

CHILD PROTECTION

Policy Statement

The following policy complies with DfE: *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education*

Everyone employed by Durham High School for Girls has a responsibility in relation to child protection. In most cases this will be the referral of concerns to the designated person for child protection. In day-to-day contact with children at risk, staff have an opportunity to note concerns and to meet with parents and other associated adults.

Increasingly, schools are expected to work with, support and sometimes lead different agencies to enable the most appropriate form of intervention to take place. This policy aims to outline the role that the school will have, the procedures that staff should take and guidance on issues related to child protection generally. It is not exhaustive. All staff should use as a rule of thumb the needs and safety of the child as being at the centre of any decision they make.

The Aims of the Policy

The policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the school. There are six main aims to the policy:

- to ensure we practise safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children including CRB checks and compliance with ISSR
- to raise awareness of individual responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse
- to provide a systematic means of monitoring, recording and reporting of concerns and cases
- to provide guidance on recognising and dealing with suspected child abuse
- to provide a framework for inter-agency communication and effective liaison
- to identify strategies and interventions available to support children at risk.

Procedure

We will follow procedures set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (County Durham www.durham-lscb.gov.uk) and take account of guidance issued by the DfE.

Designated Person

The designated person is the Head of the School. The Head of Junior House is the designated person for Junior House including EYFS.

The designated person will:

- co-ordinate action within the school and liaise with Social Services and other agencies over cases of abuse and suspected abuse
- act as a source of advice within the school
- ensure that staff are familiar with the school policy and procedure
- make child protection referrals, recording and reporting accordingly
- liaise with agencies about individual cases and where a child is referred to Social Services a referral form will be completed and sent within 24 hours
- organise training on child protection within school
- ensure that appropriate strategies for recording and reporting incidents are kept within school
- provide appropriate feedback to members of staff as and when necessary
- update her training in child protection and inter-agency working every 2 years; the current Acting Head undertook training in October 2011
- ensure that any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements are remedied without delay.

The Governing Body

The nominated member of the Governing Body responsible for Child Protection, Mrs Morag Cummings, will:

- be responsible for undertaking annual reviews of the procedures that apply to child protection
- be responsible for receiving and discussing updates provided by the designated person as part of the Head's report
- be responsible for reviewing the efficiency with which child protection policies and procedures have been carried out

School Staff, including part-time and volunteers

Every new member of the teaching and non-teaching staff, including new peripatetic musicians and sports coaches, is required to attend a training session on child protection. These sessions are organised by our Child Protection Officer, and every effort will be made to hold them within the first week of arrival at the school. Similar training is offered to all Governors and to the parents who help with activities that bring them into contact with children. All new employees of our catering firm are also required to be given training in child protection. The only adults who work or visit the school who are exempted from this requirement are:

- night-time cleaners, whose hours of work mean that they do not have contact with pupils;
- occasional visitors, including occasional lecturers and contractors, who sign in and are given a security badges by our Receptionist, who are escorted throughout their visit;
- contractors working on a designated site that is physically separated from the rest of the school, who are required to sign in and out at their site office and to wear security badges at all times;
- contractors working during the school holidays.

School staff should:

- be aware of the signs of abuse (some examples are detailed later in this policy)
- report any concerns immediately to the designated person
- consult with the designated person if in any doubt as to how to proceed
- follow the advice given in this policy in relation to how to handle disclosures
- receive training every 3 years in child protection; the updated training is due in October 2012.

It is essential that all part time staff and volunteers are made aware of the procedures relating to child protection. In addition, they will be provided with the Child Protection/Safeguarding Children Level 1 Training booklet as produced by Durham County Council.

Partnerships with Parents

It is important that the school has an established approach to working with parents. Parents' and children's need for privacy should be respected. However, the priority is the needs of the child and effective liaison is crucial for this.

It should be recognised that families from different backgrounds and cultures will have different approaches to child-rearing. These differences should be acknowledged and respected provided they do not place the child at risk as defined later in this policy.

Where possible, school staff should work with and share information with parents. Permission for liaison and information sharing with outside agencies should be sought unless it places the child at risk. In these cases it is preferable to seek advice from Social Services or make a child protection referral.

Guidance on Recognising Abuse

Child abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children are harmed by someone often in a position of power. It is not the responsibility of school staff to decide whether child abuse is occurring but we are required to act on any concerns and report it to the appropriate party. The health, safety and protection of a child are paramount.

Abuse might fall into the categories of:

- physical
- emotional
- sexual
- neglect

Because of their day to day contact with individual children, teachers and other staff in school are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour or failure to develop. Bruises, lacerations and burns may be apparent, particularly when children change their clothes for physical education and sports activities. Possible indicators of physical neglect, such as inadequate clothing, poor growth, hunger or apparently deficient nutrition, and of emotional abuse, such as excessive dependence or attention-seeking, may be noticeable. Sexual abuse may exhibit physical signs, or lead to a substantial behavioural change including precocity or withdrawal. These signs and others can do no more than give rise to suspicion - they are not in themselves proof that abuse has occurred. But teachers should be alert to all such signs.

Policy on Dealing with Suspected Abuse

All staff should refer concerns to the designated person as soon as possible. In the meantime, they should:

- listen to the pupil, keeping calm and offering reassurance

- observe bruises but should not ask a child to remove or adjust their clothing to observe them
- allow the child to lead the discussion if a disclosure is made, but do not press for details by asking questions, eg ‘what did they do next?’
- listen; don't investigate but use questions such as, ‘Is there anything else you'd like to tell me?’
- accept what the pupil says without challenge; reassure them that they are doing the right thing and that you recognise how hard it is for them
- not lay blame or criticise either the child or the perpetrator
- not promise confidentiality; explain that they have done the right thing and tell them who needs to be told.

Procedures for Monitoring, Recording and Reporting

School policy is that brief notes should be kept at the time of the incident or immediately after with the subsequent completion of a critical incident sheet. Records may be used in legal proceedings and must be kept accurate and secure. All records should be copied to the designated person and should include factual information rather than assumption or interpretation. The child's own language should be used to quote rather than a translation. If it is felt that Social Services should be involved, the designated person will ring the relevant Social Services Department, in particular the senior duty officer. Contact should be made within 24 hours; any telephone contact should be followed up by written confirmation. You must inform the duty team in the area in which the child resides, unless the abuse is alleged to have occurred in school.

Records may be used at a later date to support a referral to an external agency. Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (eg that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

Inter-agency Liaison

Social Care Meetings

At times, school staff may be called to participate in meetings organised and chaired by Social Care. These might include:

- register reviews
- case conferences
- professionals' meetings in which representative professionals from different agencies are asked to meet to discuss children and their families with a view to providing support or making recommendations in terms of next stages of involvement

- core group meetings in which a ‘core’ group of professionals associated with the family are asked to meet to review the progress of actions decided at case conferences and register reviews
- looked after children reviews.

At these meetings, representatives from the school should be ready to report back providing information about:

- the length of time the child has attended the school
- details of attendance at any other schools and details of any changes of name and/or address, which appear on the child’s school records
- details of siblings attending the school
- details of attendance/punctuality with precise information regarding recent absences
- list any known illnesses/accidents/injuries, which should have been recorded or substantiated at the time they happened. Unsubstantiated reasons for absence will be recorded elsewhere but must be available for the child protection conference
- dates of contact with other agencies about this pupil and/or siblings
- contact with parents/guardians. Give dates where possible and any relevant details e.g. parents’ expressed attitude towards the child
- brief comments on the child’s general presentation in school e.g. physical appearance, general demeanour
- brief summary of the child’s educational progress, behaviour/attitude in school
- relationships with children and adults in school/social skills
- child’s appearance and readiness for school
- any other significant factors.

Prior to the meeting, class teachers and other adults working closely with the child may be asked for their comments. Following the meeting, feedback will be given and staff brought up-to-date with any actions that are needed.

Confidentiality

Where children are on the child protection register and leave one school for another, the designated person must inform the receiving school and the key worker. If the child leaves the school with no receiving school, details should be passed to the principal education social worker (ESW).

Education staff have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with the investigative agencies. Members of staff

should not promise confidentiality but can let the child know that only those who need to know will be informed and always for the child's own sake.

Time should be taken to reassure the child and confirm that information given will be treated sensitively. Reassurance should be given and the adult involved listen sympathetically and non-judgmentally.

Staff should be careful in subsequent discussions and ensure that information is only given to the appropriate person. All staff should be kept aware of issues relating to confidentiality and the status of information they may hold.

Members of staff, other than the designated member and those involved closely, should only have enough details in order to help them to act sensitively and appropriately to a pupil. Sensitive information regarding pastoral issues and for children on the child protection register is kept in separate folder within the pupils' records. Discretion should be used when talking about the personal and changing circumstances of children, eg when a child goes into care.

The Personal Education Plan

Children who are 'looked after' will have their own personal education plan (PEP) which will have been drawn up by The Access Service. The PEP is part of the care plan. It is a record of what needs to happen in order to enable the young person to 'fulfil their potential'.

Support in School

All class teachers and year group leaders are responsible, in conjunction with other school staff, for the pastoral needs of the children in their care.

Within the curriculum there will also be opportunities to discuss issues which some children might find sensitive. Care should be taken particularly in relation to discussion about families and their make-up. Assumptions about members of families and the presence of both parents should be avoided both in discussion and the presentation of materials. During health and safety and sex education lessons, staff should be alert to the fact that some children will have very different experiences and may find content at odds with their own experiences. Staff should make themselves familiar with the background of the children in their care in order to avoid distress.

Physical Contact with Pupils

Some form of physical contact with pupils by teachers is inevitable. All teachers should be aware of issues related to touching and the way in which this might be

misconstrued (cf Staff Code of Conduct). Staff must never use corporal punishment.

Where any uncertainty exists a senior member of staff should be consulted.

Allegations against the designated person and other members of staff or volunteers

- If a pupil makes an allegation **against the designated person** with responsibility for child protection, which at DHS is the Headmistress or the Head of Junior House, the member of staff receiving the allegation must immediately inform the Headmistress or the Head of Junior House as appropriate. If the allegation concerns the Headmistress, the person receiving the allegation should immediately inform the Head of Junior House who in turn will notify the Chairman of Governors without notifying the Headmistress of this first. In case of serious harm, the police should be informed from the outset.
- Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer should be reported to the designated person, who will take such steps as considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.
- The designated person will notify the Chairman of Governors and refer the allegation to the social services department which may involve the police, or go directly to the police if out-of-hours.
- The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.

Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only.

This includes the following people:

- the designated person
- the parents of the person who is alleged to have been abused
- the person making the allegation
- social services/police
- the alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child).

The CPO should seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser.

Information should be stored in a secure place with limited access to designated people, in line with data protection laws (eg that information is accurate, regularly updated, relevant and secure).

Internal enquiries and suspension

- The designated person, in consultation with the Chairman of Governors, will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries.
- Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries the Disciplinary Committee will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member of staff or volunteer can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision, particularly where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases, the Disciplinary Committee must reach a decision based upon the available information, which could suggest that on a balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.
- The School will report to the ISA, within a month of leaving the School, any person whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or pupil, whose services are no longer used because he/she is considered unsuitable to work with children (tel 0300 1231111).

Critical Incident Sheet

To ensure that information is as helpful as possible, staff will need to write a detailed record, using notes made when the disclosure was made; this should always be made at the time of the incident. To enable staff to do this, the following check list should be used. Any notes made which are not covered in this list should be included in the final document.

- The child's name, age and date of birth of the child.
- The child's home address and telephone number.
- Whether or not the person making the report is expressing their own concerns or those of someone else.
- The nature of the allegation. Include dates, times, any special factors and other relevant information.
- Make a clear distinction between what is fact, opinion or hearsay.
- A description of any visible bruising or other injuries. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes.
- Details of witnesses to the incidents.
- The child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- Have the parents been contacted?

- If so, what has been said?
- Has anyone else been consulted? If so, record details.
- If the child was not the person who reported the incident, has the child been spoken to? If so, what was said?
- Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record details.
- Where possible, and if necessary, referral to the police or social services should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours and the name of the contact who took the referral should be recorded.

Important contact numbers:

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000,

Childline on 0800 1111.

Co Durham: Ken Flynn/Jane Stout 0191 3833191/0191 3833277

This policy should be read in conjunction with

Induction of new staff, governors and volunteers in child protection

Taking, storing and using images of children

Data Protection Policy

Staff Code of Conduct

Safer recruitment procedures

Child protection and technology

Missing pupil procedures

Updated October 2011