

**BRIGHTON STEINER SCHOOL & EARLY YEARS  
DEPARTMENT**

**SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN  
POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

***WORKING TOGETHER TO SAFEGUARD AND  
PROMOTE THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN***

Brighton Steiner School DESF 8466016

17/09/09

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In Steiner (Waldorf) education in general, and in this School and the Early Years Department we constantly seek to nourish the emerging individuality of each child. This is done in many ways, not least through the curriculum. One principle through which we explicitly work is that of protection - of protecting children from premature exposure to the harsh realities of life and from abuse of any kind, and in maintaining and nurturing our children's faith in common humanity. Nevertheless, for some children their life circumstances outside of the school community may be very challenging in these regards.

While we realise for instance that most childhood injuries occur in accidental and understandable ways, and that it can be harmful to 'jump to a conclusion' of abuse too quickly based on insufficient evidence, all the staff of Brighton Steiner School and Early Years Department undertake to be vigilant for abnormal, untoward signs of harm, whether physical, emotional, or suffered by way of neglect, and to act immediately and appropriately in any such circumstances.

Thus, whatever position we hold in the school, *it is our responsibility to be alert to the possibility of a child suffering any form of harm, and to be aware of, acknowledge and alleviate, where possible, any suffering that a child may experience. Where staff consider that a child is suffering any type of harm procedures will be followed as laid down in this Policy.*

These Procedures are fully intended to comply with the guidelines laid down in the relevant legislation and the following documents:

*What to do if you're worried a child is being abused.* 2006 DfES. Full document, summary (1) and Flowchart for Referral (2).

*Working Together to Safeguard Children* 2006 HM Government.

*A Guide to Inter-Agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children* 2006. including Flowchart for Managing an Allegation against a Member of Staff (3). Brighton Local Safeguarding Children Board.

The School and early years Department have a designated teacher or other staff member for safeguarding children – **The Child Protection Officer (CPO)** - whose role and responsibilities are fully defined.

**The designated Child Protection Officer is SARA ARDLEY** (Receptionist and Admissions Secretary)

A Trustee is designated for safeguarding children, who will oversee the school's policy and practice. The **CPO** will keep this Trustee fully informed of actions.

**The Trustee with responsibility for Child Protection is PAUL LEVY** (Chair)

This Policy will be reviewed when changes in regulations, or revised guidelines are issued by HM Government Depts including the Dept. of Children Schools and Families (DCSF), and locally Brighton & Hove Council's Children's Services or in the light of experience.

This policy is to be kept in the school staffroom, administrator's office, Reception and each Early Years setting, available to be read by existing and prospective parents, guardians and carers on request.

It is issued to all staff to be included in their personal staff handbooks, which also includes documents (1), (2), and (3), itemised above, and is available on the school's computer network on common to all/ policies and procedures/ safeguarding children/child protection

A summary of this Policy outlining the responsibility of the School and Early Years Department for Child Safety and Welfare is included in the Parents Handbooks issued to all parent and carers.

## **2. STATUTORY FRAMEWORK**

Under The Education Act 2002 and The Children Act 1989 schools have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of their pupils by:

- Creating and maintaining a safe learning environment for children and young people
- Identifying where there are child welfare concerns and taking action to address them, in partnership with other organisations where appropriate

Under the Children Act 1989 everyone working in with children is required to be familiar with our procedures for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children.

The Children Act 1989 also introduced the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children.

## **3. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THIS ORGANISATION.**

**Under this legislation it is required that Brighton Steiner School and Early Years Department:**

- 1) Develop a Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedure in place in accordance with inter-agency procedures, available to parents on request;
- 2) Operate safe recruitment procedures and makes sure that all appropriate checks are carried out on new trustees, staff and volunteers who will work with children, This procedure is given in the Policy for Safe Recruitment Procedures to Safeguard Children, see References. Trustees, staff and volunteers are also required to declare any relevant events, which affect their suitability.

- 3) Develop procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff/volunteers comply with inter-agency procedures.
- 4) Appoint Child Protection Officers and a designated Trustee, and ensure that they receive the appropriate training.
- 5) Ensure that all other staff who work with children are aware of their responsibilities regarding Child Welfare and Safety. Staff should be alert to signs of harm and know to whom they should report any concerns or suspicions.
- 6) Ensure that all staff are aware of the procedures for handling suspected cases of harm of children, including procedures to be followed if a member of staff is accused of causing harm, and know the procedure should a child disclose incidence of harm to them.
- 7) Make sure that parents and carers are aware of the Safeguarding Children Policy and the fact that this may require cases to be referred to the investigative agencies in the interests of the child.
- 8) Ensure that the Policy and Procedure is reviewed and updated annually in accordance with legislation and practical experience.

Our policy applies to all staff and volunteers working in the school. This includes the School Management, Trustees, Committees, Administrator, SEN, Afternoon Sessions, and peripatetic staff, as well as teachers and assistant teachers. Any of the above can be the first point of disclosure for a child. Concerned parents may also contact any of the above.

#### **4. THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHILD PROTECTION OFFICERS**

The role of the school's Child Protection Officer (CPO) for Child Welfare and Safety is to:

- Ensure that this Policy and Procedure is followed in the School and Early Years Department;
- That this organisation fully adheres to the Guide to Inter-Agency Working to Safeguard Children;
- Ensure that all staff are aware of these procedures;
- Ensure that appropriate training and support is provided to all staff;
- Develop effective working relationships with other agencies and services;

- Decide with other relevant staff whether to take further action about specific concerns regarding Significant Harm;
- Carry out the actions in line with the Procedure if Significant Harm is considered to be occurring;
- Ensure that accurate records relating to individual children are kept in a secure place and marked '**STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**';
- Submit reports to any Section 47 or other Assessments as required;
- Ensure that the school effectively monitors children who have been identified as being at risk;
- Provide guidance to parents, children and staff about obtaining suitable support;
- Ensure that all staff, parents, and carers are aware of their identity as the CPO

## **5. DEFINITION OF SIGNIFICANT HARM**

There are no absolute criteria that define significant harm.

Consideration of the severity of ill treatment may include the degree and extent of physical harm, the duration and frequency of harm and neglect. Sometimes a single traumatic event may constitute significant harm eg. physical injury. More often significant harm is a compilation of significant events, both acute and long standing, which interrupt, change, or damage the child's physical and psychological development.

Some children live in family and social circumstances where their health and development are neglected. For them, it is the corrosiveness of long-term emotional, physical or sexual harm that causes impairment to the extent of constituting significant harm.

## **6. RECOGNITION OF SIGNIFICANT HARM**

Staff should always be alert to a child who is suffering harm.

Some incidents of harm are easily recognisable, many are not.

Babies, young children, and children with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to abuse and harm.

It is not possible to list all the symptoms or circumstances that may result in the likelihood of significant harm. However circumstances listed below should indicate discussion with the CPO regarding further actions.

Staff should be concerned about a pupil if he or she:

- Discloses an experience in which he or she may have been significantly harmed
- Has any injury which is not typical of the bumps and scrapes normally associated with children's injuries
- Regularly has unexplained injuries
- Frequently has injuries (even when apparently reasonable explanations are given)
- Confused or conflicting explanations are given on how injuries were sustained
- Exhibits significant changes in behaviour, performance or attitude
- Indulges in sexual behaviour which is unusually explicit and/or inappropriate to his or her age
- Any mention by the child to staff of items that could constitute sexual abuse
- Where the child is known to have contact with a person who is assessed as presenting a risk to children
- Where the child is known to live in a household where there is domestic violence
- Children who are showing signs of neglect which may include being not being fed properly, being unclean, being unresponsive
- A child who is not developing emotionally or behaviourally as would be expected

## **7. DEFINITIONS: THE CATEGORIES OF CHILD ABUSE**

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child.

Someone may abuse a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

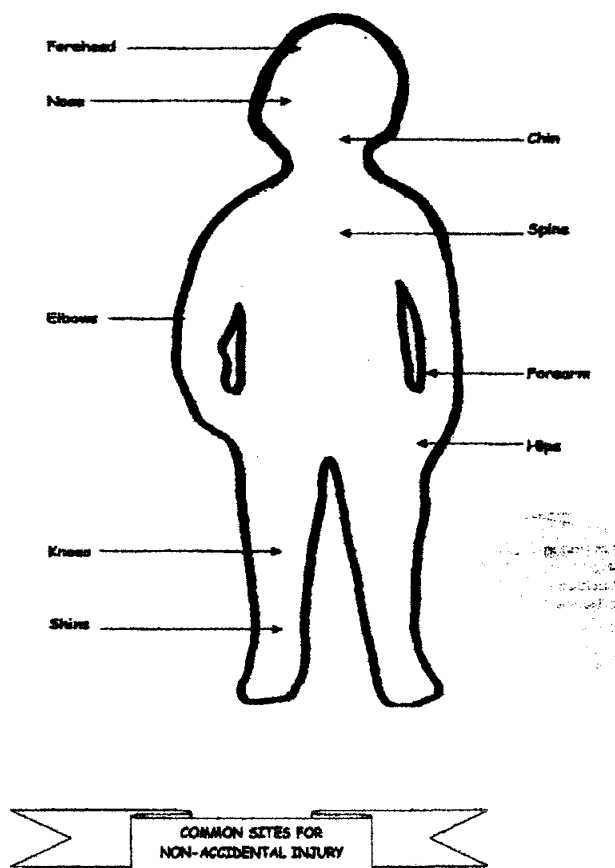
### **PHYSICAL ABUSE**

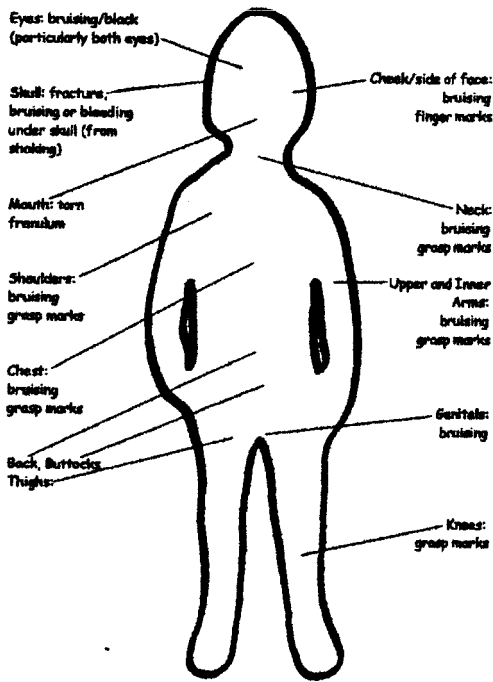
This is defined as a physical injury to a child where there is definitive knowledge, or a reasonable suspicion, that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented. Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, and attempted drowning or smothering, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

## Possible Signs of Physical Abuse

- Unexplained injuries or refusal to discuss them
- Cigarette burns
- Long bruises - possibly made by a belt
- Teeth marks
- Fingertip/slap marks or bruises
- History of bruises/injuries with inconsistent explanations
- Bilateral black eyes
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Aggression towards others
- Untreated injuries
- Fear of medical treatment
- Unexplained patterns of absence that could be in order to hide injuries
- Physical injury to areas of the body, which are not usually considered to be common sites of accidental injury. (See body diagrams, below.)

## Common sites for accidental injury





## EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse is the persistent or severe emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. This could include over-protection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

### Possible Signs of Emotional Abuse

- Developmental delay
- Inappropriate emotional responses
- Self-mutilation/harm
- Extreme passivity or aggression
- Running away
- Drug/solvent abuse
- Excessive fear of situations or people
- Social isolation
- Depression
- Domestic violence

- Over-protectiveness
- A child is used as a scapegoat within a family (good child/ bad child)

## **SEXUAL ABUSE**

Sexual abuse involves 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. The activities may involve physical contact. It also may involve non-contact activities such as looking at or production of sexual images, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Key elements in any definition of child sexual abuse are:

- (1) Betrayal of trust and responsibility
- (2) Abuse of power for the sexual gratification of the abuser
- (3) Inability of children to consent

### **Possible Signs of Sexual Abuse**

- Depression, suicidal behaviour/thoughts of suicide, self-harm
- Anorexic/bulimic symptoms
- Acting in a sexually inappropriate way towards adult/peers
- Age-inappropriate behaviour/knowledge
- Unexplained pregnancies
- Running away
- Telling of a 'friend with a problem of abuse'
- Sexually abusing a younger child
- Sudden changes in school or work habits
- Fear of, or untoward anxiety around, certain people
- 'Chronic' medical problems (e.g. stomach pains/headaches)
- Withdrawn, isolated, excessively isolated behaviour.

## **NEGLECT**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsive to, a child's basic emotional needs.

### **Possible Signs of Neglect**

- 'Failure to thrive' (e.g. looks thin, unwell, below average height and weight)
- Usually hungry
- Has regular accidents (especially burns)
- Poor personal hygiene
- Kept away from school medicals
- Tiredness
- Reluctant to go home
- Poor social relationships
- Frequent lateness/non-attendance at school
- Inappropriate clothing

## **8. DEALING WITH A DISCLOSURE FROM A CHILD**

If a pupil discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the member of staff should:

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what is being said, and be non-judgemental
- Allow the child to talk freely, being reassuring and calm
- Reassure the child but not make promises which it might not be possible to keep
- Not promise confidentiality – as it might be necessary to refer to Children's Services Dept.
- Reassure him or her that what has happened is not his or her fault, if appropriate telling the child that she/he is brave
- Stress that it was right to disclose
- Listen carefully, rather than ask direct questions
- When asking questions, ask 'open' questions rather than leading, 'closed' questions
- Not criticise the perpetrator
- Explain to the child what has to be done next, and who has to be told.

### **RECORD KEEPING**

When a pupil has disclosed this sort of information the member of staff should:

- Make some brief notes as soon as possible after the conversation, including 'nagging doubts and hear-say';
- Not destroy the original notes in case they are needed by a court of law
- Record the date, time, place and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour as well as the actual words used by the child;

- Draw a diagram to indicate the position of bruising or other injury/injuries;
- Record statements and observations rather than interpretations or assumptions;
- Immediately pass information on to the CPO as per Procedure given below;
- Keep a copy for self *only if it can be kept in a secure place*;
- Do not keep copies saved on disc or computer.

## **SUPPORT**

Dealing with a disclosure of abuse from a child, and a safeguarding children case in general, may well be a stressful experience. The member of staff involved should, therefore, consider seeking appropriate emotional support for him/herself and discuss this with the CPO.

## **9. PROCEDURE WHEN WORRIED A CHILD IS SUFFERING HARM, OR IF A CHILD HAS DISCLOSED INFORMATION**

This procedure is based on the Flowcharts given in *What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused*.

1. When a member of staff notices, becomes aware, is told either by a child or another adult, that a child may be suffering significant harm it should be disclosed to the Designated Teacher / staff member as soon as it is possible to do so, certainly on the same day.

The member of staff should also record in writing why they consider significant harm may be occurring, the relevant details including signs seen, incidents with dates, the details of any verbal reports received from children or other staff and adults. All staff involved should keep written records.

2. The details of all meetings with the CPO should be recorded including dates, discussions, and decisions taken. These meetings need to occur as soon as possible, if there is any doubt about the immediate safety of the child the meeting must take place that day. Meetings should only involve staff, and other designated persons, the contents are obviously confidential.
3. Following this discussion a decision has to be taken whether significant harm is occurring and if so The CPO will contact Brighton and Hove City Council Children's Services Dept. (see contacts List) to contact the Duty Social Worker. If there is any doubt this action should be taken.

The name of the person spoken to and a reference number requested and recorded.

4. If a child is considered to be in immediate danger, eg. staff are worried further significant harm may occur that day then the Police should be contacted for

advice and action. The Police will also contact the Children Services Dept. A record must be kept of the Police Officer spoken to and a reference number must be requested and recorded.

5. Following referral to Children Services Dept. the CPO will confirm the referral in writing within 24 hours. The CPO will also give a copy of this referral to the Designated Trustee.
6. Following this referral the relevant officer (Social Worker) in the children's Services Dept will take follow-up action as outlined in the Guide to Inter-Agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children.
7. The CPO and other relevant staff will be contacted by the Children Services Dept to participate or provide information for the Initial and Section 47 Core Framework Assessment that will then carried out involving the relevant Agencies to draw up a Plan for Ensuring the Child's Future Safety and Welfare, or may involve a Safeguarding Children Conference and subsequent Safeguarding Children Plan.

This Process is outlined in the Guide and the other documents listed in the Introduction of this Policy.

8. The CPO will be kept up to date and informed by the Children's Services about any actions required following the Assessments. In the meantime the child should be discreetly monitored by staff, dealt with normally, and anything relevant recorded.
9. The School and Early Years Department may be contacted by the Children Services Dept. regarding a Referral concerning a child who attends the School or Early Years. These will be passed to the CPO who will facilitate any passing of information, and appropriate discussions with relevant staff and meetings with Social Workers.
10. The CPO will keep the Designated Trustee informed of any actions and decisions taken in this Procedure.
11. Particular attention will be paid to the attendance and development of any child who has been identified as being at risk or who has been placed on any Child Welfare or Protection Plan.

The Children Services Dept. or Key Worker will be notified immediately if:

- The School or Early Years Department should have to exclude such a child;
- If there is any *unexplained* absence of such a child of more than two days' duration, or one following a weekend;

- If the child changes school. The CPO will transfer the appropriate records to the CPO of the receiving school.

## **10. PROCEDURE FOR ALLEGATIONS INVOLVING STAFF**

This Procedure applies to a wider range of allegations than those that are likely to cause a child significant harm. It also caters for cases of allegations that may indicate the alleged perpetrator may be unsuitable for working with children in his/her present or any capacity.

This Procedure should be used in all cases in which it is alleged that a member of staff has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children

There may be up to three strands in the consideration of an allegation:

- A police investigation of a possible criminal offence
- Enquiries and assessment by the Children's Services Dept. about whether a child is in need of protection or in need of services
- Consideration by the Board of Trustees of disciplinary action in respect of the individual

This Procedure is in line with the Process outlined in the Flowchart Managing an Allegation against a Member Of Staff see Appendix One.

This Procedure is in line with that outlined in Appendix 5 of Working Together to Safeguard Children, which should be referred to for further information.

1. If a child, or parent, makes a complaint of harm against a member of staff, the person receiving the complaint must take it seriously and immediately inform the CPO. If the complaint involves the CPO then the person should inform the Designated Trustee. The person receiving the complaint should clarify and record what is alleged, and should not tell any other person.
2. Any member of staff who has a reason to suspect that a pupil may have been harmed by another member of staff, either at school or elsewhere, similarly must immediately inform the CPO or the Designated Trustee. He/she should also make a record of the concerns, including a note of anyone else that witnessed the incident or allegation.
3. The CPO or Trustee must take a decision to inform the parents or carers of the child involved. This should be normally done as soon as possible. This can be done in discussion with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), see

Contacts Section.

4. Before any other action and as soon as possible, preferably the same day, the CPO should contact the LADO, to report and discuss the allegation. Detailed records of actions and statements should be kept at all stages.

The LADO will first establish that the allegation is within the scope of this procedure and may have some foundation, and when to inform parents or carers of the child if not already done so.

The LADO will decide on further action which may involve the police and/or Children Services Dept, including where necessary support for the child and family.

5. The CPO should also inform Ofsted Early Years if the child is under 8 years old, or Dept. of Children, Schools and Families Independent Education Team, if the child is older. The relevant numbers are given in the Contacts Section.
6. The Designated Trustee on behalf of the Board of Trustees as the employer should inform the member of staff about the allegation as soon as possible after discussion with the LADO, unless the other agencies are to be involved.
7. If further investigation is thought necessary the LADO will discuss this with the police, and will monitor progress with the police, Children Services Dept. and the Designated Trustee as appropriate.
8. The possible risk of harm to children posed by an accused person should be evaluated and managed effectively by the Board of Trustees, in respect of any children involved, and in the individual's home, work or community life. In some cases suspension should be considered, particularly in any case where it is suspected a child is at risk of significant harm, or the allegation warrants police investigation or dismissal.

Consideration of suspension will also be aided by discussions with the LADO.

9. In the event of a police investigation, the police should inform the LADO and Designated Trustee of any outcome. The LADO should then discuss if further action is appropriate and how to proceed.
10. If the allegation is substantiated and the member of staff dismissed or resigns the LADO will discuss whether a referral to the Protection of Children Act List of DCSF List 99, Independent Safeguarding Authority or any other body is appropriate.
11. If it is decided the member of staff can return to work the Board of Trustees should consider on how to facilitate this, after this stressful experience. Also it needs to consider how contact with any children involved is managed.
12. The Board of Trustees should review the circumstances of the case to determine any improvements in policies, procedures and practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

13. If the allegation is determined to be unfounded, the matter should be referred to the Children Services Dept. to determine whether the child concerned is in need of support, or may be suffering harm by someone else.

## 11. USEFUL CONTACTS LIST

Designated Teacher Staff member for Safeguarding Children Sara Ardley	01273 386300
Designated Trustee for Safeguarding Children Paul Levy	01273 670728

The Duty and Assessment Teams in Brighton & Hove are:

East: 01273 295920

West: 01273 296527

Central: 01273 294470

Dept. Children, Schools and Families Independent Education Team	0870 0012345
Brighton Constabulary (Police)	0845 4564567
Ofsted Early Years	08456 404040

## 12. REFERENCES

HM Government 2006 *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children).

Ref No: WT2006

Dept of Children Schools and Families (DCSF) 2006 *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education*.

Ref No: 04217-2006BKT-EN

DCSF 2006 *What To Do If You Are Worried A Child Is Being Abused*.

Ref. No: 04320-2006DOM-EN.

DCSF 2006 *What To Do If You Are Worried A Child Is Being Abused – Summary*.

Ref. No: 04319-2006-EN

Brighton Local Safeguarding Children Board 2006 *A Guide to Inter-Agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children*.

**Websites:** [www.teachernet.gov.uk/childprotection](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/childprotection) Supporting website includes examples of good practice, model policies, many of these references, and other useful references.

[www.acpc.brighton.gov.uk](http://www.acpc.brighton.gov.uk) gives all Local Safeguarding Children Board Procedures and Protocols.

**Other main relevant Brighton Steiner School Policies:**

Don't Suffer in Silence

Behaviour Policy

Policy For Safe Recruitment Procedures To Safeguard Children