

Safeguarding Children Policy

The Designated Senior Members of Staff (DSMS) and the designated Trustee are:

**Mrs L Lister (Head of Preparatory Department) – left Dec 2011
Miss G Cleary (Head of Lower School) undergoing training
Mrs C Howe (Deputy Head Pastoral)
Dr M Clear (Trustee)**

Safeguarding concerns in Early Years should be passed to Mrs Guida-Jones, Head of Early Years who will pass information to the Head of Lower School, Miss G Cleary. When the Prep and Senior School are closed either Miss Cleary or Mrs Howe can be contacted at home or via the school Bursar.

Introduction

As a school we are committed to safeguarding and meeting the needs of children. No child should suffer harm either at home or at school. Everyone who works in our school has a responsibility to make sure that all our young people are safe.

Our policy applies to all staff (teaching and non-teaching), Trustees and volunteers working in the school and any visitors to the school.

There are five main elements to our policy:

- Ensuring we practise safer 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 needed 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 children can learn and develop.

Procedures

We will follow the procedures set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and take account of guidance issued by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).

The school will:

- Ensure it has a Designated Senior Member of Staff (DSMS) who will undertake regular, appropriate training for this role;
- Ensure it has a member of staff who will act in the absence of the DSMS;
- Ensure it has a nominated governor responsible for safeguarding children;
- Ensure every member of staff (including temporary and supply staff and volunteers) and the governing body knows the name of the DSMS and their role;
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the DSMS;
- 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;
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding safeguarding matters including attendance at strategy meetings, initial case conferences, core group and child in need review meetings;
- Ensure that the duty of care towards its pupils and staff is promoted by raising awareness of illegal, unsafe and unwise behaviour and assist staff to monitor their own standards and practice;
- Be aware of and follow procedures set out by Children's Services and the LSCB where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer;
- Ensure safer recruitment practices are always followed.

Our procedures will be reviewed annually and up-dated in accordance with current legislation.

When staff join our school they will be informed of the safeguarding children arrangements in place. They will be given a copy of this policy and told who the DSMS is and who acts in their absence.

The induction programme will include basic safeguarding information relating to signs and symptoms of abuse, how to manage a disclosure from a child, when and how to record a concern about the welfare of a child.

All volunteers and regular visitors to our school will be told where our policy is kept and given the name of the DSMS.

The policy is also to be found on the school website.

Responsibilities

The Trustees will nominate a member to be responsible for Safeguarding Children and liaise with the DSMS in matters relating to Safeguarding. It will ensure that Safeguarding Policies and procedures are in place, available to parents and reviewed annually.

The Head teacher will ensure that the Safeguarding Policies and procedures are fully implemented and followed by all staff and that sufficient resources are allocated to enable the DSMS and other staff to discharge their responsibilities with regard to Safeguarding.

The DSMS will co-ordinate action on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children within the school ensuring that all staff, volunteers and visitors to the school know who the DSMS is and who acts in his/her absence, they are aware of their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and of their responsibility to report and record any concerns.

All those who come into contact with children through their everyday work whether paid or unpaid have a legal duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

What should I do if I am worried about a child?

If while working about a child you become concerned about

- Comments made by the child
- Marks or bruising on a child
- Changes in the child's behaviour or demeanour

Please report these concerns to the DSMS

What should I do if a child discloses that he/she is being harmed?

Although the likelihood of this is small teachers and other staff in schools are in a unique position to observe children's behaviour over time and often develop close and trusting relationships with pupils. If a child discloses directly to a member of staff

- Listen carefully to what is said **without displaying shock or disbelief. Accept what is being said. Children rarely lie about abuse.**
- **Allow the child to talk freely.**
- **Reassure the child but do not make any promises that might be impossible to keep e.g. that you will not pass information on.**
- **Do not interrogate the child or ask leading questions.**
- **Reassure the child that it is not their fault.**
- **Stress that it was the right thing to tell.**
- **Listen rather ask direct questions**
- **Do not criticise the alleged perpetrator**

How do I pass on information?

Following a disclosure, the member of staff **should immediately record details of the disclosure including wherever possible the exact words used by the child. Forms for the recording of information of this nature are available in the policies handbook and should be completed and returned to the DSMS to enable the matter to be dealt with in the most appropriate way. If the official form is not used written details of the disclosure must be signed and dated by the person passing on the information.**

What should I do if the alleged abuser is a member of school staff?

You should report such allegations directly to the Head Teacher or to the DSMS who will notify the Head Teacher. The Head teacher on all such occasions will

discuss the content of the allegation with the LA's Senior Adviser for Safeguarding Children in Education.

If an allegation is made against the Head Teacher you should report it directly to the Chairman of Trustees. The school will follow the LA procedures for managing allegations against staff, a copy of which will be readily available in the school.

What should I do if an allegation is made against me?

You should immediately report the allegation to the Head teacher who will discuss the content of the allegation with the LA's Senior Adviser for Safeguarding Children in Education.

How do I assure my behaviour is always appropriate?

- **Appropriate relationship with children should be based on mutual trust and respect.**
- **Children, especially when they are young, are often spontaneously affectionate and tactile and it is important not to alienate them through lack of response or by appearing to reject this. You should however, be careful about touching pupils.**
- **If you are working with a pupil on his/her own always ensure that the door is left or that you can be visible to others.**
- **Do not photograph pupils unless asked to do so.**
- **Do not exchange e-mails or text messages or give out your own personal details. If e-mails are exchanged for the purpose of passing on school work or feedback, always use your school e-mail address and copy the e-mails to another member of staff.**

Further guidelines can be found in the publication @guidance for Safe Working Practice for the Protection of Children and Staff in Educational Settings. 2006.

Information Sharing & Confidentiality

We recognise that all matters relating to Child Protection are confidential.

The Head teacher or DSMS will disclose any information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need to know basis only.

All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility **and legal duty** to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.

All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets.

Record Keeping

Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse from a child or young person, or noticing signs or symptoms of possible abuse, will make notes as soon as possible (within the hour, if possible) writing down exactly what was said, using the child's own words as far as possible. All notes should be timed, dated and signed, with name printed alongside the signature. Concerns should be recorded using the school's safeguarding children recording system.

All records of a child protection nature should be passed to the DSMS including case conference minutes and written records of any concerns.

Supporting Children

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. 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 Children's Services, Child and Adult Mental Health Service (CAMHS), education welfare service and educational psychology service and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children;
- Notifying Children's Social Care immediately there is a significant concern.

- Providing continuing support to a pupil about whom there have been concerns who leaves the school by ensuring that appropriate information is forwarded under confidential cover to the pupil's new school.

Supporting Staff

We recognise that staff working in the school 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. We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the DSMS and to seek further support as appropriate.

Safer Recruitment and Selection of Staff

The school has a written recruitment and selection policy statement and procedures linking explicitly to this policy. The statement is included in all job advertisements, publicity material, recruitment websites, and candidate information packs.

The recruitment process is robust in seeking to establish the commitment of candidates to support the school's measures to safeguard children and to deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children or are otherwise unsuited to work with them.

St. Mary's Recruiting and Selection procedures specify that anyone who works with children three or more days in a 30 day period or overnight (including volunteers), will require an enhanced CRB Disclosure. This is to ensure that only suitable people are working with children.

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, where they exist, about the attitude or actions of colleagues.

Complaints or Concerns expressed by Pupils, Parents, Staff or Volunteers

We recognise that listening to children is an important and essential part of safeguarding them against abuse and neglect. To this end any expression of

dissatisfaction or disquiet in relation to an individual child will be listened to and acted upon in order to safeguard his/her welfare.

We will also seek to ensure that the child or adult who makes a complaint is informed not only about the action the school will take but also the length of time that will be required to resolve the complaint. The school will also endeavour to keep the child or adult regularly informed as to the progress of his/her complaint.

Prevention

We recognise that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our pupils by providing them with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection.

The school will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are always listened to;
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty;
- Include in the curriculum opportunities that equip children with the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

Physical Intervention

Our policy on positive handling is set out in a separate policy and acknowledges that staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, and that at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury or damage to property.

We understand that physical intervention of a nature that causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under safeguarding children or disciplinary procedures.

Abuse of Trust

We recognise that as adults working in the school, we are in a relationship of trust with the pupils in our care and acknowledge that it is a criminal offence to abuse that trust.

We acknowledge that the principle of equality embedded in the legislation of the Sexual Offenders Act 2003 applies irrespective of sexual orientation: neither homosexual nor heterosexual relationships are acceptable within a position of trust.

We recognise that the legislation is intended to protect young people in education who are over the age of consent but under 18 years of age.

Racist Incidents

Our policy on Anti-Bullying is set out in a separate policy and acknowledges that repeated racist incidents or a single serious incident may lead to consideration under safeguarding children procedures.

Bullying

Our policy on bullying is set out in a separate policy and acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under safeguarding children procedures.

E-safety

Our Acceptable Use policy, within our ICT policy, recognises that internet safety is a whole school responsibility (staff, pupils, parents).

Children and young people may expose themselves to danger, whether knowingly or unknowingly, when using the internet and other technologies. Additionally, some young people may find themselves involved in activities which are inappropriate or possibly illegal.

We therefore recognise our responsibility to educate our pupils, teaching them the appropriate behaviours and critical thinking skills to enable them to remain both safe and legal when using the internet and related technologies.

See ICT policy.

Health & Safety

Our Health & Safety policy, set out in a separate document, reflects the consideration we give to the safeguarding of our children both within the school environment and when away from the school when undertaking school trips and visits.

See Health and Safety policy

Other Relevant Policies

The Governing Body's legal responsibility for safeguarding the welfare of children goes beyond basic child protection procedures.

The duty is now to ensure that safeguarding permeates all activity and functions. This policy therefore complements and supports a range of other policies, for instance:

- Managing Allegations and Concerns Against Staff and Volunteers
- Complaints Procedure
- Behaviour Management
- Anti-Bullying
- Positive Handling
- Special Educational Needs
- Trips and visits
- Work experience and extended work placements
- First aid and the administration of medicines
- Health and Safety
- Sex and Relationships Education
- Site Security
- Equal Opportunities
- E-safety
- Extended school activities.

The above list is not exhaustive but when undertaking development or planning of any kind the school will need to consider safeguarding matters.

Contacts
Internal

Mrs Carol Howe

Designated Senior Member of Staff for Child Protection

Miss Gemma Cleary

Designated Preparatory Member of Staff for Child Protection

Dr Marie Clear

Governor responsible for safeguarding children

External

Senior Adviser for Safeguarding Children in Education 01905 728902

Children's Services Access Centre 01905 768054

Out of Hours Emergency Duty Team 01905 768020

Police Family Protection Unit:

Worcester 01905 331045

Redditch & Bromsgrove 01527 58373

24hrs non-emergency 08457 444888

NSPCC Helpline

Reviewed by	Catherine Jawaheer January 2012
Adopted at Trustees Meeting	26 January 2012