Safer Schools Partnership Protocol

Metropolitan Police Partnership Agreement April 2017

Ardleigh Green Junior School

This document has been produced by the Metropolitan Police to support their work in schools. The document predominantly addresses work in secondary schools, but nevertheless outlines the nature of support offered to primary schools within the Borough of Havering.
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1 Introduction

This protocol is a live document and will be reviewed every 12 months or as required, so that it remains current and effective. It is in line with the Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime and the policing Code of Ethics.

The protocol is generic to all secondary schools, Pupil Referral Units and colleges with the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) area and signals a commitment to work together to ensure the aims of a Safer Schools Partnership (SSP) (see 2 The aims of a Safer Schools Partnership (SSP)).

To be effective, the Safer Schools Officer (SSO) should be seen as a crucial link between the School and MPS with the SSO being supported by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Having a visible SSO in the School environment has many benefits for the School community and a partnership approach should be encouraged at all levels with clear channels of communication between the SSO and School staff.

This protocol ensures that the school and the SSO are aware of mutual expectations.

The contents of this Protocol should be disseminated by Head Teachers to all members of school staff.

This protocol should be applied in conjunction with:

- Advice on school security: Access to, and barring of individuals from school premises (For local authorities, school leaders and school staff): https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-security
- MPS Safer Schools Activity Matrix
- MPS Information Sharing Agreement (ISA)
- MPS Screening on school premises guidance
- MPS Safer Schools Partnership Legislation Guidance
The aims of a Safer Schools Partnership (SSP):

- Positive engagement to build trust and confidence between the school community (Young people, school staff and parents) and the police.
- Improve safety and enhance safeguarding of school community.
- Prevention - Help for young people to deal with the risk of becoming victims and support for those who are, creating a safe learning environment.
- Early intervention and diversion for all young people identified as vulnerable*

* Vulnerable to Crime
- Vulnerable to committing crime
- Due to domestic influences
- Due to social influences
- Due to peer pressure
- Vulnerable to re-offending
- Vulnerable to being a victim of crime
- Vulnerable to the effects of Fear of Crime

Vulnerable to Exclusion
- Vulnerable to Social exclusion
- Through disability
- Through language barriers (inc. dyslexia etc.)
- Through cultural barriers
- Through isolation or commitment (young carers etc.)
- Vulnerable to Financial exclusion
- Vulnerable to Educational exclusion

Vulnerable to Abuse
- Emotional
- Physical
- Sexual
- Psychological
- Financial

OR for any reason may not achieve all of the following:
- Be healthy
- Stay safe,
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being
3 Safer Schools Officer (SSO)

3.1 Vetting

The SSO will be vetted to Children and Vulnerable Group Supervision (CVGS) level - formerly Youth Supervision.

3.2 SSO role and responsibilities

3.2.1 Contact with SSO

The SSO should not be contacted by anyone outside their working hours or during notified periods of leave. During these periods all communication should go through the SSO supervisor.

The SSO is NOT an emergency police contact. If an incident needs to be reported, or police assistance is required and your SSO is not present, please report this via:

- 101 - Non-emergency
- 999 – Emergencies

3.2.2 Patrols

The SSO will NOT undertake playground duties in place of school staff at break times. School staff performing that task will only be assisted by the SSO where some form of criminality is being undertaken by pupils (e.g. Drug dealing, possession of offensive weapons, serious violence, etc.).

The SSO will perform after school patrols in partnership with school staff to ensure pupil safety and tackle Anti-social Behaviour.

3.2.3 Behaviour policy and altercations

The SSO will show support for the school behaviour policy, however, will NOT intervene in altercations between pupils where a member of staff is available to do so, unless the officer believes there is a possibility of injury to a person or damage to property.

The SSO will give assistance to any member of staff, exercising their legislative powers, who requests it.

**Rationale**: concern has been expressed by some Head Teachers that their staff may otherwise become deskilled in dealing with incidents of conflict between pupils.

3.2.4 Care and supervision of pupils

The SSO will NOT undertake direct care and supervision of any pupil. This is the responsibility of the school. A member of staff must be present when the SSO speaks to, presents to, interviews, or takes a statement from pupils.

Where the pupil is required to be accompanied by an adult away from the school, the adult will NOT be a police officer.
3.3 Supervision

As a member of the MPS the SSO remains under the direct control of their designated police supervisor / line manager who will have responsibility for daily supervision, welfare, appraisals and development. However, feedback will be sought from the Head Teacher and/or the appointed school single point of contact (SPOC), in order to ensure that the activities undertaken by the SSO is consistent with agreed objectives.

In addition to the daily supervision of the SSO the police supervisor will arrange meetings with the school nominated SPOC to plan future delivery, in line with policing objectives and the needs of the school, whilst monitoring and reviewing current performance.

3.4 Working hours and abstractions

As part of the role, the SSO will be available Monday to Friday during term time however, the SSO’s working hours will vary to meet the needs of the school and/or police operational requirements.

Where the SSO has responsibility for several schools the SSO may only be available on a needs basis.

Where the SSO is dedicated to one school, the school will be notified of any activity conducted by the SSO away from the school (periods of annual leave, officer safety training, MPS training days, police operational requirements, etc.) authorised by their supervisor / line manager.

The SSO will notify the school of their arrival and departure from the school premises, in order to ensure the school’s compliance under Health and Safety regulations and fulfilment of responsibilities towards Officer Safety.

The SSO should not be contacted by their school outside their working hours or during notified periods of leave. During these periods all communication should go through the SSO supervisor.

3.5 Uniform and officer safety equipment

The SSO will wear police uniform whilst deployed to schools activities, to enable them to perform their role effectively in support of the school community.

However, under circumstances where it is not practicable or desirable to wear uniform the SSO’s police supervisor / line manager may authorise plain clothes to be worn.

In accordance with MPS policy surrounding Health and Safety, all SSO’s are required to wear their Personal Protective Equipment (Radio, Met vest, CS spray, baton and quick cuffs) at all times whilst on patrol. In plain clothes this will be worn covertly using a covert harness.
4 The school

4.1 Single point of contact (SPOC)

A member of the school SLT should be nominated as the SPOC for the SSO. All enquiries to and from the SSO must go via the SPOC. At Ardleigh Green Junior School the nominated member of staff is the headteacher John Morris OBE.

4.2 Partnership working

The school and SSO will work in partnership to deal with any incidents and agree on the appropriate resolution of such incidents.

The school will assist the SSO and any other police officer to maintain order of pupils at the end of the school day.

The school will inform the SSO of school panel meetings or other meetings where matters being discussed are in the remit of the SSO’s role and responsibilities.

The school can request that the SSO facilitate the delivery of MPS presentations offered on topics relevant to the safety of pupils.

The school should refer to the SSO in the event of any person not known to the school or not expected by the school who seeks access to school premises. This includes any persons brought to the school by other police personnel. The SSO will then check their identity, background and reason for the visit to ensure safety.

The school and SSO will share information in accordance with information sharing agreements drawn up under Section 115 Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and current information sharing guidance - (see Safeguarding and Information Sharing).

The school MUST dial 999 and refer to the SSO, in the event of any critical incident and/or any major incident. The SSO will conduct risk assessments and perform actions in consultation with school staff where possible. Where consultation is not immediately possible and waiting will cause the incident to deteriorate, they will perform their police duties without consultation.

For further information and/or guidance on critical incidents the SSO should refer to the MPS Advice on Critical Incidents in schools.

4.3 Facilities for the SSO

The school should provide the SSO regular use of an office for the purposes of having meetings and ensuring confidentiality. The office should include a telephone, computer terminal and a secure locker. These measures are essential so that the officer can effectively perform their duties. Where issues arise regarding liability for any given expenditure, this will be resolved through negotiation between the parties who agreed this protocol.
5 Child protection

Legislative responsibilities placed upon education providers and police in the area of child safeguarding are clearly documented in HM Government and Department for Education documentation and legislation.

**RELEVANT LEGISLATION**

Safeguarding children and young people (Policy paper):

Children Act 1989 (Legislative framework for child protection in England):

Children Act 2004 (Encourages partnerships between agencies and creates more accountability):

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (Established a single body to make decisions about individuals who should be barred from working with children and to maintain a list of these individuals):
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/47/contents

Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)):
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/9/contents/enacted

Children and Families Act 2014 (Introduced a number of reforms):

Section 175 Education Act 2002 (Duties of LEAs and governing bodies in relation to welfare of children):

Section 120 Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Amended the Children Act 1989 by expanding the definition of "harm" to include witnessing domestic violence):

Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (As amended by sections 73 and 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015):


Children and Adoption Act 2006 (powers to facilitate child contact and enforce contact orders when separated parents are in dispute):
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/20/contents

Children and Young Persons Act 2008 (Care and services for children in care):

Section 55 Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009 (Duty regarding welfare of children):

Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009:

Working together to safeguard children (A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children):

Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation: procedural information:

Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation (For those with statutory duties to safeguard children and vulnerable adults):
6 Safeguarding and information sharing

An MPS Safer Schools information sharing agreement (ISA) must be provided and signed.

In accordance with legislative responsibilities placed upon education providers and police (Section 115 Crime and Disorder Act 1998), the school and the SSO will share information for the purposes defined in such legislation. Mainly, where there are safeguarding and / or safety concerns for pupils, school staff, visitors or the wider school community.

Such practice will be the subject of an Information Sharing Agreement between the school and police.

In particular:

- The school and the SSO will share information of any incidents of assaults, criminal damage, theft and related offences, sexual offences, offensive weapons (as defined by Section 1 Prevention of Crime Act 1953 and Section 139 Criminal Justice Act 1988 as well as firearms / ammunition, crossbows and explosive materials), drugs offences, hate crime, or harassment.
- The school and the SSO will share information of all pupil exclusions, ie. short term external exclusions, permanent exclusions, and the circumstances so that any potential risks can be assessed and managed.
- The school and SSO will share information of cases of non-attendance of pupils where there are safeguarding and / or crime related concerns.
- The school and SSO will share information of a child reported missing from home.
- The school and SSO will share information of any other matter potentially impacting on the safety and welfare of a child, including concerns from their own observations of a child’s behaviour or appearance, eg. a sudden change of behaviour that could be symptomatic of issues such as death, divorce, abuse, bullying, political radicalisation or being a victim of some other unreported crime.
- Any information shared must be done securely ie. Use of a secure email address.

**RELEVANT LEGISLATION**


Information sharing (*Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers*): [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice)


School discipline and exclusions: [https://www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions](https://www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions)

Bullying at school: [https://www.gov.uk/bullying-at-school](https://www.gov.uk/bullying-at-school)

7 Missing pupils

The school must make every effort to contact the parent(s)/guardian(s) of a child that is not at school when expected to be before speaking to the police.

7.1 Absent from education

A person is absent from education when they are not at a place where they are expected or required to be and where the circumstances and context suggest there is a lower level of risk.

The school will deal with absences in the first instance as per school policy (speaking with parents/guardians, assessing the risk, etc.).

If a person’s whereabouts are known they are not considered missing or absent, and do not need to be reported to police unless there is an immediate risk to life.

If a child is considered absent the school or parent can ring 101 to report it. An operation will in each case ask the following questions. To save vital time for the call operators please have the answers ready.

- Persons full name and date of birth?
- Venue missing from?
- What is their description at the time they were last seen?
- Are the person’s whereabouts known? (If yes they are not considered missing or absent, and do not need to be reported to Police unless there is an immediate risk to life).
- Date/Time the person was last seen and by whom?
- Is this significantly out of character for them?
- What measures have you taken to ascertain their whereabouts prior to calling police? (Reasonable enquiries should have taken place by carers before calling Police).
- Have they been reported missing before? How many times?
- Are they 13 years or older?
- Do they have significant medical needs? If so what? (Consider whether they are on any medication? What’s the name of it? Is it urgent?)
- Are they likely to be involved in serious criminal activity?
- Do you have reason to believe they are likely to be a victim of crime?
- Are they at risk of Sexual Exploitation? If yes explain further
- Do they pose a danger to themselves, or anyone else?

7.2 Missing pupils

A child is missing when their whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests the child may be subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another.

If there is an identified immediate risk the young person must be reported to the SSO as missing immediately.

If no officer is available the school or parent should ring 101 or 999 (depending on the level of urgency). The school and parent should be in communication with each other to avoid duplicate reporting.

Potential risks can be managed in partnership. Schools should also complete a ‘Missing Pupil Alert’, in line with local authority policy.
RELEVANT LEGISLATION
Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-who-run-away-or-go-missing-from-home-or-care

Missing Children and Adults (A cross government strategy):

8 Lawful Powers

The SSO will NOT undertake any task asked of them by the school for which there is no police power, eg. The SSO cannot be authorised by a Head Teacher to conduct a search for tobacco under Section 550ZA of the Education Act 1996 because there is no corresponding police power to conduct such a search.

The SSO will assist school staff exercising their legislative powers to ensure safety.

In emergencies, where immediate action is needed, where there is threat to staff / students / the community then contact must be made by calling 999.

In cases of non-emergency, the school must contact the Safer Schools Officer or call the non-emergency number 101.

For more comprehensive guidance on legislative powers relevant to school staff and police officers working in schools, see ‘Safer Schools Partnership Legislation Guidance’.
9 Crime reporting

9.1 Quick guide for school staff

This process is designed as a quick guide for school staff in a Safer Schools Partnership to assist in understanding their responsibilities in relation to reporting matters to the police.

- **SERIOUS INCIDENT** (9.2)
- **SERIOUS SEXUAL ASSAULT** (9.3)

**ALWAYS INFORM THE SAFER SCHOOLS OFFICER**

- **SEXUAL ELEMENT**
  Incident involves a sexual element like sexting or sexual touching

- **CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)** (9.4)
  CSE has been identified

- **DRUGS** (9.5)
  Suspicion that a student is in possession of drugs or drugs have been found in/around school premises

- **KNIVES / WEAPONS** (9.5)
  Suspicion that a student is in possession of a knife or weapon or one been found on a student or in/around school premises

- **EXTREMISM OR RADICALISATION** (9.6)
  Concerns raised that involve signs of extremism or radicalisation

- **SERIOUS ASSAULT** (9.7)

- **GANGS** (9.8)

- **SAFEGUARDING**
  Affects the safety of anyone, involves a criminal element or you think the SSO needs to know.

School to deal

Work in partnership with the SSO to manage any potential risks and put measures in place to minimise the effect on those involved.

Dial 999 and inform the SSO
9.2 Serious incident

A serious incident is one that in the view of the child, parent or guardian or the child’s representative, has led or is intended to, or is likely to or threatened to lead to serious harm or loss to any person within the school, and includes serious damage to property.

A defined list of offences can be found in the Home Office Counting Rules for Recorded Crime.

### RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Home Office Counting Rules for recorded crime:

9.3 Serious sexual assault

A serious sexual assault can range from sexual touching without consent to assault by penetration and rape. All sexually motivated offences must be reported to the SSO so that it can be investigated thoroughly in order to protect and minimise the impact it may have on those involved and the wider school community.

The incident must also be reported to the police via 999 where the SSO is not at the scene.

For further information and/or guidance on critical incidents the SSO should refer to the MPS Advice on Critical Incidents in schools.

9.4 Child Sexual Exploitation

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is child abuse and not acceptable regardless of culture, ethnicity or background. All incidents identified as CSE must be reported to the SSO.

CSE can occur through the use of technology without the child’s immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post images on the internet / mobile phones without immediate payment or gain.

In all cases, those exploiting the child / young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength, economic situation or other resources.

Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person’s limited availability of choice as a result of their social, economic or emotional vulnerability.

9.5 Knives, weapons and drugs

All cases of knives / weapons or drugs found MUST be shared with the SSO so that further checks can be carried out and any risks assessed and managed to ensure the safety of the whole school community.

The SSO will deal with every incident on a case-by-case basis depending on the circumstances.

If a screening operation is required to send out a message to all pupils that the school will not tolerate knives / weapons in school, work in partnership with the SSO to plan the best way to do it.

9.5.1 Suspicion/finding a pupil in possession of a weapon or illegal substance (Reporting)

The school must notify the police immediately of all incidents where a student is in/suspected of being in possession of a knife, other offensive weapon or an illegal substance.
Should a member of school staff take possession of the weapon from a student, the staff member must document the incident and provide a police statement regarding the seizure if requested.

Where the arrest of a pupil is unavoidable and necessary, the head teacher or their nominee will be informed (under Police And Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984, Code C, Note 11D).

Except in exceptional circumstances where there is no doubt that the incident is innocent or poses no threat, the pupil will be interviewed (under PACE 1984, Code G) or arrested.

Entry onto a diversion scheme may be appropriate.

In addition, the school can take their own action in line with school policies to ensure the safety of the school community.

9.5.2 Finding weapons or illegal substances in/around school premises

The school must arrange to surrender any knives/weapons and/or drugs found to the Police without delay.

9.5.3 Screening on school premises and weapon sweeps

The reason for any screening practice in school is to send the message that knives and weapons will not be tolerated and is useful in preventing young people from bringing them into the school environment to ensure the safety of the school community.

The school can utilise a screening arch as provided by the police or purchase/borrow screening wands (subject to availability).

RELEVANT LEGISLATION


School discipline and exclusions: https://www.gov.uk/school-discipline-exclusions


Exclusion from maintained schools, Academies and pupil referral units in England (Chapter 12): https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion

9.6 Extremism or radicalisation

Schools are increasingly seen as being on the front-lines of the battle to prevent extremism.

Their duty to prevent extremism has now been enshrined in law in Section 26 of the 2015 Counter-Terrorism and Security Act which came into force on 1st July 2015, and requires schools to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”.

All cases where extremism or radicalisation are a concern must be reported to the SSO.

Also, if you see or hear anything that could be terrorist-related trust your instincts and call the Anti-Terrorist Hotline on 0800 789 321.
9.7 Serious assault

A serious assault is any injury inflicted that would require more than basic first aid treatment, a trip to hospital and would include any injury sustained with the use of a weapon.

Cases of serious assault must be reported to the SSO and work in partnership to manage any potential risks and put measures in place to minimise the effect on those involved.

9.8 Gangs

Any gang related information must be reported to the SSO at the earliest opportunity. This will enable the SSO to check that information against any police intelligence and then work with the school in order to put measures in place to prevent potential risk and protect the school community from harm.

10 Arresting on school premises

The MPS seeks to avoid action which unnecessarily leads to disruption of children and young people’s education. However, there may be times when the arrest of a pupil is unavoidable and necessary. In order to plan for such an event, the following should be adhered to.

Where the arrest of a pupil is unavoidable and necessary,

- the head teacher or their nominee will be informed (under Police And Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984, Code C, Note 11D).
- an arrest should be carried out discretely with the assistance of school staff to minimise any potential risks to other school users
- arrests during break times should be avoided
- a secure place should be nominated to carry out an arrest
- where possible, the person arrested will be put into police transport away from view of pupils and visitors

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

11 Cessation of Safer Schools Partnership (SSP)

The Safer Schools Partnership may be de-intensified or terminated upon mutual agreement, in the event that the needs of the school, community and/or policing no longer require the presence of a police officer at the school.
12 References

