



Hopelands Preparatory School

Child Protection Policy

At School, as in all other schools in the UK, we work within a legislative framework that seeks to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children (for example the Children Act 1989 and the Education Act 2002). We are committed to the principles that lie behind this legislation that are articulated in the 'Every Child Matters' initiative and we aim to achieve best practice in all areas of Child Protection.

Fundamental to this aim is the creation of a culture of openness throughout the school where all members of the community feel able to express their concerns and anxieties without fear of retaliation or humiliation and have confidence that they will receive a serious, sensitive and professional response from those in positions of responsibility.

The policy covers the following areas:

- Pupils' and parents' awareness
- Staff recruitment, employment and training
- Responsibilities and Procedures
- Action to be taken by staff
- Review
- Legislation and Guidance

Pupils' and parents' awareness

Opportunities will be created, in PHSE (and other areas of the curriculum if appropriate), in the houses for pupils to develop an understanding of what constitutes acceptable or unacceptable behaviour on the part of others and to develop their own self-confidence and assertiveness.

This policy will be published on the school website.

Staff recruitment, employment and training

The School recruitment procedures, in accordance with ISI regulations, (see Staff Recruitment Policy) will have regard to current expert advice (e.g. NCSL) on advertising, scrutiny of applications, interviewing, references, personal documentation, CRB checks etc. The Head, Bursar and other staff involved in employing staff will be trained in these procedures.

The Head and other designated person will undergo refresher Child Protection training every two years. This will be cascaded down to both new staff and existing staff at INSET training days.

Staff will be encouraged to pay attention to Child Protection issues in all areas of School life for instance (but by no means exclusively) risk assessments for trips, planning of staff, organisation of external events and so on.

Staff should always ensure that ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place pupils or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a pupil (for example, in one-to-one tuition, sports coaching, conveying a pupil by car, engaging in inappropriate electronic communication with a pupil, and so on).

Any concerns about a member of staff's behaviour towards pupils will be dealt with under the School Staff Disciplinary Procedure, having particular regard to expert advice on Child Protection issues involving staff and to the legal obligation to report any possible offences.

Responsibilities and Procedures

School's designated person responsible for Child Protection matters is the Head and other delegated person. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) designated practitioner responsible for Child Protection matters is the Foundation Stage Teacher (Mrs N Prout). The EYFS designated practitioner will liaise with local statutory agencies, as appropriate. The contact details for the local authority can be found at the bottom of this policy. The safety of the child is paramount and if a member of staff were ever to feel that their reported concerns had not been taken sufficiently seriously they should contact Social Services directly.

The Local Safeguarding Children Board establishes the procedures to be followed if concerns are raised about a child; School will follow these procedures. We will work closely with Social Services and the Police as required, for example by attending case conferences, and will keep appropriate, confidential and secure records of any concerns, even if a referral is not necessary. If a pupil on the Child Protection register is absent for more than two days or leaves the school, her social worker will be informed by the Head.

Staff will be informed about individual Child Protection issues on a need-to-know basis. We will endeavour to achieve the best balance between the desire for confidentiality on the part of the child and the need to give members of staff sufficient information for them to fulfil their role responsibly.

Every effort will be made to support any children who are known to have experienced abuse of any kind. In everyday School life we will seek to provide a stable, secure and consistent environment and to create opportunities to build a sense of self-worth; we will also find external professional help if appropriate. We recognise that children who have suffered abuse may display challenging or withdrawn behaviour. While making it clear that some behaviour is unacceptable we will also ensure that the pupil knows she herself is valued and not blamed for any abuse that has occurred.

Action to be taken by staff

There are four main categories of abuse: physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect. All of these can happen at home, at school, or elsewhere, inflicted by adult on child or by child on child.

Members of staff involved with a pupil should aim for a relationship which engenders trust. They should also be prepared to listen and to be observant and sensitive to changes in attitude and well-being.

If any member of staff suspects that a pupil has been abused, the circumstances should be reported to the Head, who is the “designated person”, immediately. Allegations of abuse must also be reported. The Head will follow the guidelines published by the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board on their website.

If a pupil confides in a trusted member of staff that she has been abused, she should be allowed to talk without any suggestion that judgement is being passed. She should not be questioned in any depth as this could compromise a subsequent investigation by specially trained Social Workers or Police. Staff should not promise unconditional confidentiality as it may be necessary to involve these other agencies but the pupil should be reassured that any information passed on will be on a “need to know” basis for her own welfare. Members of staff should ensure they do not ask any leading questions. Notes should be made immediately after a talk with a pupil in which abuse has been alleged. These confidential notes should be retained by the member of staff involved. They could be needed for reference should the case go further.

If the Head is absent, the allegation should be passed to the delegated member of staff (Mrs N Prout – Foundation Stage Teacher). If the allegation concerns the Head, the person receiving the allegation should immediately inform the Chair of Governors, without notifying the Head first. In case of serious harm, the police should be informed from the outset.

Where the allegation of abuse is against one or more other pupils, the designated person will refer to the school’s Anti-Bullying and Behaviour Policies.

Any member of staff or volunteer suspected of abuse may be suspended from duty while a proper investigation is carried out. Disciplinary measures may be taken even if there is insufficient evidence for a prosecution. If the person suspected of abuse is the “designated person” (i.e. the Head), the Chairman of the Governing Body should be informed. Action would be taken in accordance with existing disciplinary procedures.

If abuse is alleged or occurs, the normal channel of communication is through the Head to the relevant Social Services Departments. The Children Act (1989) requires an additional channel for serious complaints or concerns should the normal channel be blocked. Concerns or allegations about School practices or the behaviour of colleagues which are likely to put pupils at risk of abuse or other serious harm can also be referred directly to Ofsted.

If an employed, contracted or volunteered member of staff is considered unsuitable to work with children because of any Child Protection issues, the Head will report the matter to the ISA within one month at the following address PO Box 181, Darlington DL1 9FA (tel 0300 123 1111). Information on these guidelines can be found in the Independent Schools Inspectorate Handbook, Part 3.

The procedures contained in this policy, including 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).

Parents, staff and children can talk to the Gloucestershire SCB, Childline or the NSPCC.

The names and telephone numbers of contacts are: GSCB www.gscb.org.uk Chair: Jo Grills Shire Hall Westgate Gloucester GL1 2TP jo.grills@gloucestershire.gov.uk 01452 425 301	Childline: 0800 1111 NSPCC: 0808 800 5000
	Ofsted www.ofsted.gov.uk

Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the school's governing body. The governing body will ensure that the procedures contained in this policy have been and will be discharged efficiently.

Any deficiencies or weaknesses in the school's child protection arrangements will be remedied without delay.

S Bradburn
March 2009

Legislation

Children Act 1989

The Children Act 1989 gives every child the right to protection from abuse and exploitation and the right to have enquiries made to safeguard his or her welfare.

Education Act 2002

Section 175 of this Act came into force in 2004. It requires arrangements to be made by maintained schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (e.g. the leaflet 'What to do if You're Worried a Child is Being Abused').

Education (Independent Schools) Regulations 2003 introduced a similar requirement to the above for independent schools.

Education (Prohibition from Teaching or Working with Children) Regulations 2003

These regulations require information to be given to the Secretary of State following dismissal, resignation etc of a member of staff on grounds that the person is unsuitable to work with children; or relates to the person's misconduct.

Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2001

This act sets out an offence of 'abuse of trust' – a sexual or otherwise inappropriate relationship between an adult who is responsible for young people and a young person in his or her care. Subject to a number of limited defences it will be a criminal offence for a person in a position of trust in a school to engage in any sexual activity with a person aged 18 or under with whom a relationship of trust exists, irrespective of the age of consent, even if the basis for the relationship is consensual.

Guidance

Working Together to Safeguard Children: A Guide to Inter-Agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children (DfES - ISBN 011 322309 9)

Safeguarding Children in Education (DfES/0027/2004)

'What to do if You're Worried a Child is Being Abused'(DfES 2003)

Safeguarding Children: Safer Recruitment and Selection in Education Settings (DfES/1568/2005)

Safeguarding Children in Education: Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Teachers and Other Staff(DfES/2044/2005)

Guidance for Safe Working Practice for the Protection of Children and Staff in Education Settings (teachernet website)

Staff Subject to Allegations – Thresholds for and Alternatives to Suspension (teachernet website)

Managing the Aftermath of Unfounded and Unsubstantiated Allegations (teachernet website)

The Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2003 (ISI)

National Minimum Standards: Boarding Schools (DoH)

Safer Staff Recruitment Training (NCSL www.onlinecommunities/comms-join.cfm)

Boarding Schools Association publications (BSA www.boarding.org.uk)

Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board guidelines (www.gscb.org.uk)

Every Child Matters (government website)