

## 4.5 CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

*Reviewed SJO; Approved by Rebecca Melmoth (Oxfordshire Safeguarding Team) – January 2010*

### Aims and Objectives

As teachers we all have a statutory duty to 'safeguard and promote the welfare' of children. Staff and pupils have the right to protection from abuse and exploitation. Staff should work towards fulfilling the school's vision in providing a nurturing environment where each child is inspired to learn and discover their own potential; to feel safe and secure amongst their peers and staff. It is essential to maintain effective methods and systems to monitor and review the safety and welfare of pupils and staff.

### Recruitment & Training

Our objectives will be realised by regular Child Protection training sessions given to the whole staff, a minimum of every three years. New staff will be given guidance on their responsibilities and a comprehensive talk as to how the school system operates. Shiplake College practices safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children. People in a position of responsibility regarding Child Protection update their training, at a minimum, every two years.

### The College is Committed to:

- Maintaining children's welfare as our paramount concern
- Providing an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued and respected; confident to talk openly and sure of being listened to.
- Providing suitable support and guidance so that pupils have a range of appropriate adults who they feel confident to approach if they are in difficulties.
- Using the curriculum to provide opportunities for increasing self-awareness, self-esteem, assertiveness and decision making so that pupils have a range of contacts and strategies to ensure their own protection and understand the importance of protecting others.
- Working with parents to, build an understanding of the school's responsibility to ensure the welfare of all children, including the need for referral to other agencies in some situations.
- Ensuring all staff are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of abuse and are aware of the school's procedures and lines of communication.
- Monitoring children and young people who have been identified as 'in need' including the need for protection; keeping separate confidential records which are stored securely and shared appropriately with other professionals.
- Developing effective supportive liaison with other agencies including contacting them within 24 hours of a disclosure or suspicion of abuse.
- Ensuring that safer recruitment practices are followed and that they are in accordance with the school's recruitment policy. Currently the staff trained in

safer recruitment are Mr Richard Mannix (Senior Master) and Mr Neil Walne (Bursar).

## **Child Protection Officer**

The Designated Child Protection Officer is the Deputy Headmaster (Shane O'Brien). The Deputy Child Protection Officer is Miss Emma Arnold. The Governor with responsibility for Child Protection is Mr David Dalzell. Training for these position holders is updated, at a minimum, every two years.

The Child Protection Officer is trained to Level 3 Specialist Safeguarding Training with the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board. He is a trainer with the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Training Pool and has attended BSA courses. The Deputy Child Protection Officer has received training to Level 2. The Governor with responsibility for Child Protection has received BSA training. Child Protection issues, policies and procedures are reviewed termly at meetings of the Governing Body.

Concerns, however mild, should be taken to the Child Protection Officer who will advise further action. In the absence of the Child Protection Officer any concerns should be referred to the Headmaster. The Child Protection Officer and the Headmaster will monitor and review the actions of each other.

In the event of an allegation made by a child against a member of staff, the Child Protection Officer who will meet immediately with the Headmaster. In the instance of the allegation being made against the Child Protection Officer the allegation must be reported directly to the Headmaster. Should the allegation be against the Headmaster the Child Protection Officer will take it directly to the Governors (for more details see Allegations against Members of Staff).

The Designated Child Protection Officer is responsible for:

- Co-ordinating the child protection action within the school.
- Liaising with other agencies and professionals.
- Ensuring that procedures are followed; including the reporting and referral processes.
- Acting as a consultant for staff to discuss concerns.
- Making referrals as necessary.
- Maintaining a confidential and secure recording system.
- Ensuring that the school is appropriately represented at inter-agency meetings, in particular Child Protection Case Conferences.
- Managing and monitoring the school's part in any child protection / care plans.
- Organising and / or delivering the training / briefing of all staff, as well as GAP assistants, the Prefect body, members of the LVI and new House monitors.

- Ensuring that when a pupil, who is on the Child Protection Register is the subject of a CAF (Common Assessment Framework) referral, leaves the school their information is transferred immediately to their new school and that the pupil's Social Worker is informed.

Staff and pupils have the opportunities to identify and cross-reference ways in which safeguarding issues are addressed within the school. This could be via the curriculum, in particular PHSE, or school and house assemblies, Chapel and tutor time, as well as various policies and appropriate guidance. These could include Anti-Bullying, Behaviour and Discipline, Health & Safety, Risk Assessments and School Council or House Committee meetings.

#### Roles and Responsibilities

The school is responsible for ensuring that all action taken is in line with Oxfordshire's Safeguarding Children Procedure. The main role of the school in this procedure is to contribute to the identification, referral and assessment of children in need; including those who may have suffered, those who may be suffering and those who are at risk of suffering significant harm. The school may also have a role to play in the provision of service to Children in Need and their families.

All adults in school have a role to play:

- Protecting children from abuse
- Promoting the welfare of children
- Preventing children from being harmed

*In situations where there are child protection concerns the role of the school is NOT to investigate but to recognise and refer.*

## Reporting

The member of staff reporting a concern will be asked to give a written account of the alleged incident. This will be kept as a record for possible future reference. It is understood that should a member of staff wish to share a worry, or need simple advice on how best to deal with an incident, it is important to report their concerns however mild they seem. The Child Protection Officer, will then, if appropriate, in consultation with the Headmaster or relevant Housemaster decide on the strategy forward.

## Recognising Child Abuse

It is a teacher's responsibility to recognise signs of abuse and to refer these concerns to the Child Protection Officer. All lists of signs and symptoms of child abuse should be treated with caution. At times there will be straightforward explanations for injuries or behaviour, what is essential is that teachers share their concerns with the Child Protection Officer.

## Definitions of Child Abuse

There are four areas that are specified as headings under which concerns may be identified:

- Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical and psychological needs, which is likely to result in serious impairment of a child's health or development, including failure to thrive and a failure to protect a child from danger.
- Physical abuse is a physical injury to a child where there is definite knowledge, or a reasonable suspicion, that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented. This includes, for example, deliberate poisoning, attempted drowning or smothering and Munchausen's syndrome by proxy - where a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health in a child. Physical abuse can lead directly to neurological damage, physical injuries, disability or even death.
- Emotional abuse is the persistent or emotional ill treatment of a child, which has a severe adverse effect on the behaviour and emotional development of that child. Its diagnosis will require medical, psychological, psychiatric, social and/or educational assessment. (NB All abuse involves some emotional ill treatment, this category should only be used when it is the main or sole form of abuse). There is increasing evidence of the long-term consequences for children's development of emotional abuse. It can have a negative impact on a child's behaviour and self-esteem.
- Sexual Abuse is the involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children and adolescents in sexual activities that they do not truly comprehend and to which they are unable to give informed consent. This may include non-contact activities such as involving children in watching pornographic videos or watching sexual activities. The key elements in any definition of child sexual abuse are: betrayal of trust and responsibility, abuse of power for the sexual gratification of the abuser, inability of children to give consent.

## Responding to Disclosure:

- Ensure the child is safe and if in distress, cared for
- Reassure the child that you are listening and want to help
- Let the child talk freely; do not interrupt
- Keep questions open and to a minimum
- Never promise confidentiality
- Ensure that you take notes

## Reporting and Recording Disclosures:

- Report to the Child Protection Officer or the Headmaster in his absence.
- Record the date and time of the disclosure and put into some context how the child came to tell you what has happened/is happening.
- Record verbatim what the child said, as soon as possible after the disclosure, keep the recording factual and objective.

- Where there is visible bruising/injury, describe what you have seen and where on the child's body. Do not ask children to remove clothing.
- Describe your observations of the child, describing their emotional state and behaviour.
- All information is confidential and once passed onto the Child Protection Officer there is no right to further knowledge.
- If appropriate the Child Protection Officer will report the disclosure or allegations to the Oxfordshire Schools Safeguarding Team within twenty-four hours.

## **Confidentiality and Information Sharing**

All confidential issues relating to children and young people should be dealt with on a *need to know* basis. Therefore only information relevant for a particular purpose should be passed on to the recipient, who in turn may not pass this information onto another individual, without consulting the informant.

Before a referral to Social Service is made, an assessment of disclosure needs to be carried out by the Child Protection Officer, who can seek advice from the Oxfordshire Locality Co-ordinator. If a child does not consent to the disclosure of information, then the Child Protection Officer can override the duty of confidentiality in order to safeguard the welfare of the child. Appropriate consent can be gained from the parent if this is deemed not to put the child at risk.

Only relevant members of staff in schools need to know the details of concerns relating to a child in need i.e. the Child Protection Officer, Housemaster, Medical Staff and anyone involved in monitoring particular aspects of a child's behaviour. Children should also know which teachers/staff are in possession of what information, when it will be shared, why and with whom.

## **Monitoring**

The Child Protection Officer and relevant Housemaster will set a timescale for monitoring a child about whom a concern has been expressed (approximately half a term or 6–8 weeks). If no indicators are found or appear to develop, the monitoring will cease. If indicators and concerns continue, appropriate action will be taken and recorded. The Child Protection Officer will also liaise with outside agencies as required.

As part of good practice, parents/carers should be advised that their child is to be monitored and involved in the process as much as possible. When a pupil on the Child Protection Register leaves Shiplake College their information will be transferred immediately to their new school and their social worker will also be informed.

## **Allegations against Members of Staff**

- If a member of staff suspects, or is informed, about an allegation involving another member of staff, the school should not take action against the informer where he or she acted as a transmitter of information in good faith.
- Any allegation against / involving a member of staff must be referred directly to the Headmaster by the Child Protection Officer.
- If the Headmaster is either absent or the subject of the allegation this must be referred directly to the Chairman of Governors.
- The Headmaster must inform the LA designated officer who consults, if appropriate, with the Police and the Social Services.
- The Headmaster will inform the Chairman of Governors.
- The Headmaster and the LA designated officer, in conjunction with the other agencies, where appropriate, will discuss how to and who will inform the parents of the pupil / pupils concerned.
- The Headmaster must inform the member of staff who is the subject of any allegation as soon as possible after contacting the LA designated officer – if other agencies are to be involved they need to be consulted about what information may be disclosed to the member of staff.
- The Headmaster should not interview the member of staff implicated in the allegation.
- If the member of staff is a member of a professional association / union they should be advised to contact that organisation at the outset.
- The LA designated officer will lead any investigation, usually in conjunction with the Police and / or Social Services.
- All staff need to be aware that it is a disciplinary offence not to report concerns about the conduct of a colleague that could place a child at risk.
- If the allegation concerns the Headmaster, the person receiving the allegation should immediately inform the Child Protection Officer or the Chairman of Governors without notifying the Headmaster first. The Chairman of Governor should then follow the above procedure.
- In the event of an allegation against a member of staff working with boarders and who is suspended pending an investigation that person will be moved into alternative accommodation away from children.
- The School will report to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) within one month of leaving the school any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) whose services are no longer used because he / she is considered unsuitable to work with children.
- The address for referrals is PO Box 181, Darlington, DL1 9FA  
(tel: 0300 123 1111)
- This procedure is guided by the Oxfordshire publication – Allegations against Teaching and Non Teaching Staff in Education – September 2009.

## **Important Contact Numbers**

Schools Safeguarding Team

- Barry Armstrong 01865815956 (Local Authority Designated Officer)
- Rebecca Melmoth 01865815186
- Alison Beasley 01865323457

Oxfordshire Locality Coordinator

- Jeff Frank 07824498827  
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