



# ST HUGH'S SCHOOL

## Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy

**St Hugh's School recognises its legal duty to work with other agencies in protecting children from harm and responding to allegations of abuse.**

### **Aim**

To ensure that the correct procedures are in place to enable Safeguarding issues to be dealt with effectively, efficiently and sensitively. To ensure that we practice safe recruitment by checking the suitability of staff and volunteers working with children. To establish a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.

### **Procedures**

- Safeguarding is recognised as an important issue by the School.
- Guidance on the best way to react and deal with such issues is regularly updated and published as 'Child Protection (Safeguarding) Guidance'.
- The School offers pupils a range of people to whom they may go to discuss problems, these include outside agencies. A list of names and contacts is made available to children.
- The School has a complaints procedure through which students, parents and staff can exercise their right to complain about issues which are worrying them in School.
- The school will take sensible precautions to prevent the possibility of false allegations being made.
- Safeguarding related issues are dealt with as appropriate through the curriculum.
- The School seeks to promote positive, working relationships with other agencies involved in protecting children from harm and responding to abuse.
- The School also follows procedures set out by the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board.
- Appropriate INSET will be provided for staff to ensure that they are up-to-date with Safeguarding issues and procedures.

**This policy must be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Guidance published and updated regularly by the CPO.**

Reviewed: September 2011

Next Review: September 2012



## Child Protection (Safeguarding) Guidance

The designated members of staff for Child Protection (Safeguarding) are the Deputy Head (Pastoral) (Bob Avery) and the Head of Pre-Prep (Sally Russell).

### Important Background

- This policy pays due regard to 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education' (DCSF 2006) and 'Dealing with allegations against teachers and other staff' (DfE 2011)
- This policy is applicable to EYFS children as well as those in the rest of the school.
- A copy of this policy is made available to parents on the school's website and a copy is sent to those who request it.
- The school operates safe recruitment procedures (see Recruitment Policy).
- The Head, Bursar and Head of Pre-Prep have taken the online Safer Recruitment training course offered by NCSL.
- The Child Protection Officers receive appropriate training in Child Protection and Inter-Agency working every two years.
- All teaching, non-teaching staff and Head receive Child Protection training every three years.
- The Board of Governors undertakes an annual review of the school's Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy and procedures and the efficiency with which they have been discharged at its Board meeting every November.
- Any weaknesses or deficiencies in Child Protection Matters will be rectified without delay.
- The Head of Pre-Prep will take the lead responsibility for safeguarding children within the EYFS setting and liaising with local statutory children's agencies as appropriate.
- Procedures will be applied with common sense and judgement
- A quick resolution is a priority

### Guidance for Staff

The most important thing to remember: REFER ON – do not keep information to yourself. You must inform the designated members of staff (or the Headmaster in their absence), or the Local Authority Designated Officer any concern or allegation about school practices or the behaviour of colleagues which are likely to put pupils at risk of abuse or other serious harm. It is a statutory requirement that all concerns should be recorded however minor.

In their school-based Child Protection training, staff are reminded that they should ensure that their actions and behaviour do not place pupils or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a pupil. Such matters as one to one teaching, where staff are advised to ensure they can be seen by colleagues, are discussed at staff meetings and appropriate guidance given. See also the Staff Handbook for further guidance for staff.

### Boarding

It is important to note that:

- This policy is also for staff and other adults working in the school and older boarders in positions of responsibility.

- Senior pupils given responsibility over other pupils are given appropriate briefing for dealing with any allegations of abuse they may hear.
- There is a policy known to staff and used in practice, for taking appropriate action should a child (including a boarder) go missing.
- Boarders and their parents are informed about the possibility of reporting concerns or allegations to Ofsted (08456 014772 and [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)) and the 'LADO' (Local Authority Designated Officer) (01865 810628 and [www.oscb.org.uk](http://www.oscb.org.uk)) regarding any complaint concerning their welfare. These contact details are also available on our website and in documents for boarders.
- Anyone will be given immunity from 'whistle-blowing' if they act in good faith over any allegation of abuse.
- If a member of the residential boarding staff is suspended pending an investigation of a child protection issue then alternative accommodation will be found for them away from the children in the boarding house.

### **Allegations against pupils**

A pupil against whom an allegation of abuse has been made may be suspended from the School during the investigation and the School's policy on Behaviour Management will apply.

### **Child Abuse**

The basis of all child abuse is the failure to recognise a child's basic needs and respond to them. Our duty as professionals is to be open to the possibility that various forms of abuse may take place, to identify the indicators of such abuse and to ensure that our concerns are transmitted to others. Any delay in doing this might leave the child open to further, and possibly more serious, abuse and might result in a possible loss of evidence which could have been used to improve the child's position. We recognise that because of the day-to-day contact with children, school staff are ideally placed to observe the outwards signs of abuse. It is the role of the CPO to keep a secure record, to monitor and to refer cases as necessary to Social Services. These documents are to be kept separate from the child's academic file.

### **Child abuse may consist of:**

#### **Physical abuse**

- May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.
- Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child whom they are looking after.

#### **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.
- It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

#### **Emotional Abuse**

- Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment 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 insofar as they meet the needs of another person.
- It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children.
- It may involve 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 ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

### **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, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts.
- They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

*These definitions have been taken from the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Procedures.*

### **Dealing with disclosure**

*The following procedure is based upon the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Procedures (LSCB) and the National Minimum Boarding Standards.*

- Always stop and listen straight away to anyone who wants to tell you about incidents or suspicions of abuse.
- Explain that you would like to make notes of what they are telling you and write a short account of what is being said.
- **Do not give a guarantee of confidentiality.** Talk through the issue of confidentiality with the child. You can guarantee that you will only pass on information to the minimum number of people who must be told in order to ensure that the proper action is taken; that you will never tell anyone who does not have a clear 'need to know'; and that you will personally take whatever steps you can to protect the informing pupil or adult from any retaliation or unnecessary stress that might be feared after a disclosure of alleged abuse has been made.
- Avoid asking leading questions like, 'What did s/he do to you?' Instead try, 'What do you want to tell me?' or 'Is there anything else you want to say?'
- Any member of staff who is told of any incident or has strong suspicion of physical or sexual child abuse occurring to a pupil in School, at home or outside the School, must report the information immediately (within 24 hours) to the designated member of staff or the Headmaster in their absence, or to the Local Authority Designated Officer.
- School staff should not investigate reports of physical or sexual abuse themselves. Alleged victims, perpetrators, those reporting abuse and others involved will not be interviewed by School staff beyond the point at which it is clear that there is an allegation of abuse.
- Ensure the child is handed onto a sympathetic, appropriate environment when he leaves you, **do not leave him on his own.**
- After reporting the allegation to the appropriate senior member of staff, the staff member should also make a written record as soon as possible of what they have been told and hand a copy to the CPO.
- If an allegation is made against a member of staff/volunteer then this should be reported directly to the Headmaster who will deal with the matter in conjunction with the CPO and following the school's disciplinary procedures as well as safeguarding procedures. If an

allegation is made against the Head then it should be immediately brought to the attention of the Chairman of Governors who has a specific responsibility for safeguarding.

### **Professional role**

*Upon receiving an allegation of physical/sexual abuse, the designated member of staff will:*

- Limit questioning to the minimum necessary to seek clarification, avoiding 'leading' the pupil or adult by making suggestions or asking questions that introduce their ideas about what may have happened.
- Stop asking any more questions as soon as the pupil or adult has disclosed that he believes that something abusive has happened to him or to someone else.
- Tell the informing pupil/adults that he will now make sure the appropriate people are brought in. In the first instance this will be the Headmaster, as well as informing the School Governor overseeing Safeguarding, Mr James Guillum Scott. Parents will be informed as long as this does not put the child at further risk of harm.
- Ask the informing pupil/adult what steps they would like taken to protect them now that they have made an allegation and assure them that the School will try to follow their wishes. Take any steps needed to protect any pupil involved from risk of immediate harm as well as considering any child who may have specific needs (educational or physical).
- Refer the matter immediately (within 24 hours) to the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board – Abingdon Assessment Team (Tel 01235 549258) or Oxford Assessment Team (01865 323048) either in writing (using the required Referral Form) or with written confirmation of a telephoned referral.
- The threshold test for referral to the LADO is if the allegation is that a teacher, member of staff or volunteer has:
  - Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
  - Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
  - Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm if they worked regularly or closely with children.
- Follow any requests given by the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board with regard to:
  1. informing a pupil's parents
  2. medical examination or treatment for the pupil
  3. immediate protection needed for a pupil who has been the victim of abuse, a pupil who has given information about abuse and a pupil against whom an allegation has been made.
  4. informing people at School (including any other members of staff) of the allegation
  5. attending Case Conferences
- Inform the pupil/adult who made the initial allegation of what the next steps are to be, having agreed these with the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board.
- If there is no reasonable alternative, suspend from duty, pending investigation, any staff member alleged to have abused a pupil or pupils. If the member of staff is the Head, the

Chairman of Governors will undertake this action. Suspension of staff should not be a default response to an allegation.

- Take any necessary steps for the longer-term protection and support of each pupil who has made allegations of abuse, or is alleged to have suffered from abuse, taking his wishes fully into account.
- Ensure that any pupil being interviewed by the police has a supportive member of staff of his own choice to accompany him.
- Notify DfE of any allegation that is being investigated by the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board and/or police.
- Ensure co-operation by the School in any subsequent investigation by Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board or police.
- Make arrangements where feasible for any pupil who has been the subject of abuse to receive any necessary continuing counselling and support by agreement with his parents where appropriate. This will also be available to staff should they require support relating to the stress and upset of dealing with a disclosure.
- Inform, (as an instance of 'serious harm to a pupil'):
  1. The Local District Health Authority
  2. The Police
  3. The Department of Health, at CS2C, Room 2~6, Wellington House, 133-155 Waterloo Road, London, SE1 SUG

The School will consider taking disciplinary action against any member of staff, or agent of the School, where it believes pupils are at risk of abuse from that member of staff, even in cases where there is to be no criminal prosecution.

The School may apply appropriate sanctions to pupils who are found to have made malicious allegations. This could include temporary or permanent exclusions or referral to the police if a criminal offence may have been committed.

Allegations found to be malicious should be removed from personnel records. Records of all others must be kept but any that are not substantiated, are unfounded or malicious should not be referred to in employer references.

The School understands its obligation to 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. (ISA tel: 0300 123 1111). Where the School has 'low level' concerns that do not amount to allegations or suspicions of specific abuse but which may indicate the possibility of abuse occurring, the designated member of staff will discuss these with the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board where necessary and record them appropriately.

<b>Children &amp; Families Assessment Team (South)</b> Oxfordshire County Council Children, Education & Families Foxcombe Court Wyndyke Furlong Abingdon Business Park Abingdon OX14 1DZ	Telephone: 01865-897983 Fax: 01865-783385  <a href="http://www.oscb.org.uk">http://www.oscb.org.uk</a>  <a href="mailto:c&amp;fassessment.duty@oxfordshire.gov.uk">c&amp;fassessment.duty@oxfordshire.gov.uk</a>
---	---

*Reviewed : September 2011*  
*Next review : September 2012*