

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN and CHILD PROTECTION POLICY
Working in Accordance with the Fareham Locality Team Procedures.

At Wykeham House School, we are committed to promoting the welfare, health, safety and guidance of every girl, by providing a caring environment in which we listen to each other. The School follows all procedures set out for 'The Safeguarding of Children and Safer Recruitment in Education.'

Aims of the Policy

We will create a supportive environment in which:

- Girls feel safe and secure
- Staff are perceptive and feel able to instigate appropriate action in any situation they encounter
- Staff have an understanding of the possible signs and symptoms of child abuse
- The procedure for raising concerns internally or externally is fully understood.

The following Whole School approach will be encouraged, including within the Early Years Foundation Stage:

- We will promote an ethos in which girls feel secure, their viewpoints valued, where they are encouraged to talk and they are listened to, and where their self-esteem is built.
- We will provide suitable support and guidance so that girls have appropriate adults whom they feel confident to approach if they are in difficulties.
- We will work with parents to build an understanding of the School's responsibility to ensure the welfare of all girls.
- Staff will undergo induction and subsequent, regular training in Child Protection matters.
- The School will follow the Regulations for 'Safer Recruitment of staff in Education' and appointment will always be subject to a satisfactory enhanced CRB disclosure.

The designated person for Child Protection, throughout the School and in the EYFS, is the Headmistress and in her absence the Deputy Headmistress.

The designated Trustee for Child Protection, throughout the School and in the EYFS, is Dr F. Baber.

Implementation of the Policy

All staff should be vigilant in being aware of anything that may constitute grounds for concern about abuse of a girl. All concerns should be passed on to the designated person without delay.

Abuse may be one or a combination of:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Witnessing domestic violence

Concerns may arise from:

- Statements made by the girl, stories, 'news', drawings, etc
- Information from others
- Marks on a girl's body
- Unusual/different behaviour
- Mood changes
- Change in pattern of attendance

If a member of staff has concerns that a girl may be being abused, those concerns should be passed, without delay, to the designated person. The member of staff should not question the girl or discuss their concerns with other staff or with the child's parents/carers.

If a girl discloses abuse to a member of staff, the girl should be allowed to say what they want to say but should not be asked for further information. It is important to avoid asking leading questions. This should be written up without delay and brought to the attention of the designated person, again without discussing it with anyone else. The information should be recorded in factual, non-emotive, non-judgemental terms, with notes of the time, date and context of the events disclosed. Before making a disclosure, the girl may ask for an assurance of confidentiality. Staff should be aware of and ready to respond in line with the following general principles.

1. If a girl makes a disclosure, the child should be kept informed of who knows and why. Girls will often seek a promise that a disclosure is made in confidence. **Such a promise cannot be given.** There is an overriding duty to protect a girl from abuse, and all abuse must be reported.

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2. Teachers should not, in any circumstances, remove a girl's clothing. They should only note those marks, which they have noticed, or which have been brought to their attention by the girl. No further examination should be carried out.
3. All staff should be aware that personal information about a girl and her family is confidential and should only be given to an appropriate person.
4. The School accepts that other staff need know only enough to prepare them to act with sensitivity to a distressed girl.
5. If there is a threat to a girl's safety and welfare, all staff may have to be alerted to watch for signs of abuse.
6. If staff hear worrying information about girls from other parents, neighbours or even other girls, this should be passed on to the designated person.

Recording of Concerns

The designated person will maintain cumulative summary sheets (Chronology Sheets) for girls over whom concerns are raised. Notes of all concerns will be kept with the Chronology Sheet. These records will be kept in a locked file in the Headmistress' office. **Concerns about issues to do with Child Protection must not be kept in the girl's file in the office or in the teacher's own files.**

If concerns continue and are such that the girl is considered to be "in need" the designated person will make a referral to the appropriate outside agency, where possible with the knowledge and consent of the parent/carer, and where this will not place the girl at increased risk.

If the concerns are serious, such that the girl is "at risk" the designated person will make an immediate referral to the appropriate outside agency, without the knowledge of the parent/carer.

Child Protection Training for Staff

- The designated person(s) will ensure that they keep up to date with changes in Child Protection procedures and be retrained every two years, so they are fully aware of the locally agreed inter-agency procedures.
- All staff, including the Headmistress, will receive Child Protection training at least every three years.

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- Part time and voluntary staff who work with children will be made aware of the arrangements

Appointments following the Safer Recruitment Procedures.

Staff appointments are compliant with the Safe recruitment Procedures and are compliant with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations. All appointments are subject to clearance under the enhanced CRB checks and the satisfactory completion of all the regulations compliant with Safer Recruitment in Schools, including a medical questionnaire indicating their fitness to teach, with the provision for 'reasonable adjustments' to be made in the case of a disabled person's being appointed.

From April 2006, all interview panels have included at least one interviewer who has undergone and passed the NCSL Safer Recruitment Training. Three staff at Wykeham House have completed this training, The Headmistress, The Bursar and The Chair of Trustees.

Volunteers/helpers will be checked against the 'List 99' e-mail facility offered by CRB.

Allegations of Abuse made against staff/volunteers/Headmistress

If an allegation of abuse is made by a girl/parent against a member of staff a volunteer or the Headmistress, the adult hearing the allegation should listen, without asking for further information and without promising confidentiality. A written, dated record of the allegation should be made as soon as possible and certainly within 24 hours. If the member of staff hearing the allegation is not the Headmistress, the matter must be reported to the Headmistress without delay. If the allegation is made against the Headmistress, the member of staff hearing it should report to the Chair of Trustees, without notifying the Headmistress first.

On receiving the allegation, the Headmistress (or Chair of Trustees) will contact the School's legal advisers and the Child Protection agencies and follow their direction as to whether it is appropriate to suspend the member of staff against whom the allegation has been made and what other actions should be taken. In the case of serious harm the Police would be informed from the outset.

Unless directed otherwise by the Child Protection agencies, the Headmistress will:

- Inform the girl/parent making the allegation of the likely course of action.
- Inform the teacher against whom the allegation is made and explain the likely course of action.

- Inform the Chair of Trustees.

It is possible that an investigation would be undertaken by the police, social services or NSPCC, under local Child Protection procedures. Any such investigation would take precedence over an internal investigation under the School's disciplinary procedures.

If the teacher against whom the allegation is made is suspended, the teacher should be encouraged to seek legal help/support from their Teachers' Association or a solicitor and arrangements should be made for the teacher to be contacted with information by the School.

Support will be made available to the girl/parent making the allegation and to other staff and pupils as appropriate.

In all of this, confidentiality for all parties involved will be maintained as far as possible. Any requests for comment from the media will be dealt with by the Chair of Trustees.

Advice to Staff

Staff should always be aware of their surroundings and their actions. They should not place themselves in situations where allegations of abuse could be easily made, eg

- a. Being alone in a classroom with a girl when the door is closed, especially if door has no window.
- b. Accompanying a girl to the toilet and standing in a closed cubicle with them, even if they are feeling sick or ill.
- c. Being in the area of the School alone with a girl.
- d. Taking a pupil in their care
- e. Engaging in inappropriate electronic communication with a pupil

Staff should think carefully about the types of conversations they have with pupils to prevent words or actions being misconstrued by either pupils or their parents. Teachers who work with children on a 1:1 basis should be extra vigilant.

Power to Restrain Pupils

Although teachers may not use corporal punishment as a disciplinary sanction, they may use such force as is reasonable to prevent a pupil from:

- Committing a criminal offence

- Injuring themselves or others
- Damaging property, including their own
- Behaving in a way, which is prejudicial to the good discipline and order of the School whether in the classroom or elsewhere where the teacher has lawful control of a pupil.

Reasonable Force

There is no legal definition of what constitutes “reasonable force”. It is the circumstances of a particular incident which warrant the use of force and to use physical force to prevent a trivial misdemeanour or when other means would be appropriate could not be justified. Moreover, the degree of force must be in proportion to the incident and the minimum to achieve the desired result. Examples of situations which fall into the categories above when the use of “reasonable force” might be justified include:

- Violent behaviour by a pupil such as fighting or attacking a member of staff or another pupil
- Acts of vandalism
- Behaviour by a pupil, such as rough play, the misuse of objects or running in the corridors, which is likely to cause personal injury or damage to property
- Refusal by a disruptive pupil to leave a classroom.

Teachers are urged to exercise great caution in the use of force and always try to use other means to resolve a situation. This is particularly important where the enforcement of good order is the motive and there is no risk to person or property. The view is expressed that to use force to achieve compliance with instructions given by a member of staff becomes increasingly inappropriate, as the pupils get older. Staff should not act in a way which might cause pain or injury, eg by striking, holding a pupil around the neck, pulling hair or ears or holding a child by the arms so tightly that it leaves marks or bruises in any way which might be considered indecent.

If it is necessary for physical restraint to be used, the member of staff should make a written record of the incident as soon as possible afterwards (within 24 hours) and bring it to the attention of the Headmistress.

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The Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA)

The School will report to the Independent Safeguarding Authority ISA 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 considered unsuitable to work with children; the ISA can be contacted for referrals at PO Box 181, Darlington DL1 9FA (tel 0300 123 1111).

The School is making preparations to work with the new Vetting and Barring procedures. List 99 checks will move to checks on the Protection of Children Act List (PoCA) from January 2009.

The school will seek assurance that appropriate child protection checks and procedures apply to any staff employed by another organisation and working with the school's pupils on another site (for example in another institution)

For the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The School would also contact OFSTED of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living working or looking after children at the premises (whether that allegation related to harm or abuse committee on the premises or elsewhere), or any other abuse which is alleged to have taken place on the premises and of the action taken in respect of these allegations.

Review

Any deficiencies or weaknesses in our Child Protection arrangements will be remedied without delay. If a member of staff is made aware of any deficiency they must alert a member of the Senior Leadership Team without delay.

This Policy and our procedures will be reviewed by the Trustees annually to ensure the related duties are carried out efficiently.

The Fareham Locality team can be contacted as follows;

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