

Safeguarding Children - Child Protection Policy

The School fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection and is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. By doing so we fulfil the school aims to create a happy and caring atmosphere at St Teresa's; to enable each individual to develop in confidence and maturity and so achieve their best.

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years following the CPO's update training. The Deputy Head is the designated Child Protection Officer in the Senior School as is the Head of the Prep.

Our policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the School. There are five main elements to our policy:

- Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children.
- Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needs to keep them safe.
- Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
- Supporting pupils who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan.
- Establishing a safe environment in which all children can learn and develop.¹

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 children know that there are adults in the School whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Include opportunities in the PSHE curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.²
- Take all reasonable measures to ensure that risks of harm to children's welfare are minimized.
- Take all appropriate actions to address concerns about the welfare of a child, or children, working in full partnership with local agencies.

It is alert to its obligations articulated in:

1. 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruiting in Education' (Jan 2007) – copy in the CPO file in DH's office – <http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk>

¹ Equal Opportunities Statement

² 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2006

2. SSCB Child Protection Procedures and training at: SSCBHomepage / Children and families / social care and safeguarding / child protection
3. Surrey Education Safeguarding guidance: SCCHomepage / training / teachers and education staff / safeguarding children including child protection

Obligations identified in the 2007 guidance are considered in a range of policies in place at the School.

Pupil health and safety is safeguarded in the School Health and Safety Policy, and the standing Health and Safety Committee which meets once a term.

The safeguarding of those exposed to bullying is addressed in the School Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures.

Students' medical well-being is safeguarded in the School's Medical policies.

The availability of First Aid to students is promoted by the School's policy of training teaching staff to deliver First Aid in the work place and by a range of protocols including policies on Asthma and Anaphylaxis. Staff are trained on a 3 year cycle and First Aid Certificate training is available for Year 9 upwards.

Students are safeguarded from drugs and substance misuse by the School's Procedures to be followed when dealing with alcohol, smoking and illegal drugs.

We shall take account of guidance issued by the Department for Children, Schools and Families to:

- Ensure we have a designated senior person for child protection who has received appropriate training and support for this role, currently the Deputy Head. The Headmistress and Head of Boarding act as deputies to the designated CPO. All are expected to undertake the Two Day Child Protection Foundation Training delivered through the SSCB and then update training, provided by the Allegations Manager, every 2 years.
- Ensure we have a nominated governor responsible for child protection, but that all members of the governing body understand and fulfil their responsibilities.
- Ensure every member of staff (including temporary and supply staff and volunteers) and the governing body knows the name of the CPO and deputies responsible for child protection and their role; and that staff have received appropriate induction for child protection awareness and the safe working practice agreement.

- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated senior person responsible for child protection.
- Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the School and staff for child protection by setting out its obligations in the School prospectus.
- The school lettings policy will seek to ensure the suitability of adults working with children on the school site at any time.
- Community users organising activities for children are aware of the school's child protection guidelines and procedures.
- Ensure that any member of staff found not suitable to work with children will be notified to the appropriate bodies including the DfCSF for consideration for inclusion on List 99 for education staff.³
- Notify Social Services if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a pupil who is on the child protection register.
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences.
- Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
- Ensure all records are kept securely; separate from the main pupil file, and in locked locations.
- Develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.
- Ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed, all staff working within the school, who have substantial access to children, have been checked as to their suitability, verification of identity, qualifications, and a satisfactory List 99 or CRB check (according to guidance)⁴, and a central record is kept for audit.

We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The School may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at School, their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn.

³ For independent schools, reports to the Children's Safeguarding Operations Unit (List 99) can be made to 01325 392191 or 392247, email tsm.casework@dfcsf.gsi.gov.uk
See DfCSF website for guidance

⁴ Guidance for CRB checks updated 2006, see Safeguarding Children & Safer Recruitment in Education

The School will endeavour to support the pupil through:

- The content of the curriculum.
- The School ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued.
- The School behaviour policy which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the School. The School will ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
- Liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as Social Services, Child and Adult Mental Health Service, education welfare service and educational psychology service.
- Ensuring that, where a pupil on the child protection register leaves, their information is transferred to the new School immediately and that the child's Social Worker is informed.

Child Protection in the Curriculum

The School seeks to raise awareness of child protection issues through safety education as part of the PSHE programme.

In this programme, they will be taught to:

- Recognise the range of behaviours (physical, emotional, sexual or neglectful) that can constitute 'abuse'.
- Recognise the risks present in particular situations and to decide how to behave responsibly in that context
- Distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable physical contact
- Develop effective ways of resisting pressures and to decide when and where to seek help if they are being physically, emotionally or sexually pressurised
- Use assertiveness techniques to resist abusive pressures

Responsibilities

The Governors: The legal responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children under section 157 of the 2002 Act lies with School Governors. The Governors will discuss, review and endorse annually the School's Child Protection Policy, and the Headmistress' report of its working.

The Headmistress: Has a legal duty to ensure that procedures exist to ensure the proper protection of children at the School and to deal efficiently with suspicions of abuse either at home or in the School.

The Child Protection Officer (CPO) will:

- Be responsible for drafting the School's child protection policy and for presenting it for discussion by the SMT and endorsement by the Headmistress and Governors.
- Be responsible for publishing appropriate details of the policy in information documents for staff, pupils and parents, and for ensuring that the relevant procedures are presented to the Bursar in order to inform the School's support staff.
- Be responsible for the day-to-day management of the policy and associated procedures.
- Act as a source of advice and coordinate action with the School over suspected cases of abuse.
- Liaise with all relevant agencies involved in the protection of children building a good working relationship with colleagues from these agencies.
- Be responsible for action in cases of suspected child abuse, as the first person to whom suspicions are reported by staff, and as the person who discusses the situation with the relevant agencies; referring a child, if there are concerns about possible abuse, to the Contact Centre Children's Team⁵; acting as a focal point for staff to discuss concerns. Referrals should be in writing **within 24 hours** using the Inter Agency Referral and Assessment Form⁶.
- Liaise with the Headmistress when alerted to possible or actual child abuse.
- Have received regular training (updated every 2 years) in how to identify abuse and know when it is appropriate to refer a case; the CPO will have a working knowledge of NEOST procedures, and of how Surrey Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) operates.
- Will attend and contribute to a child protection case conference when required.
- Keep detailed accurate secure written records of concerns about (or referrals upon) child protection issues.
- Ensure the key issues (or new developments) in the field of child protection are communicated promptly to staff employed at St Teresa's School, and make sure that all staff have had training in child protection, appropriate to their role in the School.
- Ensure that the School's child protection policy is updated and reviewed annually and work with the Headmistress and SMT regarding this.
- Ensure that all new staff (teaching and support) have successfully completed the NSPCC Child Protection modules
- Ensure that all staff joining the school have received and signed the "Safeguarding Children and Young People Safe Working Practice Agreement"

⁵ All new referrals from 21/08/06 go to the Contact Centre Children's Team 08456 009009 (Fax 020 8541 9204) open 8.00 – 18.00. CPO may consult with an Assistant Team Manager on 020 8541 7041/7043. In an emergency out of hours, referrals can be made to the Emergency Duty Team on 01483 517898

⁶ On line forms available at www.surreycc.gov.uk

Housemistresses will:

- Put into practice, within their houses, methods for encouraging pupils to tell someone if they are being abused physically, emotionally, sexually or by neglect.

Teaching Staff will:

- Know the School's Child Protection Policy and procedures
- Deal with suspected or actual abuse according to the policy
- Receive regular training in Child Protection, updates every three years

The Bursar will:

- Be responsible for ensuring that the School's support staff are alert to the signs of possible abuse and know what they have to do if they have any suspicions.

Support Staff will:

- Know the procedure they must follow if they become alert to suspected or actual child abuse
- Follow the procedure in cases of possible or actual abuse

Pupils will:

- Be issued with a copy of the "Safeguarding Children at St Teresa's" through the diary together with appropriate guidelines – copies of the statement will be displayed in every classroom, bag room and common room
- Know how to inform a trusted person within the School if they are being abused physically, emotionally, sexually, or by neglect, or if they are aware of such abuse
- Reject the idea that disclosing abuse of any form is 'telling tales'.

Parents/Carers will:

- Be made aware of the responsibilities of staff members with regard to child protection procedures through publication of the school's Safeguarding Children – Child Protection policy on our website and have reference to it in our "New Girls' Information Pack"
- Contact the Deputy Head if they suspect that their daughter is being abused physically, emotionally, sexually or by neglect.

Child Protection Procedures

The Child Protection Officer is responsible for child protection procedures. Any reports of suspicion of child abuse should go directly to the CPO, who decides when to report this to the appropriate agencies, if at all. Although there is no legal duty on schools to report suspected abuse, the CPO would usually do so as a matter of good practice.

All staff and Sixth Form are given guidance in good practice in Child Protection.

This is a complex issue that requires fine judgement, and it is important to keep a sense of proportion. Some 'suspicious' circumstances are entirely innocent.

However, we must not turn a blind eye to any symptom. It is important not to be a victim of prejudices. Child abuse happens in all strata of society and at all ages. Children have a right to be safe. Remember that making a report of suspected abuse can be the first step in preventing abuse escalating and in protecting the child from harm.

Some, such as PE staff, are more likely than others to see signs of abuse; we all have a responsibility to guard our students by noting their general physical and mental health. In practice, therefore, you might well have confided some early observations to the child's Form Teacher /Tutor/Head of Year/Boarding Mistress/Matron, but discretion is of the utmost importance at every point once you begin to feel uneasy.

Types of Abuse (The italics are some signs of such abuse but they are neither conclusive nor exhaustive).

Physical deliberate injury or infliction of physical suffering: *unusual bruises especially symmetrical ones; scalding; burns; bites; scars*

Sexual sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent: *inappropriate knowledge/language; drug abuse; self mutilation; hostility to men or women*

Emotional persistent or severe emotional ill treatment likely to have an adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of the child: *apathy; low self esteem; attention seeking behaviour; too keen to please*

Neglect active or passive failure to protect a child from any kind of danger likely to impair the child's health or development; failure to thrive physically, emotionally or intellectually: *neglected appearance; voracious appetite; diarrhoea; unresponsiveness; continuously left unattended by parents.*

Signs of abuse may be obvious and sudden or a pattern of several small signs observed over a period of time. In general, be alert to behaviour unusual to

age, a lack of interest, especially if sudden, isolation or introversion. Such observation should be relayed to Matron or CPO as part of the usual pastoral care for our students.

If your suspicions develop

- treat the matter seriously
- make tentative enquiries of her (there could be a very innocent explanation)
- seek advice if in doubt
- tell only those who need to know (usually the Head of Year/Matron/Deputy Head/Headmistress)
- keep a careful watch on the child/situation
- keep an accurate and dated record on what you have observed and done

If you are told of ill treatment

React to what you are told seriously and be reassuring that it was right to tell you. **Make it clear you will have to inform someone else.**

If a child makes a disclosure to you

Always stop and listen straight away to someone who wants to tell you about incidents or suspicions of abuse. Statistics suggest that they may try up to ten times before they are heard. For a member of staff to leave unreported known or suspected abuse will be regarded as serious misconduct and could leave that member of staff open to disciplinary action.

If you can, write brief notes of what they are telling you while they are speaking (these may help later if you have to remember exactly what was said) – and keep your original notes, however rough, it's what you wrote at the time that may be important later. If you don't have the means to write at the time, make notes of what was said as soon as possible afterwards.

Do not guarantee that you will keep what is said confidential or secret – if you are told about abuse you have a responsibility to tell the right people to get something done about it. If asked, explain that if you are going to be told something very important that needs to be sorted out, you will need to tell the people who can sort it out, but that you will only tell people who absolutely have to know.

Don't ask leading questions that might give your own ideas of what might have happened (eg 'did he do X to you') – just ask 'what do you want to tell me?' or 'is there anything else you want to say?'
Immediately tell the designated CPO – do not tell other adults or young people what you have been told.

Child Protection Details

Name of Student: _____

Date	Report of comments and actions	Initials

Action including reviews

It is not your duty to investigate the matter. Under the Children Act 1989 Section 47 the Local Authority has a duty to make enquiries concerning suspicion of child abuse. The School would wish staff to co-operate in these investigations e.g. teachers can be asked to make assessments or to help a student express her wishes and feelings.

The CPO will decide whether to refer the matter to the local social services department and action will be taken the same day.

Confidentiality

- The school recognises that all matters relating to child protection are confidential
- The Headmistress or CPO will disclose information to the appropriate staff on a need to know basis
- We will always undertake to share the school's intentions to refer a child to Social Care with parents/carers unless to do so puts the child at greater risk of harm or it impedes a criminal investigation. If in doubt the Assistant Team Manager at the Contact Centre Children's Team⁵ will be contacted.

Supporting Staff

- The School recognises that staff who have become involved with a child who has suffered harm, or appears to be likely to suffer harm, may find the situation stressful and upsetting.
- The school support staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the CPO or Chaplain and to seek further support as appropriate

Allegations against staff

- All staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child; it is advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents to be conducted in view of other adults
- Guidance about conduct and safe practice will be given at induction and all staff will be given the "Safeguarding Children and Young People – Safe Working Practice Agreement" to sign and follow - a copy of the more detailed DfCSF "Guidance for Safe Working Practice"⁷ (Sept 2006 – *up-dated March 2009*) is in the CPO's Child Protection file
- **If an allegation is made or information is received suggesting that a person is unsuitable to work with children**, the Headmistress will be informed but the CPO will conduct an immediate preliminary investigation to establish whether the abuse could have taken place; a signed statement will be taken from the child (if the allegation is against the CPO, the Headmistress will investigate). The Headmistress will discuss the content of the allegation with the Allegations Manager (Schools and Education Services)⁸, and advice will be sought from a Legal Adviser.

⁷ DfCSF website – Safeguarding Children – Supporting Staff – 2005 document available

⁸ Allegations Manager 01372 833341 or 07968 834948

- **If an allegation against a member of staff concerns the Headmistress**, the person receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Chair of Governors who will follow the school procedures without notifying the Headmistress first
- **If the abuse cannot have taken place**, the Headmistress will contact the parents to discuss the accusation and its impossibility. She may inform the SSCB - Surrey Safeguarding Children Board.
- **If the allegation seems to rest on a misinterpretation**, e.g. of a gesture of comfort, the CPO will contact the parents to discuss the accusation and try to resolve the matter. If the parents accept this view, the CPO will counsel or warn the member of staff on future conduct. If the parents refuse this view, the CPO may report the incident to the SSCB.
- **If it is impossible to establish that the abuse could not have taken place**, the CPO *will* report the matter to the SSCB, where the allegation concerns sexual abuse or physical assault. In other cases, the CPO *may* report the matter to the SSCB. In either case, the CPO will recommend to the Headmistress whether or not to suspend the member of staff pending the investigation.

Suspension would be on full pay and does not imply guilt. The Headmistress would carry out investigations as required to determine whether or not to instigate disciplinary procedures.

Whistle Blowing

A separate policy exists dealing with and advising staff on Whistle Blowing.

Guidelines for Good Child Protection Practice

These are laid out in the “Safeguarding Children and Young People – Safe Working Practice Agreement”:

(see below)

Safeguarding Children and Young People Safe Working Practice Agreement

St Teresa's School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expects all staff to share this commitment.

It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that pupils are cared for appropriately and safeguarded from any harm, and their duty of care to promote the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community.

This document gives clarity to the measures needed to ensure that all employees and pupils can work within and enjoy being part of a safe and caring environment.

It is acknowledged that the vast majority of employees behave appropriately whilst working with our pupils. Whilst it is recognised that the individual members of an organisation may hold differing values and opinions, adults working in a school are in a position of trust and their conduct is, therefore, governed by specific laws and guidance and the policies and procedures agreed by the Headmistress and Governing body.

Staff occasionally express uncertainty as to what is and is what is not acceptable and seek guidance regarding those behaviours which, whilst most probably innocent, may be perceived by others as inappropriate⁹.

The following is, therefore, a code of appropriate conduct for all adults working in or on behalf of the school, including those involved in home visits or any out of school activities. Adherence to this code should ensure that both children and adults are safe from misconduct or unfounded allegations of misconduct.

You should always:

- Adhere to all school policies, many of which are specifically written with safeguarding in mind – Child Protection, Whistle Blowing, Anti-Bullying, Equal Opportunities, Health and Safety
- Behave in a mature, respectful, safe, fair and considered manner at all times
- Provide a good example and “positive role model” to the pupils
- Observe other people's rights to confidentiality – unless you need to report something to the CPO or Headmistress (eg concerns about a child protection issue)
- Treat all pupils equally; never confer favour on particular pupils, or build “special relationships” with individual pupils, except where one to one working is part of an agreed plan with your manager (eg counselling, tuition, mentoring)

⁹ It is the perception of the person subject to a remark or action rather than your stated intention that defines “appropriate” or “inappropriate”

Report to the CPO / Headmistress (or to the Chair of Governors if an allegation concerns the Head):

- Any behaviour or situation which may give rise to complaint, misunderstanding or misinterpretation
- Any difficulties that you are experiencing (eg coping with a pupil presenting particularly challenging behaviour); situations where you anticipate that you may not be sufficiently qualified, trained or experienced to deal with or handle appropriately
- Any behaviours of another adult in the school which give you cause for concern or breach of this code or other school policies and procedures

You should never:

- Behave in a manner that could lead a reasonable person to question your conduct, intentions or suitability to care for other people's children
- Touch pupils in a manner which is or may be considered sexual, threatening, gratuitous or intimidating
- Discriminate either favourably or unfavourably towards any pupil
- Make arrangements to contact, communicate or meet a pupil outside school, outside the parameters of your duties as a member of staff
- Develop "personal" or sexual relationships with pupils
- Push, hit, kick, punch, slap, throw missiles at or smack a pupil or threaten to do so unless your own personal safety is threatened
- Make inappropriate¹ remarks or jokes of a personal, sexual, racial, discriminatory, intimidating or otherwise offensive nature
- Intentionally embarrass or humiliate pupils (eg using sarcasm or humour in an inappropriate¹ way)
- Give or receive (other than "token") gifts unless arranged through your line manager / Headmistress
- Allow, encourage or condone pupils to act in an illegal, improper or unsafe manner (eg smoking or drinking alcohol)
- Behave in an illegal or unsafe manner - eg exceeding the speed limit, being under the influence of drugs or alcohol, driving a vehicle known to be un-roadworthy, not having appropriate insurance, using a mobile phone whilst driving, failing to use seatbelts, or drive in an unsafe manner whilst transporting pupils
- Undertake any work with pupils when you are not in a fit and proper physical or emotional state to do so – eg under the influence of medication which induces drowsiness; with a medical condition which dictates that you should not be caring for pupils; under extreme stress which is likely to impair your judgement

I have read the school's Safeguarding - Child Protection policy and agree to abide by the Safe Working Practice guidance contained therein.

Signed Date.....

The Headmistress and Governors of St Teresa's School thank you for your support in maintaining the safety and care of our school community.