



Winbury School Bray, Berkshire

Child Protection Policy to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Pupils at the School

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Revised September 2009



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Introduction

- The health, safety and well-being of all our children are of paramount importance to all the adults who work in our school. This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. Our children have the right to protection, regardless of age, gender race, culture or disability. They have a right to be safe in our school. As teachers with daily contact with the pupils, we acknowledge that we may be able to help detect child abuse and to monitor those pupils about whom there is concern.
- In our school we respect our children. The atmosphere within our school is one that encourages all children to do their best. We provide opportunities that enable our children to take and make decisions for themselves.
- All our teaching covers personal, social and health education and citizenship and helps to develop appropriate attitudes in our children and makes them aware of the impact of their decisions on others. We also teach them how to recognise different risks in different situations, and how to behave in response to them.

Statement

Winbury School fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection. This policy applies to all staff, whether employed full time or part time, contracted or a volunteer, working in the School and to the appointment of the members of the School Management. It is our intention that every pupil should feel safe and protected from any form of abuse: neglect, non-accidental physical injury, sexual exploitation or emotional ill-treatment.

The School regards the Policy to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children as integral to the effective discharge of its duties and responsibilities and accordingly has determined that the management undertake an annual review of the Policy and whenever required to ensure compliance with new or updated best practice guidelines or legislation.



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Aims and Objectives

Winbury School is committed to taking all reasonable measures to safeguard and promote the welfare of each pupil in its care by:

Ensuring that it practises safe recruitment in checking the suitability of all staff working with our pupils.

Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.

Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping pupils with the skills needed to recognize and keep them safe from abuse, as part of the PSHE curriculum.

Having clear procedures in place for identifying and reporting suspected cases of abuse.

Supporting any pupil who has been abused, in accordance with his/her agreed protection plan.

Creating an environment where children know they can approach adults, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.

The school undertakes to follow the procedures set out in “Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education”, and to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) in accordance with Section 157 Education Act 2002 and associated regulations and including “What to do if you are worried a child is being abused – Summary”.

Every complaint or suspicion of abuse from within or outside the School will be dealt with according to guidance given by The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, will be investigated and in all proper circumstances will be referred to an external agency such as the social services of the local authority in which the child resides (SSD), and the child protection unit of the police (CPU) in accordance with the procedures published by the Berkshire Local Safeguarding Children Boards.



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Winbury School undertakes to:

1. Ensure Safer Recruitment Procedures are always followed according to the DCFS document "Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education" January 2007
2. Ensure that there is a designated person for child protection who has received appropriate training and support for this role.
3. Ensure that there is a nominated member of the school management designated for Child Protection.
4. Ensure that all members of staff and school management team know the name of the designated person and their role.
5. Ensure that all staff understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and reporting arrangements for referring any concerns to the designated person responsible for child protection.
6. Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection.
7. Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences.
8. Notify Social Services if there is an unexplained absence of a pupil who is on the Child Protection Register.
9. Notify the DCFS of any employee, (whether current or having recently left the employ of the school), about whom there is a concern regarding his or her attitude or actions towards pupils.



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The Designated Person

The School's designated person who is responsible for matters relating to child protection and welfare is Mrs Paula Prewett, Headmistress. The designated person reports all matters to the Senior Management Administrator. If the designated person is unavailable or is the subject of a complaint, her duties will be carried out by the Senior Management Administrator in accordance with Allegations against Staff below. The designated person will have received appropriate training in child protection and inter-agency working and attend refresher training at two yearly intervals.

The designated person will:

- Keep written reports of concerns about children, even when there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
- Ensure all records are kept securely, separately from the main pupil file, and in a locked location.
- Follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff.
- Ensure that, where a pupil on the Child Protection Register leaves the information is transferred to the new school immediately and that the pupil's social worker is informed.

Mr John McHendry is the named Senior Administrator responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Child Protection Policy.



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Duty of Employees

Every member of the School's staff is under a general legal duty:

- To protect children from abuse.
- To be aware of the School's Child Protection procedures and to follow them.
- To keep a full record of any significant complaint, conversation or event.
- All evidence (for example, scribbled notes, mobile phone text messages) must be safeguarded and preserved.
- To report any matters of concern (suspicions or complaints of abuse) to the Designated Person/Senior Administrator or if the complaint involves either one of these people then it should be reported to the other
- To undertake appropriate training, including refresher training, at three yearly intervals.
- To ensure their behaviour and actions do not place pupils or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a pupil, for example, in one to one tuition, sports coaching and conveying a pupil by car.

Whistleblowing:

This will be in accordance with the Independent School Standards Regulation 3. (2) (b) which requires compliance with Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education Section when all staff are required to report to the designated Person any concern or allegations about school practices or the behaviour of colleagues which are likely to put pupils at risk of abuse or other serious harm. In exceptional cases such reports should be made to OFSTED. There will be no retribution or disciplinary sanction taken against a member of staff for making such a report provided that it is done in good faith.



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Procedures

Any member of staff suspecting or hearing a complaint of abuse:

1. Must listen carefully to the pupil and keep an open mind. Staff should not form a decision as to whether or not the abuse has taken place.
2. Must not ask a leading question, i.e. a question that suggests its own answer.
3. Must reassure the pupil but not give a guarantee of absolute confidentiality. The member of staff should explain they have to pass the information to the Designated Person who will ensure the correct action is taken.
4. Must keep a sufficient record of the conversation. The record should include the date, time and place of the conversation and the essence of what was said and done by whom and in whose presence. The record should be signed by the person making it and should use names and not initials. The record must be kept securely and handed to the Designated Person.

Action taken by the Designated Person

The Action to be taken will take into account:

- The procedures published by the DCFS – Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education.
- The nature and seriousness of the suspicion or complaint. A complaint involving a serious criminal offence will always be referred to the SSD or the police without further investigation within the School.
- The wishes of the pupil who has complained, provided that the pupil is of sufficient understanding and maturity and properly informed. However, there may be times when the situation is so serious that decisions may need to be taken, after all appropriate consultation, that override the pupil's wishes.



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- The wishes of the complainant's parents provided they have no interest which is in conflict with the pupil's best interest and they are properly informed. Again it may be necessary, after all appropriate consultation, to override parental wishes in some circumstances. If the Designated Person is concerned that disclosing information to parents would put a child at risk, she will take further advice from the relevant professionals before making a decision to disclose
- Duties of confidentiality, so far as applicable.
- The lawful rights and interest of the school community as a whole including its employees and its insurers.
- If there is room for doubt as to whether a referral should be made, the Designated Person may consult with SSD or other appropriate professionals on a no names basis without identifying the family. However, as soon as sufficient concern exists that a child may be at risk of significant harm, a referral will be made without delay. If the initial referral is made by telephone the Designated Person will contact Social Services again.

Referral Guidelines

The Designated Person must make a referral to Social Services within one working day of the recognition of risk if there are signs that a child:

- Is experiencing or may already have experienced abuse or neglect.
- Is likely to suffer significant harm in the future.

The safety of children is paramount in all decisions in relation to the welfare of children and members of the school staff should take all reasonable steps to offer a child immediate protection from an aggressive parent.



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External Agencies

Whether or not the School decides to refer a particular complaint to the SSD or the police the parents and pupil will be informed in writing of their right to make their own complaint or referral to the Social Services Department of the Child Protection Unit of the police and will be provided with contact names, addresses and telephone numbers, as appropriate.

Windsor and Maidenhead Social Services Department
01628 683150
01628 683715

Thames Valley Police
01865 291046 – out of office hours
01753 506581/585

Allegations against Staff

The procedures for dealing with allegations against staff should aim to strike a balance between the need to protect children from abuse and the need to protect staff from false or unfounded allegations unless:

- The pupil is at risk.
- Other pupils are at risk.
- The member of staff's presence in school will impede an investigation.
- Suspension will not be an automatic response to an allegation. Full consideration will be given to all the options, subject to the need to ensure:
 - The safety and welfare of the pupil concerned
 - The need for a full and fair investigation.

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The School is required to report to the Secretary of State, via the DCSF, within one month of leaving the school any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) whose services are no longer used because he or she is considered unsuitable to work with children.

If any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) is dismissed or resigns before a disciplinary process is completed the Head should inform the person about the employers statutory duty to report the case to the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, Failure to do so constitutes an offence and the school may be removed from the DCSF register of independent schools.

If any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) is dismissed or resigns and a judgement is made that a disciplinary process would have been instituted if that person had remained in post, the Head should similarly inform the person about the employer's statutory duty to report the case as above.

If an allegation is made against the Designated Person with responsibility for Child Protection, the member of staff receiving the allegation must immediately inform the Senior Administrator or in his absence, the allegation should be passed to the Golders Hill Management without notifying the Designated Person first.

Allegations against Pupils

A pupil against whom an allegation of abuse has been made may be suspended from the School during the investigation and the School's policy on behaviour and discipline will apply. Child protection concerns will be referred to the local authority children's social care.

Monitoring

The Head and the Senior Administrator will monitor the operation of this policy and the effectiveness of its procedures, and make an annual report on child Protection to the Management. In addition, any deficiency that is noted in the School's child protection arrangements will be remedied without delay. The School Management will undertake an annual review of this policy and the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged.



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APPENDIX A. Safeguarding Children in Education

GUIDANCE FOR STAFF DEALING WITH DISCLOSURES

RECEIVE

- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what is said
- Make a note of what has been said as soon as practicable

REASSURE

- Reassure the pupil, but only so far as is honest and reliable. For example, don't make promises you may not be able to keep eg. "I'll stay with you" or "everything will be alright now".
- Do reassure and alleviate guilt, if the pupil refers to it. For example, you could say:
 - I believe you.
 - I am glad you came to me.
 - I am sorry this has happened.
 - You're not to blame. You are not alone, you are not the only one this sort of thing has happened to.
 - We are going to do something together to get help.

(Based on NSPCC guidelines)

Do not promise to keep it a secret as your professional responsibilities may require you to report the matter. If you make this promise to a child and then break it, you confirm to the child yet again that adults are not to be trusted.



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REACT

- React to the pupil only as far as it necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer this matter, but do not interrogate for full details.
- Do not ask 'leading' questions, for example 'what did he do next?' (this assumes he did!), or 'did he touch your private parts?' Such questions may invalidate your evidence (and the child's) in any later prosecution in court.
- Do not criticize the alleged perpetrator; the pupil may care about him/her, and reconciliation may be possible.
- Do not ask the pupil to repeat it all for another member of staff. Explain what you have to do next and whom you have to talk to. Reassure the pupil that it will be the Designated member of staff. Try to see the matter through yourself and keep in contact with the pupil. Ensure that if a Social Service interview is to follow, that the pupil has a support person present if they wish (possibly yourself)

RECORD

- Make some very brief notes at the time on any paper which comes to hand, and write them up as soon as possible.
- Do not destroy your original notes in case they are required by a court.
- Record the date, time, place, persons present and noticeable non-verbal behaviour, and the words used by the child. If the child uses sexual 'pet' words, record the actual words used, rather than translating them into 'proper' words.
- Draw a diagram or complete a body map to indicate the position of any bruising.
- Record statements and observable things, rather than your 'interpretations' or 'assumptions'

REMEMBER

- To follow your school's child protection policy and procedures and share your concerns with your designated child protection member of staff as appropriate.
- Support the child: listen, comfort and be available.

Complete confidentiality is essential. Share your knowledge only with appropriate professional colleagues.

- Try to get some support for yourself if you need it.



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APPENDIX B. DEFINITIONS AND SIGNS OF ABUSE

Categories of abuse

1. Neglect

Persistent or severe neglect, or the failure to protect a child from any danger, including cold or starvation. Extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

2. Physical Abuse

Actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury (or suffering) to a child including deliberate poisoning, suffocation and Munchausen's syndrome by proxy.

3. Sexual Abuse

Actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent.

4. Emotional Abuse

Actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection.



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Possible signs of physical abuse

- Unexplained injuries or burns, particularly if they are recurrent.
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries.
- Refusal to discuss injuries.
- Admission of punishment which appears excessive.
- Fear of parents being contacted.
- Bald patches.
- Withdrawal from physical contact.
- Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather.
- Fear of returning home.
- Fear of medical help.
- Self-destructive tendencies.
- Aggression towards others.
- Chronic running away.

Possible signs of sexual abuse

Young children may:

- Be fearful about certain people like relatives or friends or family members.
- Not be allowed to have friends round.
- Have soreness/bleeding in the genital or anal areas or in the throat.
- Be reluctant to go with parent/carer.
- Find excuses not to go home or to a particular place.
- Have recurring nightmares/be afraid of the dark
- Be unable to concentrate, seem to be in a world of their own.
- Have a 'friend who has a problem' and then tell about the abuse of the friend.
- Have unexplained ailments such as stomach pains and headaches.
- Exhibit a sudden change in school/ work habits.
- Be withdrawn, isolated or excessively worried.
- Have outburst of anger or irritability.
- Be fearful of undressing for gym/swimming.



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Possible signs of emotional abuse

- Physical, mental and emotional development lags
- Admission of punishment which appears excessive
- Over-reaction to mistakes.
- Sudden speech disorders.
- Fear of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations.
- Neurotic behaviour (e.g rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking)
- Self mutilation (older children)
- Fear of parents being contacted.
- Extremes of passivity or aggression.
- Drug/solvent abuse (older children)
- Chronic running away (older children)
- Compulsive stealing (older children)

DISCLOSURE AND OBSERVATIONS

Where a child volunteers information about possible abuse, or where staff see signs which cause them concern, they should:

- Seek information from the child with tact and sympathy.
- Listen to the child without interruption.
- Not ask leading questions of the child.
- Make a signed note of the conversation, with the date, time place and whether any witnesses were present.
- Make no undertakings to the child of absolute confidentiality.
- Not investigate suspected abuse themselves and report the matter directly to the Designated Person.