

Pupil Safeguarding and Welfare (Child Protection) Policy

Other relevant documentation can be found in the Schools Policies and Procedures files on RM staff. These includes Boarding Handbook and Safer Recruitment Policy and Practice

As far as Child Protection is concerned, the term 'child' applies to all students at St Bede's School. The term staff applies to all employees of St Bede's School Trust, including temporary staff, gap year students and volunteers, and to the governors of the Trust.

The policy complies fully with the DCSF Guidance '*Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education*'. It was written with reference to '*Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures*' produced by the Local Safeguarding Children Boards of Brighton and Hove, East Sussex and West Sussex; the School's Designated Child Protection Co-ordinator (DCPC) will follow the guidelines published in this document. It has regard for the DCSF Singleton Report of March 2009 *The review of safeguarding in Independent Schools and Boarding Schools in England*.

The policy ensures that the School recognises and implements the following:

The establishment and maintenance of a safe environment in which children can learn, develop, be encouraged to talk and are listened to;

- A support network for children so that they know there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried;
- Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe;
- Staff have guidance in the support of pupils who have been abused;
- Safe recruitment procedures in checking the suitability of all staff members comply with Independent School Standards Regulations;
- Development, monitoring and review of procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse;
- Any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection which may come to light will be remedied without delay.

Recruitment of Staff

St Bede's School operates safer recruitment procedures as required by the Independent School Standard Regulations 4, 4a, 4b and 4c. Consequently, all staff are vetted through the relevant authorities (Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) and Independent Safeguarding Authority's (ISA) Vetting and Barring Procedure) to check whether there is anything in their past which would militate against them being employed at the schools. All concerns or allegations of abuse are reported to the DCPC.

Under The Education (Provision of Information by Independent Schools) (England) Regulations 2003, the school is required 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. Failure to make such a report constitutes an offence and the school could be removed from the DCSF register of independent schools.

The School seeks assurances that appropriate child protection checks and procedures have been carried out for adults who work with pupils from the School elsewhere, eg taxi drivers, outward bound instructors etc.

Designated persons

The Deputy Headteacher, Mr G Ferguson, is the current Designated Child Protection Co-ordinator (DCPC) at the Preparatory School.

Mrs Sally-Anne Huang (huangs@kentcollege.kent.sch.uk) is the Governor responsible for Child Protection.

LADO (Local Authority Designated Person)

Mr R Munro, Operations Manager Safeguarding (LADO), East Sussex County Council, St Marks House, 14 Upperton Road, Eastbourne. BN21 1EP (tel 01323 466 612) is the contact person with the Local Authority for safeguarding issues.

Training and awareness of Child Protection Issues

For the designated person:

The DCPC must maintain his own training in Child Protection matters

For the Head and all staff:

The Induction and INSET programmes ensure that all staff members, including part-time, ancillary and any voluntary staff, understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and their responsibility for referring any concerns to the Designated Child Protection Co-ordinator. All new staff are made aware of their responsibilities as part of the induction process and sign a form, which is kept in their personnel file, to confirm that they are aware of their responsibilities and of the identity of the DCPC. Additionally there is a group training session for all new teaching staff during the Autumn term and periodic INSET sessions refresh the knowledge of all staff members and keep them up to date with new developments. Training for the Headmaster and other staff is updated every three years.

Record Keeping and Information Sharing

A student with child protection issues will have a separate file as well as his/her main school file. The special file for sensitive information will be kept by the DCPC.

If a child suffering abuse leaves the Trust, relevant information will be transferred to the new school and key workers will be informed as appropriate.

What to do when abuse is suspected

Any member of staff may become aware of a pupil in distress, or suspicious that a pupil may have been maltreated. It makes no difference whether the abuse is suspected or alleged to be taking place at home, at school or elsewhere. Whether parents, relations, staff, other adults, or pupils may be involved, the welfare of the child at risk is the first priority.

What are the indicators of a potential Child Protection issue?

Physical abuse – what to look for:

- Injuries, especially those which are not typical
- Students who find it painful to walk, sit down, move their jaws, etc
- Regular injuries with no adequate explanation, or conflicting explanations
- Reluctance to change for games

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- Uncharacteristic behaviour
- Loss of appetite or eating disorder
- Sudden lack of coordination
- Reluctance to explain

Sexual abuse – what to look for:

- Inappropriate sexualised conduct, play or conversation
- Self harm
- Running away

Neglect – what to look for:

- Deterioration in appearance or hygiene
- Deterioration in behaviour

Emotional abuse – what to look for:

- Depression
- Withdrawal
- Introversion
- Aggression

Some points to consider:

- Many forms of abuse have no physical symptoms
- The diagnosis of abuse is difficult – even for experts
- Delay in reporting suspicions of abuse could be disastrous

Members of Staff should discuss any suspicion or worry they may have about any pupil who is possibly at risk with either the Headmaster or the Child Protection Officer. Staff should not contact parents or any outside agency. The DCPC will be responsible for any action which may be necessary and will follow the Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures. The DCPC will contact the LADO (see above) within 24 hours of any disclosure or suspicion of abuse.

If any member of staff is approached by a child who wants to tell them about abuse, or a worry of this kind, they should:-

- take the child seriously
- be sympathetic
- not promise to keep a secret in advance of hearing what he/she has to say. Explain that you can be trusted to behave with sensitivity, but you may have to inform someone else
- not ask leading questions (eg: "Did he do x to you?"). Just ask, "What do you want to tell me?", or "Is there anything else that you would like to say?"
- reassure the child that he/she will not be required to repeat embarrassing or distressing details to other members of staff. You will pass on the details to the relevant authority
- make a written note as soon as possible of what the child has said. This may be very important later and will save the child the distress of unnecessary repetition. Keep the original

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notes, even if they are on the back of something else - these are more valuable as evidence than a smarter version which has been copied up later

Having comforted the child and reassured him/her that you will help, you must immediately contact the DCPC or the Head.

Then:

- Do not tell other people about the situation – this could cloud the issue later.
- If the accusation concerns a colleague, please follow the same procedures.
- If the allegation concerns the Head, you should contact the Child Protection Governor, the Chairman of the Governors (tony.meier@stbedesschool.org) or the DCPC.
- Remember, an allegation may be true and the pupil may need protection. However, it may be untrue, in which case a colleague should have the right to clear his/her name. In cases such as this your anonymity will be protected as far as practically possible.
- If it is alleged that one or more pupils have abused another pupil, please follow the same procedures with the alleged victim. Another colleague (or colleagues) should be charged with the task of isolating the alleged abuser(s). All the individuals concerned should be kept apart until the DCPC has given instructions about the next step(s).
- All information is treated in the strictest confidence. Information sometimes has to be shared, but those providing the information will be involved in how this comes out.

What might the School do with the information you provide?

- At least record it; it may not seem significant straight away, but may add to further information received later.
- Telephone professional agencies for advice without giving names (the DCPC and the school will be named)
- Telephone professional agencies for advice, providing the necessary names for records to be checked
- Make a full referral in accordance with Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures

The Child Protection Officer will always let you know what will happen to information you provide. Where practically possible, and with the advice of professional agencies, the anonymity of a referring colleague will be protected.

Whistleblowing

If there is concern that the School might not be following proper procedures in a child protection matter, staff or parents may contact one of the outside agencies directly:

LADO (0345 60 80 191) or, if there is concern about boarder:

OfSTED (08456 404046) and/or whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk

Availability of the Child Protection Policy

The Policy is available on the School's website: www.stbedesschool.org, on the intranet (go to RMStaff) or, as a hard copy, in the School Office and in the Business Manager's Office.

Policy Review

This policy, together with the School's child protection procedures and the efficiency with which these procedures have been administered are reviewed annually by the School Governors.

Staff Appendix

Appropriate Conduct with Students

Staff must be aware of appropriate conduct with students in order to avoid allegations and misunderstandings:

- Avoid physical contact with students wherever possible.
- If you must be alone with a student, be careful, eg: ensure that you are visible to others; report scheduled meetings to the student's house staff or your line-manager.
- If you must transport a student in your car, ensure that you are not alone and that you have informed relevant senior staff.
- Do not give students personal contact details, eg: mobile telephone numbers, home addresses or e-mails.
- Do not exchange personal or private information/opinions with students.
- If you have concerns regarding an incident or pupil behaviour in the light of these guidelines, please discuss these with the DCPC.

Please refer to your contract and to the Staff Employment Manual for the relevant disciplinary procedures.