



SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

The Safeguarding Children Policy applies to the whole school including the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Policy Statement

1. Every pupil should feel safe and protected from any form of abuse which, in this policy, means any kind of neglect, non-accidental physical injury, sexual exploitation or emotional ill-treatment.

2. Our policy and our commitment at Farlington School is to take all reasonable measures to safeguard and promote the welfare of each child and young person (pupil) in our care and:
 - 2.1. to ensure that we practise safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children and young people. This includes CRB and compliance with ISS (Independent School Standards) regulations;
 - 2.2. to protect each pupil from any form of abuse, whether from an adult or another pupil;
 - 2.3. to be alert to signs of abuse both in the School and from outside;
 - 2.4. to deal appropriately with every suspicion or complaint of abuse;
 - 2.5. to design and operate procedures which promote this policy and which, so far as possible, ensure that teachers and others who are innocent are not prejudiced by false allegations;
 - 2.6. to support a child who has been abused in accordance with her agreed child protection plan;
 - 2.7. to be alert to the medical needs of children with medical conditions;
 - 2.8. to operate robust and sensible health & safety procedures;
 - 2.9. to take all practicable steps to ensure that School premises are as secure as circumstances permit;
 - 2.10. to operate clear and supportive policies on drugs, alcohol and substance misuse;
 - 2.11. to consider and develop procedures to deal with any other safeguarding issues which may be specific to individual children in our Schools or in our local area;
 - 2.12. to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills in accordance with section 157 Education Act 2002 and associated regulations;
 - 2.13. to be in accordance with inter-agency procedures agreed with West Sussex County Council;
 - 2.14. to continually review and update Child Protection procedures to ensure that any deficiencies or weaknesses are remedied without delay.

Every complaint or suspicion of an abuse from within or outside the School will be investigated and in all proper circumstances will be referred to an external agency



such as the Social Services Department of the local authority (SSD), the Child Protection Unit of the police (CPU), Ofsted where a boarder is the subject of concern (as soon as is reasonably practical but at the latest within fourteen days), or the NSPCC in accordance with the procedures published by West Sussex Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC).

Every employee is provided with immunity from retribution or disciplinary action for 'whistleblowing' in good faith. Staff are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the School's Whistleblowing Policy.

The Designated Person

3. The School has appointed the Deputy Head and the Headmistress of the Prep School ("Designated Person") to be responsible for matters relating to child protection and welfare. The main responsibilities of the Designated Person are:
 - 3.1. To be the first point of contact for parents, pupils, teaching and non-teaching staff and external agencies in all matters of child protection.
 - 3.2. To co-ordinate the child protection procedures in the School.
 - 3.3. To maintain an ongoing training programme for all School employees.
 - 3.4. To monitor the keeping, confidentiality and storage of records in relation to child protection.
 - 3.5. To contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Rosemary Terry following an allegation or suspicion of abuse. The concerns should be discussed with the LADO; it 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. **The Designated Person should not make their own decision over what appears to be borderline cases.**
 - 3.6. Not to do anything that may jeopardise a police investigation, such as asking a child leading questions or attempting to investigate the allegation of abuse.
4. The Designated Person for the Senior School is Louise Higson, the Deputy Head. The Designated Person for the Prep School including the Early Years Foundation Stage is Joy Baggs, the Prep. School Headmistress. They will:
 - 4.1. Advise and act upon all suspicion, belief and evidence of abuse reported to them.
 - 4.2. Liaise with the SSD and other agencies on behalf of the School.
5. If the Designated Person is unavailable or is herself the subject of a complaint, her duties will be carried out by the other Designated Person, who has received appropriate training.
6. The Designated Persons have undertaken appropriate training and will attend refresher training at 2-yearly intervals.



7. Signs of Abuse

Possible signs of abuse include (but are not limited to):

- 7.1. The pupil says she has been abused or asks a question which gives rise to that inference.
- 7.2. There is no reasonable or consistent explanation for a pupil's injury; the injury is unusual in kind or location; there have been a number of injuries; there is a pattern to the injuries.
- 7.3. The pupil's behaviour stands out from the group as either being extreme model behaviour or extremely challenging behaviour; or there is a sudden change in the pupil's behaviour.
- 7.4. The pupil asks to drop subjects with a particular teacher and seems reluctant to discuss the reasons.
- 7.5. The pupil's development is delayed.
- 7.6. The pupil loses or gains weight.
- 7.7. The pupil appears neglected, e.g. dirty, hungry, inadequately clothed.
- 7.8. The pupil is reluctant to go home, or has been openly rejected by her parents or carers.

8. Duty of employees

Every employee of the School is under a general legal duty:

- 8.1. To protect children from abuse.
- 8.2. To be aware of the School's child protection procedures and to follow them.
- 8.3. To know how to access and implement the procedures, independently if necessary.
- 8.4. To keep a sufficient record of any significant complaint, conversation or event.
- 8.5. To report any matters of concern to the Designated Person.
- 8.6. To undertake appropriate training including refresher training at 3-yearly intervals.

This applies to part time and voluntary staff who work with children, as well as the Head and all full time staff.

9. Initial Complaint

A member of staff suspecting or hearing a complaint of abuse:

- 9.1. Must listen carefully to the child and keep an open mind. Staff should not take a decision as to whether or not the abuse has taken place.
- 9.2. Must not ask leading questions, that is, a question which suggests its own answer.
- 9.3. Must reassure the child but not give a guarantee of absolute confidentiality. The member of staff should explain that they need to pass the information to the Designated Person who will ensure that the correct action is taken.



- 9.4. Must keep a sufficient written record of the conversation. The record should include the date, time and place of the conversation and the essence of what was said and done by whom, and in whose presence. The record should be signed by the person making it and should use names, not initials. The record must be kept securely and handed to the Designated Person.

10. Preserving Evidence

All evidence, (for example, scribbled notes, and mobile phones containing text messages, clothing, and computers), must be safeguarded and preserved.

11. Reporting

All suspicion or complaints of abuse must be reported to the Designated Person. Allegations against staff, volunteers or the designated person with responsibility for safeguarding should be reported to the Head. It is also advised that the Designated Person should be contacted (unless she is the object of the allegation), since the Designated Person will have received higher level safeguarding training. If the Head is absent, the allegation should be passed to the Chair of Governors. If the allegation concerns the Head, the person receiving the allegation should immediately inform the Chair of Governors without notifying the Head first. In cases of serious harm, the police should be informed from the outset.

12. Action by the Designated Person

The action to be taken will take into account:

- 12.1. The procedures published by West Sussex Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC).
- 12.2. The nature and seriousness of the suspicion or complaint. A complaint involving a serious criminal offence will always be referred to the SSD or the police without further investigation within the School.
- 12.3. The wishes of the pupil who has complained, provided that the pupil is of sufficient understanding and maturity and properly informed. However, there may be times when the situation is so serious that decisions may need to be taken, after all appropriate consultation, that override a pupil's wishes.
- 12.4. The wishes of the complainant's parents, provided they have no interest which is in conflict with the pupil's best interests and that they are properly informed. Again, it may be necessary, after all appropriate consultation, to override parental wishes in some circumstances. If the Designated Person is concerned that disclosing information to parents would put a child at risk, she will take further advice from the relevant professionals before making a decision to disclose.
- 12.5. Duties of confidentiality, so far as applicable.



12.6. The lawful rights and interests of the School community as a whole including its employees and its insurers.

12.7. If there is room for doubt as to whether a referral should be made, the Designated Person may consult with SSD or other appropriate professionals on a no names basis without identifying the family. However, as soon as sufficient concern exists that a child may be at risk of significant harm, a referral will be made without delay. If the initial referral is made by telephone, the Designated Person will confirm the referral in writing to SSD within 24 hours. If no response or acknowledgement is received within three working days, the Designated Person will contact Social Services again.

13. Referral Guidelines

A referral to the SSD or police will not normally be made where:

- 13.1. the complaint does not involve a serious criminal offence; and
- 13.2. a referral would be contrary to the wishes of a pupil complainant who is of sufficient maturity and understanding and properly informed, and contrary also to the wishes of the complainant's parents; and
- 13.3. the case is one that can be satisfactorily investigated and dealt with under the School's internal procedures, the parents being kept fully informed, as appropriate.

However, if during the course of the internal procedures, it appears that the situation is more serious, the Designated Person will again consider whether a referral should be made in accordance with section 13 above.

14. External Agencies

Whether or not the School decides to refer a particular complaint to the SSD or the police, the parents and pupil will be informed in writing of their right to make their own complaint or referral to the Social Services Department or Ofsted, where the subject of concern is a boarder, (details below) or the Child Protection Unit of the Police and will be provided with contact names, addresses and telephone numbers, as appropriate.

15. Allegations Against Staff

The School has procedures for dealing with allegations against staff, including the Head, and volunteers who work with children that aim to strike a balance between the need to protect children from abuse and the need to protect staff and volunteers from false or unfounded allegations.

Suspension will not be an automatic response to an allegation. Full consideration will be given to all the options, subject to the need to ensure:



- the safety and welfare of the pupils or pupil concerned; and
- the need for a full and fair investigation.

If the allegation is against a member of Boarding staff who is suspended pending an investigation School will make arrangements for alternative accommodation away from children.

Any person whether employed, contracted, volunteer or student whose services at School are terminated because he/she are considered unsuitable to work with children will be reported to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) within one month of leaving the School.

16. Allegations Against Pupils

Any pupil against whom an allegation of abuse has been made may be suspended from the School during the investigation and the School's policy on behaviour, discipline and sanctions will apply.

17. Suspected Harm From Outside the School

A member of staff who suspects that a pupil is suffering harm from outside the School should seek information from the child with tact and sympathy using "open" and not leading questions. A sufficient record should be made of the conversation and if the member of staff continues to be concerned he or she should refer the matter to the Designated Person.

18. Monitoring

The Designated Persons will monitor the operation of this policy and its procedures. The Governing Body undertakes an annual review of this policy and its procedures and of the efficiency with which it is carried out. The named member of the Governing Body to whom the head reports on Child Protection issues is Susan Conway.

19. The Safeguarding Children Policy is published on the School website and is available in School on request.

Contact details for OFSTED are:
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA



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