

# CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

## Introduction for Parents

The law defines someone as a child until they are eighteen years old.

Children from all types of background may be abused physically, emotionally, sexually or through neglect. It is not always easy to recognise or accept that abuse is happening. If you have concerns about a child you should contact Social Services, the Police or the NSPCC.

Sometimes parents or pupils tell us that they believe a child is being abused; a pupil might tell us themselves or their behaviour changes in a way that means they could be being abused. If this happens we have a legal duty to tell Social Services of any concerns we have of possible child abuse. In some cases we can talk to the family but you may first hear from Social Services. We understand that this would be upsetting, but in certain circumstances we are required to contact Social Services not the family.

The Pastoral Deputy Head is responsible for dealing with concerns about child abuse. Our policy, based on *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education*, is on the school's website.

## Policy for Staff

### Introduction

Staff should at all times maintain a professional relationship with our pupils. The school enjoys a reputation for close and happy relationships between staff and pupils; but common sense, as well as legal and procedural guidance requires staff to maintain a proper professional detachment from pupils. Staff need to be aware of the national increase in the number of reported allegations by pupils of abuse or professional misconduct by teachers.

The policy has been developed in accordance with *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (HM Government, April 2006), *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education* (DfES, November 2006), *Boarding Schools' National Minimum Standards, Kent and Medway Safeguarding Children Handbook* (KSCB and Medway Safeguarding Children Board, 2007) and *What to do if you are worried a child is being abused* (HM Government).

The Children Act (1989) defines 'children in need' as those whose vulnerability is such that they are unlikely to reach or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development, or their health or development will be significantly impaired without the provision of services of the Act. This includes those who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. A person, usually

known to the young person (parent, carer or person in institutions or community settings or another child) may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm.

This policy gives the procedure to be followed:

1. if a staff member suspects a child is being neglected/abused, or a pupil makes a disclosure.
2. to assist staff to protect themselves from criticism or accusations of malpractice which could potentially damage their careers.
3. for appointing new staff or volunteers, and arranging for visits by non-staff.
4. if allegations are made of misconduct by staff or volunteer.

It should be read in conjunction with the Anti-Bullying Policy.

### A Child in Need; Abuse and Neglect

A neglected or abused child is a child or young person up to the age of 18 who has suffered or may be at risk of suffering significant harm due to the actions of his or her parents, carers or others responsible for their care. All members of the school staff should be alert to the possibility of signs of abuse or neglect.

#### ▪ Neglect

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. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

#### ▪ Physical Abuse

This may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to the child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately induces injury in a child.

#### ▪ 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 (i.e. rape or buggery or oral sex) 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.

▪ **Emotional Abuse**

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. May include interactions beyond the child's development ability, overprotection, limitation of exploration or learning, prevention of normal social interaction. Seeing or hearing ill-treatment of another, serious bullying causing children to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or exploitation and corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

A child may suffer or be at risk of suffering from one or more types of abuse and abuse may take place on a single occasion or may occur repeatedly over time. In all cases the Child in Need/Child Protection Procedure should be followed, or that of the authority in which the child is normally resident.

A summary copy of Kent's procedure is kept by the Pastoral Deputy; the full document is available on-line [www.kscb.org.uk](http://www.kscb.org.uk). Information can also be found on the Kent Trust Children's Safeguards Service website: [http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/Children/safeguards\\_home.cfm](http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/Children/safeguards_home.cfm)<sup>1</sup>

**PHYSICAL ABUSE**

Determining whether an injury is accidental or non-accidental is a skilled job. It requires a full assessment of the injury, explanation, history and circumstances. This is not the role of a teacher.

There are, however, a number of injuries which should be regarded with concern and may indicate a non-accidental cause. Some may need medical assessment and treatment, occasionally urgently. Injuries need to be accounted for.

Inadequate, inconsistent, or excessively plausible explanations, or a delay in seeking treatment for the child, should signal concern.

**Physical indicators**

- Unexplained injuries or burns, particularly if they are recurrent
- Untreated injuries or lingering injuries not attended to

- Bruises and abrasions around the face, particularly if they are recurring
- Damage or injury around the mouth
- Bi-lateral injuries such as two bruised eyes
- Bruising to soft areas of the face, e.g. cheeks
- Bite marks
- Burns or scalds (note the pattern and spread of the injury, e.g. cigarette burns)
- Wheals suggesting beatings.

**Behavioural indicators**

- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Admission of punishment which appears excessive
- Shrinks from physical contact
- Refusal/avoiding getting undressed for gym – keeps arms and legs covered in hot weather
- Fears medical help
- Self-harming behaviours
- Aggression towards others
- Over compliant behaviour or a 'watchful' attitude
- Deterioration in school work
- Unexplained pattern of absences which may serve to hide bruises or other physical injuries
- Fears or is reluctant to return home or to have parents contacted.

**EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

Emotional abuse is often the most difficult to detect.

A child might be clean and physically cared for but be emotionally neglected. The parents' or carer's attitude to the child might be characterised by coldness, hostility, disinterest. They may resort to scapegoating or humiliating the child and the giving of age inappropriate responsibilities. They may give the impression that the child can never please, or may have expectations which are inappropriate, excessive or unrealistic.

**Physical indicators**

- Signs which may indicate emotional abuse:
- Delays in physical development, e.g. milestones delayed for underweight, lethargic (there may be medical reasons for this, medical advice is essential)
- Self-mutilation.

**Behavioural indicators**

- Delays in intellectual development
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Continual self-deprecation

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<sup>1</sup> Added November 2008

- Sudden speech disorders
- Social isolation – does not join in and has few friends
- Extremes of compliance, passivity and/or aggression/provocativeness
- Compulsive stealing, e.g. other children's packed lunches
- Rocking, thumb sucking, hair twisting, etc
- Drug, alcohol, solvent abuse
- Fear of parents being contacted.

### NEGLECT

Severe neglect is often characterised by the child being underweight, small in stature and with a poor physique. The care of neglected children is often poor and they present as unwashed, unkempt and inadequately fed and clothed (e.g. thin cotton dresses and plastic sandals in snow).

However, poverty, deprivation and neglect are not the same thing. Children may live in poverty but only a small number of these will be neglected. Assessment over time and with the help of other agencies is vital.

#### Physical indicators

Signs which may indicate neglect:

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Inadequate clothing
- Untreated medical problems.

#### Behavioural indicators

- Social isolation – does not join in and has few friends
- Low self-esteem
- Frequent lateness or non attendance at school
- Destructive tendencies
- Poor relationships with peers
- Compulsive stealing and scavenging
- Rocking, hair twisting and thumb sucking.

### SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse affects a child or young person emotionally and physically. It is difficult to detect as the physical indicators are not directly visible. Often the indicators that a child is being sexually abused are exhibited through behaviour. Sexual abuse occurs in every class, cultural and occupational group. Sexually abused children may take refuge in an appearance of normality, e.g. some children immerse themselves in schoolwork as a way of 'blinking out' the abuse.

Emotional and behavioural difficulties may result for example from abuse and neglect, physical or mental illness, sensory or physical impairment, or psychological trauma. In some cases emotional and behavioural difficulties may arise from or be exacerbated by circumstances within the school environment, for example, a change in teacher or routine. (*The Education of Children with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*, Circular no. 9/94 DFEE 1994.)

#### Physical indicators

- 'Love bites'
- Other bite marks
- Self-harming behaviours (e.g. deep scratches/cuts on arms)
- Tiredness, lethargy
- Pregnancy or Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs).

#### Behavioural indicators

- Sudden changes in behaviour and school performance
- Sexual awareness inappropriate to the child's age – shown for example in drawings, vocabulary, games, etc
- Provocative sexual behaviour
- Frequent public masturbation
- Fear of undressing for gym
- Tendency to cry easily
- Regression to younger behaviour, e.g. thumb sucking, playing with discarded toys, acting like a baby
- Depression and withdrawal.

**The Designated Child Protection Co-ordinator (DCPC)** is the Pastoral Deputy. In her absence the Divisional Heads of Boswell Middle and Sackville Middle are DCPCs.

The DCPC is responsible for:

#### Referrals

- Refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the relevant investigating agencies.
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise within the educational establishment when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies.
- Liaise with and inform the Head of any issues and ongoing investigations and ensure there is always cover for this role.

#### Training

- To recognise how to identify signs of abuse and when it is appropriate to make a referral.

- Have a working knowledge of how LSCBs operate, the conduct of a child protection case conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so.
- Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the school's child protection policy especially new or part time staff who may work with different educational establishments.
- Ensure all staff have induction training covering child protection and are able to recognise and report any concerns immediately they arise.
- Be able to keep detailed accurate secure written records of referrals and or concerns.
- Obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses at least every two years.

#### Raising Awareness

- Ensure the establishment's child protection policy is updated and reviewed annually and work with the governing body regarding this.
- Ensure parents see copies of the child protection policy which alerts them to the fact that referrals may be made and the role of the establishment in this to avoid conflict later.
- Where children leave the establishment ensure their child protection file is copied for the new establishment as soon as possible but transferred separately from the main pupil file.
- Ensure all staff are retrained every 3 years.

#### Procedures

##### General strategies:

Throughout the curriculum pupils are given opportunities for increasing self-awareness, self-esteem, assertiveness and decision making so that students have a range of contacts and strategies to ensure their own protection and understand the importance of protecting others.

The School ensures that students have a range of appropriate adults who they feel confident to approach if they are in difficulty. Any deficiencies in child protection are reviewed without delay.

Failure to disclose/act on a child protection concern by a member of staff could potentially be a disciplinary matter.

##### If a member of staff suspects child abuse:

Inform the DCPC who will consult with the Head and decide on the course of action. Confidentiality is of the utmost importance and must be maintained on a need to know basis.

Although the school has responsibilities under the Children Act to ensure the welfare of students in its care, the decision to take action to protect a young person is

the responsibility of the "authorised agencies", i.e. the Social Services Department or Police.

The Area Children's Officer (Child Protection) and Social Services Department is available for consultation to help clarify if there is any need for concern without having to identify the child. If the consultation process concludes a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm, the Social Services Department will then probably request details of the child in order to make further enquiries to assess if any formal action should be taken.

Other welfare issues such as bullying, pregnancy, substance misuse and inappropriate sexual behaviour may be associated or confused with child protection matters. If in doubt staff should refer their concerns to the School Counsellor or to the DCPC who will initiate further consultation as appropriate.

Any incident or behavioural change that gives cause for concern should be recorded and passed to the DCPC.

##### If a pupil makes a direct allegation or disclosure:

- Reassure the pupil that they have been heard. The young person needs to know what will happen next (as far as the school is concerned) and should not be given any false reassurance that the matter can necessarily be kept confidential between the young person and staff member.
- Allow the child or young person to make the disclosure at their own pace and in their own way
- Avoid interrupting except to clarify what the child is saying
- Do not ask leading questions or probe for information that they do not volunteer

The school is not an investigative agency and young people should not be physically examined or made to repeat their allegation to too many different people. This is the task of the Social Services Department and, if necessary, the Police.

##### Record keeping

Records should include: child's name, date of birth, the child's normal context e.g. behaviour and attitude, the incident(s) which give rise for concern with date(s) and time(s) and a verbatim record of what the child said. A form is available from the DCPC and should be submitted a.s.a.p. and certainly within 24 hours. If recording bruising/injuries the position, colour, size, and shape should be indicated on a body map.

The record should be dated and signed and forwarded to the DCPC, who will retain it in a confidential file stored separately from the pupil's main school file. Good record keeping is essential in ensuring children's ongoing welfare and safety are promoted and monitored. The DCPC will maintain a file of concerns and child protection records as recommended by Area Children's

Officer (Child Protection).

It is particularly important in the event of any subsequent prosecution or formal enquiry since in exceptional situations a staff member can be called as a witness and records used as evidence in a court case.

### Referrals

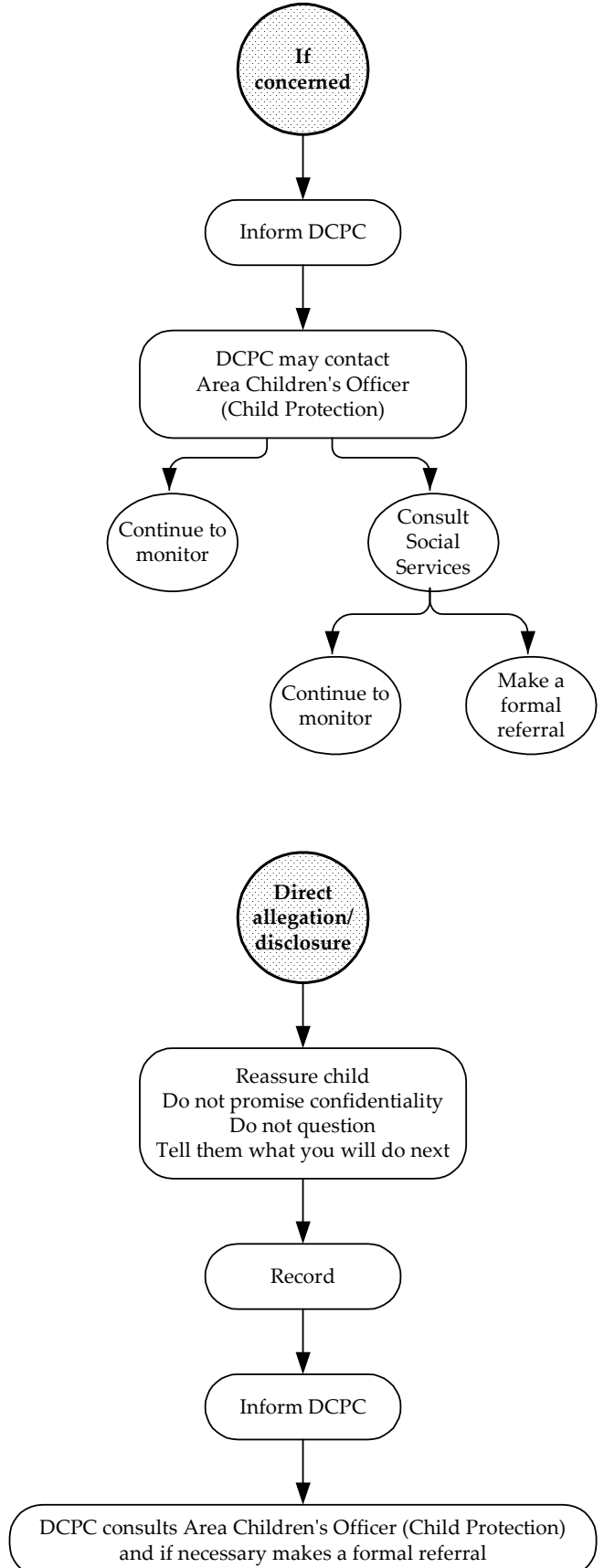
Staff must report to the DCPC any concern or allegation about school practices or the behaviour of colleagues which are likely to put pupils at risk of abuse or other serious harm. Responsibility for appropriate action (liaison with LSCB, consultation with Social Services or formal referral as a matter of child protection concern) rests with the Head and the DCPC. Referrals must be made within 24 hours.

If a member of staff felt that a child protection concern already reported by them to the DCPC was not being addressed, he or she could contact Social Services or, for boarders, Ofsted direct, according to the normal school whistle blowing policy (see Staff Handbook, page 143).

### Contact details

- DCPCs  
Extensions 282, 232 and 332.  
Home numbers in staff list.
- Area Children's Officer (Child Protection)  
Helen Windiate  
Tel: 01732 525035  
Mobile: 07740 183798  
PA = Linda Funnell 01732 525097
- Social Services:  
The Willows  
Hilda May Avenue  
Swanley  
BR8 7BY  
Tel: 01322 6110000
- [www.kcpc.org.uk](http://www.kcpc.org.uk) Child in need/child protection, Kent Child Protection Committee.
- Ofsted:  
Alex Turner  
Social Care Department  
Tel: 01634 817460  
Email: [Alex.Turner@Ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:Alex.Turner@Ofsted.gov.uk)  
  
or Ofsted National Business Unit  
Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester M2 7LA  
Tel: 08456 40 40 40  
Email: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

### Process



### Good practice guidelines

It is important that pupils can talk to staff in confidence, but staff should be alert to potential risks in situations where they are in consultation with individuals (e.g. private tuition, music lessons, career consultations, monitoring of progress, counselling etc.).

The following should enable children to be safe from harm and adults protected from false allegations or temptation:

- Treat pupils with respect and dignity.
- Do not touch children in an inappropriate or intrusive manner. If a child is distressed a hug might be appropriate, but only in a public place or with other people present.
- One-to-one meetings should, whenever possible, take place in public or semi-public places, e.g. tutor rooms, classrooms with windows on the ground floor or offices, BHM or ABHM studies. Avoid meeting in otherwise empty buildings, especially in the evenings or at weekends. If in doubt, leave the door open or let a colleague know that you are there.
- Do not invite children to your own home unless as a group or if your spouse is present. Unaccompanied one-to-one meetings with pupils in teachers' homes expose the adult concerned to prima facie suspicion.
- Do not allow abusive peer activities, e.g. bullying or initiation ceremonies.
- Do not use physical punishment to control or discipline children.
- Try to avoid giving lifts in a car to an individual; if unavoidable tell a colleague.
- Use e-mail contact with pupils for professional purposes only.
- Do not take a pupil alone to a pub, restaurant, theatre or other meeting place outside school. In circumstances where such a meeting is appropriate or essential, let a colleague know what you are doing. Thus, for instance, a coffee in town during a free period with a sixth former to discuss an exchange is a very different proposition from taking the same sixth former out to dinner in the evening.

In Boarding / Residential situations:

- If visiting pupils in their rooms for any length of time doors should be propped open.
  - Respect privacy in showers, toilets and changing rooms.
  - Avoid being alone with an individual pupil.
- If a child makes inappropriate verbal or physical approaches to you:

- tell the child it is inappropriate

- tell the DCPC, however embarrassing
- record the incident.

### Appointment of New Staff

Applicants must complete an application form and provide their c.v. A member of the interview panel, normally the Pastoral Deputy for teaching staff and the Personnel Bursar for support staff, must establish that the details on the application form and c.v. are correct. It must never be assumed that information provided by candidates is correct. The following is the minimum level of checks that should be carried out. Where any doubt or suspicion is held, exhaustive checks should be undertaken until the interviewer is entirely happy that all details have been verified as accurate.

1. The applicant must be told that the position for which they are applying is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and that a disclosure at the appropriate level from the Criminal Records' Bureau will be applied for and that checks with the DfES "List 99" will be carried out.
2. The applicant must provide originals (not photocopies) of:
  - birth certificate
  - Passport
  - examination certificates and diplomas
  - driving licence (old style or counterpart driving licence if new credit card style licence)
  - change of name documentation, if applicable
  - current financial statement or utilities bill to confirm applicant's address

The interviewer will check that the information from the above matches exactly the details given on the application form and c.v. If the awarding body for certificates or diplomas is unknown to the interviewer or if the interviewer has any doubts, adequate checks should be made to ensure the veracity of such documents. The interviewer will note any motoring offences listed on the driving licence and take photocopies of all documents, which they will sign and date, before returning the originals to the applicant.

Any gaps in the C.V. must be thoroughly investigated. The applicant must be able to give satisfactory explanations. Exact dates should be established. It must not be assumed that an employment said to have ended in, say, 1980 and a new employment said to have started in the same year were coincidental. Reasons for leaving previous posts should also be explained and given satisfactory explanations.

Written references must be obtained from the candidate's previous employer(s) or college and from at least one

personal referee. The previous employer(s) must be asked to provide dates of employment which should be checked against the information provided by the candidate.

The previous employer should be contacted by telephone to establish if there is anything they may wish to say about the candidate that they would prefer not to put in writing. This is the minimum requirement. Additional telephone calls to other referees/previous employers should be made where any doubt exists.

The aforementioned procedure will, for teaching positions, normally be undertaken by the Head or Undermaster and Pastoral Deputy Head, and for non-teaching posts, including Games coaches and peripatetic music teachers, by the Personnel Bursar.

All staff are issued with ID cards which they should carry with them.

#### **Visitors to School**

Normally visitors to school would not have access to individual pupils and should be escorted by a member of staff. Visiting examiners should have been checked elsewhere by exam-boards.

Visitors to the school must be told in advance to report to Claridge House, where they will sign in and out and be issued with a temporary pass.

#### **Volunteers**

Any proposal to use adult unpaid volunteers needs to be

referred to the Personnel Bursar, who, with the Pastoral Deputy, will agree what level of checks are required.

#### **Allegations of Misconduct by Staff/Volunteers**

If an allegation is against a member of staff there should be immediate consideration by the Head with the DCPC as to how to proceed, taking advice from local Area Children's Officer (Protection). Where the allegation is against the DCPC the Head would take over. Where the allegation is against the Head, the designated governor of Chair of Governors would take over. Suspension pending investigation would not be automatic; a decision would be made in each individual case. If a member of boarding staff were suspended alternative arrangements for their accommodation would be made.

Procedures would follow those laid down in chapter 5 'Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and Other Staff', *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education*, (DfES, November 2006)

The school is required by the regulations to make a report to the DfES where it has ceased to use a person's services (whether employed, contracted, volunteer or student) because they are considered unsuitable to work with children, or as a result of misconduct, or because of a medical condition that raises a possibility of risk to the safety or welfare of children, or where it might have ceased to use a person's services on these grounds had that person not resigned, left under a compromise agreement or otherwise left, e.g. at the end of a fixed term contract where the disciplinary process may have been considered had they not done so.