



## Ellesmere College Child Protection Policy

### **Aims and objectives**

Ellesmere College strives to educate all its pupils within an environment where the Christian traditions of learning, truth, justice, respect and community are promoted. Consequently the overall aim of this policy is to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children in our care (in situations where child abuse is suspected, our paramount responsibility is to the child).

### **Statutory framework:**

Children can only be safeguarded properly if the key agencies work effectively together. Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) are designed to help ensure that this happens. The LSCBs guidance forms chapter 3 of the revised version of 'Working Together to Safeguard Children', which is the core guidance on how agencies should cooperate in child protection and in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Schools are also expected to ensure that they have appropriate procedures in place for responding to situations in which they believe that a child has been abused, or is at risk of abuse - these procedures should also cover circumstances in which a member of staff is accused of, or suspected of abuse.

The following responsibilities are placed on all schools:

Schools must operate safe recruitment procedures.

Staff should be alert to signs of abuse and know to whom they should report any concerns or suspicions.

A Designated Teacher should have responsibility for co-ordinating action within the school and liaising with other agencies.

Staff with designated responsibility for Child Protection should receive appropriate training (updated every two years).

Ensure that appropriate training and support is provided to all staff, including the Head, (updated every three years).

Schools should be aware of and follow the procedures established by the LSCB.

Schools should have procedures (of which all staff are aware) for handling suspected cases of abuse of pupils, including procedures to be followed if a member of staff is accused of abuse, or suspected of abuse.

Parents should be made aware of the school Child's Protection Policy and the fact that this may require cases to be referred to the investigation agencies in the interests of the child'.

The governing body undertakes an annual review of the school's child protection policies and procedures and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged.

### **The designated member of staff:**

The designated member of staff for Child Protection is the Deputy Head Pastoral. The Deputy Child Protection Officer is the Deputy Head Academic, (in their absence the Headmaster and, if all are absent the Senior HsM). His or her role is to:

- Ensure that the LSCB's procedures are followed in the school.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of these procedures.
- Ensure that the Headmaster is kept fully informed of any concerns.
- Develop effective working relationships with other agencies and services.
- Decide whether to take further action about specific concerns (e.g. refer to social services in writing, or with written confirmation of a telephone referral, within 24 hours of the allegation or presentation of evidence).
- Liaise with Social Service teams over suspected cases of child abuse.
- Ensure that accurate records relating to individual children are kept in a secure place and marked 'Strictly Confidential'.
- Submit reports to, and attend Child Protection Conferences.
- Ensure that the school effectively monitors children who have been identified as 'at risk'.
- Provide guidance to parents, children and staff about obtaining suitable support.

### School Procedures:

If any member of staff is concerned about a child he or she must inform the Deputy Head Pastoral. Information regarding the concerns must be recorded by the member of staff on the same day. The recording must be a clear, precise, factual account of the observations.

The Deputy Head Pastoral will decide whether the concerns should be referred to the Social Services department. If it is decided to make a referral this will be done without prior discussion with the parents. If a referral is made to Social Services, the DHP will ensure that a written report of the concerns is sent to the social worker dealing with the case within 24 hours. Should it be decided not to refer the parents must be informed that they may.

Particular attention will be paid to the attendance and development of any child who has been identified at risk or who has been placed on the Child Protection Register.

If a pupil who is known to be on the Child Protection Register changes school the DHP will inform the social worker responsible for the case and transfer the appropriate records to the receiving school.

### When to be concerned

Staff should be concerned about a pupil if he or she:

- Has an injury that is not typical of the bumps and scrapes normally associated with children's injuries.
- Regularly has unexplained injuries.
- Frequently has injuries (even when apparently reasonable explanations are given).
- Confused or conflicting explanations are given on how injuries were sustained.
- Exhibits significant changes in behaviour, performance or attitude.
- Indulges in sexual behaviour that is usually explicit and/or inappropriate to his or her age.
- Discloses an experience in which he or she may have been significantly harmed.
- Is reluctant to get changed in front of others when getting ready for P.E. or games.

### Dealing with a Disclosure

If a pupil discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the member of staff should:

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Accept what is being said.
- Allow the child to talk freely.
- Reassure the child but not make promises that it might not be possible to keep.
- Not promise confidentiality - it might be necessary to refer to Social Services.
- Reassure him or her that what has happened is not his or her fault.
- Stress that it was the right thing to tell.
- Listen, rather than ask direct questions or suggest how the pupil may be feeling, etc.
- Not criticize the alleged perpetrator.
- Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told.
- Do not attempt a detailed examination or remove a pupil's clothes to look further at an injury. Under no circumstances should photographs be taken of a pupil's injury. The pupil should only be examined by an appropriate doctor. If a pupil wants to show you his/her injuries make sure that a colleague is with you as a witness – try to make sure that one of you is of the same gender as the pupil.
- As the informant what steps they would like taken to protect them and ensure that the School will try to follow their wishes. Make sure that they feel secure.

### Record Keeping

When a pupil has made a disclosure the member of staff should:

- Make brief notes as soon as possible after the conversation.
- Not destroy the original notes in case they are needed by a court of law.
- Record the date, time, place and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and words used by the child.
- Draw a diagram to indicate the position of any bruising or other injury.
- Record statements and observations rather than interpretations or assumptions.
- Sign this and hand it to the CPO as soon as possible.

### Support

Dealing with a disclosure from a child, and a Child Protection case in general, is likely to be a stressful

experience. The member of staff should, therefore, consider seeking support for him/herself and discuss this with the Deputy Head Pastoral.

### **Allegations involving school staff**

The criteria in this case are not limited to allegations involving actual or risk of significant harm to a child. The following course of action should be followed should it be felt that any person working with children has:

- Behaved in a way that has, or may have, harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates that he/she is unsuitable to work with children.

If a child, or parent, makes a complaint of abuse against a member of staff, the person receiving the complaint must take it seriously and immediately inform the Deputy Head Pastoral.

Any member of staff who has reason to suspect that a pupil may have been abused by another member of staff, either at school or elsewhere, must immediately inform the (CPO) Deputy Head Pastoral. The School will aim to provide immunity from retribution and no disciplinary action will be taken against staff for 'whistle blowing' in good faith. He or she should make a record of the concerns including a note of anyone else who witnessed the incident or allegation. (If the concerns are about the Headmaster, the Chair of Governors should be contacted through the Deputy Head Pastoral).

The Deputy Head Pastoral will not investigate the allegation itself, nor take written or detailed statements, but will assess whether it is necessary to refer to the Social Services.

If the Deputy Head Pastoral decides that the allegation warrants further action through Child Protection Procedures a referral direct to the Social Services team will be made. If the allegation constitutes a serious criminal offence it will be necessary to contact Social Services before informing the member of staff. If it is decided that it is not necessary to refer to Social Services the Deputy Head Pastoral will consider whether there needs to be an internal investigation.

In the event of the terminating of working / volunteer arrangements with any individual due to he or she being deemed unsuitable to work with children the College will send a report to the Secretary of State via the Independent Safeguarding Authority (Tel: 0300 123 1111) within one month of that person leaving the school. (Failure to make such a report constitutes an offence).

Should a member of the 'living in' boarding staff be suspended pending investigation the College will undertake to find alternative accommodation away from children in situations where the person is unable to move out of College into their own accommodation.

*Taken from Staff Handbook Feb 2010*