

**FYLING HALL SCHOOL**

## Child Protection Policy

Last Updated 9<sup>th</sup> June 2009

# CHILD PROTECTION

## Introduction

There is no aspect of pastoral care within the School of greater importance than that of child protection. This embraces the total welfare of all children especially their shielding from any kind of injury, ill-treatment, bullying, harassment, emotional neglect or sexual abuse. It is axiomatic that abuse of any form always constitutes serious harm to a child.

The trust vested in a boarding school should be jealously guarded by all members of staff. Staff must be sensitive to the needs, worries and concerns of individual children in their care. The concept of 'loco parentis' carries with it fundamental responsibilities, thus necessitating that Criminal Records Bureau pre-employment checks be made on all staff, together with checks on identity, background, qualifications, medical and references. The school will also take measures to satisfy itself that similar checks have been carried out on the staff of other institutions who may work with our pupils.

The incidence and manifestation of ill-treatment, although relatively rare in schools, is not easily detectable and requires constant vigilance. The assumption that 'it could not happen here' is not a tenable position.

This policy has been developed, and will be amended as necessary, with due regard to those procedures recommended, and advice provided, by the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board. This policy will be made available to parents on request.

Implementation of this policy will be through adherence to a set of established procedures by which any suspicion, allegation or instance of abuse can be investigated. Referral of any such suspicion should normally be to the members of staff named below or exceptionally directly to the local Education Child Protection and Safeguarding Manager based in Scarborough, or The Child Welfare/Protection Customer Relations Unit for North Yorkshire. The contact details for these and other agencies are to be found at the end of the 'Reporting' section of this policy.

The nominated members of staff with special responsibility for protection and welfare issues, and for liaison with the Social Services Department are, Nurse Searle (Child Protection Officer), the Headmaster and Miss B.Easton (governor).

In order for the procedures outlined to remain appropriate and effective the policy will require that:

- The Headmaster and all staff (part time and voluntary), will undertake appropriate training in Child Protection related matters every three years.
- The CPO will undertake training in child protection and inter-agency working every two years
- The Governing Body will carry out an annual review of the Child Protection policies and procedures, and of the efficiency of the related duties.
- Any deficiencies or weaknesses in the Child Protection arrangements identified as a result of the review, or from other scrutiny, will be remedied without delay.

## Procedures

The following guidelines are based substantially on those put forward as a possible model by the DCSF and SSDs in their publications:

- a) Working together for the protection of children from abuse: procedures within the Education Service DES Circular 4/28.
- b) The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations, Volume 5, Independent Schools. HMSO 1991.
- c) The welfare of children in boarding schools. Social Services Inspectorate Practice Guide. HMSO 1991.
- d) Guidance for Safe Working Practice for the Protection of Children and Staff in Education Settings. (revised 2006) DfES 2006.
- e) Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education. DfES 2007.

## Indications of abuse

Staff should be alert to the outward signs of physical abuse and to uncharacteristic changes in behaviour patterns which may give rise to suspicion.

### a) Physical Abuse

#### Physical Signs

All children have accidents and may have bruises from time to time. The child or his or her parents will usually tell you how the injuries occur and what happened. However, if they do not tell you or do not give you an adequate explanation of what happened, you need to consider whether the injuries are a possible sign of physical abuse.

Injuries not adequately explained including:

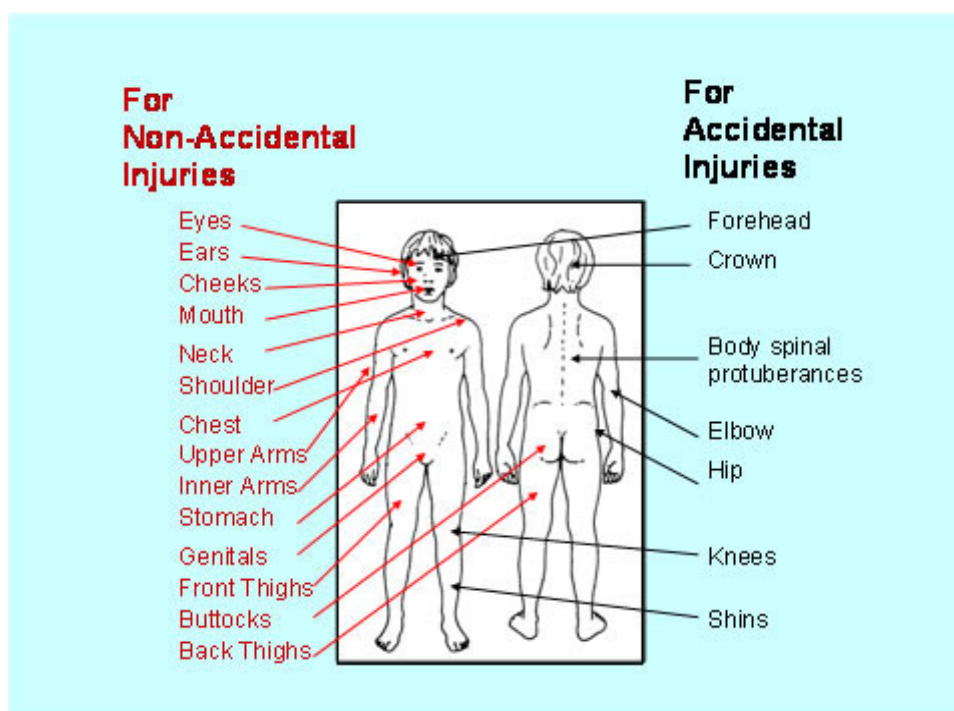
- Fractures, bruises, burns, bite marks, slap marks, implement marks e.g. belt mark.

Other signs of abuse include:

- Grip marks - may indicate shaking
- Slap marks - cheeks, buttocks, limbs (may leave a hand imprint)
- Soft tissue marks
- Long marks
- Symmetrical bruising
- Bruising in unusual places e.g. bruises on ears
- Teeth / bite marks
- Burns with outline, e.g. outline of an iron
- Cigarette burns
- Fractures or other injuries
- Injuries which haven't been treated properly and there is delay in seeking medical attention
- Any injury to a child who isn't mobile e.g. baby under 1 year, disabled child

### Behavioural Signs

- Child appears frightened of others, e.g. parent(s) or carer(s)
- Child doesn't want to go home, or runs away
- Child flinches when approached or when someone stretches a hand towards them
- Child reluctant to get undressed e.g. for games or sport activity
- Child very passive or very aggressive
- Frozen watchfulness - child sits very still watching what's going on (waiting for the next hit)
- Equally could appear overly "happy" and "eager to please"



## b) Sexual Abuse

### Physical Signs

- Repeated, inappropriate, masturbation
- Presence of sexually transmitted disease
- Children with age inappropriate sexual knowledge, e.g. penetration, ejaculation, oral sex
- Explicit sexual drawings
- Pain, soreness or itching in the genital or anal areas or mouth
- Recurrent genital or urinary infections.
- Pregnancy

### Behavioural Signs

- Disclosure from a child (to another child or an adult)
- Young children acting out sexual behaviours, e.g. simulating intercourse, grabbing genitalia etc
- Young children displaying sexually inappropriate behaviour
- Persistent bedwetting, nightmares and sleep problems
- Anorexia, bulimia, self harm or excessive 'comforting' eating

- Fear of a specific person
- Running away from home
- Substance abuse
- Child having unexplained gifts, including money
- Children having 'secrets' that an adult says they are not allowed to tell

## **Neglect**

### **Physical Signs**

- Looks excessively thin or ill
- Well below average weight and height, failure to thrive,
- Recent unexplained weight loss.
- Complains of hunger; lack of energy
- Untreated conditions/injuries
- Repeated accidents, especially burns
- Left home alone inappropriately
- Repeatedly unwashed, smelly or dressed inappropriately for the weather
- Supervision/carers inappropriate (e.g 8 year old looking after other children)
- Badly decayed teeth

### **Behavioural Signs**

- Poor level of concentration
- Constantly hungry or 'stealing' food from others/from bins
- Not keeping Doctor or Hospital appointments
- Frequently not at school or persistent lateness
- Reluctant to go home from school
- Delayed speech development

## **Emotional Abuse**

### **Physical Signs**

- Physical, mental and emotional developmental delay / late developer with no obvious medical reason
- Sudden onset speech disorders, e.g suddenly developing a stammer

### **Behavioural Signs**

- Acceptance of punishment which seems excessive
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Continual self deprecation
- Excessive fear of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional response to painful stimuli
- Excessive behaviours, e.g. rocking, head banging, hair twisting, thumb sucking
- Self harm
- Compulsive stealing/scavenging
- Excessively sad, depressed, withdrawn,
- Low self esteem

## **Handling Disclosures of Abuse**

*Disclosure by a child who is suffering abuse or by another child or adult:* If a child discloses abuse to you, the disclosure must be taken seriously.

### **Receive**

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what is being said without judgement
- Take it seriously

### **Reassure**

- Reassure the child, but only so far as is honest and reliable. Don't make promises that you can't be sure to keep, e.g "I'll stay with you" or "everything will be alright now"
- Don't promise confidentiality – you have a duty to report your concerns
- Tell the child that you will need to tell some people, but only those whose job it is to protect children
- Acknowledge how difficult it must have been to talk
- Never agree to keep secrets – be honest
- Do reassure the child that he or she is right to tell

## **React**

- Listen quietly, carefully and patiently
- Do not investigate, interrogate or decide if the child is telling the truth
- Do not ask leading questions, e.g "What did he do next?" (this assumes he did)
- Do ask open questions "Is there anything else you want to tell me?"
- Do not criticise the alleged abuser; the child may love him/her and a reconciliation may be possible
- Do not ask the child to repeat what they have told you to another member of staff. Explain what you have to do next and whom you have to talk to.

### **Record**

- Make some very brief notes at the time and write them up in detail as soon as possible
- Do not destroy your original notes in case they are required in court
- Record the date, time, place, words used by the child and how the child appeared to you – be specific. Record the actual words used, including any swear words or slang
- Draw a diagram to indicate the position of any marks
- Record statements and observable things, not your interpretations or assumptions – keep it factual
- Do not assume anything – do not speculate or jump to conclusions

### **Remember**

- If a child discloses abuse to you, take it seriously
- Seek advice from the designated child protection person/s about the child's disclosure

*Where an adult discloses to you their own history of abuse, there may be children now who still need protecting. This is a complex area and you will need to tell the adult that you must seek advice from the appropriate agency contact.*

- 1 Allegations of abuse should always be reported to the nominated person/s, on the basis that it is rare for firm accusations to be made.
- 2 The possibility of abuse by school staff must be recognised. The inadvisability of:
  - developing unsuitable relationships
  - spending too much time with individuals or groups
  - overseeing more than a normal share of changing and showering activities must be recognised by all staff.

Note:

- a) Care must be taken in interpreting responses to questions since abused children may have been rehearsed.
- b) It is **NOT** the responsibility of staff to make enquiries of parents or guardians.
- c) It is for the statutory agencies to investigate suspected abuse, not the school. The nominated member of staff will liaise with the Scarborough/Whitby/Ryedale Education Child Protection and Safeguarding Manager. As detailed by the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board.

### **Reporting of abuse**

- 1 Any suspicion of abuse must be reported directly to either Nurse Surle, the Headmaster or Miss B. Easton who will contact the external agencies within 24 hours in writing.
- 2 Detailed records must be kept of any allegations made. (Please refer closely to the notes on Handling disclosures of abuse above, and Interviews and Confidentiality in the following section)
- 3 The Chair of Governors will be notified and kept fully informed of developments. Miss B. Easton will be invited to attend all meetings with SSD and Police Child Protection Branch.
- 4 Appropriate steps must be taken to protect the child/children involved.
- 5 If staff have any concerns about school practices or the behaviour of colleagues which are likely to put children at risk of abuse or other serious harm, they may report these concerns without fear of retribution or disciplinary action to:
  - The Headmaster, Nurse Searle or Miss B. Easton
  - The Governors
  - The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted)
  - The Independent Schools Inspectorate
- 6 If the allegation involves a member of staff, consideration will be given by the Governors to:
  - contractual suspension of the individual concerned, (of itself a neutral act)
  - where the member of staff is part of the boarding/residential team provision of alternative accommodation away from children
  - informing the relevant and appropriate agencies and their officers of the allegations, cooperating fully with those agencies in any ensuing investigations
  - disciplinary action if there is insufficient evidence for prosecution but gross misconduct has occurred
  - filing a report with the DCSF within one month of leaving the school of any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or pupil) 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 pupil 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 such a report, under the circumstances detailed, would constitute an offence, and the school could be removed from the DfES register of independent schools.

### **Useful contacts and sources of information**

Education Child Protection Manager (Scarborough)	Karen Lewis 01609 534200/07715540711
Child Protection admin and support	Valerie Hutchinson 01609 534211
Senior ESW (Scarborough)	01609 534660
Ofsted Boarding School Inspectors	08456 404040
Assesment and Safeguarding Teams Duty social workers, Scarborough	01609 534181
Emergency Duty Team	01609 536993