



THE ELMS

**JUNIOR SCHOOL TO TRENT COLLEGE
GIRLS & BOYS 3-11 YEARS**

Child Protection Policy Statement

Date of Issue: September 2009

Date of last Review: September 2009

Date of next Review:

References: Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Procedures Manual (and www.derbyshirecb.org.uk/procedures)
National Minimum Standards for Mainstream Boarding Schools, National Care Commission, 2002
Good Practice in Boarding Schools (BSA)
Criminal Record Bureau Code of Practice
Safeguarding Children: Recruitment & Selection in Education Settings (DfES 2005)
Safeguarding Children in Education (DfES 2004)
What to do if you are worried a child is being abused (DfES 2003)
www.everychildmatters.gov.uk
Child Protection: guidance for senior nurses, health visitors and midwives (HMSO)
www.teachernet.gov.uk – enter IRSC in search box and link to:
Guidance for Safe Working Practice for the protection of children and Staff in Educational Settings
Staff subject to allegations – Thresholds for and alternatives to Suspensions
Managing the aftermath of unfounded and unsubstantiated allegations
The Protection of Children in England: A progress report (Lord Laming 2009)
www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/laming

- 1.1 The Governing Body, the Head of The Elms (hereafter referred to as the Head) and Staff of The Elms are committed to the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of all the children in their care. Both children and adults need a safe and secure environment in which to live and work. The policy applies to **ALL** staff and to contact both inside and outside normal school hours.
- 1.2 The School is committed to implementing good practice, as reflected in the references listed at the start of this policy:
- 1.3 The School has 2 trained Child Protection Officers (CPO) to advise the Head and staff and to offer advice and information. At present our School Chaplain & our Regulations and Welfare Officer are our CPO although being CPO is not necessarily related to either post. The Child Protection Officers are responsible, where necessary, for maintaining clear communications with Children's Social Care (contact details are given at the end of this document), Ofsted and DCSF on all matters relating to Child Protection. In addition to the CPO, and in recognition of the size and demands of The Elms, 2 additional members of staff have undertaken training in Child Protection to be the first point of contact for staff with concerns at The Elms. **These members of staff are the Head (Keith Morrow) and Head of Nursery (Mrs Sue Limbert). Mrs Limbert is the designated practitioner to take lead responsibility for safeguarding within the EYFS setting (Nursery and Reception Classes) and liaising with local statutory children's agencies as appropriate.**
- 1.4 The School has a trained Counsellor who supports pupils and staff who are referred on to her. The Counsellor will not promise confidentiality where child protection is concerned and will inform a CPO of any child protection issues she becomes aware of.
- 1.5 The School has a Governor with specific responsibility for overseeing Child Protection matters, who meets regularly with the CPOs, the Deputy Head Pastoral, the Bursar, a member of the Elms SLT and the School Counsellor.
- 1.6 The School accepts responsibility for establishing procedures for responding to allegations of abuse and for providing guidelines for good practice, which will be updated when appropriate.
- 1.7 The School ensures that all staff who have substantial access to children are checked using procedures recommended by the Independent Schools Council and provided by the Criminal Records Bureau.
- 1.8 The School undertakes to monitor the use of the procedures and guidelines.
- 1.9 The School recognises the need for appropriate training and access to advice on child protection for all staff, including the School's medical and ancillary staff.
- 1.10 The School believes that the policy statement is necessary in the interests of the protection of both pupils and staff.
- 1.11 All school staff are aware that when pupils are engaged in school supported activities outside of the immediate school campus, there is a need to ensure that all possible precautions are taken to safeguard their welfare. This may include activity days, adventure training periods, visits to other education establishments where an external provider delivers teaching and learning to our pupils. This is particularly important where overnight accommodation is included within the activity. In such cases the school would request evidence of external provider's Child Protection Policy including the checking of their staff using the Criminal Records Bureau. In the event that the school is unhappy with any aspect of such external provision, the school would look to use an alternative external provider.

- 1.12 All children have a right to achieve their potential and to be protected from all forms of harm, including abuse and neglect:

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

- 2.1 An abused child is a boy or girl who has suffered from, or is believed to be potentially at risk of suffering from, physical injury, neglect, emotional abuse or sexual abuse.
- 2.2 Abuse and Neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Types of Abuse

- a) **Physical Abuse** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.
- b) **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.
- c) **Emotional Abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as over protection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment or another. It may involve serious bullying causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
- d) **Sexual Abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

It should also be remembered that children can also abuse. They will need help too. They may themselves have been abused when younger.

3 RESPONSE TO ALLEGATION OF ABUSE

- 3.1 All allegations of child abuse involving the School community will be taken seriously and dealt with speedily. Allegations may relate to matters within school or indeed outside school or at home. As stated in the Children Act, the welfare of the child is of paramount concern.
- 3.2 The school will make arrangements as appropriate for the emotional and spiritual support of children and staff affected by a child protection issue.

- 3.3 The CPO, or Head if appropriate, will make sure that a referral has been made to the local Children's Social Care child protection team within 24 hours and will liaise with that department and the police during any child protection investigation.
- 3.4 Any allegation of abuse against a member of staff should immediately be referred to the Head (or CPO if the Head is accused), who will inform the Local Authority Designated Officer the same day and, usually, inform the accused member of staff.
- 3.5 Following the outcome of the investigation appropriate actions will be taken. These may include disciplinary procedures, risk assessments, suspension of staff or students and/or relocation of involved staff if they are resident within school.
- 3.6 The Head will be responsible for informing Ofsted and the DCSF of any information that is required to go on its register. **The Head will report to the Independent Safeguarding Authority, within one month of leaving the school any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) whose services are no longer used because he or she is suspected of inappropriate behaviour towards pupils.**
- 3.7 The result of an investigation may be inconclusive, there may or may not be a prosecution, or it may be decided that a person's behaviour has been ill-advised and foolish rather than criminal.
- 3.8 Allegations may be shown to be unfounded or malicious. In these cases the Head will find appropriate means to make clear that the person has been exonerated.
- 3.9 The CPO is required to keep a central confidential record of all reported incidents including the original notes of the first conversation with the complainant.
- 3.10 Staff who, in good faith, report any concern or allegation about school practices or behaviour of colleagues which prove to be unfounded will be provided with immunity from retribution or disciplinary action for such "whistleblowing". Further detail is given in the staff policy on Whistleblowing.

4 GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

- 4.1 The School requires all staff to maintain the highest professional standards in their work and relationships with children. The following recommendations provide a framework within which children should be safe from harm and adults protected from false allegations or temptation.

Be prepared for your colleagues to remind you if you forget one of these guidelines, and be prepared to help a colleague by advising them in return. The more trusting and open the relationships between staff, the safer our children and young people will be. However, if a colleague fails to amend inappropriate behaviour to meet the guidelines, colleagues should be prepared to report them in the interests of safeguarding children.

The Children Act stresses the importance of children being able to share their concerns with adults and being able to confide in them. All staff involved in the care of pupils should strive to create a supportive and caring environment. The following list constitutes the School's recommended good practice guidelines:

- Treat children and young people with the respect and dignity befitting their age.
- Watch your speech, tone of voice and body language.
- Control and discipline children without physical punishment.
- Don't permit abusive peer activities e.g. initiation ceremonies, ridiculing, bullying.

- Advise another member of staff if you need to see a child on his or her own for a lengthy period. Do not invite a child to your home alone. Invite a group and make sure someone else is around and aware where the children are.
- When in a private meeting with a child, try to leave the door ajar and position furniture appropriately (table or desk between you and the child).
- Respect a child's privacy, particularly in lavatories, showers and changing rooms.
- Avoid playing rough physical or sexually provocative games with children.
- Avoid being sexually suggestive about or to a child.
- Avoid touching a child in an inappropriate or intrusive manner.
- Avoid scapegoating, ridiculing or rejecting a child.
- Avoid showing favouritism to any one child.
- Avoid allowing children to involve you in excessive attention-seeking that is overtly physical or sexual in nature, in particular.
- Try to avoid giving lifts to children on their own. If this is unavoidable, consider asking the child to sit in the back of the car.
- Do not share sleeping accommodation with children.
- Do not allow unknown adults access to children. Visitors should be accompanied by a known person.

4.2 Staff are required to keep a diary of all out-of-school-hours' encounters with pupils. If a child seeks a private meeting with a member of staff on more than three occasions within a short period of time, this should be reported to a CPO.

5 INAPPROPRIATE ADVANCES

5.1 Children can sometimes make suggestive approaches to an adult. For whatever reason, they may act in an inappropriate manner. Sometimes, inappropriate physical contact can be made either intentionally or accidentally.

5.2 It is vital that members of staff take the responsibility to:

- Tell the child that his or her language or behaviour is unacceptable.
- Tell a CPO about the incident, however, embarrassing this is.
- Record the incident, indicating what was said and/or done. This is a necessary safeguard if accusations are made at a later stage.

The member of staff and the CPO should decide on the appropriate course of action. It may be necessary for the CPO and/or the member of staff to discuss the incident with the Head and/or to seek advice from Children's Social Care.

6 CONFIDENTIALITY

6.1 The highest level of confidentiality should be maintained at all times in relationships with both adults and children. You should, however, make it clear that there are certain circumstances, if a child is suffering or is likely to suffer harm, when other people will need to be told so that the child can be protected.

6.2 It is important not to agree to blanket confidentiality in any discussion or counselling. If an allegation has been made against someone it is very important that as few people as possible know whilst the allegation is being investigated. This protects both the accuser and the accused.

7 HEARING A CHILD ABUSE DISCLOSURE

7.1 The School is committed to liaising with the statutory child protection agencies when dealing with allegations of abuse. If possible, you should refer any allegation as soon as possible to a CPO, who will follow appropriate procedures for hearing a child protection disclosure. However, any member of staff may be in a position where a child wishes to disclose to them issues relating to abuse.

7.2 The following procedures should be adopted when hearing a child abuse disclosure:

- If the listener (member of staff) feels a disclosure is likely to be made then they must ask another member of staff to be present – first checking that the pupil accepts the additional presence.
- Where appropriate the listener will take steps to protect the complainant from immediate harm e.g. by contacting a CPO or the Head.
- As soon as reasonably possible, preferably immediately after the conversation has taken place, the listener will make a hand written statement of the conversation. Such a statement will include a note of the date and time and will be signed by the author. The content must be verified with the child to ensure it is an accurate account of the disclosure.
- Do not give a guarantee of confidentiality. You have a duty to tell the appropriate people if you are told of incidents of abuse. Do explain that you will only tell those who have to know. If possible, refer the complainant directly to a CPO.
- Do not ask leading questions. Limit any questioning to the minimum necessary to seek clarification only. Stick to questions of the type ‘What is it you want to tell me?’ don’t ask questions like ‘Why do you think this happened?’.
- Tell a CPO and the Head immediately (unless they themselves are being accused). Do not tell anyone else.
- Discuss with a CPO/Head whether steps need to be taken to protect the complainant.
- Do not carry out an investigation yourself. Children’s Social Care and police staff are specifically trained in appropriate procedures and you could damage or prejudice criminal proceedings by interviewing people yourself.

7.3 It is crucial never to assume that an accusation of abuse against someone you know well and whom you trust is bound to be wrong. Children and young people often tell their peers, rather than staff or other adults, about abuse. It is important to make sure that senior pupils (e.g. prefects and young people leading activities for others) as well as responsible adults are aware of these points.

8 SAFE RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES

All new employees are subject to a Criminal Records Bureau check at the Enhanced Disclosure level. The same level of pre-employment check is also carried out on any family members over the age of 16 if the prospective employee’s employment requires them to be resident within the school campus. Similarly all volunteers, such as Governors, who are likely to come into contact with pupils are checked at the same level. In order to verify the validity of written references, the school will make direct contact with a referee to ensure the written reference is genuine.

9 CONTACT NUMBERS AND DETAILS

Children’s Social Care

Derbyshire County Council (named contact Paula Sullivan) 01629 531706 (direct line)
01629 531638 (main switch board)

Out of hours number 01629 585115

(Please use the answer phone if you are offered this option. A trained duty social worker will respond promptly to answer phone messages.)

Local Authority Designated Office

For allegations against members of staff/volunteers
Police

01629 532178
0845 1233 333