

SCARISBRICK HALL SCHOOL

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY



Rationale

Scarisbrick Hall School fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection and we are committed to take all reasonable measures to safeguard and promote the welfare of each pupil in our care.

Every child should feel safe and protected from any form of abuse, including any kind of neglect, non-accidental physical injury, sexual exploitation or emotional ill-treatment. The Children Act 1989 gives every child the right to protection from abuse and exploitation and the right to have enquiries made about his/her welfare.

Development Process

Policy written	July 2009
Reviewed and adopted by Directors	January 2012
Next major review	January 2013
Parents' consultation	Web site, VLE
Staff involvement	Annual Review, Training
Directors' involvement	Annual Review, or if there are any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements these should be remedied without delay.

Location and dissemination

A copy of the policy can be found in the Staff Handbook, in the School Office and on the school website.

The content of the policy and its relationship to other policies

This policy should be considered in conjunction with other written policies on behaviour, health and safety, bullying, E-safety, PSCHE and School Visits. It is in the context of the locally agreed inter-agency policies of Lancashire LEA.

The purpose of the policy

Our policy applies to all staff, directors and volunteers working in the school.

- to ensure we operate safe recruitment procedures (enhanced CRB checks, identity checks, reference checks, qualification checks and the right to work in the UK checks) in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children and young people. This will include an assurance that appropriate Child Protection checks and procedures apply to staff from another organisation and working with the school's pupils on another site.
- to raise awareness of child protection issues and to equip children with the skills needed to keep them safe;



- to develop and implement procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases of abuse;
- to support pupils who have been abused in accordance with an agreed child protection plan;
- to establish a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.
- To ensure that any deficiencies or weaknesses in the Child Protection arrangements are rectified without delay
- The directors undertake an annual review of the policy and the efficiency with which the duties have been discharged.

We recognise that because of the day-to-day contact with children, school staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. The school will therefore:

- establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to;
- ensure that children know that there are adults in the school who they can approach if they are worried;
- include opportunities in the PSCHE curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from harm.

The schools stance on safeguarding children

- to protect each pupil from any form of abuse, whether from an adult or from another pupil;
- to be alert to signs of abuse both in the school and from outside;
- to deal appropriately with every suspicion or complaint of abuse;
- to design and operate procedures which promote this policy and which as far as possible, minimise the impact on the innocent of unfounded allegations;
- to be alert to the needs of children with medical conditions;
- to operate robust and sensible health and safety procedures;
- to take all practicable steps to ensure that school premises are as secure as circumstances reasonably permit;
- to operate clear and supportive policies on drugs, alcohol and substance misuse.

Every disclosure, complaint or suspicion of abuse from within or outside the school will be investigated and will in appropriate circumstances as set out below, be referred to an external agency such as the Social Services Department (SSD) of the local authority, the Child Protection Unit (CPU) of the police or the NSPCC in accordance with the procedures set out by the Lancashire Area Child Protection Committee.

Contact Details:

Education Safeguarding Officers

Safeguarding Unit

Room B16

County Hall

Preston PR1 8RJ

Fax: 01772 531 451

Paul McIntyre (Schools Safeguarding Co-Ordinator)
01772 532634/07766 367 597

Mary Aurens (Schools Safeguarding Officer)
01772 531196/07810 267 503

Safeguarding Unit Admin
01772 532723/534443



Out of Hours/Emergency Duty Team 0845 602 1043

The Designated Person

The school has appointed a Designated Person for First and Middle School, it is **Mr A. McCoy (Headteacher), Mrs W.A. Taylor (senior teacher in College)** to be responsible for deputising in the absence of the Head, for any matters relating to child protection and welfare.

There is a separate EYFS policy – Mrs L Fortune (Nursery Manager) is the Designated Person for the Nursery (policy is available on the Nursery website).

The main responsibilities of the Designated Person are:

- in the case of Nursery the DP reports to the Headteacher
- to be the first point of contact for parents, pupils teaching and non-teaching staff, external agencies and any other party in all matters of child protection;
- to co-ordinate the Safeguarding procedures within the school;
- to maintain an on-going training programme for all school employees to raise awareness of child protection issues and in particular the action to be taken in cases of suspected abuse
- to monitor the creation, confidentiality and storage of records in relation to child protection;
- to liaise with the child protection duty officer at the SSD;
- to report to the Headteacher any child protection concerns;
- to undergo training as required; every two years for the Designated Person and every three for staff (updated June 2009 Lancashire Safeguarding Children Board)
- Contact the necessary welfare agency within 24 hours of a suspicion or disclosure

Recognising Abuse

It is not always obvious that a child is being abused. Very often, it is the culmination of information that is important. The signs and types of behaviour listed are not in themselves evidence of abuse but may suggest abuse particularly if a child displays several of them, or if a pattern emerges:

- a pupil says that 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 may be unusual, or there may have been a number of injuries, or there is a pattern to the injuries;
- the pupil's behaviour stands out from the group as either being extremely model or extremely challenging, or there is a sudden change in the pupils behaviour or attitude;
- the pupil asks to drop subjects with a teacher and appears reluctant to discuss the reasons;

- the pupil's development is unexpectedly delayed;
- the pupil inexplicably 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 parents or carers;
- self-inflicted wounds;
- reverting to younger behaviour, depression, withdrawal.



Procedures

Initial Disclosure

A member of staff suspecting or hearing of abuse:

- must never make a promise of confidentiality. The member of staff should explain that they may need to pass the information on to the Designated Person who will ensure the correct action is taken
- should listen quietly to the child and keep an open mind. Staff should not make a decision as to whether the abuse has taken place;
- must not ask leading questions
- must keep a written record of the conversation including the date, time and place the conversation took place, the essence of what was said and done, by whom and in whose presence. It should be signed by the person making it and transferred to the Designated Person directly. A form for this purpose is attached.

Evidence

All evidence (notes, text messages, clothing, computers) must be safeguarded, preserved and transferred to the Designated Person

Reporting

All suspicion or disclosure of abuse must be reported to the Designated Person, or if the disclosure involves the Designated Person, the Chair of the Board.

Action

Subject to the paramount safety and welfare of the pupil, the action will take into account:

- the procedures outlined by Lancashire County Council's Safeguarding Children Board within the Common Assessment Framework;
- the nature and seriousness of the suspicion or disclosure. A disclosure involving a serious offence will always be referred to the SSD or police without further investigation within the school;
- the wishes of the pupil, who has disclosed, provided that the pupil is of sufficient understanding and maturity and properly informed. However there may be occasions when the situation is so serious that decisions may need to be taken which over-ride a pupils wishes;
- the wishes of the pupil's parents, provided that they have no interest which is in conflict with the pupils best interests, and that they are properly informed. Again it may be necessary, after appropriate consultation, to over-ride parental wishes in some circumstances;
- duties of confidentiality, so far as are applicable;

- the lawful rights and responsibilities of the school community as a whole;
- if there is doubt as to whether a referral should be made, the DSP may consult with appropriate professionals but as soon as sufficient concerns exist that a child may be at significant harm, then a referral will be made without delay and within a 24 hour period



Interaction with Pupils

In general, pupils should be encouraged to discuss with their parents or guardians issues that are troubling them. It may be appropriate to suggest that a pupils sees the School Nurse at the Drop- In facility, or a member of Staff.

Staff need to ensure that their behaviour does not inadvertently lay them open to allegations of abuse. They need to treat all pupils with respect and try, as far as possible, not to be alone with a child or young person. Where this is not possible, for example, in an instrumental lesson or coaching lesson, it is good practice to ensure that others are within earshot. Where possible, a gap or barrier should be maintained between the teacher and child at all times. Any physical contact should be the minimum required for care, instruction or restraint. Staff should avoid taking one pupil on his/her own in a car.

Communication with Pupils

Staff should not give their personal mobile phone numbers to pupils, nor should they communicate with them by text message or personal e-mail. These forms of communication should always be formal and should only be used to support a pupil's learning or safety. If staff need to talk to a pupil by telephone, they should endeavour to use the school telephone system. The Group Leader on all trips and visits should take the school mobile phone with him/her, and may ask the pupils for their mobile phone numbers. The mobile should only be used for urgent contact with pupils.

Physical Restraint

Any physical restraint is only permissible when a child is in imminent danger of inflicting an injury on himself/herself or on another, and then only as a last resort, when all efforts to diffuse the situation have failed. Another member of staff should, if possible, be present to act as a witness. All incidents of the use of physical restraint should be recorded in writing and reported immediately to the SDP, Headteacher or senior member of staff, for appropriate further action.

Allegations against staff

The School has procedures for dealing with allegations against staff (Including the Headteacher 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. Suspension will not be an automatic response to an allegation. Full consideration will be given to all options, subject to the need to ensure:

- the safety and welfare of the pupils or pupil concerned;
- the need for a full and fair investigation.

Full detail are included as **Appendix 1** attached. (Safeguarding Staff)

The school is mindful of the requirement to report to the Independent Safeguarding Authority, within one month of leaving the school, any person whose services are no longer used because he/she is unsuitable to work with children

Allegations against pupils

A pupil against whom an allegation of abuse has been made may be suspended from the school pending the investigation and the school's policy on behaviour, discipline and sanctions will apply.

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 he or she should refer the matter to the Designated Person for advice.

Monitoring

The Designated Person will monitor the operation of this policy and its procedures and report to the Board of Directors. The policy will be reviewed at least annually by the Directors and if there are any deficiencies or weaknesses in the child protection arrangements, they should be remedied without delay.



SCARISBRICK HALL SCHOOL
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CONCERNS FORM



Pupil's name..... Form/Mentor Group.....

Upon completion, immediately return to Mr A McCoy, or in his absence Mrs W Taylor.

Conversation Causing Concern

Date.....Time.....Place.....
.....

Signed..... Date.....

Witnessed by.....

To DSP – Signed.....Date.....



Safeguarding Staff (Appendix 1)
**Safeguarding - Procedures when a Member of Staff,
Volunteer, Child Protection Officer or Headteacher faces
Allegations of Abuse**

INTRODUCTION

Allegations that a member of staff has abused a pupil or pupils either inside the school premises or during a school trip or visit could be made by:

- Parents
- The abused pupil
- Other members of staff
- Other pupils
- The Police or Social Services
- A third party

An allegation of such seriousness would normally be made directly to the Headteacher; but if another member of staff is told first, he/she will ensure that the Headteacher is informed immediately.

If the Headteacher is unavailable – or is involved - the Child Protection Officer (SDP) or Deputy Headteacher should be told at once.

ANONYMOUS ALLEGATIONS

If we are faced with an anonymous allegation of child abuse, which names both a member of staff and a child, we will handle it in exactly the same way as if we knew the identity of the person making the allegation. Where the allegation names the member of staff; but not the pupil, we will normally interview the member of staff, and ask for his or her version of events. It could be appropriate to establish a mentoring or review programme for that individual, or to provide him or her with further training. A record would be kept on the individual's personal file.

THE FIRST RESPONSE

We will respond promptly and sensitively to the legitimate concerns of the alleged victim and his or her family.

- Take any allegation of abuse, involving a member of staff, very seriously,
- Establish the facts before jumping to any conclusion,
- Inform the member of staff concerned honestly of the allegation that has been made, and advise him or her to contact their Trade Union or Professional Association for advice and support,
- Inform the child's parents in confidence, inviting them to maintain confidentiality whilst the investigation takes place, unless the allegation involves the parents, in which case we will contact the Social Services before making contact.

THE NEXT STEP

Although a formal investigation is a matter for specialists, where the facts suggest that there may be reasonable grounds for suspecting actual abuse, or grooming of a child, or other criminal behaviour, we will always:

- Invite the police to conduct the investigation,
- Involve the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB),

- Suspend or redeploy the member of staff (or volunteer) concerned from their regular duties.

SUPPORT FOR THE PUPIL

Our priority is to safeguard the young people in our care. We will give all the support that we can to a pupil who has been abused. The Headteacher and Child Protection officer, will consider how best to support and monitor the pupil concerned through any process of investigation, liaising closely with parents, guardians, Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB), or other agencies involved to identify the support strategies that will be appropriate.

SUSPENSION

Suspension of a member of staff is a neutral act and does not imply that any judgement has been reached about his or her conduct. Even so, it is a serious step, and we will take legal advice beforehand, and will normally only suspend a member of staff where:

- There is a serious risk of harm (or further harm) to the child,
- The allegations are so serious as to constitute grounds for dismissal, if proven,
- The police are investigating allegations of criminal misconduct.

We recognise fully that we have a duty of care towards all of our staff, and we will always:

- Keep an open mind until a conclusion has been reached.
- Interview a member of staff before suspending him or her.
- Keep him or her informed of progress of the investigation.

Any member of staff who is invited to a meeting whose outcome is likely to result in his or her suspension, is entitled to be accompanied by a friend or Trade Union representative.

ALTERNATIVES TO SUSPENSION

We will always consider whether an alternative to suspension might be appropriate. Possibilities include:

- Sending the member of staff on leave,
- Giving him or her non-contact duties,
- Ensuring that a second adult is always present in the classroom when he or she teaches.

IF THE MEMBER OF STAFF RESIGNS

The resignation of a member of staff or volunteer mid-way through an investigation would not lead to the investigation being abandoned. Our policy is always to complete every investigation into allegations of child abuse.

LENGTH OF INVESTIGATORY PROCESS

We recognise that everyone's interests are served by completing any investigatory process as swiftly as possible. We would expect almost every case to be completed within one month.





REFERRAL TO THE INDEPENDENT SAFEGUARDING AUTHORITY

Like all schools, we have a statutory legal duty to refer an individual, where there is the risk that he or she may harm, or has caused harm to children, to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) within one month of the individual's dismissal or resignation because he or she has been considered unsuitable to work with children. Reports concerning members of staff or volunteers are normally made by the SDP. If the SDP is involved, the report is made by the Headteacher. If the Headteacher is involved, the report is made by Lynda Headley.

The referral form can be downloaded from the ISA website on (www.isagov.org.uk). The school plays no part in the subsequent process of barring individuals from working with children and/or vulnerable adults. We also have a legal duty to respond to any requests for information that we receive from the ISA at any time.

RECORDING ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

We will record all allegations of abuse, and our subsequent actions, including any disciplinary actions, on an individual's file. A copy will be given to the individual and he or she will be told that the record will be retained for ten years.

HANDLING UNFOUNDED OR UNSUBSTANTIATED ALLEGATIONS

The Child

A child who has been the centre of unfounded or unsubstantiated allegations of child abuse needs professional help in dealing with the aftermath. We will liaise closely with the LSCB to set up a professional programme that best meets his or her needs, which may involve the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMS) and an Educational Psychologist, as well as support from an Independent School Counsellor. We shall be mindful of the possibility that the allegation of abuse was an act of displacement, masking abuse that is actually occurring within the child's own family and/or community. However much support the child may need in such circumstances; we need to be sensitive to the possibility that the aftermath of an unfounded allegation of abuse may result in the irretrievable breakdown of the relationship with the teacher. In such circumstances, we may conclude that it is in the child's best interests to move to another school. We would do our best to help him/her to achieve as smooth a transition as possible, working closely with the parents or guardians.

The Member of Staff

A member of staff could be left at the end of an unfounded or unsubstantiated allegation of child abuse with severely diminished self-esteem, feeling isolated and vulnerable, all too conscious that colleagues might shun him/her on the grounds of "no smoke without fire". If issues of professional competency are involved, and though acquitted of child abuse, disciplinary issues are raised; we recognise that he or she is likely to need both professional and emotional help. We will undertake to arrange a mentoring programme in such circumstances, together with professional counselling outside the school community. A short sabbatical or period of re-training may be appropriate.

ALLEGATION OF ABUSE OF A CHILD WHO IS NOT A PUPIL AT THE SCHOOL

If we were given information that suggested that a member of staff was abusing a child who was not a pupil at Scarisbrick Hall School, we would immediately pass such information to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) to handle. We would then interview the member of staff and formally advise him/her of the allegations, making it clear that the school would not play any part in the investigatory process. He or she would be advised of the possibility of facing suspension, re-assignment to other duties etc in exactly the same way as if the allegation had involved a school pupil. If the allegation subsequently proved to be unfounded, he or she would be given full support by the school in resuming his/her career.

ALLEGATIONS INVOLVING THE HEADTEACHER OR OTHER CHILD PROTECTION OFFICERS

The Directors should be told at once by the Deputy Headteacher or Child Protection Officer (SDP) of any allegation involving the Headteacher. They will obtain legal advice before proceeding to the steps outlined above. The Headteacher will normally be suspended for the duration of the investigatory process. The Headteacher should similarly be told at once of any allegation involving the other SDP's. The directors should normally be informed on the same day, and legal advice obtained. The SDP will normally be suspended for the duration of the investigatory process. The Headteacher will act as leading SDP until the conclusion of the investigation and resolution of the issue.

