

Child Protection Policy

1 Policy statement

- 1.1 This policy has been authorised by the Governors, is addressed to all members of staff and volunteers, is available to parents on request and is published on the School website. It applies wherever staff or volunteers are working with pupils even where this is away from the School, for example at an activity centre or on an educational visit.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 The Royal Hospital School (**School**) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The School will take all reasonable measures to:
 - ensure that we practise safer 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 the guidance given in "Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education", the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 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 School's governing body in accordance with the above regulations and guidance given in "Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education" and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools
 - ensure that where the School 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)
 - ensure that where staff from another organisation are working with our pupils on another site, we have received assurances that appropriate child protection checks and procedures apply to those staff
 - follow the local inter-agency procedures of the Suffolk 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 School 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 School 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 School or in our local area
- have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families (**DCSF**) in accordance with section 157 of the Education Act 2002 and associated regulations

1.4 Every complaint or suspicion of abuse from within or outside the School will be investigated and in all proper circumstances will be referred to an external agency such as the social services department of the local authority (**SSD**), the child protection unit of the police (**CPU**) or the NSPCC. In each case, the matter should be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer, who is the South Suffolk Area Safeguarding manager, Tina Wilson, telephone number 01473 583000.

2 Responsibilities for Child Protection - The Designated Person

The Deputy Headmaster, Mr James Lockwood, is the Designated Person i.e. he is the senior member of staff responsible for matters relating to child protection and welfare. He may be contacted on 01473 326202.

His main responsibilities 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 School
- to keep the Headmaster informed as appropriate of all child protection matters
- to maintain an ongoing training programme for all School 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 SSD (Local Authority Designated Officer).

In turn, the Deputy Headmaster has designated two Child Protection Officers, as follows:

Amanda Pearson: telephone 01473 326215

Andrew Evans: telephone 01473 326218

The Deputy Headmaster and the Child Protection Officers will:

- advise and act upon all suspicion, belief and evidence of abuse reported to them
- keep the Head informed of all actions unless the Head is the subject of a complaint. In this situation, the Designated Person should consult with Mr Henry Strutt, Chair of Governors or in his absence, Mr Martin Sands, Director of Greenwich Hospital
- liaise with the SSD and other agencies on behalf of the School.

In addition the Deputy Headmaster may authorise the Child Protection Officers to undertake any of the actions described below in handling allegations, suspicions or incidents of abuse.

- 2.1 If the Deputy Headmaster or the Child Protection Officers are unavailable or are themselves the subject of a complaint, their duties will be carried out by the Head or other Deputy, who has received appropriate training.
- 2.2 The Deputy Headmaster and the Child Protection Officers have 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 School as well as every volunteer who assists the School are under a general legal duty:
 - to protect children from abuse
 - to be aware of the School'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 ensure that any matters of concern are reported promptly to the Designated Person
 - to undertake appropriate training including refresher training at three-yearly intervals
- 4.2 **Whistleblowing:** All members of staff are required to report to the Deputy Headmaster, or the Child Protection Officers, any concern or allegations about school 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 the information will need to be passed to the Deputy Headmaster or Child Protection Officers, 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 Deputy Headmaster or Child Protection Officers.

- 5.2 **Preserving evidence:** All evidence, for example, scribbled notes, mobile phones containing text messages, clothing and computers, must be safeguarded and preserved.

- 5.3 **Reporting:** All suspicion or complaints of abuse must be reported to the Deputy Headmaster or Child Protection Officers. If the complaint involves the Headmaster, the matter should be reported to the Chairman of Governors or the Director of Greenwich Hospital. If the complaint involves the Deputy Headmaster or either of the Child Protection Officers the matter should be reported to the Headmaster. Any member of staff who is uncertain about a suspicion or complaint of abuse should speak to their line manager who should then ensure that the information is passed to the Deputy Headmaster or Child Protection Officers as soon as possible.

- 5.4 **Action by the Deputy Headmaster :** The action to be taken by the Deputy Headmaster will take into account:

- the local inter-agency procedures of the Suffolk 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 SSD or the police without further investigation within the School
- 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 Deputy Headmaster 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 School 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 Deputy Headmaster 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. If the initial referral is made by telephone, the Deputy Headmaster will confirm the referral in writing to SSD within 24 hours. If no response or acknowledgment is received within three working days, the Deputy Headmaster will contact Social Services again.

5.5 **Referral guidelines:** A referral to the SSD 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 School'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 Deputy Headmaster will again consider whether a referral should be made in accordance with paragraph 5.4 above.

5.6 **External agencies:** Whether or not the School decides to refer a particular complaint to the SSD or the police, the parents and pupil will be informed in writing of their right to make their own complaint or referral to the Social 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 School 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 Deputy Headmaster or either of the Child Protection Officers, the matter should be reported immediately to the Headmaster.

Where an allegation or complaint is made against the Headmaster, the person receiving the allegation should immediately inform the Chair of Governors or in his absence the Director of Greenwich Hospital without first notifying the Headmaster.

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. The School's policy on physical restraint is also included in the Staff Handbook.

If the School 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 School, with a report being presented to the Governors without delay.

- 5.8 **Allegations against pupils:** A pupil against whom an allegation of abuse has been made may be suspended from the School during the investigation and the School's policy on behaviour, discipline and sanctions will apply.
- 5.9 **Suspected harm from outside the School:** A member of staff who suspects that a pupil is suffering harm from outside the School should seek information from the child with tact and sympathy using "open" and not leading questions. A sufficient record should be made of the conversation and if the member of staff continues to be concerned he or she should refer the matter to the Deputy Headmaster or the Child Protection Officers.
- 5.10 **Missing child procedures:** the separate procedure to be used for searching for, and if necessary, reporting, any pupil missing from school is detailed in the Staff Handbook. The procedure includes the requirement to record any incident, the action taken and the reasons given by the pupil for being missing.

6 Monitoring

- 6.1 The Deputy Headmaster will monitor the operation of this policy and its procedures and make an annual report to the Governors.
- 6.2 The Governors will undertake an annual review of this policy and how their duties under it have been discharged.
- 6.3 The Governors will ensure that any deficiencies or weaknesses in regard to child protection arrangements are remedied without delay.

7 Contact numbers

- 7.1 The telephone numbers of the Suffolk Council Social Services Departments are as follows:

0808 800 4005

- 7.2 The following telephone numbers may be useful for pupils:

Suffolk Contact Centre	0808 800 4005
Child line	0800 1111
NSPCC	0808 800 5000

Authorised by resolution of The Education Sub Committee on behalf of THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE ROYAL HOSPITAL SCHOOL

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Parents on request and published on the school web site

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