



Northbourne Park School Child Protection Policy

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Introduction.

This document is required as a part of the Pre-Inspection Package for all Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) inspections from Jan 2010, and is in accordance with Kent County inter-agency procedures.

This policy is made available to parents on the School website, as well as on the staff Intranet. It is referred to in the Staff and Parents Handbook. Staff should read this document in conjunction with advice given in the Staff Handbook and in the Northbourne Park School Safe Working Practices Policy.

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1. Statement of Principles

Northbourne Park School fully recognises its responsibilities to “safeguard and protect the welfare of children” (Children Act 1989) and for “promoting the welfare of Children” (Education Act 2002), . The School is mindful of the guidance given in “Working Together” (1999) that schools should:

- a) seek to create and maintain a safe environment for children
- b) work to help children understand what is acceptable behaviour
- c) teach children to speak up if they believe they are not being treated appropriately
- d) teach children how to stay safe from harm

The School will safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the School, in compliance with DCSF Guidance *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education* and in particular with DCSF Standard 3 (2)(b) and according to NMS and EYFS requirements. This includes CRB checks and compliance with Independent School Standards Regulations.

The School will ensure that safe staff recruitment practices are always followed (i.e. for all teaching staff, domestic and any other staff employed by the School who have access to children).

Standing ‘*in loco parentis*’, the School recognises its obligation that the welfare of the child is paramount. As educational professionals, those who work at Northbourne Park School recognise that they are obliged further to

exercise a *professional* quality of care in their charge of pupils. The School understands its duty of care to apply to its support of pupils throughout their lives – not only at school.

The School's policy for Child Protection applies to all Staff and Governors, to any volunteers working in the School, and to agents employed indirectly by the School (e.g. employees of other companies working on site). All staff and parents have access to the Child Protection document through the School's Intranet Policy Library and have read it in the academic year 2008/9. All new staff will read the policy in their first two weeks in the School as part of the induction process.

Child Protection training will be delivered to all staff through informal presentations by the Headmaster during routine meetings and through INSET at the beginnings of term.

The School's policy aims to ensure that all pupils at Northbourne Park School live and study in an environment that promotes their welfare and in which correct procedures are in place to enable Child Protection issues to be dealt with sensitively, efficiently and to good effect.

The School will appoint a designated teacher as Child Protection Officer (currently Edward Balfour, the Headmaster) and a nominated Governor for Child Protection (currently Dr Claire Fuller), whose role is to oversee that Child Protection arrangements at the School are robust and adhered to and to work closely with the Headmaster in maintaining up-to-date Child Protection policies and procedures. Both the Child Protection Officer and the Nominated Child Protection Governor will receive appropriate training in child protection, inter-agency working and support for their roles, updated every two years.

The Governing body undertakes an annual review of the child protection policies and procedures and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged. Should an allegation be made against the Headmaster, the following procedures will be undertaken by the Senior Master, who receives appropriate training.

The Old Rectory

The Old Rectory's designated Child Protection Supervisor is The Head of the Pre-Preparatory Department (Julia Exley). She will manage any allegation or suspicion to the School Child Protection Officer, the Headmaster, in the first instance. The Head of the Pre-Preparatory Department takes lead responsibility for safeguarding children within the EYFS setting at the Old Rectory, liaising with local statutory children's agencies as appropriate;

- informing the Headmaster of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at The Old Rectory (whether that allegation relates to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere), or any other abuse which is alleged to have taken place there, and of the action taken in respect of these allegations;
- inform the Headmaster of the above, as soon as is reasonably practicable.

The Headmaster and all staff receive training in child protection (updated every three years). Part-time and voluntary staff who work with children are made aware of the arrangements. Any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements will be remedied without delay.

EYFS

This policy also applies to the EYFS provision at the School.

- (i) The Head of the Pre-Preparatory School is the designated practitioner to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children with the EYFS setting and to liaise with local statutory children's agencies as appropriate.
- (ii) The Head of the Pre-Preparatory School informs the Headmaster, the Designated Child Protection Officer, of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person working or looking after children at the premises (whether that allegation relates to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere), or any other abuse which is alleged to have taken place on the premises, and of the action taken in respect of these allegations.
- (iii) The Headmaster, the Designated Child Protection Officer, will inform the Local Education Designated Officer as soon as is reasonably practicable but at the latest within fourteen days.

Boarding

Northbourne Park School's boarding provision is inspected by OFSTED and additional elements apply under the National Minimum Standard 3 (3.1 to 3.9) and this policy applies to staff, any adults working in the School and older boarders in positions of responsibility.

In cases where a member of the boarding staff is suspended pending an investigation of a child protection nature, arrangements for alternative accommodation away from children will be made.

The School will also ensure that every member of staff (i.e. teaching staff and any other staff employed by the School who have access to children) knows the name of the designated teacher responsible for Child Protection and his/her role.

The School will ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility for Child Protection placed on the School and its staff, setting out these obligations in the *Parents' Handbook*.

The School will develop effective links with relevant agencies for child protection and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters. It will refer any suspicions of child abuse to the relevant agencies in accordance with the agreed NEOST/Teacher Union Guidance 2002 guidelines. (<http://www.lge.gov.uk/lge/aio/51022>) The School will keep written records of any concerns about children even when there is no need to refer the matter immediately. It will ensure these records are kept securely and separate from the Pupil Record Files.

The School will ensure all staff (i.e. teaching staff and any other staff employed by the School who have access to children) understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of child abuse and their responsibility to refer any concerns to the Child Protection Officer. This will be achieved through a series of regular Child Protection briefings to both the teaching and non-teaching staff by the Headmaster, in which the procedures for disclosures are presented as in 8.1 of this document. All staff are required to read through the Child Protection documentation at least every two years and regular references to Child Protection are made in Staff Meetings.

2. Aims of the Child Protection Policy

- To establish and maintain a safe environment in which children can live and learn together, and develop into maturity.
- To establish and maintain an environment in which children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- To ensure that the School practises safe recruitment, checking the suitability of staff and others working with or in contact with children at the School or on off-site activities.
- To raise awareness of child protection issues and equip children with the skills needed to keep them safe.
- To ensure children know that there are adults in the School whom they can approach if they are worried.
- To define procedures for identifying and reporting cases of suspected, or actual, child abuse.
- To ensure the implementation of the procedures for responding to instances of suspected, or actual, child abuse.
- To support any pupil who has been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan.

3. Definition of Child Abuse

The basis of all child abuse is the failure to recognise a child's basic needs and respond to them. Child abuse is defined in the statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children*. The key concept is "*significant harm*¹". Abuse causing significant harm may take the form of Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, Sexual Abuse or the abuse of Neglect.

3.1 Physical Abuse: Intentional actions which result in the child sustaining physical injury (e.g. bruises, broken or sprained limbs). It may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

¹ Determining whether harm is '*significant*' involves assessing not only the degree and extent of the harm done to the child, but also the duration and frequency of the action causing harm and the level of premeditation behind it. It is also pertinent if threat, coercion, sadism or other unusual force was involved in the events causing harm.

3.2 Emotional Abuse: Intentional actions which result in a child sustaining emotional distress or damage. These actions can include: over-protection of the child and undue limitation of his/her exploration and learning; denying the child normal social interaction; persistent rejection of the child; *gross* inconsistency in relationships (that inhibits the child's developing understanding of appropriate behaviour); persistent interactions with the child that are beyond the child's developmental capacity.

3.3 Sexual Abuse: Involving immature children and adolescents in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend and to which they are unable to give informed consent. It may involve forcing or enticing the child to: behave in sexually inappropriate ways; to engage in non-penetrative sexual acts (including non-contact activities such as involving a child in looking at sexual activities or pornographic material); participate in penetrative sexual acts.

3.4 Neglect: Omitting to care for the child, in a way that is liable to impair the child's health or physical/emotional development.

4. Signs and Symptoms of Child Abuse

All staff have a central role in identifying the abuse of children (and not only abuse taking place within School):

"Because they are in regular and frequent contact with children, School staff are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse ... as part of their pastoral responsibilities teachers should be alert to all such signs. The designation of a co-ordinating teacher should not be seen as diminishing the role of all teachers in being alert to signs of abuse".

4.1 Physical Abuse: Bruises, scratch marks, bites, burns. The child may be unwilling to become involved in games (especially swimming) or may wear clothing covering limbs even in hot weather.

4.2 Emotional Abuse: The child may exhibit difficult or disturbed behaviour (e.g. aggressive or destructive action, an inability to sustain relationships with peers). The child may seek adult attention and/or affection (e.g. choosing the company of adults – matron, a teacher – rather than that of his/her peers; inventing reasons to join in conversations with a teacher). The pupil may seek physical contact, or compensate by over-eating or drinking.

Parents may appear fussy and over-protective. They may interfere with the development of independence, self-esteem and personal competence that are part of the child's normal growth. They may be unreasonably strict in their discipline exhibiting "Victorian patterns of parenting".

4.3 Sexual Abuse: Non-physical signs include: sudden changes in mood or behaviour, a knowledge of sexual matters (or vocabulary) far in advance of what is normative at their chronological age, a marked lack of trust in adults and an inability to develop and sustain stable relationships with their peers. They may try to win or buy friends. Indications of a wish to disguise physical attractiveness (e.g. by over-eating or radical hair cutting) may be significant.

4.4 Neglect: Irregular visits by parents or to home in term time with no apparent contact by letter or telephone may be significant. The child's clothing may be old and/or in poor repair, he/she may be short of pocket money and tuck.

4.5 General signs of abuse: These include:

- Disobedience, attention-seeking or aimless behaviour
- Anti-social behaviour or delinquency
- Hysterical attacks or sudden/violent changes in mood
- Misuse of alcohol or other drugs
- Changes in eating patterns, including loss of appetite, faddiness or an excessive preoccupation with food
- Severe sleep disturbance with vivid dreams and/or nightmares
- Inability to concentrate, or a sudden drop in School performance
- Social isolation, poor peer-group relationships, an inability to make friends
- Truancy or a reluctance to take weekend leave

- Self-mutilation
- Talk of or attempts at suicide

5. A Statement of Intent

Northbourne Park School is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all its pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. The School takes seriously its responsibility to protect its pupils from bullying and abuse. Ours is an OPEN SCHOOL. This means that anyone who knows that abuse is happening is expected to tell. Telling is not "dobbing in".

6. Responsibilities

6.1 *The Governors:* In providing for section 2.22 of *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education*, the governors ensure that the school,

- (a) has a policy and procedures in accordance with locally agreed inter-agency procedures and makes them available to parents on the school website or by sending a copy on request.
- (b) operates safe recruitment procedures including CRB checks and compliance with Independent School Standards Regulations.
- (c) has arrangements to deal with allegations of abuse against members of staff / volunteers / head.
- (d) names one or more 'designated persons' with 'status and authority' to take responsibility for child protection matters.
- (e) requires training (updated every two years) in child protection and inter-agency working for the designated person(s).
- (f) requires training in child protection (updated every three years) for the head and all staff, and indicates that temporary and voluntary staff who work with children are to be made aware of the arrangements.
- (g) requires that any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements are remedied without delay.
- (h) provides that the governing body or proprietor undertakes an annual review of the school's child protection policies and procedures and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged.

6.2 *The Headmaster:* The Headmaster has a legal duty to ensure that procedures exist to ensure the proper protection of children at Northbourne Park School and to deal efficiently with any suspicions of abuse, either in the home or in the School. He will:

- Ensure that the procedures of the School's Child Protection Policy accord with the requirements of the law and represent good standards of practice,
- Discuss development of the procedures with the School's Senior Management Team,
- Ensure that the Houseparents have an opportunity of reviewing the policy and its procedures,
- Ensure that the School's procedures are brought to the attention of all staff, parents and pupils,
- Ensure that all staff (i.e. teaching staff and any other staff employed by the School who have access to children) are alert to the signs of possible child abuse and know what to do if they have any concerns or suspicions,

- Report annually to the Governors on the approach to Child Protection and the response to Child Abuse within the School.

6.3 *The Designated Teacher – The Headmaster:* As the designated teacher, The Headmaster for the purposes of The Children Act, 1989 will:

- Be responsible for redrafting the School’s Child Protection Policy and for presenting it for discussion by the Senior Management Team before communicating it to all staff.
- Be responsible for publishing appropriate details of the policy in Staff Handbook, the Parents’ Handbook, and for ensuring that the relevant procedures are presented to the Bursar in order to inform the School’s support staff,
- Be responsible for the day-to-day management of the policy and associated procedures,
- Act as a source of advice and coordinate action within the School over suspected cases of abuse,
- Liaise with all relevant agencies involved in the protection of children building a good working relationship with colleagues from these agencies,
- Be responsible for action in cases of suspected child abuse, as the first person to whom suspicions are reported by staff, and as the person who discusses the situation with the relevant agencies,
- Liaise with the appropriate agencies, in accordance with NEOST procedures and other published guidance, when alerted to possible or actual child abuse, including historical complaints of abuse²,
- Have received training in how to identify abuse and know when it is appropriate to refer a case. He will have a working knowledge of NEOST procedures and other published guidance on dealing with reports of abuse, and of how Area Child Protection Committees operate,
- Will attend and contribute to a child protection case conference when required,
- Keep detailed accurate secure written records of concerns about (or referrals upon) child protection issues,
- Ensure the key issues (or new developments) in the field of child protection are communicated promptly to staff employed at Northbourne Park School, and make sure that all staff have had training in child protection, appropriate to their role in the School,
- Ensure that the School’s child protection policy is updated and reviewed annually and work with the Headmaster and SMT regarding this.

6.4 *The Headmaster will also:*

- Be responsible for ensuring that Matrons and other boarding staff are alert to the signs of possible child abuse and know what they have to do if they have any suspicions,
- Be responsible for ensuring that Matrons and other boarding staff read and are familiar with the School’s Child Protection Policy and that they understand that they must **always** follow its procedures **exactly** in cases of suspected or actual child abuse,
- Put into practice, methods for encouraging pupils to tell someone if they are being abused physically, emotionally, sexually or by neglect.

6.5 *Teaching Staff and Matrons:* All teaching staff and Matrons will:

- Know the School’s Child Protection Policy and procedures
- Deal with suspected or actual abuse according to the policy

6.6 *The Bursar will:*

- Be responsible for ensuring that the School’s support staff are alert to the signs of possible abuse and know what they have to do if they have any suspicions

² Northbourne Park School follows the guidance in *Working Together to Safeguard Children* that, when historical allegations of abuse are made, “they should be responded to in the same way as contemporary concerns, in terms of the prompt referral to the relevant social services department and discussion with the police if it appears that a criminal offence has been committed.”

6.7 *Support Staff:* All support, part-time and voluntary staff who work with children:

- Know the procedure they must follow if they become alert to suspected or actual child abuse
- Follow the procedure in cases of possible or actual abuse

6.8 *Pupils:* All pupils should:

- Be aware of the School's Statement of Intent on Child Protection (Section 5)
- Inform a trusted person within the School if they are being abused physically, emotionally, sexually, or by neglect, or if they are aware of such abuse
- Reject the idea that disclosing abuse of any form is "dobbing in"

6.9 *Parents:* All parents should:

- Be aware of the School's Child Protection Policy and its Statement of Intent (Section 5)
- Contact the Headmaster if they suspect that their son / daughter is being abused physically, emotionally, sexually or by neglect.

7. Child Protection in the Curriculum

Northbourne Park School seeks to raise awareness of child protection issues through safety education as part of the PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) programme. In this programme they will be taught to:

- Recognise the range of behaviours (physical, emotional, sexual or neglectful) that can constitute "abuse",
- Recognise the risks present in particular situations and to decide how to behave responsibly in that context,
- Use assertiveness techniques to resist abusive pressures.

8. Procedures

8.1 *Disclosure of Abuse by a pupil.*

Children who have been abused attempt to tell an adult, many times. One case cited at the Optimus Education Child Protection Lectures was of a child talking to 40 different people before her disclosure was treated seriously.

As professionals we have a major role to play in acting as a safety net for children, if we adopt the correct procedures below. A child may confide in any member of staff – they do not always go to teachers or matrons. All staff employed at Northbourne Park School should therefore be aware that they might sometime be chosen by a pupil as the recipient of disclosure. Under no circumstances should a member of staff carry out their own investigation into the allegation of abuse. In such circumstances the member of staff must remember that he/she:

- Has a listening role,
- Should not interrupt the child until he/she has completed what he/she wishes to say,
- Should seek clarification of what is being said only by asking open questions. It is NOT APPROPRIATE to lead the child in any way, to guess or to make suggestions,
- May clarify what the child has said only when it is necessary to determine if child abuse is at issue. It is NOT APPROPRIATE for the member of staff to clarify the details of the abuse,
- Should always take seriously what is being said,
- Should never give an undertaking of absolute confidentiality,
- Should tell the child that the substance of the disclosure will be passed on, but only to those who need to be so informed,

- May reassure the child that his/her disclosure is in line with the School's Statement of Intent (Section 5),
- Should listen initially without taking notes,
- Must ensure that the pupil feels secure once the disclosure is concluded. (It may be appropriate to hand the child, with their assent, into the care of the House Matron or their HsM, or some other carer, saying that they have been upset. If this is necessary, the disclosure of abuse must not be mentioned under any circumstances),
- Must make a note of the disclosure as soon as is reasonably practicable. This note should record the time, date, place and people present, as well as what was said. It should be signed/dated. It should note any observed physical evidence (e.g. injuries or bruises) and record the non-verbal behaviour of the pupil and the actual language used by the pupil when making the disclosure. This note may be used in any subsequent court proceedings,
- Must immediately inform the Headmaster (the Child Protection Officer) and give the note to him. (If the disclosure constitutes an allegation of abuse by the Headmaster, it is the Senior Master who must be informed – **NOT** the Headteacher. The Chairman of Governors must also be informed if the disclosure constitutes an allegation against the Head.)
- The member of staff's formal involvement ends at this point, but he/she may have an informal role supporting or monitoring the child,
- Must not discuss the disclosure with anyone.

The following mnemonic may be of use as an aide-memoire:

- R Respond without showing signs of disquiet, anxiety or shock
- E Enquire casually about how an injury was sustained or why a child appears upset
- C Confidentiality should not be promised to children or to adults
- O Observe carefully the behaviour and demeanour of the child or the person expressing concern
- R Record in detail what you have seen and heard on any material available
- D Do not interrogate or enter into detailed investigations

8.2 The Headmaster (dealing with allegations of abuse by adults who are not School employees) :

The Headmaster will follow the NEOST/Union procedures for dealing with disclosures of abuse.

He will:

- Read, sign and date the notes of the disclosure and warn the member of staff who made them to discuss the matter with no one.
- Discuss the allegation with the Senior Master or Deputy Head. They will judge if there is
 - a) a possibility that *significant harm* to a child/young person has taken place or may take place,
 - b) a possibility that a *criminal offence* involving a child/young person has taken place or may take place,
 - c) a probability that the allegation relates to the use of reasonable force to restrain a child,
 - d) a probability that the allegation indicates "inappropriate behaviour" or "poor practice" by an adult, but behaviour that does not constitute *significant harm*,
 - e) clear reason to think that the allegation is without foundation.

The Headmaster will,

- communicate readily with the local safeguarding agency whenever an allegation or disclosure of abuse has been made (*Working together to safeguard children* and *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused*), referring the case to the Local Authority Designated Officer at Kent Social Services **within 24 hours** if it is,
 - a) thought possible that *significant harm* to a child/young person has taken place or may take place,

- b) thought possible that a *criminal offence* involving a child/young person has taken place or may take place,

When deciding whether to make a referral, following an allegation or suspicion of abuse, the designated Child Protection Officer will not make their own decision over what appear to be borderline cases, but rather the doubts and concerns will be discussed with the local authority designated officer (LADO). This may be done tentatively and without giving names in the first instance. What appears trivial at first can later be revealed to be much more serious, and an allegation of child abuse or neglect may lead to a criminal investigation. Thus the school will not do anything that may jeopardise a police investigation, such as asking a child leading questions or attempting to investigate the allegations of abuse.

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- Recommend to the pupil that they discuss ways of dealing assertively with inappropriate behaviour if it seems that this is needed.
 - Require that the pupil is seen by the designated School Counsellor if it is judged that the allegation is without foundation.
 - Make written notes of the discussions with the Headmaster and the reasons for their assessment of the disclosure. These notes should be signed and dated by both the Senior Master and the Headmaster,
 - Inform the Form Teachers and the parents/guardians of a pupil if,
 - a) the pupil is to be seen by a School Counsellor to discuss ways of enhancing the assertiveness of their behaviour (if a parent is the focus of the child's disclosure of inappropriate adult behaviour they will not be informed of this counselling),
 - b) the child is judged to have made an allegation demonstrably without foundation, telling them that the pupil will be required to attend an appointment with a School Counsellor to discuss their reasons for the unfounded allegation and that further disciplinary action may be taken if the false accusation is finally deemed to have been malicious,

If it is decided that the pupil's allegation is to be formally referred to the Social Services Department the Headmaster will supply them with the following information:

- The child's name (and any other names that the child is known by),
- Date of birth,
- Home address,
- Home telephone number,
- Parents' (or Guardians') name,
- Names of siblings (if known),
- GP's name,
- Ethnicity and religion of parents,
- The nature of the abuse at issue (i.e. physical, emotional, sexual or neglect),
- Details of the allegation, including the notes of the pupil's disclosure of abuse,
- Reference to previous referrals made by Northbourne Park School to Kent Social Services,
- Whether the parents' consent to the referral has been given. (If it has not be given, the Headmaster will explain why the School has decided to dispense with their consent),
- Whether the parents have been informed that the referral has been made. (If they have not, the Headmaster will explain why the School has decided not to inform parents),
- The names of any people at Northbourne Park School or Kent Social Services that the Headmaster has contacted to discuss this matter.

These procedures remain the same for any suspicion or allegation of abuse, whether dealing with abuse by one or more pupils against another pupil; or by others. If significant harm is suspected following the meeting with the

Senior Master, any pupils against whom allegations have been made would be separated from their peers, their parents contacted and they would be taken out of School, pending the next steps.

Events following the referral will follow the local child protection procedures.

The School's involvement in considering and investigating what is alleged ceases with the referral. All discussion of the allegation by employees of Northbourne Park School is forbidden from this point. Neither teachers nor members of Council may interfere with the evidence (for example by attempting to interview the child or his/her parents).

8.3 The Headmaster dealing with allegations of abuse by School employees, volunteers:

Allegations against staff or volunteers should be reported to the designated Child Protection Officer (the Headmaster) unless he or she is the object of the allegation.

The designated Child Protection Officer (the Headmaster) will have received higher level safeguarding training.

If the Headmaster is absent, the allegation should be passed on to the Chairman of Governors.

Where the allegation is made against the designated Child Protection Officer (the Headmaster), the person receiving the allegation should immediately inform the Chairman of Governors without notifying the Headmaster first.

In case of serious harm, the police should be informed from the outset.

The Chairman of Governors will normally appoint the Senior Master to take the role of the Headmaster in fulfilling the procedure below.

The Headmaster (or nominated replacement) will follow the guidance produced by the DfES (*Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and Other Staff*) for dealing with allegations of abuse by any School employee.

He will:

- Read, sign and date the notes of the disclosure and warn the member of staff who made them to discuss the matter with no one,
- He will judge if the allegation indicates:
 - a) a possibility that *significant harm* to a child/young person has taken place,
 - b) a possibility that a *criminal offence* involving a child/young person has taken place,
 - c) a possibility that a school employee has behaved in a way indicating he/she is *unsuitable to work with children*.
- Discuss the case with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) *on the same day* if it any of (a),
 - (b) or (c) seem possible, to:
 - i. confirm the details of the allegation,
 - ii. establish that the claim is not patently false,
 - iii. decide whether the child's parents are to be informed,
 - iv. decide whether the accused employee is to be informed (the accused must be advised to contact his/her union)
 - v. consider whether there is:
 - a. a possibility that a *criminal offence* involving a child/young person has taken place,
 - b. a possibility that *significant harm* to a child/young person has taken place,
 - c. a possibility that the member of staff may need to be *suspended*
 - d. clear evidence that the allegation is *groundless*
- Make written notes of his discussions with the LADO and the reasons for their assessment of the disclosure. These notes should be signed and dated.

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- If there is a possibility that a *criminal offence* involving a child/young person has taken place, then

LADO will inform the police immediately for them to conduct an initial evaluation. The police should review the case with the CPS within four weeks of the initial evaluation.

LADO

- If there is a possibility that *significant harm* to a child/young person has taken place, then the

will involve Social Services and immediately convene a strategy discussion involving the Headmaster.

- If the Headmaster and LADO will decide that the member of staff needs to be *suspended* if:
 - i. the member of staff will impede the investigation by remaining at work
 - ii. there is a continuing risk of harm to a child that suspension can lessen
 - iii. the Headmaster intends to summarily dismiss the teacher
 - iv. there is no better option (e.g. alternative duties)

If the member of staff needs to be *suspended*, then the Headmaster will:

a) Recognise that suspension of an employee (or pupil) in such circumstance must not be construed as a disciplinary penalty (as the investigation of the allegation is on-going). In consequence, a suspended teacher will be in receipt of full pay and benefits. Voluntary alternatives to suspension (e.g. paid leave of absence or alternative duties within the School) may be considered by the Headmaster,

b) Consider placing a suspended employee normally resident in School accommodation in temporary alternative accommodation (provided at the School's expense),

c) Interview the suspended employee, who will be entitled to bring a trade union representative (or a friend) to the interview. At the interview, the employee will be informed of the allegation laid against him/her and provided with all possible information not prejudicial to the conduct of the on-going investigation,

d) Send any suspended employee written notification of the reasons for suspension within 24 hours of the oral interview. In this written notification the employee will be provided with the name of a member of the SMT who will act as an information channel, keeping them abreast of the progress of the investigation,

e) Inform the Governors of the suspension,

f) Inform the pupil who has made an allegation (and his/her parents) that the accused employee has been suspended.

- If it is judged that there is no cause to involve the police or Social Services, there remains a possibility that the School will need to take *formal disciplinary action* against the employee. The Headmaster, Chairman of Governors and LADO will discuss the next step options and action will follow within 3 days:

- i. no further action
- ii. use of the School's Disciplinary Processes (outlined in the Staff Handbook)
- iii. summary Dismissal of the employee

Reporting to the ISA

The Child Protection Officer undertakes to report to the Independent Safeguarding Authority, 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. In this context, ceasing to use a person's services includes: dismissal; non-renewal of a fixed-term contract; no longer engaging/refusing to engage a supply teacher provided by an employment agency; terminating the placement of a student teacher or other trainee; no longer using staff employed by contractors; no longer using volunteers; resignation, and voluntary withdrawal from supply teaching, contract working, a course of initial teacher training, or volunteering. It is important that reports include as much evidence about the circumstances of the case as possible. Failure to make a report constitutes an offence and the School may be removed from the DCSF register of independent schools. The relevant legislation is contained in The Education (Provision of Information by Independent Schools)

(England) Regulations 2003. The contact details for the ISA are: P.O. Box 181, Darlington DL1 9FA (telephone number: 0300 123 1111).

- Any School disciplinary hearing will be held within 15 days – unless there is a requirement for further investigation. If there is a need for further investigation it must be completed within 10 days; a decision whether to proceed with a disciplinary hearing will be made within 2 days of the conclusion of that investigation. If required, the hearing will then follow within 15 days. In these circumstances, the Headmaster will always proceed keeping in mind the possibility of involving (at this later stage) the police or social care.
- If the child is judged to have made an allegation demonstrably without foundation the Headmaster will require that the pupil is seen by a School counsellor and consider appropriate disciplinary action against the pupil. The LADO may refer the matter to Social Services.

8.4 Suspicions of child abuse:

All suspicions of abuse must be passed directly to the Headmaster (who will follow the procedure outlined at 8.2)

9. Abuse of a Position of Trust.

The Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000 creates an offence of “Abuse of Trust”. In view of this new legislation it is important that all staff employed at Northbourne Park School recognise that they are in a ‘position of trust’ and so make sure that they keep within the appropriate boundaries during their dealings with pupils under 18. The conduct of staff and the language they use in conversation with pupils under 18 must fall within appropriate boundaries. Irrespective of the age of consent (and even if the basis for a relationship is consensual) it is illegal for a School employee in a “position of trust” to engage in any sexual activity with (or directed towards) a pupil under 18.

It is important that any School employee who is concerned that actions (or words) might be construed as an abuse of a position of trust (or who is concerned that a pupil is working to move their relationship into an unacceptable area) should

- Make a written note of the incident(s) that is/are the focus of their concern,
- Discuss the incident(s) with the Headmaster
- Keep the counter-signed notes on file in case of a future accusation of abuse of trust,
- Consider discussing the matter with their trade union.

10. Advice given to pupils

A Statement of Intent

Northbourne Park School is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all its pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. The School takes seriously its responsibility to protect its pupils from bullying and abuse. Ours is an OPEN SCHOOL. This means that anyone who know that abuse is happening is expected to tell. Telling is not “dobbing in” or “grassing”.

If you are being abused in anyway, you must tell someone. It won’t stop unless you do. Anyone working at Northbourne Park School will know how to support you if you tell them about this sort of thing. You can also contact Childline on 0800 1111 at any time.

11. Contact details

Kent Social Services : 08458 247100 (*New referrals*)
0845 3302967 ask for KCAS (Kent Children’s Assessment Service)

Fax for referral forms: 01732 221709 / 01233 652261

Out of hours service : 08457 626777

12. Guidance for Staff

Guidance for staff, to ensure that 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, conveying a pupil by car, engaging in inappropriate electronic communication with a pupil, and so on) is available in the School's policy for Safe Working Practices.

13. Other Organisations

Staff members taking trips to another organisation or working with the school's pupils on another site obtain assurance that appropriate child protection checks and procedures apply to any staff with direct access to the pupils.

EWB