



# Child Protection Policy

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## Independent Day / Boarding School for Boys and Girls

### Policy statement

- 1.1 This policy has been authorised by the Governors, is addressed to all members of staff and volunteers is published on the College website. A hard copy is available for inspection by parents at the College reception office. It applies wherever staff or volunteers are working with pupils even where this is away from the College, for example at an activity centre or on an educational visit.
- 1.2 The Policy of the College is to work in partnership with parents in order to promote the welfare of children. The College also aims to build up relationships of trust with children. Children and parents should feel able to raise with the College concerns about safety and welfare in the knowledge that these will be dealt with sensitively;
- 1.3 Every pupil should feel safe and protected from any form of abuse which, in this policy, means any kind of neglect, non-accidental physical injury, sexual exploitation or emotional ill-treatment.
- 1.4 Bedstone College is committed to SAFEGUARDING and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The College will take all reasonable measures to:

ensure that we practise safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers (including staff employed by another organisation) to work with children and young people in accordance with regulations and guidance given in Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education, the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulation 2003 as amended and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools

ensure that we carry out all necessary checks on the suitability of people who serve on the College's governing body in accordance with regulations and guidance given in Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education;

ensure that where the College ceases to use the services of any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) because that person was considered unsuitable to work with children, a prompt and detailed report is made to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA);

follow the local inter-agency procedures of the Shropshire Safeguarding Children Board;

protect each pupil from any form of abuse, whether from an adult or another pupil;

be alert to signs of abuse both in the College and from outside;

deal appropriately with every suspicion or complaint of abuse;

design and operate procedures which promote this policy;

design and operate procedures which, so far as possible, ensure that teachers and others who are innocent are not prejudiced by false allegations;

support children who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan;

be alert to the medical needs of children with medical conditions;

operate robust and sensible health & safety procedures;

take all practicable steps to ensure that College premises are as secure as circumstances permit;

operate clear and supportive policies on drugs, alcohol and substance misuse;

consider and develop procedures to deal with any other safeguarding issues which may be specific to individual children in our College or in our local area;

have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families in accordance with section 157 of the Education Act 2002 and associated regulations.

- 1.5 Every complaint or suspicion of abuse from within or outside the College will be investigated and in all proper circumstances will be referred to an external agency such as the Children's Services department of the local authority (**CSD**), or the child protection unit of the police (**CPU**). In each case, the matter should be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer, Shropshire, Michelle Leith or Sara Findlay-Seivewright on 01743 254402

## **2 The Nominated Child Protection Officer**

- 2.1 The College has appointed the Headmaster and the Head of Prep School (female) as the Nominated Child Protection Officers to be responsible for matters relating to child protection and welfare. The main responsibilities of the Child Protection Officers are:

to be the first point of contact for parents, pupils, teaching and non-teaching staff and external agencies in all matters of child protection;

to co-ordinate the child protection procedures in the College;

to maintain an ongoing 3 year training programme for all College employees;

to monitor the keeping, confidentiality and storage of records in relation to child protection;

to liaise with the child protection officer appointed by the CSD(Local Authority Designated Officer).

- 2.2 The Headmaster is the Child Protection Officer for the entire College site. He may be contacted on 01547530303. He will:

advise and act upon all suspicion, belief and evidence of abuse reported to him;

keep the Chair of Governors informed of all actions unless the Chair is the subject of a complaint. In this situation, the Child Protection Officer should consult with Mr Terry Lowry, the Vice Chair of Governors;

liaise with the CSD and other agencies on behalf of the College.

- 2.3 If the Child Protection Officer is unavailable or is himself the subject of a complaint, his duties will be carried out by Mrs Julia Mcpherson, Head of Prep School who has received appropriate training.
- 2.4 The Child Protection Officer has undertaken basic child protection training and training in inter-agency working and will attend refresher training at two yearly intervals.

### **3 Signs of abuse**

- 3.1 Possible signs of abuse include (but are not limited to):

the pupil says s/he has been abused or asks a question which gives rise to that inference;

there is no reasonable or consistent explanation for a pupil's injury; the injury is unusual in kind or location; there have been a number of injuries; there is a pattern to the injuries;

the pupil's behaviour stands out from the group as either being extreme model behaviour or extremely challenging behaviour; or there is a sudden change in the pupil's behaviour;

the pupil asks to drop subjects with a particular teacher and seems reluctant to discuss the reasons;

the pupil's development is delayed;

the pupil loses or gains weight;

the pupil appears neglected, e.g. dirty, hungry, inadequately clothed;

the pupil is reluctant to go home, or has been openly rejected by his/her parents or carers.

### **4 Duty of employees, Governors and volunteers**

- 4.1 Every employee and Governor of the College as well as every volunteer who assists the College are under a general legal duty:

to protect children from abuse;

to be aware of the College's child protection procedures and to follow them;

to know how to access and implement the procedures, independently if necessary;

to keep a sufficient record of any significant complaint, conversation or event;

to report any matters of concern to the Child Protection Officer;

to undertake appropriate training including refresher training at three-yearly intervals.

- 4.2 **Whistleblowing:** All staff are required to report to the Child Protection Officer, any concern or allegations about College practices or the behaviour of colleagues which are likely to put pupils at risk of abuse or other serious harm. In exceptional cases such reports should be made to Ofsted. There will be no retribution or disciplinary action taken against a member of staff for making such a report provided that it is done in good faith.

- 4.3 **Senior Pupils:** Senior pupils who hold positions of responsibility over other pupils will be briefed on appropriate action to take should they receive any allegations of abuse.]

## 5 Procedures

- 5.1 **Initial complaint:** A member of staff suspecting or hearing a complaint of abuse:
- must listen carefully to the child and keep an open mind. Staff should not take a decision as to whether or not the abuse has taken place;
  - must not ask leading questions, that is, a question which suggests its own answer;
  - must reassure the child but not give a guarantee of absolute confidentiality. The member of staff should explain that they need to pass the information to the Child Protection Officer who will ensure that the correct action is taken;
  - must keep a sufficient written record of the conversation. The record should include the date, time and place of the conversation and the essence of what was said and done by whom and in whose presence. The record should be signed by the person making it and should use names, not initials. The record must be kept securely and handed to the Child Protection Officer.
- 5.2 **Preserving evidence:** All evidence, (for example, scribbled notes, mobile phones containing text messages, clothing, computers), must be safeguarded and preserved.
- 5.3 **Reporting:** All suspicion or complaints of abuse must be reported to the Child Protection Officer, or if the complaint involves the Child Protection Officer, to the Chair of Governors.
- 5.4 **Action by the Child Protection Officer:** The action to be taken will take into account:
- the local inter-agency procedures of the Shropshire Safeguarding Children Board.
  - the nature and seriousness of the suspicion or complaint. A complaint involving a serious criminal offence will always be referred to the CSD or the police without further investigation within the College;
  - the wishes of the pupil who has complained, provided that the pupil is of sufficient understanding and maturity and properly informed. However, there may be times when the situation is so serious that decisions may need to be taken, after all appropriate consultation, that override a pupil's wishes;
  - the wishes of the complainant's parents, provided they have no interest which is in conflict with the pupil's best interests and that they are properly informed. Again, it may be necessary, after all appropriate consultation, to override parental wishes in some circumstances. If the Child Protection Officer is concerned that disclosing information to parents would put a child at risk, he will take further advice from the relevant professionals before making a decision to disclose;
  - duties of confidentiality, so far as applicable;
  - the lawful rights and interests of the College community as a whole including its employees and its insurers;
  - if there is room for doubt as to whether a referral should be made, the Child Protection Officer may consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer or other appropriate professionals on a no names basis without identifying the family. However, as soon as sufficient concern exists that a child may be at risk of significant harm, a referral will be made without delay and in any event, within 24 hours. If the initial referral is made by telephone, the Child Protection Officer will confirm the referral in writing to CSD within 24 hours. If no response or acknowledgment is received within three working days, the Child Protection Officer will contact Children's Services again.

5.5 **Referral guidelines:** A referral to the CSD or police will not normally be made where:

the complaint does not involve a serious criminal offence; and

a referral would be contrary to the wishes of a pupil complainant who is of sufficient maturity and understanding and properly informed, and contrary also to the wishes of the complainant's parents; and

the case is one that can be satisfactorily investigated and dealt with under the College's internal procedures, the parents being kept fully informed, as appropriate.

However, if during the course of the internal procedures, it appears that the situation is more serious, the Child Protection Officer will again consider whether a referral should be made in accordance with paragraph 5.4 above.

5.6 **External agencies:** Whether or not the College decides to refer a particular complaint to the CSD or the police, the parents and pupil will be informed in writing of their right to make their own complaint or referral to the Children's Services Department or the Child Protection Unit of the police and will be provided with contact names, addresses and telephone numbers, as appropriate. Boarders and their parents have access to a complaints procedure in relation to issues affecting their welfare which provides contact details for Ofsted.

5.7 **Allegations against staff:** The College has procedures for dealing with allegations against staff (and volunteers who work with children) that aim to strike a balance between the need to protect children from abuse and the need to protect staff and volunteers from false or unfounded allegations. These procedures follow the guidance in chapter 5 of *Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education*.

Suspension will not be an automatic response to an allegation. Full consideration will be given to all the options, subject to the need to ensure:

the safety and welfare of the pupils or pupil concerned; and

the need for a full and fair investigation.

If a member of boarding staff is suspended pending a child protection investigation, arrangements will be made for alternative accommodation away from children.

Where an allegation or complaint is made against the Child Protection Officer, his deputy will report to and consult with the Chair of Governors, or in his absence the Vice Chair.

Detailed guidance is given to staff to ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place pupils or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a pupil. This guidance is contained in the Staff Handbook.

If the College ceases to use the services of a member of staff (or a governor or volunteer) because they are unsuitable to work with children, a compromise agreement will not be used and there will be a prompt and detailed report to the Independent Safeguarding Authority. Any such incidents will be followed by a review of the safeguarding procedures within the College, with a report being presented to the Governors without delay.

**Early Years - Pre-Preparatory School** - the College will inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working or looking after children on the premises of the Pre-Preparatory School (whether that allegation relates to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere), or any other abuse which is alleged to have taken place on the premises and of the action taken in respect of those allegations. The College will inform



**Authorised by** resolution of THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

**Date** 12<sup>th</sup> June 2009

**Effective date of the policy** 12<sup>th</sup> June 2009

**Circulation** Governors / all staff / volunteers automatically  
Parents on request

**Status** Complies with paragraph 3(2)(b) of the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended) and DCFS guidance *Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education* (DFES-04217-2006)