

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY — SUMMARY

Guiding principles

This document is issued to all members of staff, temporary members of the teaching staff and volunteers who work with pupils, as well as Governors. A copy of the College's child protection policy (full version) is available on request.

The College recognises that all adults, including governors, teachers and support staff, whether full-time, part-time or temporary, employed or volunteer, have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm, and that children's welfare is always of paramount concern. Accordingly, the College's child protection policy includes amongst its aims:

- raising the awareness of all teaching and non-teaching staff of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse;
- emphasising the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff;
- maintaining a structured procedure within the College that will be followed by all members of the College community in cases of suspected abuse;

The College has a duty to ensure that:

- all members of staff are familiar with the procedures to be followed when a suspicion or allegation of abuse or neglect of a child is first encountered;
- all members of staff know how to respond to information received from any source which suggests that a pupil may be suffering abuse, or to a pupil who discloses abuse;
- any member of staff found not suitable to work with children, following referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer, LADO, will be reported to any relevant professional body and Independent Safeguarding Authority for consideration for permanent disqualification from working with children.

The Deputy Head, Mr Paul Williams, is the designated member of staff having responsibility for child protection (the Child Protection Liaison Officer). He acts as a focal point for staff and others to discuss child protection concerns. Dr Eric Huxter and Mrs Rosemary Doyle act in his absence. Contact them as soon as possible if you have a concern.

Dr Alastair Wells is the Governor designated to monitor the College's child protection procedures. Governors are not entitled to know details of individual children for whom there are concerns.

Recognizing abuse or neglect

All members of staff should be alert to the possibility of signs of abuse or neglect of any of our pupils — by parents, siblings, other relatives, guardians, other carers, friends, acquaintances, strangers and of course members of the College community including staff and fellow pupils.

Abuse or neglect of a child can arise through inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm and can take many forms: emotional, physical, sexual and neglect.

Action to be taken when abuse is suspected

A member of staff — acting on personal observation or knowledge or in response to an allegation — who has good reason to suspect that a pupil has been abused or neglected in any way, or who harbours any other major concern for a pupil's well-being, has a duty to report the suspicion, allegation or concern to his/her head of department or other senior member of staff without delay and without attempting to carry out any investigation.

A member of staff approached by a pupil who "wants to tell them something" will wish to respond promptly and sympathetically but must proceed with caution. In the first instance, the member of staff has a duty to listen to the pupil. Absolute confidentiality, whether specifically requested by the pupil or not, should never be promised since it cannot be guaranteed. (See below.) . The role of the adult or adults present is to listen, to reassure and, if necessary, to take a written statement as a record of the conversation. They should not probe, ask leading questions, put words into a pupil's mouth nor become involved in any form

of medical examination. Misguided intervention can jeopardise a police investigation and impede later criminal proceedings.

Confidentiality

The College recognises that all matters relating to child protection are confidential.

Anyone concerned with a suspected case of abuse should treat all personal information as confidential, taking particular care when dealing with sensitive information relating to the child and the child's family. It may sometimes be necessary for one member of staff to disclose personal information about a pupil to another member of staff, but this will only be done on a 'need to know' basis. This assurance can be given to a child.

All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a pupil to keep secrets that might compromise a child's safety or well-being. In deciding whether there is a need to share information, the child's best interests must be paramount.

Allegations against staff

All College staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position regarding their work with pupils, in both formal and informal settings. Pupils should never be accepted as friends on social networking sites, and the use of electronic communication with pupils must be limited and professional. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children to be conducted in view of other adults, or where one to one situations are felt to be necessary, they should be reported in advance to the line manager for approval.¹ Volunteers who work with pupils (for example, parents accompanying an off-site visit or tour) are expected to maintain standards of conduct comparable to those prescribed for employed members of staff.

Key points

All members of the College staff including volunteers must:

- be alert to the possibility of abuse or neglect;
- be able to recognize and act upon indications that a pupil's welfare may be at risk;
- know who to contact to discuss or express concerns about a child's welfare;
- be prepared to listen sympathetically to a pupil who wants to discuss a sensitive issue;
- not promise absolute confidentiality;
- not ask leading questions or put words into a pupil's mouth;
- not attempt to investigate suspicions of abuse or neglect or carry out any form of medical examination;
- keep a written record of discussions and concerns, whether or not further action is taken;
- report concerns about or knowledge of actual, alleged or suspected abuse or neglect to their head of department or to the CPLO;
- report allegations involving a member of staff to the Headmaster, or the Chair of Governors if they concern the Headmaster;
- only pass on information to others on a 'need to know' basis.

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Updated September 2011

The telephone number in Surrey to report concerns about possible abuse of a child living in Surrey is the Surrey County Council Contact Centre Children's Team on 0300 200 1006. Your first port of call should always be the school CPLO. However, if your concern is about a child in the community, or you feel the CPLO does not accept the seriousness of your concern about a pupil, you are at liberty to make the referral yourself. That number will also direct you to referral points in other local authorities if the child lives outside Surrey.

¹ Further advice is available in *Guidance for Safe Working Practice for the Protection of Children and Staff in Education Settings* — IRSC, September 2006: available online at www.surreycc.gov.uk > Learning > Teachers and education staff > Safeguarding children including child protection.