

POLAM HALL SCHOOL

Safeguarding all Children in School: the context of our Child Protection Policy

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is the responsibility of everyone working in schools. The Education Act 2002 section 175 places a duty on the Head Teacher and Governing Body to ensure their functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This is re-enforced in 'Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment in Education' (2007).

Safeguarding encompasses the range of policies and measures schools have in place for **all** children. It includes elements that are designed to protect children from harm as well as preventative measures. In our school it includes the following.

A caring ethos: There are people to talk to: teachers, form tutors, boarding staff, ancillary staff, peer mentors.

Policies/Guidance: Child Protection Policy, Code of Conduct Policy, Common Assessment Framework Guidance, Anti-bullying policies, Whistle-blowing Procedures, Managing Allegations Against Staff, Safe Recruitment, Behaviour Policy, Policies relating to children's medical needs, Special Educational Needs, Acceptable IT Use policy and guidance on use of the internet and mobile phones, School Trips and Visits policy, Health and Safety policies.

Curriculum: Safeguarding through the curriculum: exploring issues, thoughts and feelings; promoting skills and confidence to write, articulate and express views and feelings; know how to stay safe on-line. Circle time, SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of learning), PSHCE programmes and Citizenship.

The informal curriculum: Extended day, clubs, activities and visits. School visitors Community Police, Theatre in Education workshops, Cycling Proficiency, Fire Brigade, Health Advisors and others.

School Support Staff: The School Nurse, Education Welfare Officer, SENCO, Connexions Advisor, Careers Advisor and other professionals as required.

Health and Safety: Premises, equipment and grounds.

Common Assessment Framework

This may be used where certain children have any unmet needs under the five Every Child Matters Outcomes:

1. Stay safe
2. Be healthy
3. Enjoy and achieve
4. Make a positive contribution to their community/ society

5. Improve economic well-being (free from negative impact of poverty). Our general safeguarding measures lead on to other specific procedures and guidance: CAF (The Common Assessment Framework) Operational Guidance for Practitioners August 2008, Children in Need (LSCB web site) and Child Protection.

The following staff have completed the County Durham CAF Training:

Miss Marie Green (Level 3)
Mrs Katie Johnson (Level 3)
Mrs Sara-Jane Hardy (Level 2)

The following staff are Designated Teachers for Child Protection in School:

Miss Marie Green

School staff received a Level 1 training/refresher training on: 23rd October 2009

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

(part of SAFEGUARDING & WELFARE policy suite)

All school employees have a responsibility to protect children from bullying, harassment, physical, sexual and emotional abuse and/or neglect.

It is of paramount importance that children at Polam Hall School feel safe, secure and free from any form of abuse. The School is committed to the protection and promotion of the children's welfare and to providing an environment in which they may thrive.

All school staff, teaching and non-teaching, are involved in a rolling programme of child protection training.

Appointments policies and procedures acknowledge the importance of addressing issues involving the safeguarding of children. Every adult who has unsupervised contact with children is subject to the school's CRB checking procedures.

The primary Nominated Officer for Polam Hall School is Miss Marie Green. Liaison with appropriate authorities (Safeguarding Children Officers, Social Services, Police, etc) is her responsibility entirely. Mrs Angela Foster (for the Junior School). Mrs Davison and Mrs Sara-Jane Hardy (for the Senior School) are also trained in Child Protection issues and will deputise for the Head in her absence. The school also has a Nominated Child Protection Governor, Mrs Anne Elliott.

Key contacts with regard to child protection are:

Safeguarding Children Officer for Darlington
01325 346750

For Boarding Issues our contact is:

01325 371720

Childline Number: 0800 1111

In an emergency call the police on 999

The NSPCC have a contact line on 0808 800 5000 for children and young people. Their web site is www.nspcc.org.uk/kidszone.

Kidscape has helpful advice on www.kidscape.org.uk

Another helpful web site is www.worriedneed2talk.org.uk

The Samaritans can be called at any time on 08457 909090

Key Points relating to effective safeguarding

- In the event of serious allegations the Nominated Officer will refer the matter to the Police Family Protection Unit or Social Services Department the same day. The Interdependent Agencies will provide immediate guidance.
- Never presume that abuse in our school is an impossibility.
- Children may confide in young people or other children rather than adults. An awareness amongst Senior girls of these referral procedures within school is imperative. Peer mentors and Head Student teams are briefed appropriately.
- Child Protection measures always operate in the best interest of the child. School Child Protection Records will be confidential and access limited to a 'need to know' basis.
- This policy is available to all staff and parents.

ALL CHILD PROTECTION REFERRALS SHOULD BE IMMEDIATE AND CERTAINLY WITHIN 24 HOURS OF ANY INCIDENT.

Staff Guidelines

- Any person having suspicion of child abuse involving the Head must report such to the Chairman of Governors Mr Chris Pratt or the nominated Governor for Child Protection issues, Mrs Anne Elliott.
- The Safeguarding Children guidelines and other relevant current legislation is available at any time in the Head's Secretary's Office and in the Boarding House Offices.

Definitions of Categories of Abuse

ABUSE is defined as physical, sexual or emotional neglect. The following categories of abuse are recognised for the purposes of the Child Protection Register:

- **Neglect:** Persistent or severe neglect, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation, or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.
- **Physical Injury:** Actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury (or suffering) to a child.
- **Sexual Abuse including Homophobic Abuse:** Actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent. The child may be dependent and/or developmentally immature.

- **Emotional Abuse:** Actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection.
- If you know or suspect that a pupil is being abused you must refer the matter **immediately** to the Head.
- If a pupil asks to speak to you about a confidential matter you must hold the interview in a room which allows for appropriate privacy. As all pupils in school have a Form Tutor and some a Personal Tutor, it is advisable to suggest to the pupil that one of these be present. If the pupil is unwilling to have another adult present, try to ensure that a colleague knows that the interview is taking place. **Always point out to the pupil that you cannot guarantee complete confidentiality. Depending on the problem other colleagues may ‘need to know’.**
- There will be occasions when a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance which may include physical comforting such as that given by a parent. It should be ensured that what is – and what is seen by others to be – normal and natural does not become unnecessary and unjustified contact. In a predominantly girls’ school, male members of staff should avoid **all** forms of physical contact, for their own protection.
- If a pupil makes some disclosures to you which fall within the defined categories of abuse, always use the RECEIVE, REASSURE, REACT, RECORD, SUPPORT procedure:
 - RECEIVE what is said: accept what you are told – you do not need to decide whether it is true or not. Listen without displaying shock or disbelief.
 - REASSURE the pupil: acknowledge her/his courage in telling; do not promise confidentiality; remind them that she/he is not to blame (but avoid criticising the alleged perpetrator – young people often love adults who abuse them); reassure her/him but do not promise what you may not be able to deliver: ‘everything will be all right now’ (it may not be).
 - REACT: respond to what the pupil has said but do not interrogate; avoid leading questions such as ‘Was it your father? Did he touch your breasts?’ Questions such as this can be used by defence counsel in a subsequent court case to suggest that you contaminated the pupil’s evidence; ask open-ended questions: ‘Do you want to tell me anything else?’ ‘And?’ ‘Yes?’ Where necessary, clarify what has been said to you so that you are clear and able to decide whether this is an abusive situation.

There is a careful judgement to be made in ensuring that you have enough information to make an appropriate referral and allowing a pupil to talk without being silenced, while making sure that you have not inadvertently led the pupil, perhaps by an assumption behind the question. For example, asking ‘Were you sitting up or lying down when this happened?’ contains the answer in the question. Explain what you will do next.

- RECORD: Make brief notes as soon as possible, during the interview if you can. Write up a subsequent record – include time, date, place. Describe observable

behaviour. Record the actual words the pupil used as far as possible. **Do not destroy** your original notes, however scrappy or incomplete, as these can be required as evidence.

- **SUPPORT:** consider what support is necessary for the pupil (refer to Headmistress or her deputies). Ensure that **you** get support, as such interviews can be stressful.

PROCEDURES WHEN A BOARDER IS MISSING FROM SCHOOL

If a Boarder is missing during the School day (8.50am – 4.00pm) the normal procedures as defined in the Staff Handbook will be followed.

If a Boarder is missing outside of the above times the Boarding Staff should:

- initiate enquiries
- inform the Head of Boarding and/or her Deputy
- inform the Head (or Deputy Head)

The Head/Deputy will advise the Head of Boarding about contact with the girl's family, and with the police if required.

Signed:

Chair of Governors

Head

Children achieve their maximum potential in an environment which is safe, secure and supportive of all their needs, including any needs they have for protection from abuse.

Our school is committed to promoting the welfare of all children by working in partnership with parents, with the Local Authority (LA) and with all relevant agencies and partners in child protection, in accordance with locally agreed procedures and practices.

Our policy applies to all members of the school community in its widest sense, including children and young people, their parents/carers, school staff, governors, visitors, specialist staff, and all the local and wider community where they interface with the school. Within its framework, the policy outlines their entitlements and responsibilities in securing the protection of children who attend the school.

Our policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Local Safeguarding Children Board -Child Protection Procedures. See www.durham-Isccb.gov.uk

- Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education -DfES 2007
- Safeguarding Children: Safer Recruitment and Selection in Education Settings (DfES/1568/2005)
- Safeguarding Children in Education: Dealing with allegations of Abuse Against Teachers and Other Staff (2005)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children -DfES 2006 (www.durham-Isqb.gov.uk see "Professional/Volunteers" Key Documents and Publications).
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused -DfES 2006
- DfEE Circular 10/98 -Section 550A of the Education Act 1996: The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils 2007.
- Department for Children, Schools and Families, The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils, non statutory guidance for schools in England.
- Common Assessment Framework (August 2008) County Durham Practice Guidelines
- Children in Need Procedures see www.durham-Isqb.gov.uk
- Neglect Practice Guidance (September 2008) on LSCB website
- AIM procedures (Assessment Intervention & Moving On) (2007) on LSCB website
- DfEE Circular 9/94. The Education of Children with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties.
- A Child Protection Handbook -Durham Education (Blue File and Schools Extranet).

Principles of the Policy

Our policy is underpinned and shaped by legislation and guidance contained in a variety of documents including:

- The Children Act 1989; Children Act 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children -a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children -DfES 2006
- The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) procedures
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused -DfES 2006
- Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education -DfES January 2007

Where a Local Authority has reasonable cause to suspect that a child who lives, or is found, in their area is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, the Children Act states that:

"the Authority shall make, or cause to be made, such enquiries as they consider necessary to enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare". (Section 47, Children Act 1989)

This school will work with the LA in assisting in identification, recording and communicating concerns and offering support in cases where children are suffering from, or vulnerable to, harm.

In support of the ethos of our school, the staff and governors are committed to the following principles:

- The welfare and well-being of the child is of paramount importance.
- Our policy works on the premise that abuse takes place in all communities and that schools are particularly well-placed to identify and refer concerns and also to act to prevent children and young people from being abused.
- We respect and value each child as an individual.
- We are a listening school, and encourage an environment where children feel free to talk, knowing that they will be listened to.
- The protection of children from abuse is a whole school issue, and the responsibility therefore of the entire school community.
- Our policy should be accessible in terms of understanding and availability. As a result the definition of child abuse and the key signs and symptoms are known and understood by all, and procedures are known and understood by all.
- Our policy will be developed in consultation with our relevant partners in Child Protection.
- We will use the school curriculum to resource our children to protect themselves from abuse, both as victims and as potential perpetrators.
- The school runs in an open, transparent way and areas of secrecy are discouraged.

Last reviewed: November 2009

Next review: November 2010