

## **Introduction**

This policy describes our arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our Students.

The policy covers the following five areas:

1. The designation of staff with 'status and authority' to take responsibility for child protection matters. The training of the designated person, staff, volunteers and the head.
2. Dealing with concerns about a child, using locally agreed inter-agency procedures.
3. Arrangements for reviewing the policies and procedures and the efficiency with which the duties have been discharged, including swift remediation of deficiencies.
4. The operation of safer recruitment procedures.
5. Handling allegations of abuse against members of staff, volunteers and the head.

### **1. Designated Staff and Training**

The Designated Senior Members of Staff for Child Protection team members are Principal, Admissions and Counseling Coordinator, Middle School Coordinator, Elementary School Coordinator.

All staff (including temporary staff and volunteers) will know: the names of the team members; how to pass on and record concerns about a Student; that they have an individual responsibility for referring child protection concerns using the proper channels and within the timescales set out in the inter-agency procedures; where the inter-agency Procedures and Education Child Protection Procedures are located.

### **2. Child abuse: Procedures**

A copy of these procedures can be found in the Principal's Office and in the offices of Coordinators. It is also on display in the staff room. The 'Logging a Concern' forms are also available in these places.

### **Identifying Signs and Symptoms**

Although these signs do not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused, they may help adults recognize that something is wrong. The possibility of abuse should be investigated if a child shows a number of these symptoms, or any of them to a

marked degree. It is also possible that a child may show no outward signs and hide what is happening from everyone.

**a. Sexual Abuse.** Being overly affectionate or knowledgeable in a sexual way inappropriate to the child's age, medical problems such as chronic itching, pain in the genitals, venereal diseases, other extreme reactions, such as depression, self-mutilation, suicide attempts, running away, overdoses, anorexia, personality changes such as becoming insecure or clinging, regressing to younger behavior patterns such as thumb sucking or bringing out discarded cuddly toys, sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating, being isolated or withdrawn, inability to concentrate, lack of trust or fear of someone they know well, such as not wanting to be alone with a babysitter or child minder, starting to wet again, day or night/nightmares, become worried about clothing being removed, suddenly drawing sexually explicit pictures, trying to be 'ultra-good' or perfect; overreacting to criticism.

**b. Physical Abuse.** Unexplained recurrent injuries or burns, improbable excuses or refusal to explain injuries, wearing clothes to cover injuries, even in hot weather, refusal to undress for gym, bald patches, chronic running away, fear of medical help or examination, self-destructive tendencies, aggression towards others, fear of physical contact – shrinking back if touched, admitting that they are punished, but the punishment is excessive (such as being beaten every night to 'make him study'), fear of suspected abuser being contacted.

**c. Emotional Abuse.** Physical, mental and emotional development lags, sudden speech disorders, continual self-deprecation ('I'm stupid, ugly, worthless, etc'), overreaction to mistakes, extreme fear of any new situation, inappropriate response to pain ('I deserve this'), neurotic behavior (rocking, hair twisting, self-mutilation), extremes of passivity or aggression.

**d. Neglect.** Constant hunger, poor personal hygiene, constant tiredness, poor state of clothing, emaciation, untreated medical problems, no social relationships, compulsive scavenging, destructive tendencies.

### Supporting the Student at Risk

#### a. Behavior.

Children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world as benevolent and meaningful. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of self-blame. School may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. Nevertheless their behavior may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. Some children actually adopt abusive behaviours and these children must be referred on for appropriate support and intervention.

The school will endeavour to support the Student through:

- Cross-curricular opportunities to encourage self-esteem and self-motivation.
- The school ethos that actively promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and values people.
- The school's behaviour policy is aimed at supporting vulnerable Students in the school. The school will ensure that the Student knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but s/he is valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
- A commitment to develop productive and supportive relationships with parents.
- Recognition that children living in a home environment where there is domestic violence, drug or alcohol abuse are vulnerable and in need of support and protection.
- Vigilantly monitoring children's welfare, keeping records and notifying Social Care as soon as there is a recurrence of a concern. When a Student who is subject to a child protection plan leaves, information will be transferred to the new school immediately. The Child Review Manager and Key Worker from Social Care will also be informed.

#### **b. Drug Use and Child Protection.**

The discovery that a young person is using illegal drugs is not necessarily sufficient in itself to initiate child protection proceedings but the school will consider such action in the following situations. When there is evidence or reasonable cause:

- to believe the young person's drug misuse may cause him or her to be vulnerable to other abuse such as sexual abuse;
- to believe the Student's drug related behavior is a result of abusing or endangering pressure or incentives from others, particularly adults;
- where the misuse is suspected of being prompted by serious parent or carer drug misuse.

#### **c. Children of Drug Using Parents.**

Further enquiries and or further action should be taken if the school receives reliable information about drug and alcohol abuse by a child's parents/carers in the following circumstances:

- the parental misuse is regarded as problematic (i.e. multiple drug use);
- a chaotic and unpredictable home environment exists which can be attributed to drug or alcohol misuse;
- children are not given acceptable, consistent levels of social and health care;
- children are exposed to criminal behavior.

## **Record Keeping**

- The school will keep clear detailed written records of concerns about children (noting the date, event and action taken), even where there is no need to refer the matter to Social Services immediately.
- The school will ensure all records are kept secure and in locked locations.
- The school will ensure all relevant child protection records are sent to the receiving school or establishment when a Student moves schools in accordance with the Education Child Protection procedures.

## **Confidentiality and information sharing**

- Staff will ensure confidentiality protocols are adhered to and information is shared appropriately. If in any doubt about confidentiality, staff will seek advice from a senior manager.
- The Principal or coordinators will disclose any information about a Student to other members of staff on a need to know basis only.
- All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.
- All staff must be clear with children that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets.

They also understand the need to avoid asking leading questions.

- Training will ensure that staff understands that their behaviour and actions must not place Students or themselves at risk of harm or allegations of harm to a Student.
- The school will undertake appropriate discussion with parents prior to involvement of another agency unless the circumstances preclude this action.
- The school will ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection by setting out its obligations in the school brochure.

## **Use of mobile phones and cameras in RISE**

- Mobile phones are not allowed in the RISE. Staff must keep them in their bags and only use them when they are in their workstations (Nonacademic staff)/off the premises. Parents, visitors and students are asked not to use their phones while in the school.
- Staffs regularly take photographs of the children while busy and engrossed in their play. They are mainly used to record the children's activities and achievements and are put in their individual RISE Summary files for their parents to keep.
- On occasion photographs are used for wall displays, advertising and on the web site. Sometimes children appear in the background or in group photographs. Parental consent is sought for all these different types of

photographs before the child starts with us. Parents can withdraw consent at any time and are made aware of this at the time of signing.

- Staff only use the school cameras/ipods/ipads
- The camera is never used in the cloakroom area or in confined spaces.
- Staff will not take photographs if a child looks uncomfortable in any way or says no when the camera is focused on them.

### **3. Review**

Policies and procedures are to be reviewed annually with the greatest care and diligence by the Principal and Directors of the school, with particular reference to the efficiency with which the duties have been discharged. Revisions and modifications will be made immediately where any weaknesses or amendments are needed. Such measures would be taken in response to official recommendations and best practice following careful review of procedures in the previous year and any matters arising. This responsibility cannot be delegated.

### **4. Safer Recruitment**

Our policy applies to all staff, paid or unpaid, working in the school including directors, teaching assistants, mid-day supervisors, secretaries as well as teachers.

Assurance is obtained that appropriate child protection checks and procedures apply to any staff employed by another organization and working with the school's Students on another site (for example, in a separate institution).

### **5. Allegations of Abuse against Staff**

If an allegation of child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal must be informed immediately. In the absence of the Principal, or in the case of an allegation against the Principal, a report should be made to the other team members. It is essential that any allegation of abuse made against a member of staff is dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently in a way that provides protection for the child and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation. At every stage, all unnecessary delays must be eradicated.

- The complainant will be asked to report the allegation to the police and/or social services,
- The team members will also inform the Police
- Information will be gathered as soon as possible to clarify points, for example, the date the alleged incident took place.
- If another member of staff or volunteer witnessed the alleged abuse they will be asked to write an accurate and factual account of what they saw and heard. They will be asked not to discuss the situation with anyone other than the Police.
- All relevant information and written records, for example, names and addresses will be given to the Police.

- If a member of staff tenders his or her resignation, or ceases to provide their services, this must not prevent an allegation being followed up in accordance with our child protection procedure.
- A meeting will be held immediately on an allegation being made to discuss any disciplinary actions. During any investigation the staff member will be sent home.
- Parents should be told about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not

Ceasing to use a person's services includes: dismissal; non-renewal of a fixed-term contract; no longer engaging/refusing to engage a supply teacher provided by an employment agency; terminating the placement of a student teacher or other trainee; no longer using staff employed by contractors; no longer using volunteers; resignation; and voluntary withdrawal from supply teaching, contract working, a course of initial teacher training, or volunteering. It is important that reports include as much evidence about the circumstances of the case as possible.

### **Code of conduct**

A Code of Conduct for Employees within the school whose work brings them into contact with children/young people

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and that their behavior towards the children and young people in their charge must be above reproach. This Code of Conduct is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children and young people gain from positive interaction with staff within the education sector. It is intended to assist staff in respect of the complex issue of child abuse, by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on prudent conduct.

#### **1. Private Meetings with Students**

- a. Staff should be aware of the dangers which may arise from private interviews with individual Students. It is recognized that there will be occasions when confidential interviews must take place. As far as possible, staff should conduct such interviews in a room with visual access, or with the door open.
- b. Where such conditions cannot apply, staffs are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place. It may be necessary to use a sign indicating that the room is in use, but it is not advisable to use signs prohibiting entry to the room.
- c. Where possible another Student or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview, and the school should take active measures to facilitate this.

## 2. Physical Contact with Students

- a. As a general principle, staffs are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their Students.
- b. It is unrealistic and unnecessary, however, to suggest that staff should touch Students only in emergencies. In particular, a distressed child, especially a younger child, may need reassurance involving physical comforting, as a caring parent would provide. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this.
- c. Staff should never touch a child who has clearly indicated that he/she is, or would be, uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm.
- d. Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.
- e. Staffs who has to administer first-aid to a Student should ensure wherever possible that this is done in the presence of other children or another adult. However, no member of staff should hesitate to provide first-aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present.
- f. Any physical contact which would be likely to be misinterpreted by the Student, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.
- g. Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to Coordinators.
- h. Staff should be particularly careful when supervising Students in a residential setting, or in approved out of school activities, where more informal relationships tend to be usual and where staff may be in proximity to Students in circumstances very different from the normal school/work environment.

## 3. Choice and Use of Teaching Materials

- a. Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice.
- b. When using teaching materials of a sensitive nature a teacher should be aware of the danger that their application, either by Students or by the teacher, might after the event be criticized. Schools have already received advice on the value of consulting parents when proposing to use materials such as the AIDS education for schools or/and in connection with sex education programmes.
- c. If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the Principal before using it.

## 4. Relationships and Attitudes

Within the Pastoral Care Policies of the school and the employing authority, staff should ensure that their relationships with Students are appropriate to the age, maturity and sex of the Students, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to

comment or speculation. Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when staffs are dealing with adolescent boys and girls.

### **Conclusion**

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all the circumstances in which staff interrelate with children and young people, or where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur.

In all circumstances, employees' professional judgment will be exercised and for the vast majority of employees this Code of Conduct will serve only to confirm what has always been their practice. If employees have any doubts about points in this policy, or how they should act in particular circumstances, they should consult with the Principal or a representative of their professional association. From time to time, however, it is prudent for all staff to reappraise their teaching styles, relationships with Students and their manner and approach to individual Students, to ensure that they give no grounds for doubt about their intentions, in the minds of colleagues, of Students or of their parents/guardians.