



Bushfield School
Child Protection Policy

Adopted by Governors 13th February 2008

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children's Act 1989; and in line with the following:
- “Working Together to Safeguard Children” 1999
- “Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families” 2000
- “What to do if you are worried a Child is being Abused” 2003 ¹
- Guidance about Child Protection Arrangements for the Education Service” 2004 ².
- Milton Keynes Area Child Protection Committee Multi-Agency Child in Need/Child Protection Procedures
- 1.2 The Governing Body takes seriously its responsibility under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard ³ and promote the welfare of children; and to work together with other agencies to ensure adequate arrangements within our school to identify, assess, and support those children who are suffering harm.
- 1.3 We recognise that all staff ⁴ and governors have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm. and that the child's welfare is our paramount concern.
- 1.4 All staff believe that our school should provide a safe caring positive and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child.

¹ What To Do If You Are Worried A Child is Being Abused www.doh.gov.uk/safeguardigchildren/index.htm

² Guidance about Child Protection Arrangements for the Education Service Sept 2004.

³ Safeguarding (as defined in the Joint Inspector's Safeguarding report is taken to mean “All agencies working with children, young people and their families take all reasonable measures to ensure that the risk of harm to children's welfare are minimised” and “where there are concerns about children and young people's welfare, all agencies take all appropriate actions to address those concerns, working to agree local policies and procedures in full partnership with other agencies”.

⁴ “Staff” covers ALL adult staff on site, including temporary, supply and ancillary staff, and volunteers working with children.

- 1.5 The aims of this policy are:
 - 1.5.1 To support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and resilience.
 - 1.5.2 To provide an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued and respected, feel confident and know how to approach adults if they are in difficulties.
 - 1.5.3 To raise the awareness of all teaching and non-teaching staff of the need to safeguard children and their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.
 - 1.5.4 To provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm, and ensure we, the school, contribute to assessments of need and support plans for those children.
 - 1.5.5 To acknowledge the need for effective and appropriate communication between all members of staff in relation to safeguarding pupils.
 - 1.5.6 To develop structured procedure within the school which will be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse.
 - 1.5.7 To develop effective working relationships with all other agencies, involved in safeguarding children.
 - 1.5.8 To ensure that all adults within our school who have access to children have been checked as to their suitability. This includes other community users of our facilities.

2.0 Procedures

- 2.1 Our school procedures for safeguarding children will be in line with Milton Keynes LA and Milton Keynes Area Child Protection Committee Child Protection Procedures, "Working Together to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children. We will ensure that:
 - 2.1.1 The governing body understands and fulfils its safeguarding responsibilities.
 - 2.1.2 We have a designated senior member of the Leadership Team for child protection who has undertaken Basic Child Protection Training in accordance with Milton Keynes Child Protection Committee, and who undertakes other training as recommended by the LA every two years.
 - 2.1.3 We have member of staff who will act in the designated teacher's absence who has, also received basic multi-agency training, and who will have been briefed in the role.
 - 2.1.4 All members of staff are provided with opportunities to receive training by the designated teacher in order to develop their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse every three years.

- 2.1.5 All members of staff, volunteers, and governors know how to respond to a pupil who discloses abuse and the procedure to be followed in appropriately sharing a concern of possible abuse or a disclosure of abuse.
- 2.1.6 All parents/carers are made aware of the school's responsibilities in regard to child protection procedures through publication of the schools' Child Protection Policy, and reference to it in our prospectus/brochure and home school agreement.
- 2.1.7 Our lettings policy will seek to ensure the suitability of adults working with children on school sites at any one time.
- 2.1.8 Community users organising activities for children are aware of and understand the need for compliance with the school's child protection guidelines and procedures.
- 2.1.9 Our selection and recruitment policy includes all checks on staff suitability including Criminal Records Bureau checks as recommended by the LA and in accordance with current legislation.
- 2.1.10 The name of any member of staff considered not suitable to work with children will be notified to the DfES Teachers' Misconduct Team, with the advice and support of Education Personnel and in accordance with the Barring Regulations.⁵
- 2.1.11 Our procedures will be annually reviewed and up-dated.
- 2.1.12 The name of the Designated Teacher will be clearly shown in the school, with a statement explaining the school's role in referring and monitoring cases of suspected abuse.
- 2.1.13 All adults, (including supply teachers and volunteers) new to our school will be given a written statement about the school's policy and procedures, a copy of our child protection policy, the name and contact details of the designated person and the booklet "What to do if You're Worried a Child is Being Abused", and have these explained, as part of their induction into the school.

⁵ The "Barring Regulations" are the Procedures for Barring or Restricting People Working with Children in Education" DfES July 2003

3.0 Responsibilities

- 3.1 We understand that our responsibility to safeguard children requires that we all appropriately share any concerns that we may have about children.
- 3.1.1 We have a designated teacher who is responsible for:
- 3.1.2 Referring a child by telephone if there are concerns about a child's welfare, possible abuse or neglect to the local Children's Services. A written record of the referral will be faxed/posted/e-mailed to Children's Services, (using the multi-agency referral form), and a copy to the LA Lead Officer for Child Protection within one hour of the telephone call or as soon as possible within the school day.
- 3.1.3 Ensuring that detailed and accurate written records of concerns about a child are kept even if there is no need to make an immediate referral.
- 3.1.4 Ensuring that all such records are kept confidentially and securely and are separate from pupil records, with a front sheet listing dates and brief entry to provide a chronology.
- 3.1.5 Ensuring that an indication of further record-keeping is marked on the pupil records.
- 3.1.6 Acting as a focal point for staff concerns and liaising with other agencies and professionals.
- 3.1.7 Ensuring that either they or another appropriately informed member of staff attends case conferences, family support meetings, core groups, or other multi-agency planning meetings, contributes to the Framework for Assessments process, and provides a report which has been shared with the parents.
- 3.1.8 Ensuring that any pupil currently on the child protection register who is absent without explanation for two days is referred to their key worker's Children's Services Team.
- 3.1.9 Ensuring that all school staff are aware of the school's CP policy and procedures, and know how to recognise and refer any concerns.
- 3.1.10 Providing, with the Head Teacher, an annual report for the governing body, detailing any changes to the policy and procedures; training undertaken by the Designated Teacher, and by all staff and governors; relevant curricular issues, number and type of incidents/cases, and number of children referred to Children's Services and on the child protection register (anonymised).
- 3.1.11 Keeping themselves up to date with knowledge to enable them to fulfil their role, including attending relevant training, at least every two years, provided by the Milton Keynes Area Child Protection Committee, and the LA.

4.0 Supporting Children

- 4.1 We recognise that a child who is abused, who witnesses violence or who lives in a violent environment may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame him/herself, and find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self-worth.
- 4.2 We recognise that the school may provide the only stability in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm.
- 4.3 We accept that research shows that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn.
- 4.4 Our school will support all pupils by:
 - 4.4.1 Encouraging the development of self-esteem and resilience in every aspect of school life including through the curriculum.
 - 4.4.2 Promoting a caring, safe and positive environment within the school.
 - 4.4.3 Liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children.
 - 4.4.4 Notifying Children's Services as soon as there is a significant concern.
 - 4.4.5 Ensuring that a named teacher is designated for Looked After Children (LAC) and that an up to date list of children is regularly reviewed and updated. The Education Welfare Officer for the school must be made aware of all LAC in the school.
 - 4.4.6 Providing continuing support to a pupil (about whom there have been concerns) who leaves the school by ensuring that such concerns and school medical records are forwarded under confidential cover to the Head at the pupil's new school as a matter of urgency, a photocopy of these records should be kept in a confidential file.

5.0 Confidentiality

- 5.1 We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential.
- 5.2 The Head Teacher or designated teacher will disclose personal information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need to know basis only.
- 5.3 However, all staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.
- 5.4 All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or well-being or that of another.
- 5.5 We will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to Children's Services with their parents/carers unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm, or impede a criminal investigation. If in doubt, we will consent with Children's Services on this point.

6.0 Supporting Staff

- 6.1 We recognise that staff working in the school who have become involved with a child who has suffered harm, or appears to be likely to suffer harm may find the situation stressful and upsetting.
- 6.2 We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the Designated Teacher and to seek further support. This could be provided for all staff by, for example, the Head Teacher, by Occupational Health, and/or a teacher/trade union representative as appropriate.
- 6.3 We recognised that designated staff should have access to support (as in 6.2 above) and appropriate workshops, courses or meetings as organised by the LA.

7.0 Allegations Against Staff

- 7.1 All school staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents to be conducted in view of other adults.
- 7.2 We understand that a pupil may make an allegation against a member of staff. If such an allegation is made, the member of staff receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Head Teacher or the most senior teacher if the Head Teacher is not present.
 - 7.2.1 The Head Teacher/senior teacher on all such occasions will discuss the content of the allegation with the LA Lead Officer for Child Protection, or, in his/her absence, Principal Education Welfare Officer.
 - 7.2.2 If the allegation made to a member of staff concerns the Head Teacher, the person receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Chair of Governors who will consult as in 7.2 above, without notifying the Head Teacher first.
 - 7.2.3 The school will follow the LA procedures for managing allegations against staff, a copy of which can be found on the Milton Keynes Council Education website.
 - 7.2.4 Suspension of the member of staff against whom an allegation has been made needs careful consideration, and we will consult (as in 7.2.2 above) in making a decision .
 - 7.2.5 Our lettings agreement for other users requires that the organiser will manage the suspension of adults where necessary from school premises.

8.0 Whistle Blowing

- 8.1 We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.
- 8.2 All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues.

9.0 Physical Intervention/Positive Handling

- 9.1 Our policy on physical intervention/positive handling by staff is set out separately. When a child is endangering him/herself or others and that, at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person.
- 9.2 Such events should be recorded and signed by a witness.
- 9.3 Staff who are likely to need to use physical intervention should be appropriately trained.
- 9.4 We understand that physical intervention of a nature, which causes injury or distress to a child, may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures.

10.0 Anti-Bullying

- 10.1 Our policy on the prevention and management of bullying is set out in a separate policy and acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

11.0 Racist Incidents

- 11.1 Our policy on racist incidents is set out in a separate policy and acknowledges that repeated racist incidents or a single serious incident may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

12.0 Prevention

- 12.1 We recognise that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our pupils by providing pupils with effective lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection.
- 12.2 The school community will therefore:
 - 12.2.1 Establish and maintain an ethos, which is understood by all staff, which enables children to feel secure and encourages them to talk knowing that they will be listened to.
 - 12.2.2 Ensure that all children know there is an adult in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.
 - 12.2.3 Provide across the curriculum, opportunities which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm and to know to whom they should turn for help.

13.0 Health & Safety

- 13.1 Our Health & Safety Policy, set out in a separate document, reflects the consideration we give to the protection of our children both physically within the school environment, and for example in relation to internet use, and when away from the school when undertaking school trips and visits.

14.0 Policy Review

- 14.1 The governing body of our school is responsible for ensuring the annual review of this policy.



Bushfield School

Child Protection Procedure Guidance

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Bushfield School Child Protection Policy and Practice

This policy statement and procedures are formulated with reference to:

- Milton Keynes Inter Agency Procedures to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children, September 2004
- 'Working Together' – a multi agency code of practice
- DfEE Circular 10/95. Protecting Children from Abuse
- The Children Act, 1989.

Aims

For the Child

- To protect the child
- To prevent further abuse
- To help a child who has been abused

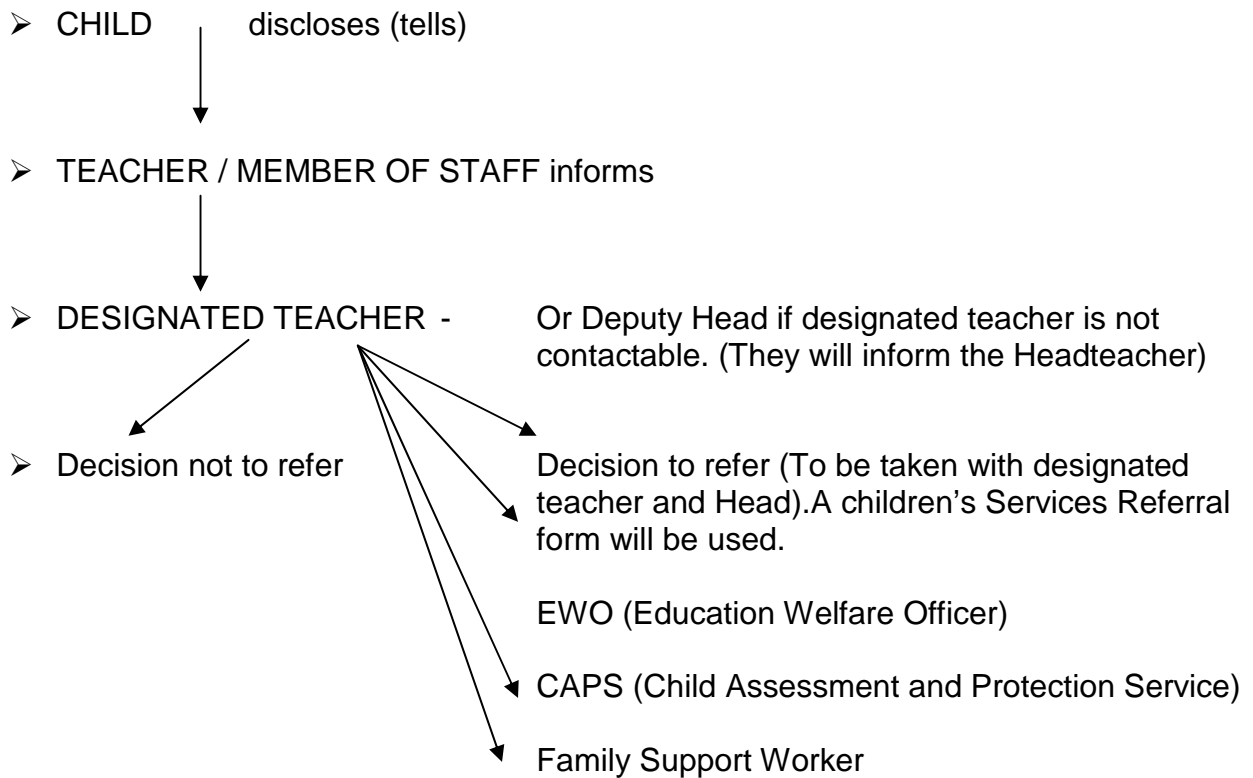
For the Staff

- To recognise the nature of abuse
- To be clear on procedures to be followed
- To understand the roles of individuals and agencies
- To ensure staff are aware of issues such as confidentiality.

Designated Teacher: Andrea Curtis, Headteacher
 Sue Gaynor (Learning mentor) who will inform the Headteacher,
 or in her absence the Assistant Headteachers, to discuss whether
 a referral is necessary

Nominated Governor: Kerry Anne McKenzie

Procedure for Dealing with Suspected Child Abuse



IMPORTANT Do's and Don't s if a child discloses to you.

Do reassure the child	Don't look shocked
Do accept the information freely	Don't ask 'closed' questions.
Do give the child space and time	Don't interrogate for details Don't ask any questions if sexual abuse – just listen
Do tell the child you must pass on the information	Don't make judgements
Do act quickly	Don't make promises Don't involve anybody else beyond the designated teacher.

RECORD EVIDENCE

- Be factual and objective – use verbatim speech if possible
- Record statements especially time, date (inc. year) etc.
- Use file to store information
- Log all communication – in file.

Definitions of Abuse of a Child

These definitions are taken from 'Working Together under the Children Act 1989' produced by: Home Office, Department of Health, Department of Education and Science, and published by HMSO 1991.

- **NEGLECT** - The persistent or severe neglect of a child (for example, by exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation), which results in serious impairment of a child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.
- **PHYSICAL ABUSE** - Actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury (or suffering) to a child including deliberate poisoning, suffocation, and Munchausen's syndrome by proxy.
- **SEXUAL ABUSE** - Actual or likely exploitation of a child or adolescent
- **EMOTIONAL ABUSE** - Actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection. All abuse involves some emotional ill treatment. This category should be used where it is the main or sole form of abuse.

NOTE: These categories of abuse are neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive and all may result in a failure of a child to thrive.

ROLES

DESIGNATED TEACHER

All disclosures must be made to the designated teacher, as should any general concerns or feelings. It is the designated teacher's responsibility to liaise with the Headteacher and together decide to formally refer to an agency beyond the school, or to seek further advice.

The designated teacher will be responsible for logging information and following a referral co-operate with the investigating agency.

They also have a role in supporting colleagues to whom the disclosure was made.

CHILD ASSESSMENT AND PROTECTION SERVICE

Together with the police this service have a formal responsibility for investigating suspected cases. They are the co-ordinating agency that will institute strategy meetings and decide whether cases should come to conference. They have a right to instigate an Emergency Protection Order to remove a child to a place of safety for up to 8 days.

POLICE

Are able to act quickly if there is an emergency and CAPS cannot be reached. They are able to use Police Protection powers to protect a child. They investigate suspected abuse.

E.W.O.

Can act as a 'sounding board' for the school or designated teacher. Will refer if school is reluctant and there is an issue of child abuse.

AREA HEALTH AUTHORITY

Will be involved if there is need for medical attention or evidence of physical/sexual abuse. They will be contacted as a contributing agency by CAPS following a referral.

CHILD CONCERN FORM

**Bushfield School
Designated Teacher: Andrea Curtis**

Telephone: (01908) 314876

Child's Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

If a child is referred to Social Services a copy of this may be sent.

Date (Include Year)	CONCERN: Use any of child's own words, Give name of reporting teacher.	ACTION: (By whom, with dates)

CHILD INFORMATION FORM

Headteacher

**Bushfield School
Designated Teacher:**

Telephone: (01908) 314876

Child's Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

This form is for any information that may be useful to note e.g. Access rights of a parent, where disputed, agency referral other than for learning/medical/language needs. Please date and initial every entry.

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE

- Unexplained injuries or burns, particularly if they are recurrent.
- Refusal to discuss injuries.
- Improbable explanations for injuries.
- Untreated injuries or lingering illness not attended to.
- Admission of punishment, which appears excessive.
- Shrinking from physical contact.
- Fear of returning home or of parents being contacted.
- Fear of undressing.
- Fear of medical help.
- Aggression/bullying.
- Over compliant behaviour or a 'watchful attitude'.
- Running away.
- Significant changes in behaviour without explanation.
- Self-destructive tendencies.
- Unexplained pattern of absences from school, which may serve to hide bruises or other physical injuries.

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE

- Physical, mental, emotional development lags.
- Continual self-denigration
- Fear of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations.
- Self-harm or mutilation.
- Compulsive stealing.
- Drug/solvent abuse.
- 'Neurotic' behaviour – obsessive rocking, thumb sucking and so on.
- Compulsive stealing/scrounging.
- Air of detachment – 'don't care' attitude.
- Social isolation – does not join in and has few friends.
- Desperate attention-seeking behaviour.
- Eating problems including overeating and lack of appetite.
- Depression, withdrawal.

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF NEGLECT

- Constant hunger.
- Poor personal hygiene.
- Inappropriate clothing.
- Untreated medical problems.
- Low self-esteem.
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school.
- Poor social relationships.
- Constant tiredness.
- Compulsive stealing.

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF SEXUAL ABUSE.

Children from the ages of 5 to 12 may:

- Hint about secrets they cannot tell.
- Say that a friend has a problem.
- Ask if you will keep a secret if they tell you something.
- Begin lying, stealing, blatantly cheating in the hope of being caught.
- Have unexplained sources of money.
- Have terrifying dreams.
- Start wetting themselves.
- Exhibit sudden, inexplicable changes in behaviour, such as becoming aggressive or withdrawn.
- Stop enjoying previously liked activities, such as music, sports, art, scouts or guides.
- Be reluctant to undress for gym.
- Become fearful or refuse to see certain adults for no apparent reason.
- Act in a sexual way inappropriate to their age.

- Draw sexually explicit pictures depicting some act of abuse.
- Seem to be keeping a secret, which is worrying them.
- Have urinary infections, bleeding or soreness in the genital or anal areas.
- Have soreness or bleeding in the throat.
- Have chronic ailments, such as stomach pains or headaches.
- Develop eating disorders, such as anorexia or bulimia
- Become severely depressed, even attempt suicide.
- Have a poor self-image, self mutilate.
- Continually run away.
- Regress to younger behaviour.
- Show discomfort when walking.
- Say they are no good, dirty, rotten
- Be wary, watchful
- Repeat obscene words or phrases, which may have been said to them during the abuse.
- Attempt to sexually abuse another child.
- Talk or write about sexual matters.
- Act in a sexually inappropriate way towards adults.

SCHOOLS AND THOSE WITH PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR A CHILD

This note explains who is a parent for the purposes of education legislation and who may have parental responsibility for a child and the main limitations that the courts may sometimes impose on that responsibility. It sets out who schools must involve in major and minor issues about a child's education and who they must keep informed about general school matter. Everyone with parental responsibility has a right to participate in major decisions about a child's education, even though, for day to day purposes, the school's main contact is likely to be the person with whom the child lives on school days.

The definition of *parent* in the Education Acts includes:

- All natural parents whether they are married or not;
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has *parental responsibility* for a child or young person; and
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, *has care* of a child or young person.

Having *parental responsibility* means assuming all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority that a parent of a child has by law. It is defined by the Children Act 1989. It gives parents the legal right to make decisions and choices, such as where the child will live or go to school etc. If the parents were married to each other at the time of a child's birth, or if they have been married to each other at any times since the child's conception, they each have parental responsibility.

Having *care* of a child or young person means that a person who the child lives with, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child is considered to be a parent in education law.

School and LEA staff must treat all parents (as defined above) equally, **unless there are court orders limiting an individual's exercise of parental responsibility**. All individuals who are parents (as defined above) have the same rights as natural parents, for example:

- To vote in elections for parent governors;
- To vote in ballots on the school's status;
- To participate in assessments for special educational needs;
- To receive a copy of the governor's annual report and school prospectus, if they ask to receive these;
- To be invited to parents' meetings, open evenings and school inspection meetings;
- To see the child's school record.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY AND THE CHILDREN ACT 1989

Parental responsibility is a shared right and a shared duty throughout a child's life. If the parents separate or divorce, that responsibility does not disappear nor is it reallocated to one parent rather than the other. It continues to be shared. It is only lost in Adoption.

It may be useful to note the position of the men who have children outside of marriage. They are often not aware until their relationship breaks down that, even if they are named as the father on the birth certificate, they do not share the same rights as the mother.

If the parents of the child were not married to each other when the child was born, only the mother automatically has parental responsibility. The father of the child does not have parental responsibility even if he is named on the birth certificate. Other people can acquire it, but the parental responsibility of one party does not stop because another person also gets it. So, in some cases several people may have parental responsibility for one child.

Section 4 of the Children Act deals with the ways in which parental responsibility can be acquired by fathers who are not married to the mother of the child. They can acquire it by means of:

- An agreement with the mother to share equal parental responsibility by making a **Parental Responsibility Agreement**; or
- Through a court order, i.e. by obtaining a **Parental Responsibility Order**.

Fathers may also get parental responsibility through:

- A residence order for the child; or
- Becoming the legal guardian of the child.

Anyone can acquire it by:

- Being granted a residence order;
- Being appointed a guardian;
- Being named in an emergency protection order. (Parental responsibility here is limited to taking reasonable steps to safeguard or promote the child's welfare);
- Adopting a child.

The *local authority* has parental responsibility if it is named in a care order for the child.

The principle that parental responsibility can be shared (other than by two people living together) and that parental responsibility does not stop if the marriage or relationship breaks down has implications for school records. Head teachers should ask parents or guardians the names and addresses of all parents when they register a pupil. These details, where known, must be included in the admission register. They should also be included in manuscript or computerised pupil records and be available to the pupil's teachers. The information should be forwarded to any school to which the pupil moves.

The school must keep pupil records up-to-date.

Section 8 Orders

Court orders under section 8 of the Children Act 1989 (often called section 8 orders) settle areas of dispute about a child's care or upbringing, and can limit an individual's parental responsibility.

- **A prohibited steps order** imposes a specific restriction on the exercise of parental responsibility. This means that no step which could be taken by a parent in meeting his/her parental responsibility, and which is specified by the court, can be taken without the consent of the court e.g. taking the child abroad for an extended period.
- **A specific issue order** is an order giving directions for the purpose of determining a specific question, which has arisen, or may arise, in connection with any aspect of parental responsibility e.g. permission in respect of a particular medical condition or choice of school.

Both of the above are concerned with **single issues**. Whatever section 8 orders are in force, *everyone with parental responsibility* is entitled to participate in all **other** major decisions about a child's education.

A **specific issue order** would allow one parent to agree, say, to a pupil changing school against the wishes of the other parent. A **prohibited steps order** would allow one parent to prevent a child from attending a form of religious worship against the wishes of the other parent. Sometimes others like the local authority may also have parental responsibility for the child i.e. through a care order. However, before a care order or supervision order can be made, the courts must be satisfied that making a care order is for the child's welfare – which has to be the paramount consideration. Once the child is in the care of the local authority, they have a duty to consult the parents about which school the child should attend, as they continue to share parental responsibility, but it will be the local authority who will make the decision which is considered to be in the child's best interests.

- **A residence order** says where and with whom a child should live, and gives the holder parental responsibility for the child (if he or she does not have it already).
- **A contact order** instructs the person with whom the child is living to allow another person to visit the child, have the child to visit or stay with him or her, or have contact by letter or telephone.

Details of court orders must be noted in a pupil's record. School staff will then know who can give parental permission for a school visit, or be contacted if the child is ill, as well as what to do in more difficult situations. For example, if a parent, rather than a foster-parent, comes to collect a child in local authority care from school.

A parent's action or proposed action may conflict with the school's ability to act in the best interests of the child. If so, the school staff should first try to resolve the problem with that parent but avoid becoming involved in any conflict.

Sometimes parents (whether divorced or not) may not be permitted to act independently despite having parental responsibility. For example, one parent or the local authority when the child is in their care, cannot change a child's name without the consent of the other parent.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact:

Linda Kennedy
Department for Education and Employment
Admissions and Information for Parents Division
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT

Tel: 0171 925 5918

Fax: 0171 925 5179

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