



St Margaret's School

Exeter

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CHILD PROTECTION – POLICY AND CODE OF PRACTICE AT ST MARGARET'S SCHOOL

The School has a legal obligation to work with other agencies in the protection of children from harm. This policy has been written with due regard to the DCFS publication 'Working together to safeguard children, 2006' and is compliant with the DCFS publication, 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education'. It is in accordance with the Devon Safeguarding Children Board.

The policy will be available on the school website. Also parents will be advised that the school has a Child Protection Policy and that they have the right to receive a copy of this statement and of the implementation procedure.

IMPLEMENTATION AND PROCEDURES

Review

- This policy will be reviewed annually
- The School Council will annually review the procedures and the efficiency with which related duties have been discharged. This review will be minuted.
- Any deficiencies, or weaknesses in child protection arrangements will be remedied without delay, whenever they might be discovered

Recruitment and visitors

- The school operates 'Safe Recruitment Procedures', which include Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) clearance for all appointments. It also fulfils other checks as required by the Independent School Standards Regulations.
- assurance is obtained that appropriate child protection checks and procedures apply to any staff employed by another organisation and working with the school's pupils on another site (for example, in a separate institution);
- 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 or she is considered unsuitable to work with children; the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) commenced operation on 20 January 2009 and its address for referrals is PO Box 181, Darlington DL1 9FA (Tel 0300 123 1111). In this context, ceasing to use a person's services includes: dismissal; non-renewal of a fixed-term contract; no longer engaging/refusing to engage a supply teacher provided by an employment agency; terminating the placement of a student teacher or other trainee; no longer using staff employed by contractors; no longer using volunteers; resignation, and voluntary withdrawal from supply teaching, contract working, a course of initial teacher training, or volunteering. It is important that reports include as much evidence about the circumstances of the case as possible.

The designated Child Protection Officer for the school is Dr Karen Marshall. Mrs Suzy Allen is the Early Years specialist and therefore the first contact for concern about children of Pre-Prep age (Nursery - Year 2).

Training

- The designated Child Protection Officer will receive training in child protection and interagency work updated every two years.
- The Head Teacher and all other staff will undergo training in child protection every three years (maximum).
- Part-time staff will be included in training where possible. Where that is not possible the C.P.O. will train them separately. This also applies to PGCE students.
- New staff will have an induction programme which includes a session on child protection delivered by the C.P.O.

GUIDANCE FOR STAFF

It is your professional responsibility to be alert to the threat of child abuse, and to refer any suspicion of abuse when there is concern.

Categories of abuse (listed below), as defined by the Department of Health, are: neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, grave concern, i.e. where social and medical assessments indicate that a child is at a significant risk of abuse.

1. Staff need to be aware of signs of abuse (see below), alert to its possibility and up-to-date with the procedures. Our pastoral system gives the opportunity for children to be heard by tutors, Key Stage Co-ordinators or indeed any staff. Suspected abuse should be reported to the C.P.O. and not investigated by the member of staff.

Possible signs of abuse

Physical Abuse

- Black eyes without bruising to the forehead
- Finger tip bruising and bruises in various stages of healing
- Cigarette type burns anywhere, patterned burns (irons), rope burns. Contact burns in abnormal sites.
- Lacerations to the body or mouth
- Multiple fractures. Evidence of old fractures.
- Fading injuries noticeable after an absence from school
- Seems frightened of parents, does not want to return home at the end of the day
- Shrinks markedly (backs away) at the approach of adults
- Suffers from frozen watchfulness
- Constantly asks in words/actions what will happen next

Sexual Abuse

- Difficulty walking or sitting
- Pain/itching/bleeding/bruising/discharge to the genital area/anus
- Urinary infections/sexually transmitted diseases
- Persistent sore throats
- Eating disorders
- Self mutilation
- Refuses to change for gym or participate in physical activities
- Exhibits an inappropriate sexual knowledge for their age
- Exhibits sexualised behaviour in their play or with other children
- Lack of peer relationships, sleep disturbances, acute anxiety/fear
- School refusal, running away from home

Emotional Abuse

- Excessive behaviour, such as extreme aggression, passivity or become overly demanding
- Children who self-harm, for instance by scratching or cutting themselves
- Is either inappropriately adult or infantile
- Children who persistently run away from home
- Children who show high levels of anxiety, unhappiness or withdrawal

Neglect

- Frequent absenteeism from school
- Begs or steals money or food
- Lacks needed medical or dental care, immunizations or glasses
- Lacks appropriate clothing, e.g. for weather conditions, shoes are too small, ill-fitted clothes
- Clothes are consistently dirty
- Teeth are dirty, hair quality is poor and contains infestations
- Hands are cold, red and swollen
- The parent or adult caregiver has failed to protect a child from physical harm or danger

The Parent or Other Adult Caregiver:

- Denies existence of or blames the child for the child's problems at home or at school
- Sees and describes the child as entirely worthless, burdensome or in another negative light
- Unrealistic expectations of the child i.e. demands a level of academic or physical performance of which they are not capable
- Offers conflicting or unconvincing explanation of any injuries to the child
- Appears indifferent to or overtly rejects the child
- Refuses offers of help for the child's problems
- Isolated physically/emotionally

2. If a child begins to disclose information to staff it is very important that confidentiality is not promised to the child. This point needs to be made tactfully to the child as soon as is practical in any discussion.

If a Pupil discloses information:**Do**

- explain that you may have to tell someone;
- allow the pupil to do the talking;
- listen quietly and encouragingly;
- allow the pupil to finish
- record the conversation as soon as possible
- refer to the Head Teacher or Deputy Head immediately
- write a full report for the Form Tutor/Key Stage Co-ordinator and retain a copy

Don't

- make any promises of secrecy;
- postpone or delay the opportunity to listen;
- ask leading questions;
- allow your own feelings, such as anger, pity, shock to surface;
- interpret what you have been told, just record it;
- allow any breach of confidentiality (i.e. only those who need to know should be told about the abuse).

It is essential that staff do not receive information in confidence. The pupil must be told at the outset that information may have to be passed on "the need to know basis", that is to someone in a position to protect the pupil.

3. Physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect should be reported by the teacher to the Child Protection Officer. If the child needs immediate attention then the C.P.O. should contact a G.P, or a hospital for treatment. Parental consent is not required for this. For any cases of abuse the CYPD (Children & Young People's Directorate) should be contacted. The incident can be discussed with the social care practitioner on that number either for advice, or if the evidence is clear enough, to make a referral. Advice should be taken from the CYPD as to whether the parents are informed or not. If contact with the CYPD is deemed appropriate by the C.P.O. it will be made within 24 hours of the concerns coming to him.

4. Any concerns, and/or the child's comments should be accurately recorded by the C.P.O. at the time and be dated. They should be retained (confidentially) as further concerns may be raised later.

5. The C.P.O. may be asked to arrange for a child to be interviewed to substantiate the concern. This should be carried out by a member of staff who has received appropriate training and guidance.

6. If concern is substantiated then any further investigation will be carried out by Social Workers or Police officers.
Note:- at no time should the alleged abuser be contacted.

7. If the complaint has been made against a member of staff or volunteer, the C.P.O. should immediately contact the Head Teacher, who in turn must contact the Local Authorities Designated Officer, L.A.D.O. The L.A.D.O. will follow the procedure as laid down in 'Working together, 2006' and advise the school accordingly.

8. If the alleged abuse is by the Head Teacher then the C.P.O. would contact the Chairman of the School Council, who would then follow the above procedure.

9. If the complaint has been made against the C.P.O. then the teacher would report it to the Head Teacher who would then follow the above procedure.

10. Any complaint made against a member of staff by a parent should be made to either the Head Teacher or Deputy Head who will then meet to discuss the appropriate procedure.

11. If abuse of a child by another child is discovered (rather than bullying) the CYPD should be contacted for advice.

MANAGING RISK

It is important that staff do not leave themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a pupil. Whilst recognising that St. Margaret's School provides a wide range of activities at various times of the day, and in various venues, staff should be mindful of managing that risk. Examples of situations where this may be more relevant might include;

- One-to-one tuition
- Sports coaching
- Conveying pupils by car
- Electronic communication, eg texts and email

Examples of actions that staff should take to minimize such risk might include;

- Informing colleagues of their whereabouts and situation. (Do not allow a pupil to remain in your room after the end of school unless you have informed a colleague)
- Minimising time spent one-to-one with a student (you could ask another child to wait with the pupil you are dealing with to act as a witness)
- Asking colleagues to 'check in' on them occasionally
- Keeping doors open
- Checking that emails/texts can not be misconstrued
- Do not respond to any form of provocative behaviour, or comment in any way about the way a pupil is dressed, other than to correct uniform details. If male members of staff have any concerns about the way a member of the Sixth Form is dressed, please mention this to Mrs Bridget Hutchings or another female member of staff.

Physical restraint

Ref: Croner Teacher's Briefing Issue No. 68

DfEE Circular 10/98 Section 550A of Education Act 1996 advises that:

"Before intervening physically, a teacher should, wherever practicable, tell the pupil who is misbehaving to stop and what will happen if he or she does not. The teacher should continue attempting to communicate with the pupil throughout the incident and should make it clear that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary. A calm and measured approach to a situation is needed and teachers should never give the impression that they have lost their temper or are acting out of anger or frustration or to punish the pupil"

Teachers have the power in law to control or restrain pupils by the use of force. The Head may also authorise other school staff to do so. Where a teacher or authorised person does not have the power to intervene, there will be occasions when he or she should not intervene in an incident without help.

The new legislation does not make staff immune to complaints that they have not acted correctly. In an official investigation, the issue of whether the member of staff acted inappropriately is assessed on the balance of probabilities. If there is a criminal investigation, the applied judgement is of proof beyond all reasonable doubt.

Examples of *acceptable physical intervention according to the above circular are:

- Physically interposing between pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path
- *Holding
- *Pushing
- *Pulling
- *Leading a pupil by the hand or arm
- *Shepherding a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back
- *(in extreme circumstances) using more restrictive holds.

**In recent legal cases it has proved difficult to define acceptable or reasonable force so you are best not attempt to restrain or physically touch a child unless there is a medical reason for taking this action. Make sure that there are witnesses.*

Although there are times when we may want to put an arm around a distressed pupil, we have to consider the advisability of such action. If a pupil makes an accusation against a member of staff, the Head Teacher is required to investigate this. Extreme caution should be exercised when dealing with young pupils, particularly during the adolescent years. Careers have been ruined as a result of an unsubstantiated accusation.

CHILD'S RIGHTS DURING AN INVESTIGATION

1. All those involved in Child Protection investigations must act throughout in the best interests of the child or young person.
 2. Children and young people are entitled to be protected from harm and neglect.
 3. Children should be listened to and treated with respect.
 4. The views and wishes of the child must be sought. However, the child's best interests may mean that action has to be taken against the child's wishes. The reason for this must be carefully explained to the child.
 5. Children and young people must always be given explanations for the actions taken to protect them.
 6. Children and young people should not be repeatedly interviewed about the same events.
 7. Children and young people's consent should be obtained before a video recording of an interview is made or before a medical examination.
 8. Medical examinations should only be undertaken when there is a clear purpose. They must be conducted by appropriately qualified staff and in suitable surroundings.
- Children who are felt to be at risk of harm are given a Child Protection Plan. A list of those children for whom this is the case is kept by the Devon Safeguarding Children Service.

Devon LEA Code of Practice is available for referral, it is in the staff room, please do not remove.

Once the name of a family has been mentioned, then a Social Worker is obliged to investigate. The subsequent investigation may involve the teacher and/or the school. Social Services will decide whether to take the investigation further. A child may be placed on the Child Protection Register.

The school will not be informed of this decision.

The school may not hear any more after the concern has been reported.

The Pupil Support Group is available to collect information about any pupil that we are concerned about.

A note should be kept in the child's file and a copy given to the Pupils Support Group of any concern we have, so that if an investigation takes place, we have some information that may be of use.

CHILD PROTECTION – GUIDANCE FROM THE MULTI-DISCIPLINARY CHILD HANDBOOK 1998

A copy of this handbook is available in the Learning Resources Centre in the Teacher reference section.

Updated - November 2009

To be reviewed - Annually

By whom – Head Teacher & Deputy Head