



TUDOR HALL

Child Protection Policy

1. The School has designated the Headmistress and the Assistant Head, Pastoral to take specific responsibility for child protection matters in the School and they are trained in Child Protection issues. The Headmistress is responsible for:
 - Holding the school's copy of the current Oxfordshire Child Protection Procedures, and being fully conversant with these procedures.
 - Holding and being fully conversant with the school's copy of "Working Together to Safeguard Children-a guide to inter-agency co-operation to safeguard and promote the welfare of children"
 - Briefing school staff (both boarding and teaching staff) on the relevant contents of the above guidance and procedures, and on the procedures the school should follow below - including the briefing of new staff as part of their induction after arrival at the school.
 - Ensuring that the procedures below are followed within the school
 - Liaising over child protection procedures with the Social Services Department.
 - Receiving reports of alleged or suspected child abuse within the school, or reported by a pupil relating to incidents at home or outside the school, contacting the Social Services Department and taking other action in response, as set out below.
2. The School Sister should hold a copy of "Child Protection; guidance for senior nurses, health visitors and midwives" (HMSO) and should be fully conversant with, and use, its guidance when relevant to the school setting.
3. All staff will receive training in child protection on joining the staff and at least every three years this will be updated. All members of staff are required to take steps to try to safeguard themselves from allegation. Details are found in Appendix 1 and in the restraint section of the Behaviour Policy.
4. Any member of staff who is told of any incident or has a strong suspicion of abuse occurring in the school, or to a pupil of the school at home or outside the school; must report the information the same day to the Headmistress or Assistant Head, Pastoral. All staff who report allegations will be protected from disciplinary actions or retribution as long as the allegation is made in good faith. If the allegation or suspicion is about the Headmistress, the report should be made to the designated to the local Social Services Department (outlined in Appendix 2) and to Ofsted.

(Child abuse to be reported includes abuse of a pupil by a staff member or other adult, abuse at home which a pupil reports to staff, abuse by a stranger outside school, and abuse of one pupil by another pupil. In the case of abuse by a pupil, or group of pupils, the key issues identifying the

problem as abuse (rather than an isolated instance of bullying or 'adolescent experimentation', which might be considered within normal bounds in the school community) are:

- *The frequency, nature and severity of the incident(s)*
- *Whether the victim was coerced by physical force, fear, or by a pupil or group of pupils significantly older than him or herself, or 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.*

Briefing on child protection is available for Heads and designated staff from the Social Services Department.)

4. Senior pupils and junior and ancillary staff should be aware of the need to report allegations or suspicions of child abuse to the designated member of staff.
5. School staff including the Headmistress should not investigate reports of abuse themselves. Alleged victims, perpetrators, those reporting abuse and any others involved; should not be interviewed by school staff beyond the point at which it is clear that there is an allegation of abuse.

(One of the major reasons for the inclusion of boarding schools within the Children Act was to ensure that local child protection procedures are followed in cases of alleged child abuse. In order to minimise the risk of problems that have occurred in the investigation of abuse elsewhere in the country, the interviewing of children and adults involved is now carried out by specially trained staff only, following procedures agreed between (amongst others) the local authority and police in line with government requirements and in the light of the recommendations of past inquiries into the handling of child abuse issues. These are designed to avoid unnecessary or repeated interviewing and examinations, to involve the police and medical examinations as appropriate and in the light of the experience of previous investigations and to avoid the 'contamination' of evidence that may later be needed in court by interviews that may have 'led' a witness.

It is important to acknowledge that the Children Act will inevitably lead to some investigations being triggered which do not substantiate the allegation made, as well as those that do. It is a basic assumption that it is better to endure some 'false alarms', than to fail to initiate specialist investigation of instances of real abuse.)

6. Staff members and other adults at the school, should never give absolute guarantees of confidentiality to pupils or adults wishing to tell them about something serious. They should however guarantee:
 - that they 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 to sort the problem out
 - that they will never tell anyone who does not have a clear 'need to know'
 - that they will personally take whatever steps they 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.
7. Any staff member to whom an allegation of abuse is made should:

- a) Limit any questioning to the minimum necessary to seek clarification only.

- b) Strictly avoiding misleading the pupil or adult who has approached them by making suggestions or asking questions that introduce their own ideas about what may have happened. (Do not ask questions like “Did he do x to you?”, using instead a minimum number of questions of the “Tell me what has happened” type.)
 - c) Stop asking any more questions as soon as the pupil or adult has disclosed that he or she believes that something abusive has happened to him or her, or to someone else.
 - d) Tell the informing pupil or adult that the staff member will now make sure that the appropriate people are brought in to follow the problem up (*these will include the specialist social worker, and that worker may need to involve the police.*)
 - e) Ask the informing pupil or 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.
 - f) Refer the matter the same day, with all relevant details, to the Headmistress. (If this cannot be done, the staff member him or herself should contact the Social Services Team Manager as in No. 8 below.)
 - g) Make a written record as soon as possible of what they have been told, and make a copy of this available to the Headmistress.
8. The Headmistress or Assistant Head, Pastoral on receiving an allegation of abuse should:

- a) Take any steps needed to protect any pupil involved from risk of immediate harm.

(This may involve allocating an appropriate member of staff, as far as possible a person chosen by the pupil him or herself, to stay with him or her.)

- b) Not interview or investigate the allegation further, but refer the matter the same day to the Team Manager (Children and Families), or the social services officer deputising at the time for the Team Manager, at the local Divisional Office of Oxfordshire Social Services Department. She should speak personally to the social services officer, and not rely on leaving a message. (*The telephone number supplied to the school is given in appendix 2*)
- c) Consult the social services Team Manager (or officer deputising for him/her) and follow his/her advice about contacting parents, other staff, police, doctor or alleged perpetrator or witnesses direct. Agree with the Team Manager (or social services officer deputising) any necessary next steps in relation to:
 - Informing a pupil’s parents. (*There are circumstances where it would be inappropriate to inform parents immediately an allegation has been made.*)
 - Medical examination or treatment for the pupil. (*Again, there are circumstances where medical evidence will be needed.*)
 - Immediate protection that may be 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. (*Each of these may now be at risk.*)

- Informing other people at the school (including any other members of staff) of the allegation and its investigation. *(Experience has shown that knowledge of an allegation or impending investigation can lead to a serious risk to the informant from the alleged perpetrator, or to 'cover up' evidence that may be sought by police - such as collections of child pornographic photographs - or to pressure being applied on others to remain silent.*
- Informing the placing authority, if there is one

(Contacting the Team Manager in the Social Services Department will initiate an independent investigation if this proves to be necessary, and the Team Manager will arrange, within pre-set time limits, the involvement of the relevant specialist police personnel and if necessary a meeting of the agencies who may need to be involved, together with the school.)

- d) Inform the pupil or adult who made the initial allegation of what the next steps are to be, having agreed these with the Team Manager. *(It is helpful for the call to the Team Manager to be made while the pupil or adult is waiting, so that he or she can be told the likely next steps immediately after the call.)*
- e) Inform the Headmistress (unless she is the subject of any of the allegations or suspicions of the allegation) of the action taken as above and agree necessary further action in line with these standards.
- f) If necessary, suspend from duty pending investigation any staff member who is alleged to have abused a pupil or pupils. *(Schools should not hesitate to suspend, without pre-judgement of guilt and as a precautionary measure, where there is a concern about possible abuse - this would be standard practice in the SSD.) If a member of the boarding staff is suspended the school would provide alternative accommodation.*
- g) Take any necessary steps for the longer-term protection and support each pupil who has made allegations of abuse, or is alleged to have suffered from abuse, taking his or her wishes fully into account. *(This may involve the pupil receiving continuing support and protection from a staff member chosen by herself or changing boarding accommodation, or returning to his or her parents temporarily.)*
- h) Take any necessary steps to protect and support a pupil who is alleged to have abused another. *(The allegation may not later be substantiated, but even if it is, the school continues to have a statutory welfare responsibility towards this pupil while he or she is boarding at the school.)*
- i) Ensure that any pupil being interviewed by the police has available a supportive member of staff of his or her own choice to accompany him or her if this becomes necessary.
- j) Notify Ofsted as the body responsible for boarding welfare inspections of the school of the allegation and action taken, as soon as possible.
- k) Notify the Department for Education of any allegation that is being investigated by the SSD and/or police.

- l) Ensure co-operation by the school in any subsequent investigation by SSD or police.
- m) 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 or her parents where appropriate.

(The SSD or the school may at any time convene a Planning Conference of SSD investigators, police, Lead Inspector, and SSD Child Protection advisers, with other involved parties, to assist in:

- *formulating a school plan for protection of pupils;*
 - *managing the consequences of an investigation, and future child protection measures in the school.)*
9. (a) Where a member of staff has been suspended, the Chair of Governors should be informed of the suspension formally, in writing. In all cases a report should be made to the governing body that a member of staff has been suspended pending investigation. It is inadvisable to provide more than the minimum information necessary to the governing body, as more than this would prejudice Governors' impartiality in any subsequent hearing or appeal in disciplinary proceedings. Where the Head Teacher has been suspended, the implications for the management of the school will need to be considered including the arrangements for an Acting Head Teacher.
- (b) The pupil or parent making the allegation should be confidentially informed of the suspension. Where the pupil is under 18, his or her parents should normally be informed, in confidence in so far as to do so is consistent with wider child protection considerations.
- (c) Senior teachers in the school who need to know of the reason for the suspension should be informed so far as is necessary in the particular circumstances. The Head Teacher/Acting Head Teacher should take a decision on informing other staff colleagues in the school of the suspension.
- (d) The Head Teacher/Acting Head Teacher should discuss with the nominated Governor the extent to which it is necessary to make a statement to parents of children in the school, having considered the need to avoid unwelcome publicity.
- (e) In certain circumstances, it may be necessary for the Head Teacher (Acting Head Teacher in consultation with the nominated Governor) to provide immediate reassurance to parents and children in the school and there may be a need for information to continue to be provided during the course of an investigation to parents, children and other colleagues.
- (f) In respect of paragraphs c, d and e guidance should be sought from the Chair of Governors where relevant and appropriate, from social services or the police.
- (g) The Head Teacher/Acting Head Teacher in consultation with the nominated Governor should consider carefully, and keep under review, decisions as to who is informed of the suspension and investigation and to what extent confidentiality can or should be maintained, according to the circumstances of a particular case. In a situation where a matter becomes common knowledge or the subject of general gossip, it may be desirable to provide an accurate statement for public information. Advice should be taken from the Social Services Department or the police on this matter as necessary.

10. The school should consider taking, and, as necessary should take, 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. (PG)

(The school must make its own decision on whether pupils' welfare is at risk, whatever the outcome of a police or SSD investigation may be, and the level of evidence needed for criminal prosecution is likely to be higher than that which may trigger valid disciplinary proceedings. Disciplinary proceedings and grounds for concern over pupils' welfare may be based on 'balance of probability' rather than 'beyond reasonable doubt')

11. The school must inform the Secretary of State via DCSF within one month of any member of Staff whose employment is terminated as are considered unsuitable for work with children.
12. Where a 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 Head or designated staff member should discuss these with the Social Services Department
13. The school should issue guidelines to all staff concerned with boarding on the prevention of abuse, which covers issues such as:
- staff supervision of high risk situations;
 - avoidance of inappropriate physical contact between staff and pupils;
 - avoidance of inappropriately spending time alone with individual pupils;
 - the need for all staff to be vigilant in spotting and reporting clear suspicions that abuse may be occurring.

Signed: W.J. Griffiths

Signed: B. Polk

Date: 18th August 2008

Review: Annually by governors