

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY FOR KING'S HALL SCHOOL

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CHILD PROTECTION AT KING'S HALL SCHOOL

In all cases of actual or suspected abuse our Designated Child Protection person must be informed and the South West Child Protection Procedures followed – these are online procedures, which are regularly updated. Key staff should upload this website to their desktop for instant access.

www.swcpp.org.uk

King's Hall School's Designated Child Protection person is Karen McSwiggan or, in her absence, the Senior Tutor, or, in his absence, the Deputy Head (who will know how to contact the DCP or Senior Tutor). (The only exception to this would be if the DCP/Senior Tutor were implicated in the concerns, in which case the nominated Child Protection Governor (currently Mrs Tisha Eliot) would be informed).

See Appendix 1

**ALL SCHOOL STAFF SHOULD KNOW
WHERE THEY CAN ACCESS THIS
CHILD PROTECTION GUIDANCE**



SAFEGUARDING / CHILD PROTECTION ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Our Governing Body is there to ensure (amongst other things) that we:

- have effective, annually reviewed and applied child protection policies and procedures
- remedy any identified weaknesses
- use safer recruitment practices
- have a senior person who is the Designated Child Protection Person
- the Designated Person is appropriately trained and updated 2 yearly
- **all** school staff have child protection training which is updated 3 yearly
- have a Nominated Child Protection Governor(s)
- have procedures to deal with allegations against staff

Our Chair of Governors is **Magnus Mowat** who can be contacted via the school office.



Our Headteacher is **Justin Chippendale** and his role is:

- to make sure all the policies/procedures are applied
- to ensure the designated person and other staff are able to fulfil their child protection duties
- to help and encourage school staff and volunteers to raise appropriate child welfare concerns
- to ensure all these concerns are dealt with quickly and effectively



Our designated person is **Karen McSwiggan** and her job is to:

- make sure **all** staff (newly qualified, new to the school, non-teaching and volunteers) have received in-house child protection training during induction
- provide support, advice and expertise to all school staff who raise child welfare concerns
- liaise with the Head on Child Protection issues
- make the decision to discuss with/refer to Children's Social Care or Police
- know who to contact and if referring, do so in writing using the multi-agency referral form
- keep accurate and factual records
- keep their own training up-to-date

Our nominated Governor is **Tisha Eliot** and this role means that they:

- liaise with the school and informs the Governing Body of safeguarding issues
- liaise with the Chair of Governors / Children and Young Peoples Directorate / partner agencies if there is an allegation against the designated teacher or headteacher
- supports the designated teacher in fulfilling their role



Everybody else

Our role is to:

ENCOURAGE A CULTURE OF SHARING CONCERNS

BE PERSONALLY ALERT TO POSSIBLE SIGNS OF ABUSE

DISCUSS YOUR CONCERNS WITH THE DESIGNATED TEACHER WITHOUT DELAY

KEEP NOTES OF THE DATES AND TIMES OF RELEVANT INCIDENTS/CONCERNS

BUT ABOVE ALL REMEMBER:

DOING NOTHING IS NOT AN OPTION!

KING'S HALL SCHOOL CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

King's Hall School fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection. Whilst we strive to minimise risk, we are fully aware that child protection risk cannot be eliminated.

Our policy applies to all staff and governors working for and on behalf of the School and is available to parents on request. There are five main elements to our policy:

- Establishing a positive, supportive, secure environment in which children can learn and develop, together with a School ethos, which promotes, in all pupils, a sense of being valued.
- Ensuring we practise safer recruitment in checking the suitability of all staff to work with children.
- Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe through the content of the curriculum.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
- Supporting pupils who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan.

We recognise that because of the day-to-day contact with children, staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse King's Hall School will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in King's Hall School whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Include opportunities in the PSHE curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

We will follow the procedures set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board and take account of guidance issued by the Department for Children, Schools and Families to:

- Ensure we have a Designated Child Protection Person and an assistant for child protection who have received appropriate training and support for this role (currently Karen McSwiggan). Training in child protection and inter-agency working is carried out every two years for the designated person and assistant.
- Ensure we have a Nominated Governor responsible for child protection. The Governing Body undertakes an annual review of the child protection policy and procedures and the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged.
- Ensure safer recruitment practices are always followed, including enhanced Criminal Record Bureau checks.
- Ensure every member of staff (including temporary and supply staff and volunteers) and governing body knows the name of the Designated Child Protection Person responsible for child protection and their role.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the Designated Child Protection Person (DCPP) responsible for child protection. Through regular staff training we will foster a culture of mutual respect between pupils and members of staff, with adults modelling good practice in this context. Training in child protection is provided every three years for all staff. All part-time and voluntary staff are made aware of the arrangements for child protection.
- Notify Children's Social Care if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a pupil who is in receipt of a child protection plan.
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences.
- Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
- Ensure all records are kept securely, separate from the main pupil file, and in locked locations.
- Follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff. Ensure that there are procedures to deal with allegations not only against members of staff but also against volunteers or the Headmaster; in the case of an allegation against the DCPP, the nominated Governor should be informed.
- Notify the DCSF within one month when the services of a person are discontinued because he or she was considered unsuitable to work with children.

- Carry out appropriate checks on staff with a different employer looking after the school's pupils on a site other than the school.
- Ensure that any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements are remedied without delay.

The Children Act (1989) and Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (2007) state that the "welfare of the child is paramount". This means that considerations of confidentiality which might apply to other situations should not be allowed to override the right of children to be protected from harm. However, every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned when an allegation has been made and is being investigated.

We recognise that children who suffer any form of abuse may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at School their behaviour may be challenging or they may be withdrawn. In such cases, we will liaise with other agencies that support the pupil such as Children's Social Care, Child and Adult Mental Health Service, Education Welfare Service and Educational Psychology Service. We will also ensure that, where a pupil in receipt of a child protection plan, their information is transferred to the new school immediately and that the child's social worker is informed.

King's Hall School's policies on Bullying and Cyber-bullying are to be read in conjunction with the Child Protection Policy. Any serious bullying concerns will be referred to the Child Protection Person and appropriate action will be taken (see Procedure for dealing with Bullying / Cyber-bullying incidents).

(See Appendix 2)

Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Child Protection Person (DCPP)

King's Hall School has a Designated Child Protection Person who is responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of children (currently Karen McSwiggan or in her absence the Senior Tutor).

The Designated Child Protection Person for EYFS is Karen McSwiggan.

Role of the designated person is to:

1. recognise how to identify signs of abuse and know which outside child protection agency to contact in the event of a child protection matter coming to his/her attention;
2. ensure that appropriate information is available at the time of referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing under confidential cover;
3. liaise with local Children's Social Care and other agencies, as appropriate;
4. act as a source of advice and expertise and keep relevant people within the School informed about any action taken and any further action required
5. ensure that a proper record is kept of any referral and action taken, and that this is kept safely and in confidence, and
6. manage and deliver staff child protection training and review the operation of the Child Protection Policy annually to ensure the procedures are working and that it complies with current best practice.

Responsibilities for all staff:

Staff have an obligation to report all suspicions of abuse to the Designated Child Protection Person, (or the Deputy Child Protection Person in their absence), who will then inform Headmaster. The Headmaster will inform the Governor with responsibility for child protection (currently Mrs Tisha Eliot). If the allegation involves any of the persons named here, the member of staff should report to one of the other designated persons.

It then becomes the responsibility of the Designated Child Protection Person, working with the Headmaster, to pass these concerns on to Children's Social Care.

**This is an inescapable, personal and professional responsibility
by all staff for the protection of children from harm.**

1. POLICY ON CHILD ABUSE

(a) Introduction

All members of the School staff should be alert to the possible signs of abuse of a pupil. Abuse may take several forms, which are not mutually exclusive:

Physical Abuse results from acts or omissions by others, which cause injury to the child. Bruises, burns, scalds, abrasions should be of concern to staff, who should also be alert of the rare possibility of fabricated or induced illness.

Neglect involves persistently not providing the basic necessities: food, warmth, shelter, caring supervision or reasonable cleanliness.

Emotional Abuse, which is harder to detect or define, may result from locking the child away, conveying to a child they are worthless, excessive shouting, teasing or humiliation, the denial of love, affection, interest or friendship, over-protection so as to deny the child the normal experiences of life.

Sexual Abuse is the involvement of emotionally immature young people in sexual activity with an adult or significantly older person to which they cannot give informed consent or which breaks social taboos.

There will be other circumstances, not amounting to abuse, which give cause for serious concern about the welfare of pupils. Questions of the young person being in moral danger, being uncared for, engaging in antisocial or inappropriate behaviour and so on may be referred to the Designated Child Protection Person, who will discuss the matter with the Headmaster, and through them, as necessary, to Children's Social Care. Such cases may also be referred to the Medical Centre, and through them to Children's Social Care. In each case the School's Child Protection Person must be informed.

(See Appendix 3)

2. PROCEDURES

(a) **Cases where abuse may have been inflicted by parents or carers**

- (i) Suspicion or knowledge of abuse must be reported to the Designated Child Protection Person or Senior Tutor who will share such information with colleagues as appropriate e.g. School Management Team and the child's tutor.
- (ii) Any adult to whom abuse is reported by a pupil has a duty to listen to the pupil, to provide reassurance, and subsequently to record the pupil's statements. He / she must not press the pupil, ask probing questions or suggest answers. The situation should then be reported and discussed with the Designated Child Protection Officer. The online South West Child Protection Procedures must be referred to at all stages (www.swcpp.org.uk).
- (iii) Expert diagnosis may be required quickly. The Designated Child Protection Person will, in such cases, seek the advice and support of the Local Authority (Somerset) Designated Officer.

(b) **Cases where abuse may have been inflicted by staff**

If an allegation is made against a member of staff it must be responded to; there is an obvious need to act immediately and with **utmost discretion**. The informant should be told that the matter will be referred in confidence to the appropriate people. This must be done, and the written record passed on the same day to the Designated Child Protection Person.

The circumstances should be kept **strictly confidential** until the DCPD has been able to judge whether or not an allegation or concern indicates possible abuse. The next step is always to discuss the situation with the appropriate Local Authority Designated Officer (for Allegations Management)

If it is decided, by the appropriate Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), that an investigation is called for, it is the responsibility of the Children's Social Care manager to arrange a meeting (called a Strategy Meeting) to discuss how the next steps are handled. This would normally involve the Police, Children's Social Care, the Designated Child Protection Person and nominated member of the Governing Body of the School. The arrangements agreed upon will include informing the parents and seeking their consent for

any immediate medical examination.

The staff member against whom the allegation is made, would normally be informed as soon as possible after the result of the initial investigation is known, or the decision is made to dispense with one, but not invited to make a response. There should be a warning that anything said will be recorded.

If it is established that the allegation is not well founded, either on the basis of the medical evidence or further statements, then the person against whom the complaint has been made would normally be informed that the matter is closed.

If the Police/Children's Social Care decide to take the case further and the allegation is against a member of staff, he / she should normally be suspended or, where the circumstances are considered to warrant it, dismissed. It is reasonable to ask the Police to give some indication of their timescale. There have been cases where the period of suspension has been unacceptably long.

There is understandable concern amongst many teachers that careers may be irreparably damaged by flimsy or malicious allegations by children. This is actually extremely rare, though some incidents do end up only as "unproven" one way or the other which is generally unsatisfactory. It is always better for a school to anticipate possible risks and to seek to prevent all reasonable risk of misunderstandings and false allegations. Proper policy and procedures are also likely to deter any individual seeking to use the school as a basis for inappropriate relationships with pupils; the staff "Code of Conduct" may be helpful. This will help staff to know what behaviours are generally considered to be inconsistent with their professional status. Infringements should then be subject to disciplinary procedures as required.

(c) **Complaint or Allegation?**

It is important to draw a distinction between complaints and allegations against staff. In other words, the difference between behaviours that suggest misconduct or unprofessionalism, and those which specifically raise child protection concerns.

Any concern which involves the possibility of physical, emotional or sexual abuse will **always** be discussed with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and their advice taken. If child protection procedures are needed, an investigation will be carried out by Children's Social Care and the Police, as happens with any other referral. The Designated Child Protection Person and Governors **must not** carry out investigations themselves in these circumstances. They will be invited to a Strategy Meeting at a very early stage.

(See Appendix 4)

Decisions about suspension and the use of disciplinary procedures are for the Headmaster and Governors alone, but action may need to be co-ordinated where there is a wider investigation involving Children's Social Care and/or the Police.

3. ALLEGATIONS INVOLVING SEXUAL IMPROPRIETY

Whenever a member of staff is informed by a pupil of an event involving sexual impropriety of any kind, whether between pupils or staff and pupils, the following steps should be taken:

- (i) Listen sympathetically and afterwards briefly note the content of what was disclosed, sign and date it.
- (ii) Contact the Designated Child Protection Person or deputy immediately, who will discuss with the LADO decide whether Children's Social Care should be notified.
- (iii) If they are notified and it is agreed that the school alone should follow up the issue, the Child Protection Officer will interview the complainant and oversee the disciplinary aspects of the enquiry;
- (iv) If Children's Social Care seeks further investigations, they will themselves open an enquiry. In these circumstances, the school's own disciplinary enquiry will be suspended until cleared by the Children's Social Care. This would normally involve the Police and DCP.

Parents should be informed as soon as a referral to Children's Social Care has been made by the DCP, **unless to do so would put the pupil at greater risk of harm**. If there is any doubt, the DCP will consult with the Police/Children's Social Care beforehand.

4. **STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT**

Cordial relations between teaching staff and pupils are at the heart of a happy and thriving school. At the same time, in the interests of all parties, professional boundaries must be observed.

Over-familiarity, however well intentioned, can lead to serious moral and legal complications. Since the implementation of the Children Act, the number of complaints against members of the teaching profession has risen sharply.

We must all be aware of the possibility of accusations and try to avoid hazardous situations. A teacher should never speak to or touch a pupil in a manner that could be construed as having sexual overtones or that could be interpreted as a physical assault. **It is the action rather than the intention that may subsequently give rise to problems.** One-to-one meetings between staff and a pupil of the opposite sex should be approached with great caution. If in doubt, have somebody else present, leave the door open, sit behind a desk, or let someone else know the meeting is taking place.

Good practice includes valuing and respecting children as individuals, and the adult modelling of appropriate conduct - which will always exclude bullying, shouting, racism or sexism.

HOW DO WE PROTECT OURSELVES?

THROUGH

- ❖ Maintaining open and unambiguous behaviour towards children – adopt safe working practices
- ❖ Respecting the rights, needs and position of children within the school
- ❖ Not condoning inappropriate behaviour in others
- ❖ Taking action to safeguard children
- ❖ Resisting favouritism

DO NOT

- ❖ Kiss or cuddle a young person
- ❖ Tickle or engage in other games involving physical contact
- ❖ Touch a pupil below the shoulder unless there is a justifiable reason
- ❖ Do anything of a personal nature for a pupil that they can do for themselves
- ❖ Force a pupil into a position or place
- ❖ Give a pupil a lift alone in a car unless planned and disclosed

5. PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING CONCERNS

Staff could have their suspicion or concern raised in a number of ways, the most likely of which are:

1. the conduct of a member of staff;
2. a child, parent or member of staff “disclosing” abuse;
3. bruising or evidence of physical hurt; which may or may not be accompanied by;
4. unusual behaviour by a child.

If a member of staff has such concerns they should be reported to the Designated Child Protection Person immediately (in person or by telephone) and confirmed in writing preferably on the pro forma available from the school office within 24 hours. **Delay could prejudice the welfare of a child.** If the concerns relate to the conduct of a member of staff these also should be reported directly to the DCP; there is an obvious need to act immediately and with **utmost discretion**.

The Designated Child Protection Person will consider the report and either refer this immediately to the authorities or, after taking appropriate advice (which may include discussing the circumstances on a confidential basis with Children’s Social Care or the Police Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT)), decide not to refer the concerns to the authorities but keep a full record of the concerns.

6. The following information is intended to assist you if you become involved in a potential child protection situation when a child or young person makes a disclosure.

Note that this is a completely different procedure to interviewing pupils on disciplinary issues, for which we have different guidelines in this Handbook.

WHAT TO DO IF A CHILD DISCLOSES

- Listen, allow the pupil to finish without directly questioning or stopping them. Let them tell you what they want to and no more. They may need to disclose to a specialist later and too much detail now may interfere with later investigation.
- When the pupil has finished, make sure they feel secure and explain what you are going to do next.
- Write down notes, including date and time of the interview and sign the notes. Record as much as you can remember, as soon as possible (preferably immediately) afterwards, using the pupil’s own words.
- Stay calm and convey this through word and action; reassure the child or young person that you are taking what they have to say seriously.
- Report to the Designated Child Protection Person and give them the written record of the incident.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- The management of confidentiality is an essential factor in all issues relating to Child Protection.
- Staff should **never give pupils or adults an absolute guarantee of confidentiality**, but must ensure that the information is disclosed only to the people who need to know. Make sure that this is clear early on, not sprung on the pupil at the end.
- It should be explained to children and young people that secrets cannot and should not be kept if keeping them means that they, or others, will continue to be harmed.

7. **AFTER DISCLOSURE**

STAY CALM

Try not to transmit your anger, shock, distress, or embarrassment to the child - either verbally or through body language.

ACT AS THOUGH YOU BELIEVE IN THE CHILD

REASSURE THE CHILD

Not your fault; glad they told you etc.

ALLOW CHILD TO TALK / FINISH STORY

Don't question the child

REPORT THE INCIDENT IMMEDIATELY TO THE DESIGNATED CHILD PROTECTION PERSON, or in her absence, the Senior Tutor.

(Explain to the child that you will need to talk to someone in another agency whose job it is to help and protect children and that they will want to talk to the child **but offer to stay with the child and support them.**)

(See Appendix 5)

THE CHILDREN ACT 1989

The purpose of the Act is to protect the welfare of children.

Various obligations are laid upon schools (and other institutions) and their staff, which are summarised here. Schools will be regularly inspected by the newly formed inspection authority.

It is essential that all members of staff are familiar with key features of what the legislation requires, and their responsibilities.

These are set out below:

- (i) The School is required to provide pupils, staff, and parents with written statements of the following:
- the principles on which School life is based;
 - the school's sensitivity to the religious, cultural, racial and linguistic background and beliefs of children;
 - the procedures whereby pupils may raise matters of concern to them;
 - how an approach may be made by a pupil to the Children's Social Care Department.

The Staff Handbook, and other information to parents variously meet these requirements.

All members of staff (academic or boarding staff, personal tutors or the Chaplain, the School Doctor or the School Medical Centre Staff) are available for counsel and advice. Pupils should approach whichever adult they feel they can talk to.

It is the School's duty to publish the telephone number of the local Children's Social Care department (Somerset Direct - **0845 3459122**). If there is no one in the School they can turn to in a situation of extreme seriousness, they have the legal right to contact this number.

- (ii) Please note that at **all** levels of staff seniority we could be legally culpable if we fail to ensure that Children's Social Care and the Police are informed of a clear allegation of sexual or serious physical abuse.

We have an obligation to make sure that there is an adult or adults to whom pupils can turn when they have a serious problem, and that the pupils understand this, and know to whom they may go.

- (iii) The Head, Bursar and Staff, and particularly Boarding Staff, have a responsibility to keep under review various aspects of school life, including the following:
- the environmental health of boarders, including such matters as hygiene and provision for privacy;
 - compliance with all Safeguarding National Standards for Boarding Schools
 - pupils' access to telephones;
 - the keeping of records, any complaints (e.g. from parents) about the welfare of a child, and the action taken; details of serious punishments administered (e.g. formal warning, suspension, expulsion); all non-routine letters to parents;
 - records of fire drills and practices;
 - prevention of the exploitation of one pupil by another (e.g. bullying)
 - Karen McSwiggan is the School Officer whose appointment the law requires as our contact with the Children's Social Care Department.

SAFEGUARDING AND ICT

Protecting young people in the online world means thinking beyond the school environment. As well as the computer to access the Internet, now many mobile phones and games consoles offer broadband connections. Pupils may be working online in school, at home or remotely. Increasingly pupils will have access to personal devices not covered by network protection and therefore the emphasis needs to be on educating all users as to the risks involved and their obligation to act responsibly while online.

Safeguarding pupils in both the real and virtual world is everyone's responsibility and all staff should be aware of this policy and how to respond to e safety incidents.

All pupils should be made aware of the school's acceptable user policy and what to do if they have any ICT safeguarding concerns. Harassment, grooming of another person using technology, breaching their right to privacy, poses a serious threat to physical and emotional safety, and may have legal consequences.

Procedures for dealing with Inappropriate/Illegal Internet Access or Material

If staff or pupils discover unsuitable websites, this should be immediately reported to the DPP who in liaison with the ICT Co-ordinator for the school will consider a referral to the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) and the Police. Illegal material within the school's network is a very serious situation and must always be reported to the Police. Our school ensures processes are in place to minimise the risk of pupils gaining access to inappropriate materials, through supervision and monitoring. Any incident that involves inappropriate adult access to legal material on the school premises will be dealt with by the school's disciplinary policy.

What to do in the event of discovery of illegal material

- Seek immediate and specific advice from the DCPD who will consult with the ICT co-ordinator, the Headmaster and the Police.
- Prevent any further physical access to the device until the correct advice is gained.
- **Unless absolutely necessary, DO NOT remove the power from a working PC and definitely DO NOT start a PC if it is already turned off.**
- Consider if it is necessary to prevent remote access to the device.
- If you believe that a member of staff or pupil who has left the site, could remove or damage evidence on the device remotely, unplug **ONLY** the network cable from the back of the device to prevent this access from taking place.
- If the PC is already turned off and it is no longer realistically possible to prevent further physical access to the device (i.e. lack of supervision, high levels of access or an unoccupied location) **disconnect the power at the base unit (not the wall)** and remove the battery from a laptop. Store this device securely in a location where no one else can gain access to it and make a note of the date, time and name of the individual who performed this action.

Under no circumstances should the ICT co-ordinator, network manager or Headmaster attempt to conduct an investigation of their own or bring in an outside expert to do so as this may compromise the evidence if a legal case were to result. In some cases this may constitute a criminal offence in itself.

Combating Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying is dealt with at length in the school's anti-bullying policy. Serious incidences of cyber-bullying may result in the involvement of the Designated Child Protection Person and /or the Police.

SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCIL CHILDREN and YOUNG PEOPLE'S DIRECTORATE

The practice of members of the Children and Young People's Directorate is guided by their Eligibility Criteria.

1. Introduction

Teachers, who better than most, have the opportunity to witness signs of distress, emotional deprivation and significant changes in the behaviour of their pupils over a period of time, will appreciate that a fundamental problem may exist. Prompt and sensitive action, in accordance with the approved procedures, may sometimes prevent actual abuse or reduce the level of harm it if has occurred.

2. Action to be taken following concerns about abuse

The nature and degree of concern will determine the response necessary:

2.1 Investigation of Concerns about Child Abuse

There are broad categories of concern:

- a) **Cases requiring immediate formal referral to Children's Social Care Department, or Police**
Immediate formal referral is required in any cases of significant physical injury, life-threatening neglect, serious threats of abuse and clear allegations or disclosures by a child or third person of child sexual abuse.

Once referral has been made, the Children's Social Care Department will initiate the approved formal procedures in collaboration with other key services.

- b) **Cases requiring discussion with Children's Social Care Department or Police**
Discussion and evaluation involving the senior staff / school co-ordinator for child abuse and subsequent consultation with the Children's Social Care Department is required whenever the child shows signs of failure to thrive, general neglect, emotional abuse, compelling evidence that child sexual abuse may have occurred, or where there is a suspicion that abuse is likely to occur.

Where concerns are enhanced following this procedure, there is likely to be urgent follow up action by the Children's Social Care Department who will inform and consult with the Police on subsequent action. A watching brief may be kept where some concerns remain, or no further action where there is a well founded alleviation of concerns.

- c) **Cases requiring discussion within the School**
Discussion and evaluation involving the senior staff / school co-ordinator for child abuse is always required where a teacher's suspicion that child abuse or child sexual abuse may have occurred is based on behavioural indicators, physical signs / symptoms or information received.

The outcome will lead to an immediate confidential discussion with the Children's Social Care Department where concerns are enhanced. The Children's Social Care Department will make confidential enquiries of other agencies and professionals and report back to the school. A decision on further action will then be made.

NB In all instances when child abuse is formally investigated it will be the Children's Social Care / Police who will inform the parents of the concerns.

3. Other Issues

3.1 Records

Where there are strong and clear indications that abuse has occurred, detailed records must be kept by the Designated Lead Child Protection Person, (DCPP) including all actions and communications arising from any case. Written confirmation must follow telephone messages and other personal communications.

Where suspicions are aroused but not confirmed, the DCPP should devise a means of keeping appropriate records in a way which does not convey false and / or potentially damaging allegations about an individual. Particular note should be taken of the County Council's wish to make files and records as open as possible, with safeguards for highly confidential information.

3.2 Case Conference

The DCPD and/or class teacher will be invited to relevant case conferences if these are convened as part of the follow up action.

Attendance at case conferences should be given high priority as an important expression of the school's duty of care to its pupils. Copies of the minutes will be forwarded to the DCPD with the name of the agreed key worker.

Appropriate staff will be warned by the DCPD to be alert to further evidence of abuse to a particular child or other members of the same family in the school.

3.3 Injuries requiring urgent medical attention

A school should follow the normal course of action (i.e. secure appropriate medical attention at a hospital or other medical centre). Parents should be informed that their child has been taken to a doctor, but no opinion should be offered about the cause of any injury. In such cases, the Children's Social Care Department will have been informed, as under 2.1 (b) above.

3.4 Curriculum

Schools considering the implementation of a programme of child protection related material (e.g. personal safety, stranger danger) should consult the appropriate Somerset Children's Social Care Divisional Office and Education Adviser on suitability and presentation.

4. Conclusion

Child abuse in its various forms is too serious a matter to be left to chance. A school's response must be governed by the approved procedures (www.swcpp.org.uk), which are based on two fundamental principles:

- a) that the safety of the child is paramount;
- b) that the agencies involved have all subscribed to the procedures and will co-operate fully in achieving the safety of children so affected.

4.1 Clearly, the identification of abuse and the remedial action, which follows, can injure relationships with parents. In spite of this, it is recognised that teachers are an important front-line group in identifying suspected, actual or potential abuse. Teachers should be able to protect their position and justify their actions by demonstrating that any action they have taken is in the interests of the child, in consultation with the key agencies, after the exercise of sound judgement in the context of these guidelines. Teachers can be assured that practice, which meets these criteria, supported by detailed records, will always receive the support of the School and the Local Authority.

Allegations Management

The definition of what an allegation is broadened significantly with the introduction of the statutory guidance Working Together 2006. Allegations now relate to all situations where a person has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

If an allegation is made against any member of school staff (including volunteers) this needs to be dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently in a way that provides protection for the child and supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

Every Local Authority now has a Designated Officer for Allegations Management (LADO) who is available to provide support and advice to any organisation where staff work with children. This role also incorporates a monitoring function to ensure that all organisations work to complete allegations processes in a timescale appropriate for both the victim and the alleged perpetrator.

The Local Authority Designated Officer must be informed immediately if an allegation has been made, and they will consult as necessary with the relevant personnel in Human Resources, and other agencies such as the Police, as appropriate.

In Somerset the LADO is:

Claire Winter

CWinter@somerset.gov.uk

(01823) 355697

Useful Publications:

An overview of the framework for managing allegations against people who work with children is set out in [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2006\)](#).

[Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education – Chapter 5](#) deals with allegations of abuse and the flowchart in Appendix 5 details the safer recruitment process and gives details of the procedures and guidance on how allegations should be handled.

The South West Child Protection Procedures (www.swcpp.org.uk) also has useful guidance.

All schools should have a policy and procedures in place to address this eventuality and all staff should be aware of the steps that will be taken should they become involved in an allegation. They should also be aware of how to report concerns they may have in respect of the behaviour of any colleague. This is known as ‘Confidential Reporting’ (previously called ‘whistle blowing’) and all allegations management policies must include this.

Worries And Complaints - A Pupil's Guide

This guide explains what you should do if you feel worried about something and what you may do if you wish to complain about how you are, or have been, treated. Much of what follows may seem obvious to you, but it is important for you to realise that the school will want to help you if you have a problem that is making you unhappy.

You may just wish to talk to someone or
You may wish to make a complaint.

Either way this advice will assist you to decide what to do.

“What do I do if I just want to talk to someone?”

Remember you have close friends who may be able to help, or perhaps a senior boy or girl to whom you feel you can turn. Your Housemaster or Housemistress or Tutor is always ready to help, or any other members of staff (including domestic staff) you know and to whom you feel you can comfortably talk.

There may be times when you feel you cannot talk with a member of staff. Talk, telephone or write to any of the following:

Your parents

The school nurses (san sisters)

The School Doctors		01823 285400
The School Chaplain		01823 328211
The Nominate Governor, Mrs Eliot		01278 452056
Somerset Direct, Somerset County Council		0845 345 9122
Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT)		01823 363003
Ofsted (who visit the school from time to time to inspect our provision)		08456 40 40 50
ChildLine	FREEPHONE	0800 1111
NSPCC Child Protection Helpline	FREEPHONE FREETEXT	0800 800 5000 0800 056 0566
Independent Listener (Tony Smith)		01278 733577
Drink Line		0800 917 8282
Frank – National Drugs Helpline		0800 776600
Smoking Quitline		0800 002200
NHS Smoking Helpline		0800 169 0169
Somerset Eating Disorders		01458 448600
Victim Supportline		0845 3030900
Samaritans		08457 909090
NHS Direct		0845 4647