



Ashford School and Ashford Friars Preparatory School
Child Protection and Safeguarding
&
Procedures for Dealing with Suspected Cases of Child Abuse

This policy, which is available to parents on the school's website, is guided by the framework outlined in the UCST Child Protection Policy, the key requirements of which are:

- The school must establish its own Child Protection Policy to meet the principles set out in the UCST policy and ISI regulations.
- Procedures must follow the DCSF guidelines on child protection including appropriate liaison with the KSCB and other agencies
- The school must designate a senior member of staff to be the Child Protection Manager and a member of the LGB to oversee Child Protection
- The school must ensure that all members of staff are trained appropriately and have an understanding of child abuse and its main indicators, and are alert to our reporting and confidentiality responsibilities
- The school must monitor the implementation of the Child Protection Policy and review its effectiveness. The findings must be reported to the LGB on a regular basis.

At Ashford School & Ashford Friars Prep School we believe all staff share the responsibility for promoting the welfare and protection of children. We have a duty to safeguard them from significant harm as embodied in the Children Act 1989. We need to be aware of the ways in which children are subjected to physical, sexual or emotional abuse and neglect. We work in accordance with KSCB and Kent Police procedures.

The following people have delegated responsibility to oversee Child Protection (Child Protection Managers): (Training Update Due November 2011)

Senior School Deputy Head, Yvonne Howard 01233625171 ext 253
Prep School Headmaster, Richard Yeates 01233656852 ext 204
Head of Bridge House (EYFS), Francesca Russell 01233739041

Despite the above, every adult in the school has a responsibility to report any suspected case of abuse to one of the individuals named above.

It should be noted that all pupils have access to:

- child care telephone numbers displayed in the school offices and other places around the school "ChildLine 0800 1111 is the UK and Channel Islands' free, confidential 24-hour helpline for children and young people who need to talk. From homework to bullying and abuse, whatever the problem, whenever it is, you can always speak to us."

Staff Responsibilities

- Staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount and it is the responsibility of all staff to respond appropriately if they feel a child might be being abused or neglected

- Any such concerns should be communicated **without delay** with the designated person for child protection
- If a child discloses something to staff they must follow the correct procedures for listening and dealing with the disclosure
- **Where there is an allegation or suspicion of abuse, the school will always make a referral within 24 hours to the relevant local social services department (in writing or with written confirmation of a telephone referral).**

Training for staff and those responsible for child protection

- Designated staff are to receive multi-agency training on appointment and updates every two years
- All staff are to receive training and reminders in procedures and awareness by designated staff – this will be updated at least every three years (training due September 2013)
- Temporary staff, volunteers and new staff will be made aware of procedures and the Child Protection Policy through the issue of an information leaflet and Child Protection Policy.
- The school follows the Safer Recruitment Guidelines, ISI regulations and UCST directives on safe recruitment and employs only staff with Enhanced CRB checks and checks of identity, background, qualifications, references, medical fitness, any overseas checks and right to work in the UK
- All staff joining the school are given a letter outlining UCST guidance on staff / pupil relationships

Code of Practice

- Whenever possible, staff should avoid occasions where a single adult is in the company of a lone child, particularly where there is little or no possibility of the activity being supervised or observed
- Don't give lifts to children or young people on their own. If this is unavoidable ask the child to sit in the back
- Visitors from other organisations working directly with children on or off the site are subject to CP checks.
- Don't allow unknown adult's access to children. A known person should accompany visitors.
- Activities that involve lone children working with an adult should take place where they can be easily observed. Viewing panes are installed in most such rooms and doors should be left open where there is not other means of seeing the child and adult together
- Physical contact should be kept to a minimum and only used when there is a genuine reason in relation to the activity or even e.g. First Aid, Physical Education
- Staff should choose their words carefully so they cannot be misconstrued and they should avoid belittling or making jokes at the expense of children
- Please refer to the policy on internet and ICT with respect to the care needed when using email and text-messaging.
- Wherever possible two members staff should accompany children on outings

Procedures for Dealing with Allegations against Staff

It is essential that any allegation of abuse made against a member of staff or volunteer in the school is dealt with fairly, quickly, and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection for the child and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

Action will be taken in all cases where it is alleged that a member of staff or volunteer has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or might have harmed a child through inappropriate behaviour
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- Behaved in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with children

All allegations against a member of staff should be reported straight away to the Head and the designated Child Protection Manager

- In the absence of the Head, the Chairman of the Local Governing Body and the Deputy Chief Executive
- If the Head is the subject of the allegation or concern, the Chairman of the Local Governing Body and Deputy Chief Executive should be informed
- The school is required to report to the ISA, within one month of leaving the school, any person whose services are no longer used (including volunteers) because he or she is considered unsuitable to work with children. Failure to do this constitutes an offence and the school may be removed from the DfE register of independent schools
- Provision may be made for members of staff involved in boarding who are the subject of an allegation to be accommodated elsewhere
- It is recognised by the school that 'compromise' agreements may not be used in this context

Whenever an allegation is made against a member of staff, the Head teacher or Designated Child Protection Officer should consult with the Children's Safeguards Unit who will advise on whether the allegation crosses the 'significant harm' threshold that will require referral to Social Services/Police, for investigation under the child protection procedures (Section 47). In the case of a child suffering serious harm the police will be informed immediately. The school understands its duty towards a member of staff 'whistle blowing' in good faith; they will be provided with immunity from retribution or disciplinary action.

Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of abuse by one or more pupils against another pupil

It is essential that any allegation of abuse made by a pupil against another pupil/pupils in the school is dealt with fairly, quickly, and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection for all the children involved.

- The allegation should be reported to the CPM who will immediately inform the Head
- The Head will:
 - Investigate if the incident is abuse, or an isolated instance of bullying or 'experimentation', in which case this will be handled in the normal framework for discipline. (See Behaviour and Discipline Policy)
 - Determine the frequency, nature and severity of the incident
 - Ascertain if the victim was coerced by physical force, fear or by a pupil or pupils significantly older than himself/herself or with power or authority over him

- Ascertain whether the incident involved a potentially criminal act

If it is established that an investigation is necessary the Head will inform the parents of all children involved and seek advice from Children's Services.

LGB responsibility for reviewing procedures

- The Local Governing Body undertakes an annual review of policy and procedures for Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged. Any deficiencies or weaknesses in Child Protection and Safeguarding arrangements will be remedied without delay
- A member of the Local Governing Body has specific interest in and responsibility for Child Protection (Child Protection Manager – Elaine Rose). She can be contacted care of the Head's PA Mrs Anne Rylands (01233625171)

Other measures to protect children and avoid abuse or neglect

- Education and support for children through PSHE and other awareness programmes.

Understanding Abuse and its main indicators

Categories of Abuse

The following categories of abuse are recognised for the purposes of the child protection register.

Neglect: persistent or severe neglect, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation, or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive; Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Physical injury: actual or likely physical injury to a child or failure to prevent physical injury (or suffering) to a child including deliberate poisoning, suffocation and Physical abuse 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 feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after.

Sexual abuse: actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent. The child may be dependent and/or developmentally immature; Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material photographs, pictures, cartoons, literature or sound recordings e.g. the internet, books, magazines, audio cassettes, tapes, CD's or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Children under 16 years of age cannot provide lawful consent to any sexual activity, though in practice many are involved in sexual contact to which, as individuals, they may have agreed.

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.²

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children.

It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened

or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Domestic Violence

Children's exposure to parental conflict, even where violence is not present, can lead to serious anxiety and distress. Research evidence indicates a strong link between domestic abuse and all types of abuse and neglect.

Prolonged and/or serious domestic abuse can have a serious impact on a child's development and emotional well-being.

Identifying Abuse

- Because of their day-to-day contact with individual children, teachers and other staff in the education service are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour or failure to develop.
- Bruises, lacerations and burns may be apparent, particularly when children change their clothes for physical education and sports activities.
- Possible indicators of physical neglect, such as inadequate clothing, poor growth, hunger or apparently deficient nutrition, and of emotional abuse, such as excessive dependence or attention seeking, may be noticeable.
- Sexual abuse may exhibit physical signs, or lead to a substantial behavioural change including precocity or withdrawal. These signs and others can do no more than give rise to suspicion – they are not in themselves proof that abuse has occurred. But teachers should be alert to all such signs.
- The appointment of a designated teacher with specific responsibility for child protection should not be seen as diminishing the role of all members of staff in being alert.

Where teachers and other staff see signs which cause them concern they should seek information from the child with tact and sympathy. It is not, however, the responsibility of teachers and other staff in schools to investigate abuse.

What to do if abuse is suspected

- Working with children on a daily basis means that staff are likely to sense when things do not 'feel right'. Therefore staff should share any uncertainties with the CPM. 'Gut feelings' are always worth acknowledging.
- Never assume someone else is dealing with it or that it is someone else's responsibility
- Never 'turn a blind eye'
- Always take your concerns to the CPM, who may do any of the following:
 - Suggest continual monitoring and observation of the situation and keeping notes
 - Ask for a body map to be completed
 - Talk to the parents, but ONLY IF THIS WOULD NOT COMPROMISE THE SAFETY OF THE CHILD
 - Consult with Children's Services

Whilst it is generally not the responsibility of staff to consult with KSCB, or to make referrals, it is their responsibility to follow up that their concerns have been actioned in some way.

Consulting with Children's Services

Contact Number: Kroner House – Telephone 01233 652100

Children's Services will:

- Help to clarify the concern
- Determine if a referral is necessary
- Advise on how to discuss the concern with parents, if that is considered appropriate.

Consulting with Ofsted (EYFS – Children under three years old)

The Child Protection Manager responsible for the children under three years of age will inform Ofsted, as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days, of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, 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.

Procedures for listening and dealing with disclosure

- In the case of a third party disclosure, attempts may be made by the CPM to ascertain the reliability/ source of the information. Care should be taken in reacting to what may be malicious gossip or innuendo. If you are not satisfied that the information is erroneous, proceed as the protocol in this policy advises
- Care must be taken in asking, and interpreting children's responses to questions about indications of abuse. Listen carefully to the child and take their allegations seriously. Staff should be aware that the way in which they talk to a child could have an effect on the evidence which is put forward if there are subsequent criminal proceedings
- You should not ask the child leading questions as this can later be interpreted as putting ideas into the child's mind. You should, therefore, not ask questions which encourage the child to change his or her version of events in any way, or impose your own assumptions. For example, staff should say "tell me what has happened" rather than "did they do X to you". The chief task at this stage is to listen to the child and not interrupt if he or she is freely recalling significant events, and to make a note of the discussion to pass on to the designated teacher
- Write brief notes if possible at the time or immediately after, taking care not to frighten the child into feeling it is intimidating or more formal than they would wish. The note should record the time, date, place and people who were present as well as what was said. You should also be aware that the note of the discussion might need to be used in any subsequent court proceedings
- Never ask the child to repeat the disclosure to another member of staff
- You should not guarantee confidentiality to the child. Explain that all you do will be done in their best interests and you might have to share it with another responsible adult. You might have to tell people who simply have to know
- Discuss with the Designated Child Protection Manager as soon as possible who will inform/consult with the Social Services promptly and certainly within 24 hours

- Child protection records will be held discretely by the Head and Designated Child Protection Manager

Remember that abuse is possible in and out of school and an accusation against someone you know well and trust is not bound to be wrong. It is more common for children to be abused by a person known to them, than by a stranger.

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Copies of this policy are available on the website in English and in translation in Mandarin to staff, pupils and parents and guardians.

All pupils in prefect roles and peer mentoring positions have been briefed on the protocol in dealing with allegations of abuse.

The Attendance and Registration Policy outlines the protocol for dealing with a missing pupil.

Confidentiality

If a child confides in a member of staff and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the member of staff tells the child sensitively that he or she has a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate person for the child's own sake. Within that context, the child should, however, be assured that the matter be disclosed only to people who need to know about it. Staff who receive information about children and their families in the course of their work should share that information only within appropriate professional contexts.

Key Messages

- All organisations that are involved with children are vulnerable
- Children can't protect themselves- that's our job
- Develop organisational confidence based on robust procedures and a culture of openness

Date Document Updated	Document Updated by	Location of Saved File
23/11/10	Yvonne Howard (Deputy Head)	
27/1/11	Yvonne Howard (Deputy Head)	
10/2/2011	Yvonne Howard (Deputy Head)	

Date Document Reviewed	Document Reviewed by	Date of Next Review
11/11/2010	LGB	11/2011