



Guidance for Safe Working Practice for the Protection of Children and Staff in Education Settings

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Overview

The vast majority of adults who work with children in education settings act professionally. They seek to provide a safe and supportive environment, which secures the well-being and very best outcomes for children and young people in their care. It is recognised that achieving these aims is not always straightforward. Much relies on pupil and staff interactions where tensions and misunderstandings can occur. It is here that staff behaviours can give rise to allegations being made against them. Allegations may be genuine, malicious or misplaced. They may arise from differing perceptions of the same event, but when they occur, they are inevitably distressing and difficult for all concerned.

Staff working in education settings have expressed concern about their vulnerability and have requested clearer advice about what constitutes illegal behaviour and what might be considered as misconduct. They have asked for practical guidance about which behaviours constitute safe practice and which behaviours should be avoided.

This document has been produced in response to these concerns. It has been adapted from Guidance for safe working practice for the protection of children and staff in education settings produced by The National Network of Investigation and Referral Support Co-ordinators February 2005. It seeks to ensure that the duty of care towards pupils and staff is promoted by raising awareness of illegal, unsafe and unwise behaviour. It is hoped that it will also assist staff to monitor their own standards and practice.

The guidance will also support employers in giving a clear message that unlawful or unsafe behaviour will not be tolerated and that where appropriate, legal or disciplinary action is likely to follow.

Whilst every attempt has been made to cover a wide range of situations, it is recognised that any such guidance cannot cover all eventualities. There may be times when professional judgements are made in situations not covered by this document, or which directly contravene the guidance given by their employer. It is expected that in these circumstances staff will always advise their senior colleagues of the justification for any such action already taken or proposed.

This document should be read in conjunction with the National Employers Organisation for School Teachers (NEOST) 'Guidance on Conduct', 'Preventing Abuse of Trust', and 'Staff Facing an Allegation of Abuse' jointly produced by NEOST and the six Teacher Unions. This document is also of relevance to LEAs and employers in education in respect of the requirements of Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 and the related guidance¹.

1. Duty of Care

Teachers and other education staff are accountable for the way in which they exercise authority; manage risk; use resources; and protect pupils from discrimination and avoidable harm.

All staff, whether paid or voluntary, have a duty to keep young people safe and to protect them from physical and emotional harm. This duty is in part exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between staff and pupils and behaviour by staff that demonstrates integrity, maturity and good judgement.

LAs, schools and parents have legitimate expectations about the nature of professional involvement in the lives of pupils. When individuals accept a role that involves working with children and young people, they need to understand and acknowledge the responsibilities and trust inherent in that role.

Employers have a duty of care towards their employees under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974² which requires them to provide a safe working environment for staff and guidance about safe working practices. The Act also imposes a duty on employees³ to take care of themselves and anyone else who may be affected by their actions or failings. In this respect, the duty of care towards both staff and children can be demonstrated through the use of these guidelines. An employer's duty of care and the staff duty of care towards children should not conflict.

This means that adults should:

- *understand the responsibilities, which are part of their employment or role, and be aware that sanctions will be applied if these provisions are breached*

¹ Safeguarding Children in Education September 2004 Ref: DfES/0027/2004

² Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 Part I, Section. 2 (1) and (2)

³ Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 Part I, Section.7

- *always act, and be seen to act, in the child's best interests*
- *avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions*
- *take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour.*

2. Exercise of Professional Judgement

This guidance cannot provide a complete checklist of what is, or is not, appropriate behaviour for staff. It does highlight however, behaviour that is illegal, inappropriate or inadvisable. There will be occasions and circumstances in which staff have to make decisions or take action in the best interests of the child or young person which could contravene this guidance or where no guidance exists. Individuals are expected to make judgements about their behaviour in order to secure the best interests and welfare of the children in their charge and in so doing, will be seen to be acting reasonably.

This means that where no specific guidance exists staff should:

- *discuss the circumstances that informed their action, or their proposed action, with a senior colleague. This will help to ensure that the safest practices are employed and reduce the risk of actions being misinterpreted*
- *always discuss any misunderstanding, accidents or threats with a senior manager*
- *always record discussions and actions taken with their justifications.*

3. Power and Positions of Trust

As a result of their knowledge, position and/or the authority invested in their role, all adults working with children and young people in education settings are in positions of trust in relation to the young people in their care. A relationship between a member of staff and a pupil cannot be a relationship between equals. There is potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable young people and staff have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification.

Wherever possible, staff should avoid behaviour, which might be misinterpreted by others, and report and record any incident with this potential.

Where a person aged 18 or over is in a position of trust with a child under 18, it is an offence for that person to engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of that child, or to cause or incite that that child to engage in or watch sexual activity⁴

This means that adults should not:

- *use their position to gain access to information for their own advantage and/or a child's or family's detriment*
- *use their power to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine pupils*
- *use their status and standing to form or promote relationships with children, which are of a sexual nature.*

4. Confidentiality

Members of staff may have access to confidential information about pupils in order to undertake their every day responsibilities. In some circumstances staff may be given additional highly sensitive or private information. They should never use confidential or personal information about a pupil or her/his family for their own, or others' advantage (including that of partners, friends, relatives or other organisations). Information must never be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the pupil.

Confidential information about a child or young person should never be used casually in conversation or shared with any person other than on a need to know basis. In circumstances where the child's identity does not need to be disclosed the information should be used anonymously.

There are some circumstances in which a member of staff may be expected to share information about a child, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, individuals have a duty to pass information on without delay, but only to those with designated child protection responsibilities.

If a member of staff is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential he or she should seek guidance from a senior member of staff. Any media or legal enquiries should be passed to senior management.

The storing and processing of personal information about pupils is governed by the Data Protection Act 1998. Employers should provide clear advice to staff about their responsibilities under this legislation.

The booklet "What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused"⁴ contains further guidance⁵ on sharing information to protect children. *This means that staff:*

- *are expected to treat information they receive about children and young people in a discreet and confidential manner.*
- *in any doubt about sharing information they hold or which has been requested of them should seek advice from a senior member of staff*
- *need to be cautious when passing information to others about a child/young person.*

5. Propriety and Behaviour

All staff have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in their ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of children and young people. They should adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of their peers, pupils and the public in general.

An individual's behaviour, either in or out of the workplace, should not compromise her/his position within the work setting.

The General Teaching Council for England's (GTCE) Code of Professional Values and Practice, which is now embodied within the standards for Qualified Teacher Status, recognises that "Teachers support the place of the school in the community and appreciate the importance of their own professional status in society. They recognise that professionalism involves using judgement over appropriate standards of personal behaviour".

This means that adults should not:

- *behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children or act as a role model.*
- *make sexual remarks to a pupil (including email, text messages, phone or letter)*
- *discuss their own sexual relationships with, or in the presence of, pupils*
- *discuss a pupil's sexual relationships in inappropriate settings or contexts*
- *make (or encourage others to make) unprofessional personal comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate, or might be interpreted as such*

6. Dress and Appearance

A person's dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression. However staff should consider the manner of dress and appearance appropriate to their professional role which may be different to that adopted in their personal life. Staff should ensure they are dressed decently, safely and appropriately for the tasks they undertake. Those who dress or appear in a manner which could be considered as inappropriate could render themselves vulnerable to criticism or allegation.

This means that adults should wear clothing which:

- *promotes a positive and professional image*
- *is appropriate to their role*
- *is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative*
- *does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding*
- *is absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans*
- *is not considered to be discriminatory.*

7. Gifts

Staff should be aware of guidance and/or school's policy including arrangements for the declaration of gifts received and given. Gifts to a value above £20 must be declared and registered with the school admin team.

It is against the law for public servants to take bribes. Staff need to take care that they do not accept any gift that might be

⁴ What to Do if you are Worried that a Child is Being Abused. Department of Health May 2003

⁵ www.doh.gov.uk/safeguardingchildren/index.htm

construed as a bribe by others, or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment.

There are occasions when children or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation to staff eg at Christmas or as a thank-you and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.

Similarly, it is inadvisable to give such personal gifts to pupils. This could be misinterpreted as a gesture either to bribe, or single out the young person. It might be perceived that a 'favour' of some kind is expected in return.

Any reward given to a young person should be agreed practice within the establishment, consistent with the school's behaviour policy, recorded and not based on favouritism.

This means that adults should:

- *ensure that gifts received or given in situations which may be misconstrued are declared*
- *generally, only give gifts to an individual young person as part of an agreed reward system*
- *where giving gifts other than as above, ensure that these are of insignificant value and given to all children equally.*

8. Infatuations

Staff need to be aware that it is not uncommon for pupils to be strongly attracted to a member of staff and/or develop a heterosexual or homosexual infatuation. All situations should be responded to sensitively to maintain the dignity of all concerned. Staff should also be aware that such circumstances always carry a high risk of words or actions being misinterpreted and for allegations to be made against staff.

A member of staff, who becomes aware that a pupil may be infatuated with themselves or a colleague, should discuss this at the earliest opportunity with a senior colleague so that appropriate action can be taken. In this way, steps can be taken to avoid hurt and distress for all concerned.

This means that adults should:

- *report any indications (verbal, written or physical) that suggest a pupil may be infatuated with a member of staff.*

9. Social Contact

Staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. Even if a young person seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the member of staff should exercise her/his professional judgement in making a response and be aware that such social contact could be misconstrued.

Staff should not give their personal details such as home/mobile phone number; home or e-mail address to pupils unless the need to do so is agreed with senior management.

Internal e-mail systems should only be used in accordance with school policy.

This means that adults should:

- *always approve any planned social contact with senior colleagues, for example when it is part of a reward scheme or pastoral care programme*
- *advise senior management of any regular social contact they have with a pupil which may give rise to concern report and record any situation, which they feel, might compromise the school or their own professional standing.*

10. Physical Contact

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role.

A 'no touch' approach is impractical for most staff and may in some circumstances be inappropriate. When physical contact is made with pupils this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate given their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. Appropriate physical contact in schools may occur most often with

younger pupils.

It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one child in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child. Staff should therefore, use their professional judgement at all times.

Physical contact should never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be recorded as soon as possible in the school's incident book and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the child's file.

Physical contact, which occurs regularly with an individual child or young person, is likely to raise questions unless the justification for this is part of a formally agreed plan (for example in relation to pupils with SEN or physical disabilities). Any such contact should be the subject of an agreed and open school policy and subject to review. Where feasible, staff should seek the child's permission before initiating contact. Staff should listen, observe and take note of the child's reaction or feelings and – so far as is possible - use a level of contact which is acceptable to the child for the minimum time necessary.

Extra caution may be required where it is known that a child has suffered previous abuse or neglect. In the child's view, physical contact might be associated with such experiences and lead to staff being vulnerable to allegations of abuse. It is recognised that many such children are extremely needy and seek out inappropriate physical contact. In such circumstances staff should deter the child sensitively by helping them to understand the importance of personal boundaries.

The general culture of 'limited touch' should be adapted, where appropriate, to the individual requirements of each child. Children with special needs may require more physical contact to assist their everyday learning. The arrangements should be understood and agreed by all concerned, justified in terms of the child's needs, consistently applied and open to scrutiny.

This means that adults should:

- *be aware that even well intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described*
- *never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent*
- *always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny*
- *never indulge in horseplay, tickling or fun fights.*

This means that schools should:

- *ensure they have a system in place for recording serious incidents and the means by which information about incidents and outcomes can be easily accessed by senior management.*
- *Provide staff, on a "need to know" basis, with relevant information about vulnerable pupils in their care*
- *Make staff aware of the DfES guidance in respect of physical contact with pupils⁶ and meeting medical needs of children and young people in school.⁷*

11. Physical Education and other activities which require physical contact.

Some staff, for example, those who teach PE and games, or who offer music tuition will on occasions have to initiate physical contact with pupils in order to support a child so they can perform a task safely, to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument or assist them with an exercise. This should be done with the pupil's agreement.

Contact under these circumstances should be for the minimum time necessary to complete the activity and take place in an open environment (see section 17, one-to-one situations, below). Staff should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the child.

This means that adults should:

- *consider alternatives, where it is anticipated that a pupil might misinterpret any such contact, perhaps involving another member of staff, or a less vulnerable pupil in the demonstration.*
- *be familiar with and follow recommended DfES guidance⁸*
- *always explain to a pupil the reason why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take.*

⁶ DfEE Circular 10/98 Section 550A Education 1996 The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils

⁷ DfEE Circular 14/96 Supporting Children with Medical Needs in School

⁸ British Association of Advisers and Lecturers in Physical Education: Guidance for Schools and LEAs

12. Showers and Changing

Young people are entitled to respect and privacy when changing clothes or taking a shower. However, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard young people, satisfy health and safety considerations and ensure that bullying or teasing does not occur. This supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the young people concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

Staff therefore need to be vigilant about their own behaviour, ensure they follow agreed guidelines and be mindful of the needs of the pupils.

This means that adults should:

- *avoid any physical contact when children are in a state of undress*
- *avoid any visually intrusive behaviour*
and where there are changing rooms:
- *announce their intention of entering*
- *avoid remaining in the room unless pupil needs require it*

This means that adults should not:

- *change in the same place as children*
- *shower with children.*

13. Pupils in Distress

There may be occasions when a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance. This may include age – appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation.

Where a member of staff has a particular concern about the need to provide this type of care and reassurance s/he should seek further advice from a senior manager.

This means that adults should:

- *consider the way in which they offer comfort to a distressed pupil*
- *always tell a colleague when and how they offered comfort to a distressed child*
- *record situations which may give rise to concern.*

14. Behaviour Management

All pupils have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. Corporal punishment is unlawful in all schools. Equally, staff should not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a pupil. The use of humour can help to defuse a situation. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards pupils is not acceptable in any situation.

This means that adults should:

- *not use force as a form of punishment*
- *try to defuse situations before they escalate*
- *keep parents informed of any sanctions*
- *adhere to the school's behaviour management policy.*

15. Care, Control and Physical Intervention

The circumstances in which staff can intervene with a pupil are covered by the 1996 Education Act. Staff may legitimately intervene to prevent a pupil from committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others, causing damage to property, engaging in behaviour prejudicial to good order and to maintain good order and discipline. Staff should have regard to the health and safety of themselves and others.

This is a complex area and staff must have regard to DfES guidance.^{9,10,11,}

Under no circumstances should physical force be used as a form of punishment. The use of unwarranted physical force is likely to constitute a criminal offence

In all cases where physical intervention is deemed necessary, the incident and subsequent actions should be documented and reported.

This means that schools should:

- *regularly acquaint staff with relevant school policy and DfES Guidance*
- *ensure that staff are provided with appropriate training.*

This means that staff should:

- *adhere to the school's physical intervention policy*
- *always seek to defuse situations*
- *always use minimum force for the shortest period necessary.*

16. Sexual Contact with Young People

Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a child or young person is both inappropriate and illegal. Children and young people are protected by the same laws as adults in relation to non-consensual sexual behaviour. They are additionally protected by specific legal provisions regardless of whether the child or young person consents or not. This includes the prohibition on adults in a position of trust (see Section 5).

The sexual activity referred to does not just involve physical contact including penetrative and non-penetrative acts. It may also include non-contact activities, such as causing children to engage in or watch sexual activity or the production of pornographic material. 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'¹², defines sexual abuse as "forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening".

There are occasions when adults embark on a course of behaviour known as 'grooming' where the sole purpose is to gain the trust of a child, and manipulate that relationship so sexual abuse can take place. Staff should be aware that conferring special attention and favour upon a child might be construed as being part of a 'grooming' process, which is an offence.

More detailed guidance is available in the joint NEOST/Union Guidance on Preventing Abuse of Trust and Sexual Offences Act 2003.

This means that adults should:

- *not pursue sexual relationships with children and young people either in or out of school*
- *avoid any form of communication with a child or young person which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative ie verbal comments, letters, notes, electronic mail, phone calls, texts, physical contact.*

⁹ DfES Circular 10/98 Section 550A Education 1996 The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils

¹⁰ DfES Guidance LEA/0242/2002 The Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions for Staff Working with Children and Adults who Display Extreme Behaviour in Association with Learning Disability and/or Autistic Spectrum Disorders

¹¹ DfES Guidance LEA/0264/2003 The Use of Restrictive Physical Interventions for Pupils with Severe Behaviour Difficulties

¹² Working Together to Safeguard Children Department of Health, Home Office, DfES 1999

17. One to One Situations

Staff working in one to one situations with children and young people may be more vulnerable to allegations. Teachers and others should recognise this possibility and plan and conduct such meetings accordingly. Every attempt should be made to ensure the safety and security needs of both staff and pupils are met.

Schools need to consider these issues in drawing up their school policies and offer clear training and guidance for the use of any areas of the school which place staff or children in vulnerable situations

Managers should undertake a risk assessment in relation to the specific nature and implications of one to one work for each worker. In addition, each assessment should take into account the individual needs of each pupil. Any arrangements should be reviewed on a regular basis.

Pre-arranged meetings with pupils away from the school premises should not be permitted unless approval is obtained from their parent and the head teacher or other senior colleague with delegated authority.

This means that adults should:

- *avoid meetings with pupils in remote, secluded areas of school*
- *ensure there is visual access and/or an open door in one to one situations*
- *inform other staff of the meeting beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by*
- *avoid use of 'engaged' or equivalent signs wherever possible. Such signs may create an opportunity for secrecy or the interpretation of secrecy*
- *always report any situation where a child becomes distressed or angry to a senior colleague*
- *consider the needs and circumstances of the child/children involved.*

18. Overnight Supervision and Examinations

There are occasions during exam periods when timetables clash and arrangements need to be made to preserve the integrity of the examination process. In these circumstances, staff may be asked to volunteer to supervise students perhaps in their own homes.

Some LEAs and Unions do not endorse this practice. Where there are no staff volunteers, the examination awarding bodies allow for alternative supervisory arrangements to be made.

When staff do volunteer, efforts should be made to balance the purpose of the arrangement with the need to safeguard and protect the wellbeing of all parties.

This means that:

- *a full health and safety risk assessment should have been undertaken*
- *all members of the household should have the appropriate checks made.¹³*
- *all arrangements should be made in partnership and agreement with the student and parents/carers*
- *arrangements involving one to one supervision should be avoided wherever possible.*
- *staff should have regard to any guidance that exists*
- *as much choice, flexibility and contact with 'the outside world', should be incorporated into any arrangement so far as is consistent with appropriate supervision*
- *whenever possible, independent oversight of arrangements should be made*
- *any situation which gives rise to complaint, disagreement or misunderstanding should be reported*
- *LEAs and schools should ensure that all arrangements reflect a duty of care towards pupils and staff.*

19. Transporting Children

¹³ DfES Guidance 0278/2002 Preventing Unsuitable People from Working with Children and Young People in the Education Service

In certain situations eg out of school activities, staff or volunteers may agree to transport children. A designated member of staff should be appointed to plan and provide oversight of all transporting arrangements and respond to any difficulties that may arise.

Wherever possible and practicable it is advisable that transport is undertaken other than in private vehicles, with at least one adult additional to the driver acting as an escort.

Staff should ensure that their behaviour is safe and that the transport arrangements and the vehicle meet all legal requirements. They should ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy and appropriately insured and that the maximum capacity is not exceeded

This means that adults should:

- *plan and agree arrangements with all parties in advance, responding sensitively and flexibly to disagreements*
- *ensure that they are alone with a child for the minimum time possible*
- *be aware that the safety and welfare of the child is their responsibility until this is safely passed over to a parent/carer*
- *report the nature of the journey, the route and expected time of arrival in accordance with agreed procedures*
- *ensure that their behaviour and all arrangements ensure vehicle, passenger and driver safety*
- *take into account any specific needs that the child may have.*

20. Educational Visits and After School Clubs etc.

Staff should take particular care when supervising pupils in the less formal atmosphere of a residential setting or after-school activity.

During school activities that take place off the school site or out of school hours, a more relaxed discipline or informal dress and language code may be acceptable. However, staff remain in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour cannot be interpreted as seeking to establish an inappropriate relationship or friendship.

Where out of school activities include overnight stays, careful consideration needs to be given to sleeping arrangements. Pupils, staff and parents should be informed of these prior to the start of the trip.

Health and Safety arrangements require members of staff to keep colleagues/employers aware of their whereabouts, especially when involved in an out of school activity. Staff must be aware of and follow guidance.^{14,15}

This means that adults should:

- *always have another adult present in out of school activities, unless otherwise agreed with senior staff in school*
- *undertake a risk assessments*
- *have parental consent to the activity*
- *ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times.*

21. First Aid and Administration of Medication

All schools must have trained first aiders/appointed persons. Teachers may volunteer to undertake this task but it is not a contractual requirement. Staff should receive appropriate training before administering first aid or medication.

Pupils may need medication during school hours. In circumstances where children need medication regularly a health care plan should be drawn up to ensure the safety and protection of pupils and staff. With the permission of parents, the children should be encouraged to administer the medication themselves.

If a member of staff is concerned or uncertain about the amount or type of medication being given to a pupil, this should be discussed with the appropriate senior colleague at the earliest opportunity. When administering first aid, wherever possible,

¹⁴ DfES A Good Practice Guide – Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits 1998

¹⁵ DfES Guidance Health and Safety – Responsibility and Powers Dec 2003

staff should ensure that another adult is present, or aware of the action being taken. Parents should always be informed when first aid has been administered.

This means that adults should:

- *adhere to the school's safety policy*
- *adhere to the school's intimate care policy*
- *make other staff aware of the task being undertaken*
- *explain to the child what is happening.*

22.Intimate Care

All children have a right to safety, privacy and dignity when contact of an intimate nature is required (for example assisting with toileting or removing wet/soiled clothing). A care plan should be drawn up and agreed with parents for all children who require intimate care on a regular basis.

Children should be encouraged to act as independently as possible and to undertake as much of their own personal care as is practicable. When assistance is required, staff should ensure that another appropriate adult is in the vicinity and is aware of the task to be undertaken.

Additional vulnerabilities that may arise from a physical disability or learning difficulty should be considered with regard to individual teaching and care plans for each child. As with all arrangements for intimate care needs, agreements between the child, their parents/carers and the organisation must be negotiated, agreed and recorded. In addition, the views and/or emotional responses of children with special educational needs, regardless of age and ability must be actively sought in regular reviews of these arrangements.

This means that adults should:

- *adhere to the school's intimate care guidelines*
- *make other staff aware of the task being undertaken*
- *explain to the child what is happening*
- *consult with colleagues where any variation from agreed procedure/care plan is necessary*
- *record the justification for any variations to the agreed procedure/care plan and share this information with parents.*

23.Curriculum

Many areas of the curriculum can include or raise subject matter which is sexually explicit, or of an otherwise sensitive nature. Care should be taken to ensure that resource materials cannot be misinterpreted and clearly relate to the learning outcomes identified by the lesson plan. This plan should highlight particular areas of risk and sensitivity.

The School has a detailed Sex Education policy which indicates content including vocabulary to be used.

The curriculum can sometimes include or lead to unplanned discussion about subject matter of a sexually explicit or otherwise sensitive nature. Responding to pupils' questions can require careful judgement and staff may wish to take guidance in these circumstances from a senior member of staff.

Care should also be taken to abide by the governing body's required policy on sex and relationships education and the wishes of parents. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of any sex education provided (but not from the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction necessary under the science curriculum).

This means that adults should:

- *have clear written lesson plans.*

This means that adults should not:

- *enter into or encourage inappropriate or offensive discussion about sexual activity.*

24. Photography, Videos and other Creative Arts

Many school activities involve recording images. These may be undertaken as part of the curriculum, extra school activities, for publicity, or to celebrate achievement.

Staff need to be aware of the potential for these aspects of teaching to be misused for pornographic or 'grooming' purposes. Careful consideration should be given as to how these activities are organised and undertaken. Particular regard needs to be given when they involve young or vulnerable pupils who may be unable to question why or how the activities are taking place.

Children who have been previously abused in this way may feel threatened by the use of photography, filming etc in the teaching environment.

Staff should remain sensitive to any children who appear uncomfortable and should recognise the potential for misinterpretation.

Using images of children for publicity purposes will require the age - appropriate consent of the individual concerned and their legal guardians. Images should not be displayed on websites, in publications or in a public place without such consent. The definition of a public place includes areas where visitors to the school have access.

It is recommended that when using a photograph the following guidance should be followed:

- if the photograph is used, avoid naming the pupil
 - if the pupil is named, avoid using their photograph
 - schools should establish whether the image will be retained for further use
- images should be securely stored and used only by those authorised to do so.

This means that adults should:

- *be clear about the purpose of the activity and about what will happen to the photographs when the lesson/activity is concluded*
- *ensure that a senior member of staff is aware that the photography/image equipment is being used and for what purpose.*
- *ensure that all images are available for scrutiny in order to screen for acceptability*
- *be able to justify images of children in their possession*
- *avoid making images in one to one situations.*

This means that adults should not:

- *take, display or distribute images of children unless they have consent to do so.*

25. Internet Use

Schools should have clear policies about access to and the use of the Internet and have regard to DfES guidance.¹⁶

DfES guidance, 'Superhighway Safety Pack' is available at <http://www.safety.ngfl.gov.uk>.

Under no circumstances should adults in school access inappropriate images. Accessing child pornography or indecent images of children on the internet, and making, storing or disseminating such material, is illegal and, if proven, will invariably lead to the individual being barred from work with children and young people.

Using school or college equipment to access inappropriate or indecent material, including adult pornography, is likely to give cause for concern particularly if as a result pupils might be exposed to inappropriate or indecent material.

¹⁶ Superhighway Safety Pack <http://safety.ngfl.gov.uk>

This means that adults should:

- *follow the school policy on the use of IT equipment.*

26. Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. Each employer should have a clear and accessible whistleblowing policy that meets the terms of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

Staff should acknowledge their individual responsibilities to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant external agencies. This is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

This means that adults should:

- *report any behaviour by colleagues that raises concern.*

27. Sharing Concerns and Recording Incidents

All staff should be aware of the school's child protection procedures, including procedures for dealing with allegations against staff, which are informed by the NEOST/Joint Union Guidance. Staff who are the subject of allegations are advised to contact their professional association.

In the event of an incident occurring, which may result in an action being misinterpreted and/or an allegation being made against a member of staff, the relevant information should be clearly and promptly recorded and reported to senior staff. Early discussion with a parent or carer could avoid any misunderstanding.

Members of staff should feel able to discuss with their line manager any difficulties or problems that may affect their relationship with pupils so that appropriate support can be provided or action can be taken.

This means that adults:

- *should be familiar with their school/service system for recording concerns*
- *should take responsibility for recording any incident, and passing on that information where they have concerns about any matter pertaining to the welfare of an individual in the school or workplace.*

This means that schools/services:

- *should have an effective, transparent and accessible system for recording and managing concerns raised by any individual in school or the workplace*

All adults working in education settings should know the name of the school's designated teacher for child protection and know and follow relevant child protection policy and procedures. All staff have a duty to report any child protection concerns to their designated person for child protection.

Anyone who has concerns or is in doubt should refer to the document "What To Do If You're Worried a Child Is Being Abused" and follow that guidance.