching pupils. For example, as a parent, having a friend's child sit on your lap, may seem acceptable at home, but having that same child or another child, sit on your lap at school is not appropriate. Whilst warm and friendly relations are important in your role, overly familiar relationships can be misunderstood and lead to difficulties. If you have concerns about these matters – or feel that you may find yourself in a difficult position because of the way something may appear, you need to raise them with the Class Teacher or Headteacher.

If you are working with a pupil on his/her own always ensure that the door is left open or that you can be visible to others. If, for example, a young child is in the toilet and has a problem and calls out for your help, always ask a member of staff to see what the problem is. Never go to deal with it yourself.

Never make arrangements to meet a pupil on their own without school and parental permission.

Do not photograph pupils, exchange e-mails or text messages, or give out your personal details.

### **Confidentiality**

As a volunteer, please be aware that anything you see or hear in school regarding a child, (for example if a child misbehaves) must be kept confidential. It is not appropriate to discuss things outside of school with other parents. you have any concerns, please speak to the Class Teacher, or the Headteacher as appropriate.

No child should suffer harm, either at home or at school. Everyone who works in our school has a responsibility to make sure that all our young people are safe.

This leaflet has been given to you to make sure you understand what is expected of you. Please ask the person who gave it to you if you are not clear about anything in it, and keep the leaflet in a safe place, so that you can read it again if you need to.

If you are worried about the safety of any young person in your school, you must report this to the Headteacher.

(Developed by Bucks County Council Safeguarding in Education Team)

### **USEFUL CONTACTS**

Headteacher:	Mrs Natasha Harrison
Designated Person for Child Protection:	Mrs Natasha Harrison
Deputy Designated Person for Child Protection:	Miss Gemma Grimaldi
Chair of Governors:	Mr Hugh Gage (via the school office)
	Mr Dirmuid Jennings (via the school office)