

Child Protection Policy (CPP)
Acceptance of CPP Copy and Agreement to Adhere to
the DTC Child Protection Policy

I, (Insert Name)

hereby acknowledge receipt of the Dyslexia Teaching Centre's Child Protection Policy and agree that it is my responsibility to read, understand and adhere to the policy at all times whilst working for/on behalf of the Dyslexia Teaching Centre.

Signed:

Date:

Dyslexia Teaching Centre (DTC)

Child Protection Policy

Child protection policy, procedures and guidance

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Introduction

This mandatory policy is approved and endorsed by the Board of Trustees and makes clear the Dyslexia Teaching Centre's position on child protection. It applies to all staff (permanent and contracted), trustees and volunteers involved with the Centre.

It is essential that all staff, trustees, volunteers, beneficiaries, donors and the general public are aware of its central messages and any duties/responsibilities it places on them.

All parents and guardians will be made aware that there is an official procedure to be followed in the Centre in any situation of child abuse. A copy of the policy will be made available for parents if they wish to read it.

DTC's Child Protection Policy

The Dyslexia Teaching Centre fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection.

Our policy applies to all staff, trustees and volunteers working in the centre. There are four main elements to our policy:

1. Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children.
2. Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
3. Supporting pupils who have been abused, in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan, as supplied to the centre by the pupil's school.
4. Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.

We recognise that because of the regular contact with children, centre staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. The centre will therefore:

1. Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
2. Ensure children know that there are adults in the centre whom they can approach if they are worried.

We will follow the procedures set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board and take account of guidance issued by the Department for Education and Skills to:

1. Ensure we have a designated senior person for child protection who has received appropriate training and support for this role.
2. Ensure we have a nominated Trustee responsible for child protection.
3. Ensure every member of staff (including temporary and supply staff and volunteers) and governing body knows the name of the designated senior person responsible for child protection and their role.
4. Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated senior person responsible for child protection.
5. Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the centre and staff for child protection.
6. Notify social services if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a pupil who is on the child protection register.
7. Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences.
8. Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
9. Ensure all records are kept securely, separate from the main pupil file, and in locked locations.
10. Develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.
11. Ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed.

We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The centre may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at the centre their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. The centre will endeavour to support the pupil through:

1. The centre ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued.
2. The centre behaviour policy which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the centre. The centre will ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
3. Liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as social services, Child and Adult Mental Health Service, education welfare service and educational psychology service.
4. Ensuring that, where a pupil on the child protection register leaves, their information is transferred to the new school immediately and that the child's social worker is informed.

Guidance on interaction with pupils

The current climate of suspicion with regard to child abuse poses a real dilemma for caring adults. In order to protect children from abuse, and staff from suspicion of abuse, the natural inclination to comfort and reassure children through physical contact has to be curbed, and impulse restrained, by a considered assessment of the situation.

This does not mean that physical contact is never permissible, but adults touching children must operate within understood limits, and contact outside of those limits must be a considered response which can be justified if necessary.

Rigid rules about what is and is not permissible are not acceptable and are difficult to implement.

Where one-to-one contact does happen it is advisable that this is either within earshot or vision of other people.

1. Physical contact

This may be for the purpose of care, instruction or restraint. Staff should always be able to justify resorting to any physical contact. Restraint should involve only the minimum force necessary to protect children at imminent risk of harming themselves or others, or inflicting damage to property. Should physical contact appear necessary colleagues should, if at all possible, be summoned to assist.

2. Remarks

Salacious or demeaning remarks should never be made to or in the presence of children and young people. Remarks about a child's physical characteristics or development, or suggestive or derogatory comments, could fall into this category.

3. Attachments

You are strongly advised to share your concerns with a senior colleague if:

- a. you suspect a pupil is becoming inappropriately attached to you or another member of staff, or
- b. your relationship with or feelings toward a child or young person are placing you at risk of unprofessional behaviour

What is abuse & neglect?

Defining child abuse is a difficult and complex issue. A person may abuse a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family, institution or community setting, by those known and trusted to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

In England and Wales there are four categories of abuse in general use:

1. Physical injury

Actual or attempted physical injury to a child where there is definite knowledge, or reasonable suspicion, that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented. May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child including fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately causing, ill health to a child.

2. Neglect

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. May involve failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, or neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

3. Emotional abuse

Persistent or emotional ill treatment of a child that adversely affects their development. May involve conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, and inadequate, there only to meet the needs of another; or where inappropriate expectations are imposed upon them. In addition it includes children who are regularly frightened, exploited or corrupted.

4. Sexual abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. This may also include involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Indicators of abuse

This list is neither definitive nor exhaustive. The information in the list has to be used with all other information related to the child and his/her circumstances. There can be an overlap between all the different forms of child abuse and all or several can co-exist.

1. Physical abuse

Signs of possible physical abuse:
Unexplained injuries or burns, particularly if they are recurrent;
Improbable excuses given to explain injuries;
Refusal to discuss injuries;
Untreated injuries, or delay in reporting them;
Excessive physical punishment;
Arms and legs covered in hot weather;
Fear of returning home;
Aggression towards others;
Running away.

2. Neglect

Signs of possible neglect:
Constant hunger;
Poor personal hygiene;
Constant tiredness;
Poor state of clothing;
Frequent lateness and/or unexplained non-attendance at the Centre;
Untreated medical problems;
Poor peer relationships;
Stealing.

3. Emotional Abuse

Signs of possible emotional abuse:
Low self esteem;
Continual self deprecation;
Sudden speech disorder;
Significant decline in concentration;
Socio-emotional immaturity;
"Neurotic" behaviour (e.g. rocking, head banging);
Self-mutilation;
Compulsive stealing;
Extremes of passivity or aggression;
Running away;
Indiscriminate friendliness.

4. Sexual abuse

Not all children are able or willing to tell parents that they have been assaulted. Changes in behaviour may be a signal that something has happened. It is the combination, frequency and duration of signs that will alert a problem. Try to notice all changes in usual behaviour, but remember that in sexual assault there may well be no physical or behavioural signs.

Signs of possible sexual abuse:

a. Behavioural

Lack of trust in adults, or over-familiarity with adults;
Fear of a particular individual;
Social isolation – withdrawal or introversions;
Sleep disturbance;
Running away from home;
Girls taking over the mothering role;
Reluctance or refusal to participate in physical activities;
Low self esteem;
Drug, alcohol or solvent abuse;
Display of sexual knowledge beyond child's years;

Unusual interest in the genitals of adults or children or animals;
Fear of bathrooms or closed doors;
Abnormal sexualized drawing;
Fear of medical examinations;
Development regression;
Poor peer relations;
Over sexualized behaviour
Compulsive masturbation;
Stealing;
Psychosomatic factors, e.g. recurrent abdominal pain or headache;
Sexual promiscuity.

b. Physical/Medical

Sleeplessness, nightmares, fear of the dark;
Bruises, scratches, bite marks to thighs or genital areas;
Obvious discomfort in the rectal area or in the area of the genitals;
Pain when passing urine;
Stained clothing, particularly underwear;
Unusual genital odour;
Anxiety or depression;
Eating disorder;
Discomfort in walking/sitting;
Self mutilation.

Roles and Responsibilities – who does what?

(see P.15 for Key Contacts)

The role of the Trustees

- To ensure safe recruitment procedures are followed and that all appropriate checks are carried out on all staff.
- To provide sufficient resources to enable appropriate training to be given to the Directors, teachers and other staff (employees or contractors).
- To ensure that the Centre has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff that comply with the London Child Protection Committee and with DfES guidance.
- To report any major incidents in accordance with the Charity Commission's regulations.

The role of the Directors

- To understand the latest procedures as set out by the London Safeguarding Children Board (<http://www.londonscb.gov.uk/procedures/>).
- Monitor the effectiveness of the policy and these procedures and liaise with the Trustees over amendments.
- Ensure that all staff know and are alert to possible signs of abuse and know what to do if they have any concerns or suspicions.
- Ensure each staff member is aware of and has access to the Centre's Child Protection Policy and has received appropriate training.
- Create a safe environment and a caring ethos within the Centre.
- Make the parents aware of the Centre's Child Protection Policy.

The role of the Director (or Designated Teacher)

- Be familiar with and understand the DfES guidance "Safeguarding Children in Education" (<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/familyandcommunity/childprotection/guidance/documentsreferredto/>), London Safeguarding Children Board procedures (see role of Directors) and the Department of Health guidance "What to do if you're worried a child is being abused" (<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/files/34C39F24E7EF47FBA9139FA01C7B0370.pdf>)
- Be responsible for referring cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the relevant agencies according to the London Safeguarding Children Board. This includes dealing with allegations against members of staff.
- Act as a source of advice and co-ordinate action in the Centre over any case of abuse.
- Keep written records that are detailed, accurate and kept secure.
- Liaise with the Trustees over any issues.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the policy and procedures and report (at least annually) any need for amendments.
- Keep up-to-date with training in identifying and referring suspected cases of abuse and pass new information to staff and Trustees.

The role of the staff

- Be aware of the contents of the Child Protection Policy and Procedures and individual responsibilities of what to do in the event of abuse.
- Be open, accepting and ready to listen to a child. Take the child's worries seriously. Do not interrupt if he/she is recalling a significant event; the first account is usually the most accurate.
- Do not guarantee confidentiality; referrals may have to be made in order to safeguard the child.
- If you need to ask questions to clarify understanding, do not lead the child, but make the questions as open as possible.
- Make a written note of the discussion within 24 hours to give to the Director. Note time, date, place, people present and what was said. Try to make the report verbatim; your notes may be needed in subsequent court proceedings.
- You are not required to investigate further, but you may be required to support or monitor the child in future.

What to do in the event of abuse

Concerns about child abuse may arise in any one of the following circumstances:

1. A member of staff suspects abuse or a child tells of abuse

You should

OBSERVE

RECORD

REPORT

- R** Respond without showing signs of disquiet, anxiety or shock.
- E** Enquire casually about how an injury was sustained or why a child is upset.
- C** Confidentiality should not be promised to children or adults.
- O** Observe carefully the behaviour or demeanour of the child or the person expressing concern.
- R** Record in detail what you have seen or heard.
- D** Do not interrogate or enter into detailed investigations; rather encourage the child to say what he or she wants until enough information is gained to decide whether or not a referral is appropriate.

Finally, **REPORT to the Director immediately.**

2. A third party expresses concern

A member of staff to whom a third party expresses concern should observe, record and report as above. If the third party is another pupil, it should be remembered that reporting suspicions of abuse may be traumatic for the child and support for that child may be advisable.

3. An anonymous allegation is received

Staff in receipt of such allegations should:

RECORD in writing the words used, if received by phone, or retain the paper where the allegation is in writing.

REPORT the matter to the Director.

4. Child abuse within a family

If it is suspected or reported that child abuse may be occurring within a family, then the Centre should not contact the parents, but instead the Director should contact the Duty Officer at the Social Services in the area where the child lives. They will give advice on the next steps. *At no point should the Centre contact the parents.*

Any fears for the children in these situations must be sensitively handled and reported to Social Services.

5. Emergency Situation

After consultation, if both the reporter and Director believe there to be clear and immediate evidence of abuse caused by a known person, then immediate contact should be made with the Police. The Police will take the responsibility of informing all other appropriate agencies.

6. Allegation against a member of staff

Any allegation against a member of staff must be taken seriously and there must be consideration of it made within the Centre. Record and Report as in Point 1 and inform the Director immediately.

If the conclusion is that the allegation is completely unfounded, the decision to take the matter no further should be recorded and the information placed in a confidential file.

Even if unfounded, parents or guardians of the child concerned must be made fully aware of the allegations. However, the identity of the member of staff involved should not be given until specific legal advice has been obtained.

In the event of enquiries being made by other parents, they should be told only that an allegation of misconduct has been made against a member of staff and that it is being investigated. No further information should be given without first seeking legal advice.

7. Allegation against the Director or a Trustee

Record and Report as in Point 1 and immediately notify the Chair of Trustees who will take independent action.

8. Abuse by other pupils

This may involve: Physical abuse
 Emotional abuse e.g. bullying, racial harassment, etc
 Sexual abuse

In minor incidents the Centre's normal disciplinary procedures should apply. In more serious cases it will have to be decided whether to involve the parents of the victim and the alleged perpetrator. The Director may wish to discuss with the victim and his/her parents whether there should be police involvement.

In all cases:

- All cases of alleged or suspected abuse must be treated seriously.
- The report to the Director should be made as far as is possible on the same day that the concerns arise.
- The member of staff making the report should keep a signed record of when the allegations were reported to the Director.
- Information about the allegation **must not be shared** with any person other than the Director or a Trustee.
- Consideration should be given to the provision of support for the child and for the member of staff who made the report.
- Any co-ordination meeting should also consider:
 - If medical treatment or assessment is required
 - Siblings and other members of the child's family
 - Implications for other pupils
 - What is the likely attitude of parents/guardians
 - Immediate welfare of the child – how does he/she get home; fear of going home, etc
- Accurate minutes of every meeting held are vital, as are any notes about decisions to refer, or not to refer, and reasons. These minutes must be kept confidential.
- A report of the incident must be given, in confidence, to the Chair of Trustees. If the allegation is against a member of staff, then it is appropriate to name that member of staff as the Director is responsible for his/her employment.

Key Contacts:

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Chair of Trustees:

Veronica Bidwell

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Confidentiality

The policy of the Dyslexia Teaching Centre is to work in partnership with parents to promote the welfare of children. The Centre also aims to build up relationships of trust with children. Children and parents should feel able to raise with the Centre concerns about safety and welfare in the knowledge that these will be dealt with sensitively.

Due to the sensitive nature of such concerns, the Centre will operate on the presumption that anything imparted in confidence will be treated in confidence, subject to 3 qualifications:

1. Anything imparted 'in confidence' to one member of staff or person approached as an associate of the Centre may be shared with a restricted number of colleagues, if that person feels in need of support and guidance from them.
2. If serious concerns are raised about the safety or welfare of a child, the person approached may be obliged, in terms of the Centre's child protection procedures, to pass that information on to the Director or Trustees for consideration as to whether it should be shared with the appropriate authorities. In these circumstances, the person approached would not, except in an emergency, breach the confidence without letting the child know that he/she intended doing so.
3. The Dyslexia Teaching Centre must pass on information when legally obliged to do so, for example, by a court of law.

Children must also feel able to share concerns with staff. Problems may arise when a child consults a member of staff about a problem and does not want that information to be shared with their parents. Whilst staff will try to encourage children to share the information with parents, where that is appropriate, there may be circumstances in which any pressure to pass the information on could result in the child keeping the problem to him/herself or not sharing concerns in the future.

Parents must be reassured that it is the aim of the Dyslexia Teaching Centre to always act in the best interests of the child and, where appropriate, to encourage the fullest possible involvement and consultation with parents.

Defamation

One of the main concerns quoted by adults in their reluctance to report suspicions of abuse is the fear that the person suspected will sue them for defamation if the allegation turns out to be unfounded.

To be defamatory, a statement must first of all be untrue. Even if subsequently shown to be untrue, the statement will be protected by "qualified privilege" if it is made to the appropriate authority in response to a duty whether legal, moral or social or in the protection of an interest. Unjustified repetition of the allegations to other persons will not be protected by privilege.

The qualification on privilege refers to statements motivated by malice. If a statement, even to the appropriate authority, can be shown to be not only untrue, but motivated by malice, then an action of defamation could be successful.

Breach of Confidence

If certain conditions are met, information may be regarded as confidential, and passing it on without permission could lead to an action for breach of confidence. Information would be regarded as confidential if:

- The information disclosed was confidential in character (not, for example, a matter of public record such as a person's age).
- Disclosure has or would cause actual harm to the person whose confidence was breached.
- One could infer from the circumstances that the confider did not want the information passed on.

If all these conditions are satisfied and an action is raised for a breach of confidence, it would be a defence to show that the information was passed on in pursuit of the public interest. As there is a clear public interest in the protection of children, it is difficult to envisage any such action succeeding.

Prevention

1. Recruitment

The Dyslexia Teaching Centre strives to ensure that it applies the highest standards in its recruitment and vetting policies.

Candidates will be checked for their suitability for working with children and their understanding of child protection. Safeguarding checks, such as disclosure of previous convictions or police checks (if disclosure is unavailable), forms an important part of our recruitment policy.

Disclosure or police checks will also be completed for people contracted to work at the Centre.

2. Duty of Care

The Dyslexia Teaching Centre takes its duty of care very seriously. This includes the responsibility for escorting children at all times whilst on the premises and also ensuring their safe transportation, whilst under the supervision of a member of staff, to and from the Centre (e.g. to or from their school, educational trips, etc).

Written material and visual images used by The Dyslexia Teaching Centre or Trustees need to be checked as being appropriate and not denigrating for any child. Photographs, films of children and websites must show respect for children and be in their best interest.

Support

Child abuse is a difficult and emotional subject for the child victim and for the staff dealing with the issue. The Dyslexia Teaching Centre will support staff who disclose abuse, refer concerns, or are involved when an incident has happened.

Referral Form

About YOU

Your name and email address:

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.....

Your relationship to the Dyslexia Teaching Centre:

.....
.....

Your relationship to the child concerned – if relevant:

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.....
.....

About THE CHILD/CHILDREN

Name of child:

.....

Age and date of birth of child:

.....

Who does the child live with?

.....

Address/place of residence (and telephone no. if available):

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.....
.....
.....

Referral Form (continued)

About YOUR CONCERN

Are you reporting your own concerns or passing on those of somebody else?
Give details.

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.....

Brief description of what has prompted the concerns (include dates and times of any specific incidents):

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.....

Observations made by you: Physical signs? Behavioural signs? Indirect Signs?

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.....

Have you spoken with the child? If so, what was said? (verbatim)

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.....

Has anybody been alleged to be the abuser? If so, give details:

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.....

Have you consulted an external agency or reported this to anyone else?
Give details (name of person, organization, date and time)

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.....

Does the child require medical attention?

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.....
.....

Signature:

Date: