

QUEEN'S COLLEGE, LONDON



Child Protection (Safeguarding)

*Child Protection Policy
Including EYFS*

(The Policy to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children)

POLICY DOCUMENT

Child Protection Policy *Staff Handbook Ref: 15.*

Queen's College and Queen's College Prep School Policy on Child Protection and Safeguarding

N.B. The Designated Child Protection Officer in the College is the Senior Mistress (Mrs Katharine Woodcock). The Designated Child Protection Officers, including for children within the Early Years Foundation Stage, in the Prep School is the Assistant Head, Alastair Dickson. Mr Dickson is the dedicated practitioner taking the lead responsibility for safeguarding children within our EYFS setting. He liaises with the local statutory Children's Agencies as appropriate. The member of Council responsible for Child Protection is Mrs Sally Cass.

Queen's College and Queen's College Prep School fully recognise their respective responsibilities for child protection. All staff must be aware of the professional obligation laid upon them by the 1989 Children Act and subsequent legislation. Both the College and the Prep School have a 'duty to safeguard and promote children's welfare' (Education Act 2002 Section 157).

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

- Ensuring we practise safe recruitment procedures in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with girls, including obtaining assurance that appropriate checks and procedures apply to any staff employed by another organisation, and ensuring all staff have read the policy and understood the chain of command and their responsibility
- Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping girls with the skills needed to keep them safe.
- Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
- Supporting girls who have been abused in accordance with her agreed child protection plan.
- Establishing a safe environment in which girls can learn and develop.

We recognise that because of the day to day contact with girls, school staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. The College and the Prep School will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where girls feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.

- Ensure girls know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried through the system of form tutors, pastoral team and school nurse.
- Include opportunities in the PSHEE curriculum for girls to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse and harm.
- Ensure that all staff in the College and Prep School receive training in child protection every three years and that the designated members of staff for child protection attend child protection training every two years.
- The Council will undertake an annual review of this policy and its procedures and the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged.

PROCEDURE

1. If a member of staff suspects that a pupil is the victim of abuse, whether physical, emotional, sexual or as a result of neglect, she/he should inform one of the Designated Persons. For girls in the College The Senior Mistress, Mrs Katharine Woodcock and for girls in the Prep School, the Assistant Head, Alastair Dickson. They are responsible for liaising with Social Services Departments/ Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

The Senior Mistress can be contacted on: 0207 7291 7010

The Assistant Head of the Prep School can be contacted on 020 7291 0673

SIGNS OF POSSIBLE ABUSE

There are four main definitions of abuse:

- Physical Abuse: Physical injury to a child where there is definite knowledge, or a reasonable suspicion, that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented.
- Neglect: The persistent or severe neglect of a child which results in serious impairment of the child's health or development.
- Emotional Abuse: The persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment of a child which has serious adverse effect on the behavioural and emotional development of that child. Domestic violence may result in emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse: Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening.

All abuse involves some emotional ill-treatment; this category would be used where it is the main or sole form of abuse.

There is also a further category - Organised Abuse. This is the exploitation of children involving systematic sexual, physical or emotional abuse by groups of abusers who manipulate, coerce or use threats to control children for personal gratification or gain.

The NSPCC lists some of the signs and behaviours which may indicate that a child is being abused:

- repeated minor injuries
- children who are dirty, smelly, poorly clothed or who appear underfed
- children who have lingering illnesses which are not attended to, deterioration in school work, or significant changes in behaviour, aggressive behaviour, severe tantrums
- an air of 'detachment' or 'don't care' attitude
- overly compliant behaviour
- a 'watchful attitude'
- sexually explicit behaviour (e.g. playing games and showing awareness which is inappropriate for the child's age).
- a child who is reluctant to go home, or is kept away from school for no apparent reason
- does not trust adults, particularly those who are close
- 'tummy pains' with no medical reason
- eating problems, including over-eating, loss of appetite
- disturbed sleep, nightmares, bed wetting
- running away from home, suicide attempts
- self inflicted wounds
- reverting to younger behaviour
- depression, withdrawal
- relationships between child and adults which are secretive and exclude others
- pregnancy

These signs are not evidence themselves; but may be a warning, particularly if a child exhibits several of them or a pattern emerges. It is important to remember that there may be other explanations for a child showing such signs. Abuse is not easy to diagnose, even for experts.

INITIAL COMPLAINT

If a pupil discloses directly:

Listen carefully to what is said. **Ask only open questions such as:**

- What was happening at the time?
- Anything else you want to tell me?
- Would you like to go on?

Do not ask leading questions which may be considered as suggesting what might have happened, or who has perpetrated the abuse as this can later be interpreted as putting ideas into the child's mind. Allow the child to lead the conversation and remain calm.

Suggest it would be helpful to continue the discussion with the school nurse present but do not force the child to repeat what he/she said in front of another person.

NEVER GIVE UNDERTAKINGS OF ABSOLUTE CONFIDENTIALITY TO A PUPIL: breaking a child's confidence would be inappropriate, it is better to say that you might have to tell someone

Make notes of the details of the disclosure using the child's words where possible.

Records should:

- be written within 24 hours
- be accurate and descriptive, using the child's words/quotations as much as possible
- not make assumptions
- not include any opinions
- indicate sources of information
- be clear and concise and include date, time place and who was present where applicable
- include what lead up to the disclosure and include what you said to the child

If the disclosure is coming from a secondary sources, eg a friend is telling you something about his/her friend, then if at all possible ask him/her to give you a written account of their concern which you should then pass on to the designated child protection officer along with your own account of the conversation.

Reassure the child they have done the right thing and tell them they are not to blame. Offer ongoing support.

Talk immediately to the relevant Designated Person, unless the complaint involves the Designated Person, in which case the Principal of the College or the Headmistress of the Prep School. Do not discuss the matter with anyone else.

If you observe anything which involved a girl at the college or the prep school which you feel could be a child protection matter you must talk to the relevant designated person asap.

INVESTIGATION, REFERRAL AND REPORTING

It *is* the responsibility of the College and Prep School staff to:

- Protect children from abuse;
- Be aware of the School's child protection procedures;
- Keep a sufficient record of any significant complaint, conversation or event;
- Report any matters of concern to the Designated Person.
- Undertake appropriate training, including refresher training at three yearly intervals

It *is not* the responsibility of the College or Prep School staff to investigate suspected abuse. The College/Prep School is not an investigation or intervention agency for child protection but it has an important role to play at the recognition and referral stages. The College/Prep School will take into account the procedures published by the Local Safeguarding Children Board when dealing with allegations of abuse.

Having taken advice from the relevant Social Services Department and when considered appropriate and safe to do so the Designated Person will discuss the concerns with the parents/guardians and seek their agreement before making a referral to Social Services, recognising that this may strengthen the capacity of parents to respond to the needs of their children before problems develop into abuse. The only exception would be in the case of sexual abuse or where seeking parental consent would put a child at further risk of abuse/significant harm. If consent to referral is not given by the parent/guardian the Designated Person may consult Social Services who will advise whether any further action should be taken by the School or Social Services.

If there is doubt over whether a referral should be made, the Designated Person may consult with the Social Services Department or other appropriate professionals on a no-name basis without identifying the family. However, as soon as sufficient concern exists, a referral will be made without delay. If a referral is made by telephone, the Designated Person will confirm the referral in writing to the Social Services Department within 48 hours. If no response is received within 3 working days, the Designated Person will contact Social Services again.

If a referral is made, the Designated Person will keep the Principal of the College/Headmistress of the Prep School informed of the case unless the complaint involves the Principal or the Headmistress in which case the Chairman, Mr Michael Sharman, or Vice-Chairman, Ms Jessica Pulay, of the Council will be consulted. A referral may not normally be made where:

- The complaint does not involve a serious criminal offence;
- A referral would be contrary to the wishes of a pupil complainant who is of sufficient maturity and understanding and properly informed, and contrary also to the wishes of the complainant's parents;
- The case is one that can be dealt with under the school's internal procedures, the parents being kept informed as appropriate.

If during the course of internal procedures it appears that the situation is more serious, the Designated Person will consider again whether a referral should be made in accordance with the procedure above.

RECORD KEEPING

Child protection records will be kept securely locked, separate from the main girls' files, and are exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 where a child is, has been or may be at risk of child abuse. The best interests of the pupil will always be paramount. For manual records in principle the details of individual cases will be limited to the minimum number of people whilst ensuring that the staff who will be supporting and monitoring the child are kept appropriately informed.

If a child is the subject of a Child Protection Plan, the Designated Person and or the Principal of the College/ Headmistress of the Prep School has the responsibility of passing this information on should the child transfer to a new school.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF

If an allegation is made against a member of staff, the Principal of the College/ Headmistress of the Prep School would be informed immediately. There would be an urgent initial assessment to check the practical details of the allegation and to establish the facts. This assessment is not an investigation to determine guilt or innocence, but to ascertain whether the matter warrants further investigation by the appropriate agency and whether suspension pending investigation is appropriate. Suspension will not be an automatic response to an allegation. Advice will be sought from the designated Local Authority officer where appropriate. Full consideration will be given to all the options, subject to the need to ensure:

- the safety and welfare of the pupil or pupils concerned;
- the need for a full and fair investigation.

Where an allegation or complaint is made about the Principal of the College/ Headmistress of the Prep School, the Designated Person will report to and consult with the Chairman of the Council, or in his absence the Vice-Chairman.

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout this stage in order that any subsequent investigation is not prejudiced.

There are three possible routes for further investigation: by the police, under local child protection procedures or under the school's Disciplinary and Competence procedure.

Whistleblowing

We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so. All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues. If necessary, they should speak to the Principal/Headmistress or the Chairman of Governors.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST PUPILS

A pupil against whom an allegation of abuse has been made may be suspended from school during the investigation and the School's policy on behaviour, discipline and sanctions will apply.

MONITORING

The Designated Person will monitor the operation of this policy and procedures and liaise with the member of Council responsible for Child Protection, Mrs Sally Cass.

TRAINING

The Child Protection Officers attend training courses every two years Child protection issues are part of the induction programme for all new staff and In Service Training of teaching and non-teaching staff on Child Protection and Safe Working Practice takes place at least every three years (latest update September 2010).

Remember that you have a duty to safeguard the welfare of our girls. If you report an allegation or suspicion of abuse in accordance with this procedure and honestly believe that your report has not been acted on appropriately, you may inform the Principal of the College/Headmistress of the Prep School, Chairman of Council, the member of council responsible for child protection, or inform the Social Services under the terms of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

Never assume that abuse is impossible in the College/Prep School, or that an accusation against someone you know well is bound to be wrong. If you suspect a child is being abused physically, emotionally, sexually or is being neglected then you

should raise your concerns with the Designated Child Protection Officer as soon as possible.

Peripatetic Staff

Schools have specific responsibilities for the protection of girls. Inspections by members of the Social Services Department and the Independent Schools Inspection Service are routine, and are usually followed by a report giving positive and negative points about those aspects of our work which relate to the protection and welfare of our girls. Any peripatetic teacher, for example instrumental and visiting sports or languages teachers, should be made fully aware of the child protection policy and procedure by their Head of Department.

By the nature of their duties, instrumental teachers usually establish a personal relationship with girls. Individual tuition could provide an opportunity for girls to give information which teachers feel constrained to pass on. There is also the potential for unfounded accusations about the conduct of music teachers during lessons.

The following may be helpful to visiting music teachers:

- If a girl seems unhappy you should mention this to the Head of Music, the relevant Head of section or to the Designated Child Protection Officer.
- If the matter is of a more serious nature, please follow the procedure outlined above
- When teaching individuals, especially in rooms that have no direct view from the corridor, you should continue to create an impression of easy access and openness to other girls and colleagues
- Whilst some physical contact is an essential element of our work, it is worth avoiding unnecessary proximity to girls. When you need to touch a girl, make it obvious what you are going to do and why you are going to do it. **For example: 'I am going to move your arms into the correct position over the keyboard. Is that ok?'**

Staff Interaction with Pupils

The current climate of suspicion with regard to child abuse poses a real dilemma for caring adults. In order to protect girls from abuse, and staff from suspicion of abuse, the natural inclination to comfort and reassure girls through physical contact has to be curbed, and impulse restrained, by a considered assessment of the situation.

This does not mean that physical contact is never permissible, but adults touching girls must operate within understood limits, and contact without those limits must be a considered response which can be justified if necessary-

Rigid rules about what is and is not permissible are not acceptable, and are difficult to implement. See the above guidelines for peripatetic teachers.

The simplest advice is to try, as far as is possible, to avoid being alone with a girl. Where one-to-one contact does happen e.g. in music lessons, guidance interviews, it should be arranged with others, where possible, within ear shot or vision.

(i) Physical contact

This may be for the purpose of:

care
instruction
restraint

Staff should always be able to justify resorting to any physical contact. Restraint should involve only the minimum force necessary to protect girls at imminent risk of harming themselves or others, or inflicting damage to property. Should physical contact appear necessary colleagues should, if at all possible, be summoned to assist.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the College handbook, in particular with reference to section 57, Professional Guidelines for staff. The Prep School sets out guidelines for staff in the Prep School in the Physical Contact and Intervention Policy.

(ii) Remarks

Salacious or demeaning remarks should never be made to or in the presence of the girls. Remarks about a girl's physical characteristics or development, or suggestive or derogatory comments could fall into this category.

(iii) Attachments

You are strongly advised to share your concerns with the Principal or the Child Protection Officer if:

(i) you suspect a girl is becoming inappropriately attached to you or another member of staff, or

(ii) your relationship with, or feelings towards, a child or young person are placing you at risk of unprofessional behaviour.

(iv) Residential Trips

When on a residential trip with a girl you are strongly advised to adhere to all the guidelines above and the following:

- You will need to be more vigilant when you are on residential courses as the girls will be around people that are unknown to them and us.
- When completing a risk assessment for any residential trip it is worth considering how you could minimise risks from the above. If in doubt discuss with the Senior Tutor.

(v) Non - Residential Trips

As above.

SAFER EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES:

The Council will, when appointing staff and volunteers, take account of the guidance issued by the Education Department's Contracts and Personnel Section and observe the following safeguards:

1. That documentation sent out to potential candidates will make it clear that child protection is a high priority of the school and that rigorous checks will be made of any candidate before appointments are confirmed.
2. That a reference as to the suitability of a candidate to work with children will always be obtained from the last employer.
3. That at interview candidates will be asked to account for any gaps in their career/employment history.
4. That Criminal Records Bureau checks, checks against the DFE list 99 register and the similar list maintained by the Department for Health will be followed through for any staff or volunteer appointed and regular helpers. Staff, volunteers and helpers who have recently moved to the UK will be asked to produce a certificate of good conduct (or national equivalent) from the authorities representing the countries from which they have recently moved. That assurance is obtained 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.
6. Queen's College and Queen's College Prep will be compliant with the incoming regulations from the Independent Safeguarding Authority and with the expectations of the Independent School Standards Regulation.

7. Queen's College and Queen's College Prep will report to the necessary regulating office of HM Government 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.

Independent Safeguarding Authority
PO Box 181
Darlington DL1 9FA
Tel: 0300 123 1111

This policy is reviewed each year by the Council of Queen's College at its AGM.