

Annual Link Governor Safeguarding Report

Safeguarding Children – Notes from meeting with Debbie Christopher – Designated School Lead on Child Protection (CP) issues – 27th January 2023

SCR check with Miriam Hall last completed – November 2022

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – Debbie Christopher (DCH) continues in this role with Jeremy Morland as her deputy. Luke Ryder has also completed his DSL training and is now part of the team.

Designated governor for child protection / safeguarding – Adrian Thomas

Current Safeguarding legislation

The revised documents school are working with are:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 – this legislation placed a shared and equal duty for safeguarding on Gloucestershire County Council, Gloucestershire Constabulary and the NHS Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (GCCG). This partnership is known as GSCP (Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership)
- The Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Executive (GSCE) also provides information on safeguarding through its website.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education - September 2022

All of the changes and updates within these documents are included in the school safeguarding packs and policies.

The Gloucestershire Safeguarding Executive Board have been very helpful and proactive. They run half hour training / update sessions every fortnight on Teams. DCH attends whenever possible.

Ofsted – Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools and Colleges – June 2021

This report has now been incorporated into KCSiE 2022. DCH has included this in the School Development Plan for this academic year – which has entailed a complete review of Behaviour and Discipline and anti bullying policies. DCH is currently working with the School Council on this. In response to the recent OFSTED inspection DCH has instigated a whole school (all staff and pupils) review of Sexualised Behaviour with the aim of forming a whole school approach for implementation from September 2023.

GSCE Safeguarding audit for schools

GSCP had intended to release an online version of the audit in January 2023. This is called a Safeguarding Assurance Declaration. However on testing it proved to be not fit for purpose and so has been abandoned for this academic year. Therefore the audit completed in December 2021 is still extant. The new online version is scheduled for completion next academic year, date to be advised.

Policies

All policies are compliant with KCSiE 2022. The policies (Child Protection, allegations management, safer working practice, anti bullying, behaviour, acceptable use of IT, e safety, safeguarding and whistleblowing etc) have been reviewed and updated and comply with government Safeguarding guidelines and model policy. All policies link references to safeguarding and child protection. The policies have been approved at the governor curriculum/pastoral meetings.

Child Protection policy and procedures – The policy was discussed at the November 2022 Curriculum and Pastoral Committee meeting and was approved at the full governing body meeting in January 23

Allegations Management – The changes in KCSiE 2022 meant that DCH had to make a few minor alterations to the Allegations Policy for the next academic year and these have been put into effect.

There is an update on safeguarding as a standing agenda item on each Governors' Curriculum and Pastoral meeting as well as all Full Governing Body meetings. Debbie attended the full governors' meeting in December 2022 to update all governors on developments linked to safeguarding

Child Protection procedures

The Safeguarding Procedures Handbook is updated and distributed to staff every September. This is in a ring binder which makes it easier to update and amend during the academic year. Debbie also does a presentation to staff in September. All staff and governors are also required to read Part 1 and 5 of "Keeping Safe in Education" plus annex A. At the September inset there is a reminder to all staff. Forms are completed and kept with the Central Register to confirm they have read the document. DCH has to evidence this has happened and so all staff and governors were asked to complete a questionnaire covering the 3 documents. A 100% response rate was achieved and all were indicative of having completed the process diligently. A clear system is in place for all new staff to have CP training within 7 days of them starting work at school.

DCH has continued to make improvements to staff awareness of child protection procedures and this is now embedded in to school. She attends all whole school staff meetings and safeguarding is always included as an agenda item. Safeguarding is kept high on the staff agenda via emails and newsletters and in weekly staff briefings as/when appropriate.

Safeguarding Training :

Safer Recruitment – As one member of staff on any interview panel should have had this training the school has put a number of staff and governors through the training. All interview panels comply with this requirement. Update training is currently required every 5 years.

Staff training –

All staff receive a safeguarding update on the first day back in September. Additionally over 90% of the school staff undertook training delivered by GSCP in November 2022; this is required every 3 years. Four governors also attended.

DCH, COA and Adrian Thomas have done the Single Central Record training. All staff training is recorded on the Central Record and is up to date.

SLT – To ensure that SLT are informed and involved with Safeguarding in school, this forms part of the Pupils section of each SLT agenda. This counteracts the concerns raised by the Ofsted report that, too often, SLT are too removed from this area of work with young people.

Governor training

KCSiE 2022 requires governors to have training to help them in their role as having responsibility for the strategic overview of safeguarding activities at school.

Record keeping – A separate child protection pupil file is kept in a secure filing cabinet in Debbie's office.

CPOMS (Child Protection, Online Monitoring and Safeguarding) - DCH is very pleased with the CPOMS software as it provides a clear, chronological timeline of incidents and will do away with the need for a lot of paper records. The system is intuitive and is easy for staff to record all concerns. It can also be used to record SEND information and can store reports – such as CP paperwork, ed.psych. and therapist reports etc. Unfortunately, whilst SIMS links to CPOMS for attendance and personal details it appears not to link when recording incidents.

DCH passes on CP records to post 16 providers. If a pupil isn't progressing to further education then the records are kept in school for the required period – 10 years. Records of primary pupils can be transferred to Kingshill via CPOMS once the pupils start here. Most of our feeder primary schools use CPOMS, so this transfer of information should become easier in the future.

Referrals to Social Care

Details of all referrals are contained within CPOMS. Reporting is through MASH, an online portal. All Safeguarding concerns are logged on CPOMS even if they don't meet the Social Care threshold.

There is an increased focus on Children Missing Education and an ever increasing number of pupils who are home educated (Elective Home Education). This group are often vulnerable and at increased risk of CSE. As is happening across Gloucestershire, schools are seeing an increased number of parents wanting to opt for elective home education. In school, at key stage 3, three pupils have been taken off role for Elective Home Education since 09/22. We fully comply with the requirements of the Local Authority by offering EXIT discussions and sharing information with parents. This continues to cause concern as these young people will not be effectively monitored and supported by the L.A.

The school are still finding it very difficult and frustrating when having to work with Childrens Services. There are still delays in calling CP conferences etc. Families have had up to 7 different social workers allocated to them so there is little opportunity for them to have ongoing support from a named professional in social care. 'Drift and delay' is still apparent in many cases. Many CP meetings seem to centre on the needs of the parent rather than the child. Families are increasingly finding that school is the only consistent agency and are relying on school staff even more. Pastoral roles are constantly evolving with this escalation and staff are put under increasing time pressures and stress through these expectations. Although throughout the academic year, CP meetings have still been conducted by telephone conferencing – the option for "Face to face" meetings between families, school and social care is being offered from January 2023. DCH believes that telephone and Teams Conferencing as means of communication are flawed and likely to lead to professionals being unable to watch for visual clues – body language, facial expression and for families not to be able to see professionals to gauge their involvement and sincerity.

Operation Encompass - Operation Encompass remains in place. This means that if a Domestic Abuse incident is reported to police, involving one of our families, DCH will receive an email in the morning between 8.15 – 9 am. In turn this means she can then do appropriate checks on the child. A letter was sent home to inform parents that this is happening. DCH feels this is good news, welcomes this work and feels that it makes good sense.

Mental Health

The new Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Policy has been embedded into school. There is an increased emphasis on mental health in school for both pupils and staff and this area is included in the School Development Plan. Teens in Crisis are currently averaging 12 weeks for a referral to be picked up.

There are currently 2 Teens in Crisis counsellors in school working with pupils. Parents and young people can refer themselves to TIC but they have a huge waiting list. CAMHS currently have a 2 year waiting list and have also changed their threshold for who they will work with. For instance, they will not work with a pupil who is not in a settled home and also require parents to complete parenting courses.

The theatre company (Alter-Ego) who deliver Chelsea's Choice came into school to do so for year 8 pupils in October 2022 and is booked for the Autumn term in 2023. In March 2023 the same theatre company will deliver a play on County Lines to Y9 pupils.

Exclusions

These are still below the Gloucestershire average and remain low this academic year. This is in part due to the hard work of staff who go above and beyond what would be expected of them as teachers in order to offer support to vulnerable pupils.