



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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We fully recognise the School's responsibilities for child protection. Our policy applies both to all who work at the school and to Governors.

The member of staff designated as our school CPO (Child Protection Officer) is the Head. In the event of the Head's unavailability, the Deputy Head will be acting CPO.

There are eight main elements to our Child Protection policy:

1. Staff Recruitment

We are careful in our recruitment, making the appropriate checks on the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children (including CRB checks).

2. Pupil Awareness and Educating

We raise awareness of child protection issues and aim to equip our boys with the skills needed to keep them safe.

3. Environment

We aim to provide a safe and secure environment in which boys are encouraged to talk, are listened to, and in which they know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried.

4. Identifying and Reporting Cases

Staff are in contact with children all day and are in a position to detect possible abuse. They are provided with signs and symptoms. They are assured that by voicing concern to the designated appropriate person they are not necessarily starting procedures. The criterion for doing so should be that they have '*reasonable suspicion*'.

5. Support for a pupil who has been abused

We would support a pupil if he had been abused in accordance with his agreed child protection plan.

6. Child Protection Office and Staff Training

Shrewsbury House School recognises and fulfils the requirements for the training of the Child Protection Officer, The Head and all the Staff i.e. The Child Protection Officer's training is updated every 2 years and all staff (including part-time staff/voluntary staff) is updated every 3 years.

7. Annual Review of the School's Child Protection Policy

An annual review of the School's Child Protection Policy is undertaken by a representative of the Board of Governors. When required, a report of the effectiveness of the operation of the School's Child Protection Policy will be made to the full Board of Governors by the Child Protection Officer.

8. Procedure for allegations made against members of Staff or the Head

In the instance of an allegation against a member of staff or the Head there is a formal procedure

approved by the Board of Governors which is adhered to. Allegations against staff or voluntary staff should be reported to the Head, who is the Child Protection Officer at Shrewsbury House School. If the Head is absent, the allegation should be passed to the Deputy Head or the Chair of Governors. If the allegation concerns the Head (who is the CPO), the recipient of the allegation should immediately inform the Chair of Governors without notifying the head first. In case of serious harm, the police should be informed from the outset.

9. Following the Governors review of the Child Protection Policy any deficiencies or weaknesses in Child Protection arrangements are remedied without delay. Implementing our Child Protection Policy

1. Staff Recruitment

All staff appointments are referred to the bursar who carries out the appropriate checks, (including CRB checks).

Shrewsbury House School seeks assurance that appropriate child protection checks and procedures apply to any staff employed by another organisation and working with the school's pupils on another site.

Any interviewing panel will always include someone who has both attended the NCSL Safer Recruitment workshop and been awarded a certificate of proficiency at it.

Shrewsbury House School fulfil the requirement of reporting to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) 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; the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) commenced operation on 20th January 2009 and its address for referrals is PO Box 181, Darlington DL1 9FA (tel 0300 123 1111)

2. Pupil Awareness and Educating

This is carried out through:

- Informal conversation
- Tutor briefings and discussions
- Themes in Assemblies
- Briefings for outings, trip and tours
- The implementing of our ICT usage policy and by advice on safe ICT usage
- Encouraging boys to speak out if there is something worrying them or if they are aware of or witness something unacceptable, untoward or disturbing
- Ensuring boys know what to do if there is someone in the school who is unaccompanied or is not wearing the appropriate badge
- Lectures

3. Providing a Safe and Secure Environment

Definition of Environment: within 107 Ditton Road and all other related Shs areas (e.g. school minibuses; other transport we use for the boys; at Almshouse Lane; at other schools under our charge – including, of course, for matches; wherever outings, trips, tours may take us).

Physical Environment. All staff play their parts in ensuring that the school is physically a safe place. To this end, they are expected always to be risk assessing. Where something is not as it should be, they are expected to act immediately in informing the appropriate person to deal with whatever it is.

Social Environment. All staff play their part in ensuring Shs is a good place to be in by:-
being good examples to the boys;
being friendly (but not over-friendly), supportive, interested, helpful, and caring;
upholding and supporting the school's regulations and routines in a sensitive but, where appropriate, firm manner;

being proactive;
using good sense;
being responsible and efficient (e.g. duties – be there at the start; boys using minibus – be there when they start arriving)
reinforcing the strong anti bullying culture in the school – noticing and acting on anything which could be bullying or making a boy unhappy;
ensuring we do not ourselves bully (especially boys, but also other staff) nor do anything which could lead to bullying or to a boy being humiliated;
disciplining/punishing positively;
not favouring a boy/ or boys over other boys.

4. Identifying and Reporting Cases

All staff are given guidelines on how to identify possible abuse, the different forms of abuse and of the procedures to follow if they have reasonable suspicion that abuse may be occurring.

5. Support for a pupil who has been abused

If a boy had been abused or had witnessed violence, he would be likely find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth. He could feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The school could be the only stable, secure and predictable element in his life. When at school his behaviour may be challenging or defiant or he may be withdrawn. The school would endeavour to support him through:

- our school ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued.
- ensuring that he knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but he is valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
- liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as social services, Child and Adult Mental Health Service, education welfare service and educational psychology service.
- ensuring that, if there is a pupil on the child protection register, when leaves his information is transferred to his new school immediately and that his social worker is informed.

Procedures when a Member of Staff, Voluntary Staff, Child Protection Officer or Head faces Allegations of Abuse

Allegations that a member of staff, or CPO has abused a pupil or pupils either inside the school premises or during a school trip or visit could be made by:

- Parents
- The abused pupil
- Other members of staff
- Other pupils
- The Police or Social Services
- A third party

An allegation of such seriousness would normally be made directly to the Head Master; but if another member of staff is told first, he/she will ensure that the Head Master is informed immediately.

If the Head Master is unavailable – or is involved - the Chairman of Governors should be told at once.

ANONYMOUS ALLEGATIONS

If we are faced with an anonymous allegation of child abuse which names both a member of staff and a child, we will handle it in exactly the same way as if we knew the identity of the person making the allegation. Where the allegation names the member of staff; but not the pupil, we will normally interview the member of staff, and ask for his or her version of events. It could be appropriate to establish a mentoring or review programme for that individual, or to provide him or her with further training. A record would be kept on the individual's personal file.

THE FIRST RESPONSE

We will respond promptly and sensitively to the legitimate concerns of the victim and his family. We undertake to:

- Take any allegation of abuse, involving a member of staff, very seriously,
- Establish the facts before jumping to any conclusion,
- Inform the member of staff concerned honestly of the allegation that has been made, and advise him or her to contact their Trade Union or Professional Association for advice and support,
- Inform the child's parents in confidence, inviting them to maintain confidentiality whilst the investigation takes place, unless the allegation involves the parents, in which case we will contact the Social Services before making contact.

THE NEXT STEP

Although a formal investigation is a matter for specialists, where the facts suggest that there may be reasonable grounds for suspecting actual abuse, or grooming of a child, or other criminal behaviour, we will always:

- Invite the police to conduct the investigation,
- Involve the Local Safeguarding Childrens Board (LSCB),
- Consider suspending the member of staff (or volunteer) concerned.

SUPPORT FOR THE PUPIL

Our priority is to safeguard the young people in our care. We will give all the support that we can to a pupil who has been abused. The Headmaster, the school's Child Protection Officer (CPO), will consider how best to support and monitor the pupil concerned through any process of investigation, liaising closely with parents, guardians, Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), or other agencies involved to identify the support strategies that will be appropriate.

SUSPENSION

Suspension of a member of staff is a neutral act and does not imply that any judgement has been reached about his or her conduct. Even so, it is a serious step, and we will take legal advice beforehand, and will normally only suspend a member of staff where:

- There is a serious risk of harm (or further harm) to the child,
- The allegations are so serious as to constitute grounds for dismissal, if proven,
- The police are investigating allegations of criminal misconduct.

We recognise fully that we have a duty of care towards all of our staff, and we will always:

- Keep an open mind until a conclusion has been reached.
- Interview a member of staff before suspending him or her.
- Keep him or her informed of progress of the investigation.

Any member of staff who is invited to a meeting whose outcome is likely to result in his or her suspension, is entitled to be accompanied by a friend or Trade Union representative.

ALTERNATIVES TO SUSPENSION

We will always consider whether an alternative to suspension might be appropriate. Possibilities include:

- Sending the member of staff on leave,
- Giving him or her non-contact duties,
- Ensuring that a second adult is always present in the classroom when he or she teaches.

IF THE MEMBER OF STAFF RESIGNS

The resignation of a member of staff or volunteer mid-way through an investigation would not lead to the investigation being abandoned. Our policy is always to complete every investigation into allegations of child abuse.

COMPROMISE AGREEMENTS

The policy at the school is to follow the DCSF guidance set out in “Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education” on the use of compromise agreements in cases of child abuse which is:

“Compromise agreements, by which a person agrees to resign, and a school agrees not to pursue disciplinary action, and both parties agree a form of words to be used in any future reference, must not be used in these cases. In any case, such an agreement will not prevent a thorough police investigation where that is appropriate. Nor can it override the statutory duty to make a referral to List 99 [now the ISA] where circumstances require it”

LENGTH OF INVESTIGATORY PROCESS

We recognise that everyone’s interests are served by completing any investigatory process as swiftly as possible. The school is a small community and we will aim to spend as little time as is compatible with fair and impartial processes on the investigatory process. We would expect almost every case to be completed within one month.

REFERRAL TO THE INDEPENDENT SAFEGUARDING AUTHORITY

Like all schools, we have a statutory legal duty to refer an individual, where there is the risk that he or she may harm, or has caused harm to children, to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) within one month of the individual’s dismissal or resignation because he or she has been considered unsuitable to work with children. Reports concerning members of staff or volunteers are normally made by the CPO. If the CPO/Headmaster is involved, the report is made by the Chair of Governors.

The referral form can be downloaded from the ISA website on (www.isa-gov.org.uk). The school plays no part in the subsequent process of barring individuals from working with children and/or vulnerable adults. We also have a legal duty to respond to any requests for information that we receive from the ISA at any time.

RECORDING ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

We will record all allegations of abuse, and our subsequent actions, including any disciplinary actions, on an individual’s file. A copy will be given to the individual and he or she will be told that the record will be retained until he or she reaches statutory retirement age, or for ten years, if that is longer.

HANDLING UNFOUNDED OR UNSUBSTANTIATED ALLEGATIONS

The Child

A child who has been the centre of unfounded or unsubstantiated allegations of child abuse needs professional help in dealing with the aftermath. We will liaise closely with the LSCB to set up a professional programme that best meets his needs, which may involve the Child Protection Officer, Adolescent Mental Health Services and an Educational Psychologist as well as support from Head of Pastoral Care. We shall be mindful of the possibility that the allegation of abuse was an act of

displacement, masking abuse that is actually occurring within the child's own family and/or community.

However much support the child may need in such circumstances; we need to be sensitive to the possibility that the aftermath of an unfounded allegation of abuse may result in the irretrievable breakdown of the relationship with the teacher. In such circumstances, we may conclude that it is in the child's best interests to move to another school. We would do our best to help him to achieve as smooth a transition as possible, working closely with the parents or guardians.

The Member of Staff

A member of staff could be left at the end of an unfounded or unsubstantiated allegation of child abuse with severely diminished self-esteem, feeling isolated and vulnerable, all too conscious that colleagues might shun him/her on the grounds of "no smoke without fire". If issues of professional competency are involved, and though acquitted of child abuse, disciplinary issues are raised; we recognise that he or she is likely to need both professional and emotional help. We will undertake to arrange a mentoring programme in such circumstances, together with professional counselling outside the school community. A short sabbatical or period of re-training may be appropriate.

ALLEGATION OF ABUSE OF A CHILD WHO IS NOT A PUPIL AT THE SCHOOL

If we were given information that suggested that a member of staff was abusing a child who was not a pupil at the school, we would immediately pass such information to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) to handle. We would then interview the member of staff and formally advise him/her of the allegations, making it clear that the school would not play any part in the investigatory process. He or she would be advised of the possibility of facing suspension, re-assignment to other duties etc in exactly the same way as if the allegation had involved a school pupil. If the allegation subsequently proved to be unfounded, he or she would be given full support by the school in resuming his/her career.

ALLEGATIONS INVOLVING THE HEAD OR CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER

The Chairman of Governors should be told at once by the Deputy Head or Child Protection Officer of any allegation involving the Headmaster. He will obtain legal advice before proceeding to the steps outlined above. The Headmaster will normally be suspended for the duration of the investigatory process and asked to vacate his school residence, and one of the Deputy Heads will be made acting Head until the conclusion of the investigation and resolution of the issue.

The Chair of Governors should similarly be told at once of any allegation involving the CPO. The Chairman of Governors should normally be informed on the same day, and legal advice obtained. The CPO will normally be suspended for the duration of the investigatory process and asked to vacate his school house. The Deputy Head should be made acting CPO until the conclusion of the investigation and resolution of the issue.