

Sedgefield Hardwick School Safeguarding Audit May 2016

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Sedgefield Hardwick Primary School provides education to 269 children and employees 20 members of staff. The school has a duty under sections 157 and 175 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard children.

1.2 The audit commissioned by the head teacher and designated safeguarding lead Mrs Newton was undertaken by Mr Sturrock the Governor lead for such matters. The audit sought to identify if school safeguarding procedures are robust and whether children are safe and feel safe. Data was taken from a variety of sources which included focus groups of staff and children whilst policies and procedures were inspected.

2.0 Executive Summary

2.1 The auditor found that Sedgefield Hardwick School has effective safeguarding policies which are understood and implemented by members of staff. This was evidenced in focus groups when staff were clearly able to discuss in practical terms how policies and procedures are implemented and applied on a daily basis.

2.2 During the same focus group sessions children were able to identify potential safeguarding issues and had no hesitation about informing an adult about the dangers they had recognised. Children felt safe at school and raised no safeguarding concerns.

2.3 Policies have been recently updated and cover new and emerging safeguarding risks. As the designated lead Mrs Newton ensures that staff are provided with safeguarding training whilst the safer recruitment and retention of staff is monitored by frequent Data Barring Service checks. The auditor found that safeguarding records are accurate and regularly updated.

2.4 A daily behaviour log exists which is used to address and prevent poor behaviour. A serious incident log captures any significant behaviour likely to harm or injure a child. The auditor found that behaviour logs are monitored to identified and prevent occurrences of bad behaviour.

2.5 Statistical data indicates an improvement in the School attendance rate which now stands at 96.7 %. This has steadily increased over the last 3 years and is testament to the intervention strategies employed by the School. There have been no exclusions, instances of bullying or reported incidents of racist or homophobic behaviour in the academic year to date.

2.6 The auditor has found that the School has robust and effective safeguarding procedures. The designated lead Mrs Newton has a clear understanding of safeguarding procedures and ensures that her staff implement and promote the welfare and well-being of children at the School. The auditor recommends that regular safeguarding training in addition to that offered by the Local Authority is

undertaken to ensure that staff gain further understanding of new and emerging safeguarding issues.

3.0 Findings

3.1 Safeguarding policies are available on the School website. The auditor found that policies had been recently reviewed and updated. The head teacher Mrs Newton is identified as the designated lead for safeguarding with Mr Taylor as the designated secondary lead.

3.2 Policies comply with nationally expected safeguarding procedures and are routinely updated as evidenced by the new policy to address radicalisation as part of the Government's PREVENT strategy.

3.3 The auditor identified that policies are translated into child protection procedures. A wall in the staff room is dedicated to safeguarding material with points of contact for the Local Authority and social services prominent. Templates have been created to provide guidance to staff when managing or dealing with safeguarding issues. This system is particularly beneficial for new members of staff unfamiliar with such procedures. The auditor would recommend that the board is regularly reviewed and updated with new contact information as necessary.

3.4 Focus group sessions were held with staff and children. Five scenarios were devised in order to explore their understanding of safeguarding issues.

Staff

3.5 A mixture of teaching staff, teaching assistants and IN2 staff attended the session. It was clear that staff had a good understanding of safeguarding issues. Staff were able to describe how they kept children safe by ensuring that access to the school is by the main entrance only. Daily inspections of the grounds and equipment are undertaken to ensure that health and safety risks are identified. Staff on play time duty have recently been provided with first aid holders to ensure effective and speedy first aid for children when required. Staff were confident that they could identify children with particular allergies. What was clear is that staff have a good understanding at all times where children are. This is based upon the monitoring of attendance and discussion between all of those on duty.

3.6 Staff were able to identify instances of bullying. There was general discussion as to what constituted bullying with an acceptance that a series of incidents over a few days could constitute bullying. Staff were mindful not to label one off incidents as bullying. Staff discussed how they would tackle such issues and the completing of behaviour logs and serious incidents reports. When merited a referral would be made to Mrs Newton or Mr Taylor. Staff were aware of the effects of bullying on children and such issues were discussed in assemblies, think about talk about sessions and circle time. Staff saw these sessions as opportunities to make children aware of the effects of their actions and how others felt.

3.7 The teaching of E-safety is a common thread throughout all of the year groups. Staff were able to identify the dangers presented by social media and identified how this can lead to abuse and in some extreme circumstances physical danger. Staff discussed the computing council and the benefits of discussing danger on the internet with children. Staff provided examples where children would stop what they were doing if they came across an error message on screen and seek help. Staff were confident that they could spot differences in children's behaviour and could pick up on any problems they may be having.

3.8 The auditor identified that staff were able to spot potential signs of physical abuse and were aware of the sensitivities when obtaining such information from children. Staff were aware that a written record of such conversations was needed and would seek to ensure that a colleague was present during disclosure. Staff felt that they had a close relationship with children and were confident that they could provide them with emotional and practical support as required.

3.9 Staff discussed their initial actions upon a child being reported as missing from school. Staff were aware that the designated lead needed to be informed immediately and a search of the school undertaken. Staff confirmed that they would speak with children to try and build up a picture of the circumstances leading to the report. Staff were also mindful that in such circumstances school records needed to be checked to identify if there were any on-going safeguarding concerns. The new text messaging system to inform parents about the missing child was acknowledged and discussed. Staff were aware of the need to quickly and accurately report such incidents and stated that social services or the police would be contacted.

3.10 The auditor identified that staff were less certain as to their role when school had finished for the day. The responsibility for reporting a child missing in such circumstances requires clarification. Staff were unaware of the child alert rescue scheme and asked that a missing from home flow chart of required actions is created. The auditor recommends that a flow chart is created and the safeguarding lead clarifies the role of staff in such reports.

Children

3.11 A mixed group of children from year 5 and year 6 spoke with the auditor. Children said that they felt safe in school. Children said that they had regular fire drills and knew where to obtain first aid if needed. Children knew that all visitors to the school had to attend reception.

3.12 Children could recognise bullying and said that they would let a teacher or adult know if they saw or heard anyone being bullied. Children were aware of the effects of bullying making the victim feel "small inside". The auditor asked the children if they had been bullied or knew of anyone who had been bullied at school. The children said that they had not witnessed any bullying incidents in school.

3.13 Internet safety was discussed. Children were aware of the dangers of social media and universally stated that they would tell an adult or teacher if someone tried to make them do things that they didn't want to do. Children stated that they used private accounts with security settings when at home to talk with friends. Children discussed threats in the computing counsel and felt safe on line at school.

3.14 Children were aware of domestic abuse and said that they would help and support pupils if they suspected that they be at risk of harm. Children agreed that they would tell an adult and help the person being abused to tell an adult or children.

3.15 Children recognised that the school is a safe location and said that if they were unable to go home they would stay at school. Children commented that IN2 staff were present until 6pm and would help or assist them if needed. Children said that that they would tell an adult if they discovered that a friend was planning on not returning home.

Conclusion

- 5.0 The auditor found that Sedgefield Hardwick School has effective safeguarding policies which are understood and implemented by members of staff.
- 5.1 Children are able to identify potential safeguarding issues and had no hesitation about informing an adult about the dangers they had recognised. Children felt safe at school and raised no safeguarding concerns
- 5.2 The designated lead Mrs Newton has a clear understanding of safeguarding procedures and ensures that her staff implement and promote the welfare and well-being of children at the School.

Recommendation

5.0 The auditor recommends that regular safeguarding training in addition to that offered by the Local Authority is undertaken to ensure that staff gain further understanding of new and emerging safeguarding issues.

Ian Sturrock – Governor Lead for behaviour and safety