

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

STAFF GUIDANCE ON ABUSE, RECOGNITION OF CHILD ABUSE, CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES AND BULLYING

1. INTRODUCTION

In 1991 the United Kingdom implemented a new Act of Parliament, the Children Act 1989. Part 5 of the Act gives details of statutory action intended to protect young persons under the age of 18 from 'significant harm'. The requirements of the Act are complex, must be strictly observed, and involve outside agencies, particularly the Police and County Council Social Services Departments. It is therefore very important that:-

- great care is taken to avoid or prevent an incident of abuse occurring;
- when incidents of abuse do occur, the student is immediately protected, statutory authorities are notified, details are recorded in writing immediately, and the correct reporting procedures are followed.
- the School has two designated Child Protection Officers - Mr Michio Takahashi, the Deputy Headmaster, and Mrs Carol Jones, the Deputy Bursar, who are required to update their training every two years. For all other staff, training should be updated every three years. Details of all training are held in the Training File. Both levels of training must include inter-agency work and must be approved by the LSCB.

This policy covers both the above points and has regard to guidance issued by the DCSF, 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment, 2007'.

This policy is made available to parents and others on request and it is posted on the School's website.

2. THE SUSSEX CHILD PROTECTION & SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES (SCPSP)

References are made in this Policy to a loose-leaf book produced by the Local Safeguarding Children Boards of Brighton and Hove, East Sussex & West Sussex, entitled 'Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures' (SCPSP). The School holds three copies of this book - two in the Surgery and one in the bookcase besides the Headmaster's Secretary's desk. All staff are issued with a copy of the Child Protection Policy. This policy is in line with the locally agreed inter-agency procedures.

3. ESTABLISHING A CLIMATE OF TRUST AND PREVENTION

- The School recognises that it must establish a climate in which the safeguarding and welfare of students are paramount and in which students have the confidence to approach adults with any concern they may have.
- Students are told who the designated persons are and members of the Student Council are made aware of the procedures to follow should a student make a disclosure to them, or should they wish to report abuse on the premises.
- Through the curriculum and pastoral care, students are given the knowledge, understanding and skills to protect themselves and others from harm.

4. ABUSE AND WARNING SIGNS

Child abuse to be reported includes abuse of students by a staff member or other adult abuse at home that a student reports to staff, abuse by a stranger outside the School, and abuse of one student by another student. In the case of abuse by a student, or a group of students, the key issues identifying the problem as abuse are:

- the frequency, nature and severity of the incident(s);
- whether the victim was coerced by physical force, fear, or by a significantly older student or group of students, or by those having power or authority over him or her;
- whether the incident involved a potentially criminal act, and whether, if the same incident (or injury) had occurred to a member of staff or other adult, it would have been regarded as assault or otherwise actionable.

The Children Act 1989 defines an abused child as 'one who has suffered from, or is believed to be at significant risk of, physical injury, neglect or sexual or emotional abuse'.

PHYSICAL ABUSE can be identified at an early stage by specific warning signs. These are listed in Section 3.2.7 of SCPSP.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE is covered in Section 3.2.31 of SCPSP and can result in:-

- lack of self confidence

- being withdrawn
- being abnormally aggressive
- always seeking attention
- constantly trying to please and over-eager to relate to anyone, even strangers.

SEXUAL ABUSE can usually be detected from specific warning signs. These are listed in Section 3.2.34 of SCPSP. Sexually abused children have often been abused by a family member, or a close friend of the family, and may feel very guilty and responsible for their involvement.

The signs of NEGLECT are listed in Section 3.2.36 of SCPSP.

Senior students and junior and ancillary staff should be aware of the need to report allegations or suspicions of child abuse to the Child Protection Officer. It should be remembered that severe and repeated bullying can constitute abuse.

The School also protects itself by training its staff in Child Protection procedures, of which this policy forms a part. It is a School requirement that the procedures set out in this Policy and a separate instruction on Staff Recruitment Procedures are followed exactly. However, it should be noted that even following faithfully the School's staff engagement procedures cannot guarantee to prevent the School from engaging a potential abuser.

Some abusers move from School to School and may not have a criminal record. Those responsible for engaging staff therefore need to be very vigilant and take independent advice from a colleague or senior member of staff if they have any doubt about the suitability of a prospective new employee.

5. STAFF

It is recommended that all School staff protect themselves against the risk of being accused of abusing a student at the School.

School practice is to interview students in the open Teachers' Room or another open space, such as the lobby to the Library, or with another teacher present.

However, it may be necessary from time to time for a staff member to interview a student alone. This should be avoided where possible but, if it cannot, the following guidelines should be observed:-

- if the interview is held in a separate room, leave the door open so that those passing can see in;
- choose a room where staff and students regularly pass by;
- if possible, choose a room with glass panels in the door;
- try to ensure visibility to others at all times;
- tell another member of staff in advance about the interview and its expected length;
- if a potentially compromising situation develops, leave the room, record in writing what happened as soon as possible and give a copy of the report to the Child Protection Officer, or, if he/she is not available, the Headmaster.
- avoid touching the student;
- follow DCSF guidance on 'the use of physical restraint in schools' when having to restrain a student, so as to protect yourself from being accused of assault;
- never give a lift to a student in your car.

In general, if in any doubt, always seek advice as soon as possible.

Staff who normally teach students individually, such as Music or Private Language Tutors, will not always be able to follow the above advice and should discuss the precautions to take with their Head of Department.

6. SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS AT BEDTIME

A Duty Teacher may become involved in an incident alone. If the incident is serious, a colleague should be asked to help, the Child Protection Officer informed as soon as convenient and a written report given to him/her within 24 hours.

7. INITIAL PROCEDURES AND FOLLOW-UP

7.1 WHERE THE STUDENT APPROACHES A MEMBER OF STAFF

The most likely way a staff member will be involved in a child abuse case is when a student asks to speak to his or her Class Teacher, Deputy Class Teacher or a Senior Teacher confidentially and then discloses that he/she has been/is being abused.

If the report of abuse is against a member of staff, including the Headmaster, or another student, it should be limited to collecting the evidence and then passing this to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) immediately for advice on how to proceed - see contact details at end of this policy.

The student may have chosen the staff member approached because he/she feels that this particular staff member is the only one he/she can trust. The procedure should then be as follows:-

- arrange a private interview, following the advice given in Section 4 about location and visibility, etc;
- make very brief notes at the time on any paper which comes to hand and write them up as soon as soon as possible;
- record the date, time, place and who else was around, any non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the student;
- ensure the student appreciates, at the outset, that if the problem disclosed is so serious that action must be taken, the staff member must take that action but will be there to support the student at future interviews if the student wishes it;
- the student should be encouraged to tell his/her story in their own way - they must not be prompted. Do not ask questions like "Did he/she do x to you?" using instead a minimum number of questions of the "Tell me what has happened" type;
- as much detail as possible about the student's family background should be obtained and recorded;
- do not destroy your original notes in case they are required by a court.

7.2 If the member of staff feels that the incident is serious, it should then be reported to the Child Protection Officer, who should report it to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within 24 hours of the incident as follows:-

7.3 PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED WHERE ACTION IS REQUIRED

NOTE - THESE PROCEDURES WILL ONLY BE ACTIONED BY, OR ON THE SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS OF, A SENIOR MEMBER OF STAFF, ON ADVICE RECEIVED FROM THE LADO.

7.3.1 NOTIFICATION TO OUTSIDE AGENCIES

While, in general, you should seek to discuss any concerns with the student's parents, and where possible, seek their agreement to making referrals to Children's social care, this should be done where such discussion and seeking of agreement will not place a child at increased risk of significant harm or lead to interference with any potential investigation. The student's interests must be the overriding consideration in making any such decisions.

The School lies within the County of West Sussex, and Child Protection is one of a number of responsibilities of the County's Social Services Department. They are the 'lead' agency and the first contact for the School if outside agencies have to be brought in to help. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Rosemary Terry, should be contacted within 24 hours of the incident being reported to the Headmaster. Her telephone number is 01243 642315 or 07912 298265 and her email address is rosemary.terry@westsussex.gov.uk.

The procedures to be followed are set out in detail in the SCPSP book. .

In outline, if the issue is serious, the Social Services Department, who operate locally through an Area Office in Horsham, may call in the Police and, if the student(s) are considered to be 'at risk of significant harm', will arrange for a Child Protection Conference to be held.

Before doing so, the Social Services Department would check the Child Protection Register to confirm whether or not the student(s) has/have been noted as in need of protection.

7.3.2 CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCE

The purpose of this Conference is to gather all relevant professionals together to discuss the strategy to be employed for the care of a potentially abused student. Social Services would first decide whether or not to call a Conference and, having done so, are responsible for calling on all relevant persons to attend.

Those expected to attend include a wide range of individuals and organisations: the Police, representatives from the medical professions, the School attended by the student, the parents and normally the student him/herself.

The main purpose of the Conference is to decide if, having listened to all the evidence, the student should be placed on the Child Protection Register or (if the Conference is a Review Meeting) whether or not to leave the student's name off the Register.

The Conference should not proceed if there are less than 3 agencies represented. It is very unusual for a child in school to be put on the Register: children at risk are normally safer at school.

7.3.3 THE POLICE

There is a Child Protection Team of a CID Sergeant and 4 Constables at Crawley Police Station specially trained in Child Protection matters. The parents' permission is required before their child may be interviewed by the Police. However, if permission is not forthcoming, an application can be made to the local Magistrate's Court for their authority to carry out interviews and examinations.

For Rikkyo School it would be necessary to check the legal position where the parents live abroad.

7.4 EMERGENCY ACTION

If a staff member becomes aware of a serious injury to a student, their main responsibility is to ensure the student receives appropriate treatment as soon as possible. If it is suspected that the injury results from abuse, the CPO should be informed immediately. The procedure set out in section 3.3 of the SCPSP book should be followed.

7.5 FURTHER ACTION

This document is only an outline of the Child Protection Procedures. Staff will not normally be involved directly in action beyond that set out above. Those wishing more detail should consult the SCPSP book issued by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

8. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

What happens next depends on the seriousness of the abuse disclosed and where the abuse has taken place. Many of the School's students' parents live outside the UK and abuse is therefore as likely to have occurred outside the UK as within. If the abuse has occurred within the UK, or a country with similar laws (e.g. in Western Europe) these steps should be followed:-

- West Sussex County Council Social Services staff (WSSC) must be informed;
- Ofsted will be informed no later than 14 days of any actual abuse or allegations of abuse on the premises
- the parents must be informed as advised by the LADO
- in serious case the Police must be informed.

- the School recognises the requirement to report to the Independent Safeguarding Authority within one month of leaving the School any person whose services are no longer used because they are considered unsuitable to work with students.

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