

CHILD PROTECTION (SAFEGUARDING) POLICY

Principles

Stanbridge Earls School fully recognises its responsibilities for Child Protection.

Stanbridge Earls School recognises the paramount importance of protecting and safeguarding the health, safety and welfare of the children and young people entrusted to its care. The actions of the Headmaster, Child Protection Liaison Officer (CPLO), staff, volunteers, school officers and governors contribute to safeguarding the children.

Aims

This policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the school and ensures that all staff in the school are clear about the necessary actions with regard to a child protection issues. This policy complies with 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education' and is in accordance with the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Board.

This is facilitated by:

1. Ensuring that the school operates safe recruitment procedures when checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children, complying with CRB checks and Independent School Standards Regulations.
2. Raising awareness of child protection issues through staff training and school officer training; equipping older students with the knowledge and skills needed to keep children safe.
3. Implementing and reviewing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse including allegations against staff/volunteers/Head.
4. Supporting pupils who might have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan.
5. Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.
6. Ensuring any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements are remedied without delay.
7. Conducting an annual review of the policy, procedures and efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, undertaken by the nominated governor.

As part of the ethos of the School, the staff and governors are committed to:

- Encouraging and supporting parents/carers/guardians and working together in partnership with them.
- Listening to, relating effectively with and valuing each individual child or young person in our care.
- Ensuring that all members of staff, both teaching and support, full time and part time are properly trained and supported.

The school recognises that some children and young people today are the victims of neglect and/or physical, sexual or emotional abuse and that staff of the School, by virtue of their day-to-day contact with and knowledge of the children in their care, are well placed to identify such abuse and to offer support to children in need.

The Curriculum

Staff will use many different elements of the School's curriculum to raise pupils' awareness and build their confidence so that they have a range of contacts and strategies to ensure their own protection and they understand the importance of protecting others.

There are many links between this policy and other policy documents and curriculum guidelines produced by the school. In particular there are links with those relating to:

- Behaviour Management
- Anti-bullying
- Anti-cyber bullying code
- Anti-racism

- Code of Conduct for Pupils
- Complaints
- Equal Opportunities including Harassment
- Health and Safety
- Rewards and Sanctions
- Sex Education
- Special Educational Needs
- Professional Code of Conduct for Staff
- School Officers
- Whistleblowing
- Citizenship

Procedures

The Deputy Headmaster – Pastoral is the designated Child Protection Liaison Officer (CPLO):

Mr Robert Bailey
 Deputy Headmaster – Pastoral
 2 West View
 Stanbridge Earls School
 Stanbridge Lane
 Romsey
 Hampshire
 SO51 0ZS
 rob.bailey@stanbridgeearls.co.uk

The CPLO has yearly, updated training in child protection and inter agency working. In his absence, the Headmaster who was also a trained CPLO in his previous role assumes the responsibility:

Mr Geoff Link
 Headmaster
 North Lodge
 Stanbridge Earls School
 Stanbridge Lane
 Romsey
 Hampshire
 SO51 0ZS
 geoff.link@stanbridgeearls.co.uk

A confidential child protection record is maintained in a locked cabinet in the office of the Headmaster's Personal Assistant. It may only be accessed through representation to the CPLO or Headmaster.

The CPLO presents a thorough annual report entitled 'Safeguarding and Promoting Welfare in the Community' to the governing body.

The school has designated a governor responsible for child protection:

Mrs Sybil Warner
 Birch Wood House
 Cadnam
 Southampton
 SO40 2NR
 sybilwarnerhome@aol.com

Staff including the Headmaster receive updated training every three years in the recognition of different styles of abuse – physical, emotional, sexual and neglect and have an awareness of the signs and symptoms exhibited by the child. These details are also available to all staff via their training notes from the NSPCC child protection awareness course delivered to all staff as part of the in-service staff training cycle, and to all volunteers via the intranet.

Any member of staff who receives a disclosure of abuse or suspects that abuse may have occurred must report it immediately to the CPLO, or the Headmaster in his absence. In the absence of either of the above the matter should be brought to the attention of a member of the Senior Management Team (SMT).

Any action taken by the CPLO when dealing with an issue of child protection must be in line with the procedures outlined by the Hampshire Child Protection guidelines.

The school's CPLO works closely with Hampshire Children's Services and Social Services staff when investigating any allegations of abuse. All parties involved handle such investigations in a sensitive manner, but the best interests of the child are paramount.

Allegations made by a child

If a child alleges abuse, the school usually communicates with parents first before reporting the alleged abuse. In some circumstances, the school may not inform the parents first. This would be when the best interests of the child would not be served or where the school is unable to contact parents.

If a disclosure or suspicion of abuse is made, this will be reported to the relevant welfare agency within 24 hours. If a subsequent child protection referral is made, a case conference is held according to Hampshire Child Protection guidelines.

The school regards all information relating to individual child protection as confidential, and it is treated accordingly. Information is only passed on to appropriate persons. The child is kept informed at all stages of who is involved and what information the school has given them.

It is also explained to the child that confidentiality cannot be promised to a pupil giving evidence.

How a parent can make a complaint about possible child abuse

Parents are made aware of the Child Protection policy upon joining the school. It is also available via the school website or as a hard copy upon request. Should parents have concerns regarding a member of staff or volunteer they should contact the Headmaster and they have recourse to the school's Complaints Procedure.

On receipt of any such complaint, the Headmaster will:

1. Immediately inform the governor with responsibility for child protection and the Chair of Governors.
2. Form an initial assessment as to whether or not there is sufficient substance in the allegation to warrant further steps.
3. Maintain a record of all steps taken.
4. Ensure that other relevant members of staff are informed at this point.
5. Where the matter is referred to Social Services*, the member of staff will be immediately removed from direct contact with children, and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation. The Chair of Governors will be informed immediately.

* Contact with an appropriate welfare agency will be made within 24 hours of a disclosure or suspicion of abuse being received.

If a complaint is made against a volunteer the same procedures will be followed.

If a complaint is made against the CPLO, then the Headmaster (or the Chair of Governors and the governor with responsibility for child protection, in the Head's absence) must be informed immediately, whereupon the same procedures will follow.

If the complaint concerns the Headmaster, the person receiving the allegation should immediately inform the Chair of Governors without notifying the Headmaster first.

Past staff

Should any member of staff (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or a student) leave the school for reasons of being considered unsuitable to work with children, a report should be made by the Headmaster to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) within one month of that person leaving the school. The Headmaster will have documented evidence, and a written report of the circumstances. (The ISA commenced operation on 20 January 2009 and its address for referrals is PO Box 181, Darlington DL1 9FA. Telephone 0300 123 1111.

Abuse by one or more pupils against another pupil

Please refer to the school's 'Anti-bullying' policy.

External agency involvement

Stanbridge Earls School recognises that it is an agent of referral and not of investigation. It fully accepts that the investigation of child abuse is the responsibility of the Children's Services Department and the Police and will do everything possible to support and assist them in their task. Any allegation or suspicion must be referred to Children's Services within 24 hours.

The school will endeavour to build relationships with the other agencies so that understanding, trust and confidence can be built, which will help to secure effective cooperation in cases of actual or suspected abuse. Ofsted will be promptly informed of any investigations that are undertaken by Children's Services and they will be furnished with the results of these as soon as they are made known to us.

In cases of serious harm, the Police will be informed from the outset, in accordance with the schools policy on 'Liaison and Involvement with Outside Agencies'.

Hampshire Children's Services
Hantsdirect Contact Centre
Hampshire County Council
Tel: 0845 603 5620 (08.30 – 17.30 hours Mon – Fri)
Tel: 0845 600 4555 (Out of hours contact)

Enquiries
National Business Unit
Ofsted
Royal Exchange Building
St Anne's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Guidance on dealing with suspected child abuse

Where staff see a cause for concern, they should, as a first step talk with the child with tact and understanding.

Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse from a child or young person, or noticing signs or symptoms of possible abuse in a child or young person, should listen to the child and not interrupt or try to interpret if he/she is recalling significant events.

From the outset they must inform the child giving evidence that confidentiality cannot be promised.

As soon as possible afterwards (e.g. within an hour), a note should be made of the discussion and passed to the CPLO. Notes should be written down as exactly as possible to what was said or seen, putting the scene into context and giving the time and location.

Dates, times of events, venue and who was present should all be recorded as accurately as possible together with a note of when the record was made. Signs of physical injury observed

should be described in detail, but under no circumstances should a child's clothing be removed. Physical injury could be mapped on a drawing to indicate location and shape of any injury.

The child should never be asked leading questions, as this later can be interpreted as putting ideas into the child's head. The child should not be asked questions which encourage him/her to change his/her versions of events in any way, or which impose the adult's own assumptions.

Any questions should be open, not closed.

For example, ask: "Can you tell me what happened?" rather than "Did they do x to you?" or "Did x do this to you?"

All hand written notes will be kept, even if they are subsequently typed up in a more formal format.

Do not investigate; this is the role of the statutory services.

Care must be taken in asking and interpreting children's responses to questions of abuse. Should the disclosure lead to criminal proceedings it is important that the amount of questioning has been minimal.

Staff professional code of conduct

All staff and volunteers must be mindful that they hold a position of trust and that their behaviour towards the children and young people in their charge must be beyond reproach. This is especially so when private meetings are necessary.

All staff are advised against making unnecessary physical contact with pupils. Pupils should never be touched if they have clearly indicated that they are uncomfortable with such contact. However, children who are distressed or seek tactile reassurance may be comforted.

Staff should take special care during residential trips and after school activities when relationships that are more informal are usual, e.g. one-to-one tuition, sports coaching, transporting a pupil by car, engaging in inappropriate electronic communication with a pupil etc.

For further information on the staff professional code of conduct see the school policy entitled 'Professional Code of Conduct for Staff'.

Support for Children/Staff/Families

For any child undergoing a child protection referral and investigation, the need for support will be great and quite often such support will be limited to what the School can offer. We are the only agency with a statutory duty to work with the children on a daily basis and despite heavy workloads and limited resources we aim to meet their needs for support whenever possible. We aim to at least provide a secure classroom/house environment in which the child feels valued and protected.

The CPLO will, whenever possible make himself available to discuss individual children or situations with concerned members of staff.

The School will offer support where possible to the family of a child or children involved in child protection investigations, within the time constraints of its role, always remembering the limits of confidentiality on all members of staff and the fact that it is the welfare of the child that is paramount.

Review

This policy is continually monitored and is reviewed annually.

RJB

12.12.2009