



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER (THE JUNIOR SCHOOL): Mr Martin Morris

The School affirms that:

- (1) The welfare of children is of paramount importance
- (2) All children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm
- (3) It will take immediate and effective action to safeguard the welfare of any child whom it suspects is being harmed or is in danger of harm
- (4) It will carry out its legal duty to refer cases of alleged or suspected abuse to other appropriate agencies (Social Services, and the Police) and to work with these agencies in protecting children from harm
- (5) Any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements will be remedied without delay.

This policy aims to establish clear guidelines and procedures for dealing with cases of alleged or suspected abuse of children which come to the attention of teaching staff, other employees, pupils, parents or governors. It covers alleged or suspected abuse which might have occurred in or out of school by a member of the school community or other person. It establishes procedures for contacting outside agencies and for liaison with them.

This policy is in accordance with the procedures of the Bristol Safeguarding Children Board.

It is the aim of the school to provide:

- (1) Information to pupils through the curriculum, principally PSHE
- (2) Training for all staff to help them to recognise signs of abuse and to implement the school's policy effectively. This training will be updated at least every three years and part-time and voluntary staff will be made aware of the training. Any staff or volunteers unable to attend will be trained separately
- (3) Definition of roles, responsibilities and procedures in dealing with Child Protection issues
- (4) To practise safe recruitment policies to check the suitability of new staff to work with children:
 - (i) this will include sourcing full references with clear statements about a candidate's suitability to work with children
 - (ii) enhanced CRB checks will be carried out on all staff
 - (iii) assurances will be obtained that staff employed by other organisations who work with the school's pupils, on or off site, have appropriate Child Protection checks
- (5) This policy in full on request to parents.

THE ROLE OF THE HEADMASTER AND GOVERNORS

The Headmaster takes overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation, for liaison with the Governing Body, parents and appropriate outside agencies. The Headmaster will report, each term, to Governors on matters of Child Protection and Welfare.

At Queen Elizabeth's Hospital Junior School the Designated Person, to whom all suspicions or allegations of abuse should be referred, is Mr Martin Morris (Headmaster). In his absence, matters should be referred to the senior School Designated CPO, Mr David Bateson, or alternatively The Headmaster of the Senior School, Mr Stephen Holliday. In the case of neither being available, the matter must be referred to a member of the SMT (Junior).

The Designated Person will undertake appropriate training at two-yearly intervals. This training will include training in Child Protection and inter-agency working.

The School has appointed a Governor to oversee matters relating to Child Protection and Welfare. At QEH, that Governor is: Mr A Morsley

The role of the 'Designated Governor' is:

- (a) to be informed and kept aware of any Child Protection matters referred to an outside agency
- (b) To discuss annually with the Designated Person and the Headmaster, all matters of Child Protection (referred or not) and to review, each year, the Child Protection Policy and the Anti-Bullying Policy
- (c) To manage allegations against the Headmaster.

The Governing Body will review the Child Protection Policy and procedures, and the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, on an annual basis.

DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

The difficulty lies in establishing the boundaries between unprofessional behaviour and abuse (where staff are involved) and between careless or cruel actions and abuse (where parents or others are involved). Staff and employees should not make such judgements and must always refer suspicions or allegations of abuse to the Designated Person who will make an ***Urgent Initial Assessment*** of the known evidence.

An abused child is a boy or girl under the age of 18 years who has suffered, or is likely to suffer, physical abuse, neglect, emotional or sexual abuse which any person caused or knowingly failed to prevent. This would include abuse of a child/young person by a stranger and abuse of a child/young person by a child/young person.

The Law recognises four broad categories of abuse. It must be emphasised that these categories often overlap:

Neglect Children under the age of 18 who have been persistently or severely neglected or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger. This includes the failure to carry out important aspects of care resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development.

Physical Injury Children under the age of 18 where the nature of the injury is not consistent with the account of how it occurred or where there is definite knowledge or reasonable suspicion the injury was inflicted (or knowingly not prevented) by any person. In particular, cases where the injury was a calculated act, the harm is regular or persistent or so severe as to question the motive of the perpetrator.

Sexual Abuse The actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent under the age of 18 years by any person. This would include any form of sexual activity to which the child cannot give true consent either by law or because of ignorance, dependence, developmental immaturity or fear. It does not include those who are sixteen years old and over who are willing and able to give true consent, unless the sexual activity includes the parent or care giver.

Emotional Abuse Actual or likely adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child under the age of 18 years caused by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection. As all other categories involve some emotional abuse it should be used when this is the main or sole form of abuse.

Signs of possible abuse include bruising or injury (especially where the explanation is inconsistent with the injury); changes in behaviour or an obvious failure to thrive.

ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED PERSON IN MAKING AN URGENT INITIAL ASSESSMENT

The Designated Person will carry out an *Urgent Initial Assessment* of all cases referred to him. The purpose of this assessment is to discover: the nature of the suspicion or allegation, the validity of the suspicion or allegation based on the *prima facie* evidence, the likelihood of immediate or future significant harm to the child. The Designated Person will refer to the confidential files on issues of Child Protection (held by the Designated Person); he will refer to school medical records, registers and pupil files. He may talk discreetly with staff or pupils to ascertain relevant information without revealing the nature of the inquiry.

This is not an investigation, although the child and staff might have to be interviewed (see guidelines). A written record of the *Urgent Initial Assessment* will be made, including signed statements where appropriate, which will be kept by the Designated Person. On the basis of the *Urgent Initial Assessment* the Designated Person, usually in consultation with another member of the SMT, will decide an appropriate course of action which might involve referring the matter to an outside agency or implementing disciplinary procedures with staff. The decision of the Designated Person will be recorded in writing on the *Urgent Initial Assessment* report.

The *Urgent Initial Assessment* should be completed promptly and, if at all possible, within 24 hours of the allegation or suspicion being reported.

THE CHILD PROTECTION REGISTER

The Designated Person will keep information about pupils placed on the Child Protection Register by the Social Services. He will also keep all records relating to issues of child protection which are too sensitive to remain in the open access pupil files. Key staff in school will be informed if a pupil is placed on the CPR.

PSHE LESSONS

Through the PSHE curriculum, pupils will be made aware of the definitions of abuse, the school policy and what to do if they (or others) are being abused, as appropriate for the age of the pupils. Advice will include access to national helpline numbers, which will be displayed around the school.

CHILD PROTECTION: PROCEDURES

Procedures for Dealing with Suspected Abuse (no Direct Allegation)

- (1) Staff should be vigilant to recognise signs of abuse and should read and refer to material provided by the school to train staff in the recognition of signs of abuse
- (2) It is the duty of all School employees to be familiar with this policy and to carry out the procedures when abuse is suspected
- (3) Parents who have suspicions of abuse should contact the Designated Person, Mr David Bateson
- (4) Any other person or outside agency who contacts the school to discuss a matter of suspected abuse should be referred to the Designated Person.

In the case of suspected neglect or emotional abuse the matter should be referred immediately to the Designated Person. The Designated Person will undertake an *Urgent Initial Assessment*. The pupil will be interviewed, unless there are strong reasons not to, according to the procedures outlined in *Child Protection: Guidance for Staff in Interviewing Pupils* (below, page 7).

The Designated Person will decide the appropriate course of action. This might involve seeking advice, interviewing parents, seeking a referral to the pupil's GP or to the School Medical Service, contacting the Social Services or Police and/or resolving to monitor the situation further.

Staff involved will be made aware of decisions taken and of any action plan devised to monitor the pupil, unless there are compelling reasons to prevent this.

Written records will be kept by the Designated Person and a note to that effect made on the pupil's file.

In the case of suspected physical injury, the matter should be referred immediately to the Designated Person. It is vital to report any suspicion as delay could result in further harm to the child. Staff must not begin to investigate. The Designated Person will carry out an *Urgent Initial Assessment*. The child will probably be interviewed (see guidelines) and careful written notes will be kept. The *Skin Map* (see *Child Protection Procedures* held by the Designated Person) may be used to describe the location of injuries. After the *Urgent Initial Assessment*, and usually in consultation, the Designated Person will decide on a course of action. If there is a possibility that abuse has occurred or is likely to occur he will inform the Social Services and/or the Police. If he decides that there are insufficient grounds to alert an outside agency, he will record the decision on the *Urgent Initial Assessment* Report. If no agency is contacted, the pupil must be monitored closely and any future injuries recorded and assessed.

The Designated Person will decide whether or not to involve parents and record that decision and, if parents are informed, record the details of conversations with them.

In the case of suspected sexual or emotional abuse, the evidence will usually be in the form of a disclosure to an adult or friend and can therefore be treated as an allegation - see below. In the unusual circumstances of an unsubstantiated suspicion the Designated Person must be informed. He will undertake an *Urgent Initial Assessment* and decide on a course of action. In the absence of strong evidence it is possible that the only clear course of action will be to monitor the pupil closely and to record anything which might constitute evidence in the future. The Designated Person will seek advice from an appropriate outside agency before informing parents if there is any possibility that the parents themselves might be involved or anyone close to the parents might be involved.

PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

Allegations are often made as disclosures by the person being abused to a caring adult. If the disclosure is made to a friend who then tells a caring adult, the adult must encourage the friend to persuade the abused child to disclose. If the abused child will not disclose, the timing and nature of the allegation should be noted in writing and passed to the Designated Person who will file the details.

An allegation of abuse by a parent, other member of the family or other adult outside the family (not a member of staff or other employee of the school)

The recipient of the Disclosure should make a written record of the details. The record must not contain opinion, gloss or speculation. The person disclosing should agree the facts and if possible sign the record. This record must be given immediately to the Designated Person who will undertake an *Urgent Initial Assessment* of the case.

On the basis of the *Urgent Initial Assessment*, the Designated Person will decide on a course of action. Under no circumstances will the person, about whom the allegation is made, be informed. If the Designated Person believes that the child is in immediate danger, he will arrange for the child to remain at school until the Social Services take charge of the case. Otherwise he will either alert the Social Services and/or the Police or decide that there is no substance to the allegation. In the latter case the decision and the reasons will be noted on the *Urgent Initial Assessment*. If the Designated Person is unsure whether the alleged action constitutes abuse he will contact the Social Services for advice. Doubtful cases will generally be referred in the interests of protecting the child.

An allegation of abuse by a member of staff or other employee of the school or by a volunteer working in or assisting the school

The recipient of the Disclosure should make a written record of the details. The record must not contain opinion, gloss or speculation. The person disclosing should agree the facts and if possible sign the record. This record must be given immediately to the Designated Person who will undertake an *Urgent Initial Assessment* of the case.

If after the *Urgent Initial Assessment* the allegation is groundless, the person about whom the allegation was made will be informed by the Headmaster and the matter noted in a confidential pupil record held by the Designated Person. Disciplinary action against the pupil might be considered.

If the allegation cannot be disproved after the *Urgent Initial Assessment* The Designated Person will decide whether to refer the matter to the Social Services and/or the Police. If a referral is made, the Designated Governor will be informed.

In deciding whether to refer the allegation, The Designated Person, in consultation with the Headmaster, will aim to strike a balance between the need to protect children from abuse and the need to protect staff from unfounded allegations. Suspension will not be an automatic response but is an option. If suspension is deemed appropriate, the procedure in the Staff contract and handbook will be followed. Alternatively, a member of staff may be required to take a leave of absence until the matter is settled. In either case, suspension or leave of absence, the action is neutral, not disciplinary, and the employee would remain on full pay. In the case of a volunteer, the volunteer will be informed of the allegation and will not be permitted to be involved with the school or its pupils in any way until the matter has been finally resolved.

A pupil against whom an allegation of abuse has been made is likely to be suspended until the matter is resolved. It might be appropriate for a pupil making an allegation to be suspended until the matter is resolved. In either of these cases the ‘suspension’ is not a disciplinary action against the pupil.

An allegation of abuse of a pupil by a pupil

The recipient of the Disclosure should make a written record of the details. The record must not contain opinion, gloss or speculation. The person disclosing should agree the facts and if possible sign the record. This record must be given immediately to the Designated Person who will undertake an *Urgent Initial Assessment* of the case.

The pupils will be interviewed according to the procedures outlined in *Child Protection: Guidance for Staff in Interviewing Pupils* (see below) by the Designated Person and a witness who will prepare a full written report. On the basis of the report, the **Designated Person** will decide an appropriate course of action to deal with each pupil involved. **The School** will liaise with parents and/or other agencies as necessary.

An allegation of abuse by the Designated Person (the Junior School Headmaster);

The recipient of the Disclosure (or the person suspecting abuse) should make a written record of the details. The record must not contain opinion, gloss or speculation. The person disclosing should agree the facts and if possible sign the record. This record must be given immediately to Deputy Head (pastoral) of the Senior School, or the Senior School Headmaster who will undertake an *Urgent Initial Assessment* of the case. He will inform the Designated Governor.

After the *Urgent Initial Assessment* the procedure is identical to that for other staff who are subject to an allegation.

An allegation of abuse by

The recipient of the Disclosure (or the person suspecting abuse) should make a written record of the details. The record must not contain opinion, gloss or speculation. The person disclosing should agree the facts and if possible sign the record. This record must be given immediately to the Designated Person who will undertake an *Urgent Initial Assessment* of the case. He will inform the Designated Governor and the Chairman of Governors. The recipient of the Disclosure (or the person who suspects abuse) could also contact the Chairman of Governors directly.

Guidance on making a Referral

- (a) Contact the Social Services on a no-name basis for advice if there is doubt
- (b) Always refer if a child may be at risk of significant harm or may have been harmed. This referral will be made within 24 hours of a disclosure or suspicion of abuse
- (c) A referral will not normally be made where:
 - (i) the complaint does not involve a serious criminal offence
 - (ii) a referral is clearly contrary to the wishes of the complainant (and/or the complainant's parents) where there is no risk of further significant harm.
 - (iii) If the complaint is one which can be satisfactorily investigated using the school's disciplinary procedures, keeping parents informed and, usually, where parents agree that to be the best way to proceed
- (d) If a referral is not made, the Designated Person must reconsider that decision in the light of any new evidence
- (e) In making a referral, the Designated Person will initially telephone (and record the details of the call: to whom, date, time etc.) and will follow that phone call by a referral in writing within 24 hours
- (f) The telephone number of Social Services is: 0117 9036500 (out of hours: 01454 615165);
the telephone number of the Police Child Protection Unit is: 0117 9454322;
the telephone number of the Child Protection Helpline is: 0808 800 5000
- (g) The school has a legal duty to report to the DCSF within one month of leaving the school, any person whose services are no longer used because he or she is considered unsuitable to work with children
- (h) The school will include in any reference for a member of staff, mention of allegation or cause for concern relating to Child Protection.

GUIDANCE FOR STAFF IN INTERVIEWING PUPILS

This guidance must be followed by members of staff when interviewing pupils who may have been abused -

The person to whom the disclosure is made must never promise absolute confidentiality even at the risk of not receiving the information. An assurance can be given that only those who need to know will be told. It is vital that the person receiving the disclosure does not try to investigate the matter or ask leading questions.

The recipient of the disclosure should make a written record of the details. The record must not contain opinion, gloss or speculation. The person disclosing should agree the facts and if possible sign the record. This record must be given immediately to the Designated Person who will undertake an *Urgent Initial Assessment* of the case.

If practicable, arrange for a witness (preferably a disinterested colleague) to be present during the interview.

GUIDANCE FOR STAFF IN AVOIDING ALLEGATIONS

One-to-one tuition should only occur when:

- Other staff are aware it is happening
- It happens in a reasonably public place
- The teacher and pupil can be seen from outside the room and the door is propped open
- The teacher sits across a desk from the pupil (not side-by-side).

In every case of one-to-one tuition the teacher should be alert to create conditions in which allegations against them are unlikely to be made.

Staff must not touch pupils. The only exceptions are to restrain a pupil who is likely to injure himself or others or occasionally (and always when others are present) with the pupil's permission, to demonstrate in a practical subject such as PE, drama or music.

Staff must not socialise with pupils out of school or offer lifts to pupils without their parents' or the Headmaster's permission. In those circumstances, a single pupil should always sit in the back of the vehicle.

Staff must not engage in inappropriate electronic or paper communication with a pupil.

On school trips, staff should not enter a pupil's bedroom without another person being present. Particular care needs to be taken at times when pupils are likely to be changing.

On trips, staff must not 'socialise' with pupils beyond normal professional boundaries. For example, it would be inappropriate to drink with pupils or visit a nightclub.

In all circumstances, staff should be aware that any pupil could make an allegation against them and should take all reasonable steps to avoid placing themselves in a vulnerable situation.

Useful reference:

DCSF publications: *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education*

MJM (October 2008)