

BOX HILL SCHOOL
CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

This policy was first presented at the INSET day on 31st August 2004. It was amended in February 2005, September 2007, March 2008, April 2008, September 2008, September 2009 and it was last reviewed in March 2010

**The designated Child Protection liaison officer is
Mrs Marianne Sunter, Deputy Head (co-curricular)**

The deputies are

Mrs Monica Pengilley

Miss Hayley Seddington

Mr John Attewell

Nominated governor Mrs Lyn Rose

Introduction

This policy is one of a series of integrated policies contained in the safeguarding handbook. Our core principles are

- The school's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is of paramount importance
- Safer children are more successful learners
- Policies will be reviewed annually or more often if required by changes in legislation or guidance.
- The safeguarding handbook is for all members of the school community- pupils, parents/carers, staff and governors

Statement

At Box Hill School we recognise our statutory and moral duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all our pupils. We aim to provide a safe and welcoming environment. We are alert to signs of abuse and neglect and we follow procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice. These procedures apply to all staff and governors and are consistent with those of the local safeguarding children board.(LSCB)

Principles

- Welfare of children is paramount
- All children regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection.
- All staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm
- Pupils and staff involved in child protection will receive appropriate training.

Aims

- To provide all staff with the necessary information to enable them to meet their child protection responsibilities.
- To ensure consistent good practice
- To demonstrate the school's commitment to child protection to pupils, parents and other partners

Terminology

Safeguarding refers to the process of protecting children from abuse and neglect, preventing impairment of health or development. To ensure that children have optimum life chances.

Child protection refers to the processes undertaken to protect children who have been identified as suffering or being at risk of suffering significant harm.

Staff refers to all those who work for or on behalf of the school, full or part time, paid or voluntary.

Child refers to any young person who has not reached their 18th birthday.

Parent refers to birth parent or other who have a parenting role such as step parents, foster carers or adoptive parents, legal guardians.

Context

Section 157 of the Education Act 2002 requires proprietors of independent schools to have arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school. Research suggests that more than 10% of children will suffer some form of abuse. School staff are uniquely placed to observe changes in children's behaviour and the outward signs of abuse. Children may also find it easier to confide in a trusted adult at school. It is vital that school staff are alert to the signs of abuse and understand the procedures for reporting their concerns.

Roles and responsibilities

All schools must appoint a designated senior person (DSP) and at least one deputy. Also a designated member of the governing body. The role and responsibilities of the DSP are detailed in appendix A.

The responsibilities of the governing body and the headmaster are detailed in appendix B.

Good Practice

Good practice includes

Treating all pupils with respect

Setting a good example

Involving pupils in decisions which affect them

Encouraging positive and safe behaviour among pupils

Being a good listener

Being alert to changes in a pupil's behaviour

Recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse

Reading and understanding the school's safeguarding handbook

Maintaining appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between pupils

Being aware that the personal and family circumstances of some pupils lead to increased risks of abuse

Abuse of trust

All school staff are aware that their conduct towards pupils must be beyond reproach. In addition staff should understand that, under the Sexual offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18 where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual.

Children who may be particularly vulnerable

Special consideration will be given to children who are/do not

- Disabled or who have special educational needs
- Living in domestic abuse environments
- Affected by parents substance abuse
- Living away from home
- Vulnerable to being bullied or engaging in bullying
- Living in temporary accommodation
- Living in unsupportive homes
- Have English as their first language

Support

Child abuse is devastating for the child and can be distressing for staff involved. We will support pupils, families and staff by

- Taking all suspicions and disclosures seriously
- Nominating a link person to keep all parties informed. A separate link will be established if a member of staff is the subject of an allegation.
- Responding sympathetically to requests for time out to deal with anxiety or distress
- Maintaining confidentiality and sharing information on a strictly need to know basis
- Storing records securely
- Offering details of helplines
- Following procedures laid down in our whistleblowing, complaints and disciplinary procedures.
- Co-operating fully with relevant statutory agencies

Complaints procedure

Our complaints procedure will be followed where a pupil or parent raises a concern about poor practice towards a pupil that initially does not reach the threshold for child protection action. Examples include unfairly singling out a pupil, using sarcasm or humiliation as a form of punishment, bullying or belittling a pupil or discriminating against them in some way. Complaints are managed by senior staff, the headmaster and governors. An explanation of the complaints procedure is included in parents and pupils handbooks.

Concerns about a colleague

All staff must remember that a child's welfare is paramount. The school's whistleblowing code (appendix C) enables staff to raise concerns and allegations in confidence knowing that a sensitive enquiry will follow. All such concerns should be addressed to the headmaster. Complaints about the headmaster should be addressed to the chair of governors.

Staff who are the subject of an allegation

When such an allegation is made set procedures must be put in place. It is rare for a child to make an entirely fake or malicious allegation although misunderstandings and misinterpretations do happen. A child may also make an allegation against an innocent party because they are afraid to name the real perpetrator. Even so we must accept that some adults do pose a threat and we must act on every allegation. Staff who are the subject of an allegation have a right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently. They must be kept informed of its progress. Suspension is not mandatory but it may be the best way of ensuring the safety of a child. The full details of dealing with such allegations can be found in *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education* (pp 57-67)

Staff training

It is important that all staff have training to help them recognise the possible signs of abuse and neglect and to know what to do if they have a concern. New staff and governors will receive training as part of their induction process. Training will be updated at least every 3 years and every 2 years for the DSP including training in inter agency working. Supply staff and other visitors will be supplied with the child protection card which states what we practice and what to do if they have concerns.

Safer recruitment

Box Hill School endeavours to ensure that we do our utmost to employ 'safe' staff by following the guidance in *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education* (pp 20-54) Safer recruitment means that all applicants will

- Complete an application form
- Provide two referees including at least one who can comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children.
- Provide evidence of identity and qualifications
- Be checked through the Criminal Records Bureau as appropriate to their role and be registered with the Independent Safeguarding Authority.
- Be interviewed

All new members of staff will undergo induction that includes familiarisation with the school's child protection policy and procedures .

All staff sign to indicate that they have received a copy of the safeguarding handbook which includes this policy.

Extended school and off-site arrangements

Where extended school activities are provided and managed by the school our own child protection policy and procedures apply. If other organisations provide services or activities on our site we will check that they have appropriate procedures in place, including safer recruitment procedures. When our pupils attend off-site activities, we will check that effective child protection arrangements are in place.

Photography and images

The vast majority of people who take or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely innocent, understandable and acceptable reasons. Sadly a small number abuse such images so we must ensure that we have safeguards in place. To protect pupils we will

- Seek their consent for photographs to be taken or published
- Seek parental consent
- Ensure pupils are appropriately dressed
- Encourage pupils to tell us if they are concerned in any way.

e-Safety

Most pupils will use mobile phones and computers at some stage. They have many good and useful applications. However they can be used by some to harm in many forms including hurtful or abusive texts and e-mails to entice children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, webcam photography or face to face meetings. We have in place guidelines and regular training sessions to help all pupils remain safe. Cyberbullying will be treated seriously and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures.

Chatrooms and social networking sites are more obvious sources of inappropriate and harmful behaviour and pupils are not permitted to access these sites in school. We have produced a short factsheet to help parents and pupils understand the possible risks.

Useful contacts

Ofsted 08456 404045

enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

NSPCC helpline 0808 800 5000

www.nspcc.org.uk

Childline 0800 1111

Appendices

- A. Responsibilities of the CPLO
- B. Responsibilities of headmaster and governors
- C. Whistle blowing code

Child Protection Procedures

Recognising abuse

To ensure that our pupils are protected from harm we need to understand what type of behaviour constitutes abuse or neglect. They are forms of maltreatment. Failing to act in circumstances where abuse or neglect is suspected is also a form of abuse. There are four categories

Physical abuse

This may involve hitting, shaking, throwing poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning or any other form of physical harm. Such can harm can also be caused by a parent or fabricates or falsely induces illness in a child.

Emotional abuse

This is persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and lasting adverse effects to a child's development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or unwanted. It may involved exposure to things inappropriate to the child's age or severe bullying.

Sexual abuse

This involves forcing or enticing a child to participate in sexual activities including prostitution. Non contact activities are also included such as forcing a child to watch pornography.

Neglect

This is the persistent failure to meet a child's needs likely to result in impaired health or development. Failure to protect a child from harm is also neglect.

More information can be found in Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government 2006)

Bullying

Bullying between children is not a separate category of abuse but it is serious and can cause anxiety and distress. At its most serious level it can lead to up to 12 child suicides a year. All incidences should be reported and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures. The subject of bullying is addressed regularly through PHSE, workshops, assemblies etc. If these procedures are deemed to be ineffective or if the bullying is particularly serious or there is a large disparity of ages the DSP and/or headmaster may consider implementing child protection procedures.

Indicators of abuse

Remember it is your responsibility to report your concerns. It is not your responsibility to investigate or decide if a child has been abused.

- A child who is being abused or neglected may;
- Have bruises bleeding burns or other physical injuries
- Show signs of pain or discomfort
- Keep arms and legs covered even in warm weather
- Be concerned about changing in public for PE etc
- Look unkempt or uncared for
- Change eating habits

- Have difficulty making or sustaining friendships
- Appear fearful
- Be reckless with regard to their own safety
- Self harm
- Frequently miss school or arrive late
- Show signs of not wanting to go home
- Show an obvious change of behaviour
- Challenge authority
- Become disinterested in schoolwork
- Be constantly tired or preoccupied
- Be wary of physical contact
- Be more than usually knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol
- Display sexual knowledge or behaviour inappropriate for their age

Individual indicators in isolation do not provide conclusive evidence of abuse however you could still express your concerns to the DSP who may have a 'bigger picture'

Impact of abuse

The impact should not be underestimated. Many children do recover eventually but scars (physical and emotional) will remain and many affect behaviour in adult life. Swift and early intervention on our part may well reduce the long term effects.

Taking action

Key points to remember

- In an emergency take action quickly eg call 999
- Report your concern to the DSP by the end of the day, Do not delay
- Share information on a need to know basis only
- Complete a record of concern
- Seek support for yourself as appropriate.

If you suspect a pupil is at risk

Do not analyse your feelings and observations too much. Better to seek help from the DSP as soon as possible and share your concerns. You do not have to decide what action to take or whether your suspicions are correct. Your responsibility is to share your concerns, whatever they are, with the DSP.

If a pupil discloses to you

It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose even to someone they trust. You must make it clear that you cannot keep secrets and that you must pass information on but that you will involve the child as much as possible. Follow these guidelines

- Allow the child to speak freely
- Remain calm and do not overreact
- Give reassuring nods or words of comfort
- Do not be afraid of silences
- Do not ever ask investigative questions

- At the appropriate time tell the pupil that in order to help them you must pass the information on
- Do not automatically offer any form of physical comfort
- Do not suggest that the child should have spoken out sooner
- Tell the pupil what will happen next. If the pupil agrees then take them with you to meet the DSP.
- Report verbally to the DSP (or deputy)
- Writing up your conversation as soon as possible. Sign and date it and hand it to the DSP.
- Seek support for yourself if needed.

Notifying parents

The school will normally seek to discuss concerns about a pupil with the parents. This needs to be handled sensitively. This will not happen if the school believes that notifying parents will increase the risk of significant harm. In these circumstances advice will be sought from children's social care.

Referral

The DSP will refer to children's social care if it is believed that a pupil is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm. The pupil (depending on age and understanding) will be told that a referral is being made. Parent will also be informed unless it is believed that this will increase the risk.

Children with sexually harmful behaviour

Children may be harmed by other children or young people. Staff will be aware of the harm caused by bullying and will use the school's anti-bullying procedures where necessary. However there may be occasions when a child's behaviour warrants action under child protection procedures. In particular research shows that 30% of child sex abuse is committed by persons under 18 years of age. The management of such young people is complex and the school will work closely with other relevant agencies to maintain the safety of the whole school community. Young people who display such behaviour may be victims themselves of abuse so procedures will be followed for both victim and perpetrator.

Confidentiality and sharing information

All staff must understand that child protection issues require a high level of confidentiality. Staff should only discuss concerns with the DSP, headmaster or chair of governors. That person will then disseminate information on a strictly 'need to know' basis. Such information will be handled and stored in line with the Data Protection Act 1998 thus

- Processed for limited purposes
- Accurate
- Kept for no longer than necessary
- Processed in accordance with the data subject's rights
- Secure

Record of concerns will be kept in a locked facility and electronic items will be password protected. Sensitive information should not be stored on laptops. Child protection information must be stored separately from the child's school file. Children and parents do not have automatic rights to see such information. Requests to view such information must be referred to the headmaster. The school's policy on confidentiality and information sharing is available to parents. Information concerning a child at risk can be shared, as required, with other agencies.

Reporting directly to other child protection agencies

Staff should follow reporting procedures laid out in the policy. However they may report directly to children's social care, NSPCC or police. If

- the situation is an emergency and none of the designated people are available
- they are convinced that reporting directly is the only way to ensure the child's safety