

**QUEEN'S COLLEGE, LONDON**



**Child Protection**

*POLICY DOCUMENT*

## **Child Protection Policy *Staff Handbook Ref: 15.***

### **Queen's College Policy on Child Protection and Child Abuse**

Queen's College fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection. All staff must be aware of the professional obligation laid upon them by the 1989 Children Act and subsequent legislation. The school has 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 school. There are five main elements to our policy:

- Ensuring we practise safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with girls 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 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.

### **What is Abuse and Neglect?**

The following is taken from 'Working Together to Safeguard Girls' HM Government 2006:

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child (*as per the Children Act 1989 and 2004, 'a child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday'*) by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Girls may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another girl or girls.

- **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

- **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to girls that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on girls. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve causing girls frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of girls. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

- **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery) or non-penetrative acts (oral sex). They may include non-contact activities, such as involving girls in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging girls to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

- **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Queen's College will follow the procedures set out by the Local Safeguarding Girls Board and take account of guidance issued by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to:

- Ensure we have a designated senior person for child protection who has received appropriate training and support for this role. **This person is the Senior Mistress, Mrs Katharine Woodcock and her deputy is the School and Junior Mistress, Miss Rose Martinez.**
- Ensure we have a nominated member of Council responsible for child protection and that the Council undertakes an annual review of the school's child protection policy and procedures and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged. **The nominated member of Council is Mrs Sally Cass.**
- Ensure every member of staff (including temporary and supply staff and volunteers) and the Council knows the name of the designated senior person (and deputy) responsible for child protection and their roles.
- 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 making the school's policy on child protection and the school's procedures available to parents. A copy of the school's policy will be sent to parents on request.
- Notify social services if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a girl 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.
- Follow DCSF guidance should an allegation be made against a professional working in the school on a paid, unpaid or voluntary basis.
- Ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed.
- Ensure the original copy of this policy is signed and dated by both the Chairman of Council and the Principal and that the policy is reviewed annually.

We recognise that girls 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 girls at risk. When at school their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. The school will endeavour to support the girl through:

1. The content of the curriculum.
2. The College ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives girls a sense of being valued.

3. The College will ensure that the girl knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
4. Liaison with other agencies that support the girl such as social services, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, education welfare service and educational psychology service.
5. Ensuring that, where a girl on the child protection register leaves, their information is transferred to the new school immediately and that the child's social worker is informed.

The Child Protection Officer will ensure that her role is carried out according to the guidance contained in 'Safeguarding Girls and Safer Recruitment' DCSF (formerly DfES) 07 - also, the Principal is ultimately responsible for CP processes in the College and the Council holds responsibility for ensuring that measures are in place. The role of the designated person is an operational one.

The school nurse should hold a copy of 'Child Protection: guidance for senior nurses, health visitors and midwives' (HMSO) and should be fully conversant with, and use, its guidance where relevant to the College setting. The nurse will be invited to participate in any school INSET concerned with the welfare and protection of girls.

Any member of staff (teaching or support) who is told of any incident or strong suspicion of physical, sexual, emotional or negligent child abuse occurring in the school, or to a girl of the school at home or outside the school (or who knows of, or suspects such abuse), must report the information the same day to the Child Protection Officer, the Senior Mistress or her Deputy, the School & Junior Mistress. They will ensure that the possible victim is safe from immediate harm. If the suspicion is against the Child Protection Officer then the information should be taken to the Deputy Child Protection Officer. If the allegation is against the Principal, the report should be made to the Child Protection member of Council.

Senior girls and junior ancillary staff should be made aware of the need to report allegations or suspicions of child abuse, in the first instance to the Child Protection Officer, the Senior Mistress.

School staff should not investigate reports of physical or sexual abuse themselves. Alleged victims, perpetrators, those reporting abuse and others involved, should not be interviewed by College staff beyond the point at which it is clear there is an allegation of abuse.

Staff members and other adults at the school, should never give absolute guarantees of confidentiality to girls or adults wishing to tell them about something serious. The member of staff in receipt of information about

abuse has a clear duty to take action in accordance with the steps detailed in this document in order to protect the victim. They should, however, guarantee that they will only pass on information to the minimum number of people who must be told in order to ensure that the proper action is taken to sort the problem out, that they will never tell anyone who does not have a clear 'need to know', and that they will personally take whatever steps they can to protect the informing girl or adult from any retaliation or unnecessary stress that might be feared after a disclosure of alleged abuse has been made.

Any staff member to whom an allegation of physical or sexual abuse is made should:

- a. Limit any questioning to the minimum necessary to seek clarification only, strictly avoiding 'leading' the girl or adult who has approached them by making suggestions or asking questions that introduce their own ideas about what may have happened.
- b. Stop asking any more questions as soon as the girl or adult has disclosed that he or she believes that something abusive has happened to the girl or someone else.
- c. Tell the informing girl or adult that the staff member will now make sure that the appropriate people are brought in to follow the problem through.
- d. Try to ascertain the wishes and feelings at this point if appropriate but remember that what they want to happen may not be possible.
- e. Refer the matter the same day, with all relevant details to the Child Protection Officer as above, or the deputy Child Protection Officer.
- f. Make an accurate written record as soon as possible of what they have been told, and make a copy of this available to the designated staff member or the Principal.

The Principal, receiving an allegation of physical or sexual abuse, should herself or through the Child Protection Officer:

1. Take any further steps needed to protect any girl involved from the risk of immediate harm
2. Not interview or investigate the allegation further, but refer the matter, the same day, or within twenty-four hours, to the Child Protection Manager at the Social Services Department of the girl's home borough (contact details for boroughs can be found on individual borough websites)
3. The referral should be made by speaking personally with the duty social worker; reliance should not be placed on leaving a message. A telephone referral should be followed up

in writing within forty-eight hours, in accordance with national guidelines.

If a member of staff reports an allegation or suspicion of abuse in accordance with this policy, but honestly believes that the report has not been acted upon appropriately, then he or she may draw the matter immediately to the attention of the Principal. Alternatively, under the terms of the public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, the member of staff may make a report direct to Children's Social Services. The Child Protection Council member, is also available.

### **Child Protection and Child Abuse Guidance and Procedures**

The school designates one senior member of staff, the Senior Mistress, to take specific responsibility for child protection matters in the school. She is responsible for:

- Holding the school's copy of the current London Child Protection Procedures, being fully conversant with these procedures and ensuring that SMT and members of the pastoral team are aware of these procedures.
- Holding and being conversant with the school's copy of 'Working Together: a guide to arrangements for inter-agency co-operation for the protection of children from abuse.'
- Holding and being conversant with appropriate sections of the Children Act 1989, Section 157 of the Education Act 2002 and Section 11 of the Children Act 2004.
- Making the above publications and any similar relevant documentation available to the Principal, Senior Tutor, School and Junior Mistress and College Nurse.
- Briefing staff about the relevant contents of the school's child protection guidance and procedures, as outlined below, including the briefing of new staff as part of their induction after arrival at the school, together with informing all support staff who have contact with girls.
- Ensuring that child protection procedures are followed within the College.
- Liaison over child protection procedures with the social services department.
- Communicating to the local Social Services reports of alleged or suspected child abuse within the College or reported by a girl relating to incidents at home or outside the school, with the knowledge and agreement of the Principal.
- Ensuring that, in the event of the Principal referring an allegation of child abuse through the Child Protection Officer to the local Child Protection Team, such other actions, for example protecting the victim of the alleged abuse, are carried out.

- Encouraging a rolling programme of training in Child Protection Matters at Queen's College, delivered by a variety of routes as appropriate.
- Ensuring that every member of staff and volunteer at Queen's College is issued with a copy of 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused?'
- Ensure that the school has up to date information about which parents have 'Parental Responsibility'.

Having heard an allegation of abuse the Principal, through the child Protection Officer will:

- g. Consult the Children's Services Child Protection Team Manager (or officer deputising for him/her) and follow his/her advice about contacting parents, other staff, police, doctor or alleged perpetrator or witnesses direct. Agree with the Team Manager (or Social Services officer deputising) any necessary steps in relation to:

Informing a girl's parents – where appropriate the school will inform a parent/carer that the school will be sharing their concern with Children's Services.

Medical examination or treatment for the girl

Immediate protection that may be needed for any girl who has been the victim of abuse, any girl who has given information about abuse, and any girl against whom an allegation has been made.

Informing other people at the school (including any other members of staff) of the allegation and its investigation

Informing the placing authority, if there is one

- Inform the girl or adult who has made the initial allegation of what the next steps are to be, having agreed these with the Team Manager
- If necessary suspend from duty, pending investigation, any member of staff who is alleged to have abused a girl or girls.
- Take any necessary steps for the longer- term protection and support of each girl who has made allegations of abuse, or is alleged to have suffered from abuse, taking his or her wishes fully into account.
- Take any necessary steps to protect and support a girl who is alleged to have abused another.

- Ensure that any girl being interviewed by the police has available a supportive member of staff or her own choice to accompany her if this becomes necessary.
- Notify the Social Services Child Protection Managers of the allegation and action taken, as soon as possible.
- Ensure co-operation by the school in any subsequent investigation by the SSD or the police.
- Make arrangements where feasible for any girl who has been the subject of abuse to receive any necessary continuing counselling and support by agreement with her parents where appropriate.

The College should consider taking and, as necessary, should take disciplinary action against any member of staff or agent of the College, where it believes girls are at risk of abuse from that member of staff, even in cases where there is to be no criminal prosecution. It may be necessary to report to the Secretary of State, via the DCSF, within one month of leaving, any person (whether employed, contracted or a volunteer or girl) whose services are no longer used because he or she is considered unsuitable to work with girls.

Where the College has 'low level' concerns that do not amount to allegations or suspicions of specific abuse, but which may indicate the possibility of abuse occurring, the Principal should consider discussing these, through the Child Protection Officer, with the Child Protection Managers of the Local Social Services.

The College should issue guidelines to all staff concerned on the prevention of abuse, covering staff supervision of high risk situations, avoidance of inappropriately spending time alone with individual girls, and the need for all staff to be vigilant in spotting and reporting clear suspicions that abuse may be occurring.

All staff must be aware of the professional obligation laid upon them by the 1989 Children Act and subsequent legislation. The school has a 'duty to safeguard and promote children's welfare' (Education Act 2002). Mrs Katharine Woodcock, the Senior Mistress, is the Child Protection Officer for Queen's College and the School & Junior Mistress, Miss Rose Martinez, is the Deputy Child Protection Officer. In the event of a member of staff suspecting any type of abuse they must refer the matter immediately to the Child Protection Officer or her Deputy in her absence.

The Child Protection Unit of the Social Services Department is properly concerned that all members of the academic staff should be aware of the steps to be taken should information come to light of the possibility of physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect, or other forms of abuse of any girl.

The following guidelines should be followed:

- 1 Always stop and listen immediately to anyone who seems to wish to tell you about incidents or suspicions of abuse. Once you believe you are dealing with an issue of child protection/abuse do not ask any questions, simply listen. Re-assure your informant that what has been said will be taken very seriously and that he or she has done the right thing in coming forward and is not in trouble
- 2 If you can, write brief notes of what you are told on the spot (these may help later if you have to remember exactly what was said) and keep your *original* note, however rough and ready they may have been – and even if you write them up more fully later. If you do not have the means to write at the time, make notes of what was said as soon as possible afterwards. You should also record your own responses to what the girl has said, as exactly as possible, being careful to avoid making interpretations or assumptions about the meaning. Make sure that you put a time and date to your records and sign it. Pass it on to the Child Protection Officer. Always keep written records of concerns about girls, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately. All records are kept securely, separate from the main girl file in the Principal's office.
- 3 Do not give a guarantee that you will keep what was said confidential. If you are told about abuse you have a responsibility to tell the appropriate people to get something done about it. If asked, explain that if you are about to be told something that needs to be sorted out you will have to tell those who can do so, but that you will tell only those absolutely 'need to know'. Reassure your informant that what has said will be taken very seriously, and that she or he has done the right thing by telling somebody and that she/he is not in trouble herself/himself. *If you are told about abuse, you have a responsibility to tell the Child Protection Officer as soon as possible. This is particularly important if you feel that steps need to be taken to protect a child.*
- 4 Do not ask leading questions – just ask 'What do you want to tell me?' or 'Is there anything else you want to say?'
- 5 If the girl says she has physical injuries, do not attempt to examine these yourself.
- 6 Immediately tell the Child Protection Officer about your concerns, as soon as possible - do not discuss it with anyone else. Do not tell other adults or girls what you have been told. The Principal through the Child Protection Officer will refer the matter to Social Services immediately as the child might need immediate medical attention, or there may be marks which will fade or forensic evidence could be lost if there is a delay. The requests of Social Services must then be followed – they have a statutory duty to set up any necessary investigations.
- 7 Discuss with the Child Protection Officer whether any steps need to be taken to protect the victim and the informant (if different).

- 8 Never attempt to carry out your own investigation of suspected or alleged abuse by questioning the girl yourself or by interviewing others. This is the responsibility of trained Social Service and police staff. You could cause more damage and undermine possible criminal proceedings. Once you have passed the matter on to your Child Protection Officer, your involvement in the matter ceases.
- 9 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, Chairman of Council, the Child Protection Governor, or inform the Social Services under the terms of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

**Remember that you have a duty to safeguard the welfare of our girls. Never assume that abuse is impossible in the College, 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 Child Protection Officer or in her absence the deputy 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 School and Junior Mistress, the Head of the Senior College or Senior Mistress, the 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.

#### **(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.

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