

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Reviewed June 2009

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ROCHESTER
INDEPENDENT COLLEGE

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Designated Child Protection Officers: Anellia Mladenova and Lesley King

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Medway Safeguarding Children Board 01634 336329

INTRODUCTION

The safety and security of the students is of the highest priority.

The aim of the College is to create an environment in which everyone feels safe and secure and are listened to at all times.

This policy is designed to help us and you to ensure the safety and security of students at the College. It is reviewed by the principals annually and where changes need to be made the policy is updated without delay.

The Designated Child Protection Officer should attend training every two years. Other members of staff should receive update training every three years.

The College requires any member of staff to report to the Child Protection Officers or Ofsted, any concern or worry in relation to practices taking place in school, or the behaviour of students. Ofsted can be contacted on 08456 404045. Staff who report an issue are protected by the College from retribution or disciplinary action. Please also refer to the Whistleblowing Policy.

STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

The Children's Act 2006 provides the legal framework for the protection of children in the UK.

"Working together to safeguard children, 1999" sets out how all agencies and professionals should work together to promote the welfare of children and to protect them from neglect and abuse.

'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education 2007' places the following responsibilities on all schools.

- 1 Staff should be alert to signs of abuse and know to whom they should report any concerns or suspicions.
- 2 A designated School Child Protection Officer should have responsibility for coordinating action within the school and for liaising with other agencies.
- 3 Staff with designated responsibility for child protection should receive appropriate training.
- 4 Schools should have procedures, of which all the staff are aware, for handling suspected cases of abuse of pupils, including procedures to be followed if a member of staff is accused of abuse.

Circular 10/95 also states that “parents should be made aware of the school’s Child Protection policy and the fact that this may require cases to be referred to the investigative agencies in the interests of the child.

PRIORITIES

A member of staff should be concerned if a student:

- 1 Has an injury which is not typical of the bumps and scrapes normally associated with children’s activities.
- 2 Regularly has unexplained injuries.
- 3 Frequently has injuries, even when apparently reasonable explanations are given.
- 4 Offers confused or conflicting explanations about how injuries were sustained.
- 5 Exhibits significant changes in behaviour, performance or attitude.
- 6 Indulges in sexual behaviour, which is unusually explicit and/or inappropriate for his or her age; discloses an experience in which he or she may have been significantly harmed.

TYPES OF ABUSE

Child abuse has many different forms but is categorised under physical injury, neglect, sexual abuse and emotional abuse. Below is a list of signs and symptoms that may be indicators of abuse, bearing in mind that children may exhibit one or more of these signs for other reasons. Discuss any concerns with a child protection officer at the earliest opportunity.

PHYSICAL INJURY

Physical indicators

Unexplained bruises, welts, lacerations or abrasions:

- On the face, lips or mouth
- On the torso, back, buttocks, thighs
- In varying stages of healing
- Clustering forming regular patterns
- Marks of the shape of implement used, e.g flex, belt , buckle
- Bite or fingernail marks
- Appearing after a period away from school (weekends, holidays)

Unexplained burns:

- Cigar or cigarette burns
- Immersion burns, where parts of the body have been forced into very hot water
- Patterns like electrical burner, iron
- Rope burns on arms, legs, torso

Unexplained fractures:

- To skull, nose, face
- In varying stages of healing
- Multiple fractures

Behavioural indicators

- Flinching when touched or approached
- Reluctance to change for PE
- Wary of adult contact
- Difficult to comfort
- Crying or irritability

- Frightened of parent
- Not wanting to go home
- Rebelliousness in teenage years
- Childlike regression
- Apathy
- Depression
- Poor relations with peers

NEGLECT

Physical indicators

- Consistently hungry
- Poor hygiene
- Consistent lack of supervision
- Unattended physical problems or medical needs
- Abandonment
- Inappropriate dress

Behavioural indicators

- Stealing food
- Begging
- Constant fatigue
- Frequent delays in collecting child from school
- Poor relations with parent or guardian

SEXUAL ABUSE

Physical indicators

- Difficulty sitting down or walking
- Pain or itching in groin area
- Sickness
- Excessive crying

Behavioural indicators

- Inappropriate sexual behaviour or knowledge for child's age
- Sudden behavioural changes
- Wary of adults
- Running away from home
- Promiscuity
- Unusual avoidance of touch
- Reporting of assault
- Eating disorders
- Emotional withdrawal through lack of trust in adults
- Sleeping problems
- Poor relations with peers
- Too eager to please
- Avoidance of school medicals
- Soiling of clothes

- Frequent non-attendance
- Substance abuse, such as glue sniffing

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Physical indicators

- Failure to thrive
- Delays in physical development or progress

Behavioural indicators

- Sucking, biting, rocking
- Destructive or anti-social
- Sleeping problems
- Unwilling to play
- Compliant, passive, aggressive, demanding
- Impairment of intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development
- Inappropriately adult or infant behaviour

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The role of the Designated School Child Protection Officer is to:

- 1 Ensure that the Local/Medway Safeguarding Children Board procedures are followed by the College.
- 2 Ensure that all staff are aware of these procedures.
- 3 Ensure that appropriate training and support is provided to all staff.
- 4 Ensure that the Proprietor is kept fully informed of any concerns.
- 5 Maintain effective working relationships with other agencies and services
- 6 Decide whether to take further action about specific concerns and to whom to refer such matters to.
- 7 Liaise with the appropriate teams with suspected cases of abuse.
- 8 Ensure that accurate records relating to individuals are kept in a secure place and marked 'strictly confidential'.
- 9 Submit reports to, and attend, child protection conferences where necessary.
- 10 Ensure that the school effectively monitors children who have been identified as 'at risk'.
- 11 Provide guidance to parents, children and staff about obtaining suitable support.

SUPPORT

Dealing with a disclosure from a child is likely to be a stressful experience. The member of staff concerned should consider seeking support for him/her and discuss this with the Designated School Child Protection Officer.

PROCEDURES

Any member of staff may raise minor concerns about a child with the appropriate Personal tutor or to the hostel supervisor and these concerns will be recorded. Any concerns will be brought to the attention of the head teachers.

- 1 Any member of staff with immediate concerns or allegations about school practises or behaviour of colleagues likely to put pupils at risk of harm or abuse must inform the Designated School Child Protection Officer.
- 2 The member of staff must record information regarding the concern the same day. The recording must be clear, precise, factual account of the observations.

- 3 The Designated School Child Protection Officer will decide whether the concerns should be referred to Social Care, Medway Council.
- 4 If an allegation of abuse or suspicion of abuse has been raised then a referral to local Social Care Department will be made within 24 hours in writing or via a written confirmation of a telephone call. If a parent is the subject of the allegation then the referral will be carried out without prior discussion with the parents.
- 5 Particular attention will be given to the attendance and development of any child who has been identified as 'at risk', or who has been put on the Child Protection Register.
- 6 If a student who is on the Child Protection Register changes school the designated person will inform the officer responsible for the case and send a copy of the appropriate records to the receiving school.

DEALING WITH A DISCLOSURE

If a student discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the member of staff should

- 1 Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief
- 2 Accept what is being said
- 3 Allow the student to talk freely
- 4 Reassure the student, but not make promises which they may not be able to keep
- 5 Not promise confidentiality, as it may be necessary to refer the information onwards
- 6 Reassure the student that what has happened is not their fault
- 7 Stress that it was the right thing to tell
- 8 Listen, rather than ask direct questions
- 9 Ask open questions rather than leading questions
- 10 Not criticise the perpetrator
- 11 Explain what has to be done next and to whom this must be told

RECORD KEEPING

When a student has made a disclosure, the member of staff should:

- 1 Make brief notes as soon as possible after the conversation
- 2 Not destroy the original notes in case they are needed by a court or other professional
- 3 Record the date, time, place and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the student
- 4 Draw a diagram to indicate the position of any bruising or other injury
- 5 Record statements and observations, rather than interpretations or assumptions

ALLEGATIONS INVOLVING COLLEGE STAFF

If a student, or parent, makes a complaint of abuse against a member of staff, the person receiving the complaint must take it seriously and immediately inform one of the Principals.

Any member of staff who has reason to suspect that a student may have been abused by another member of staff, either at school or else where, must immediately inform the one of the Principals. A record of the concerns must be

made, including a note of anyone else who witnessed the incident or allegation. If one of the Child Protection Officers is the subject of an allegation refer to the other Child Protection Officer.

The Principal will refer to the Local Authority Designated Officer or the Safeguarding Co-ordinator (Education), Medway Council or the Safeguarding Team Children and Adults based at Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham.

If it is decided that it is not necessary to refer the matter on the Principal will consider whether there needs to be an internal investigation.

Any member of staff who reports a concern or allegation will be provided immunity from retribution or disciplinary action for 'whistleblowing' in good faith. Please see the College Whistleblowing policy.