

ROYAL ALEXANDRA AND ALBERT SCHOOL

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Approved by the Chairman of the Governing Body on 15 September 2011.

Responsible member of SLT: Carl Bingham

Next review: Autumn 2012

Introduction

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

This policy has been developed in accordance with statutory requirements and related guidance which require the school, under section 175 Education Act 2002, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children as a prime responsibility in all its functions. The following have been consulted as main sources:

The Children Acts 1989 and 2004
Care Standards Act 2000
The Education Act 2002
The Education and Inspections Act 2006
The Equality Act 2010
Boarding School national Minimum Standards Sept 2011 and related Ofsted Inspection Framework
What to do if you're worried a child is being abused DfES 2006
Working Together to Safeguard Children HM Government 2010
Safeguarding children and Safer Recruitment in Education DfES Jan 2007
Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and other Staff DofE July 2011
Surrey Safeguarding Children Board Online Child Protection Procedures — SSCB¹

1. Principles

- 1.1 In seeking to achieve the highest standards of pupil education and care, the school fully acknowledges its duty of care to all pupils, whether full boarders, day boarders, flexi boarders or day pupils, and its responsibility to promote healthy relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils.
- 1.2 All Governors, teachers and support staff, whether paid or acting in a voluntary capacity, have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm, and we are committed to ensuring safer recruitment includes adequate induction for all so that they understand child protection is their paramount responsibility, and know what to do if they have a concern.
- 1.3 Child protection is a multi-agency responsibility, and RAAS recognises the need to work openly and to develop and maintain good working relationships with the main investigating agencies, social care and the police.
- 1.4 Any matter which the Child Protection Liaison Officer (CPLO) at RAAS believes to constitute a safeguarding concern, complaint, allegation or disclosure will, without delay, and within 24 hours, be discussed with the relevant Children's Services Department, or where the concern relates to alleged abuse by a member of staff, the

¹ SSCB Child Protection Procedures: available online at <http://sscb.proceduresonline.com/index.html>

Local Authority Designated Officer LADO², following the Surrey Safeguarding Children Board SSCB procedures.

- 1.5 The Governing Body has designated the Chairman of Governors for Child Protection, whom has been briefed by the CPLO. The whole Governing Body is aware of their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- 1.6 The school is inspected every three years by OfSTED, and Safeguarding Policy and practice in the school comply with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding. Significant incidents arising between inspections will be reported by the school's CPLO to the local office of OfSTED.
- 1.7 All those involved with the provision of education and care at the school have a duty to be alert to the possibility of abuse by other children, visitors, members of staff, parents, guardians and other carers.
- 1.8 All employees of the school, whether permanently or occasionally contracted, will act in accordance with the aims of this document and will honour their obligation and duty to the school to raise legitimate concerns about the conduct of colleagues and others. The school is particularly mindful of the need to support and protect 'whistle-blowers' and to ensure that their position within the school is not jeopardised or prejudiced by their actions. Staff making disclosures in respect of safeguarding issues are protected by the school's "Whistle Blowing" policy.
- 1.9 In line with the school's Equal Opportunities policy, and the Equality Act 2010, every endeavour will be made to ensure that all pupils feel valued and respected. Similarly, the rights of pupils will be acknowledged and respected in all areas of school life.
- 1.10 Pupils receive advice on the various forms of abuse, and guidance on how to keep themselves safe and who to turn to. We recognise that children rarely disclose abuse to adults, though may do so to friends, and need to be armed with knowledge to help them identify abuse, and where to turn to get help.
- 1.11 Should any child find him/herself in difficulties, he/she will have ready access to family or friends, their Head of House, the CPLO, the Headmaster or a trusted staff member. There are independent listeners to whom a child may turn for help and there is telephone access to OfSTED, Child-Line, NSPCC, etc. Telephone numbers for these external services are displayed throughout the school.
- 1.12 The school acknowledges a duty to ensure that parents, senior pupils and **ALL** staff are aware of this policy. This policy is on our website and open to inspection by any interested party.

Training

- 1.13 The school has a Child Protection Liaison Officer, and a Deputy, both of whom have had multi-agency training in child protection provided by the SSCB, and who maintain their training at 2 yearly intervals
- 1.14 All staff, including volunteers, and governors, are given a briefing, and a copy of the school's child protection policy including the name and contact details of the CPLOs as part of their induction into the school, so that they know what to look for and what action to take if they suspect abuse. They are also given guidance for Safe Practice including E Safety.
- 1.15 The Headmaster and all other staff, including the Independent Listener, undertake training in child protection supplied by the SSCB, but delivered by the CPLO, within

² The LADO is contactable on 01372 833321. The SSCB procedures also allow maintained schools to consult their Local Education Officer LEO, who will give advice on lower level concerns, but direct the school to the LADO where the matter is more serious, or a criminal offence may have been committed

their first term, and are kept up to date by an annual briefing, and a three yearly refresher course. Governors are also expected to undertake the refresher course.

- 1.16 Governors will receive briefing as to the Governing Body's responsibilities from the CPLO, and updates as necessary through the Chair who is also the Nominated Governor for child protection
- 1.17 Prefects, and other pupils acting as mentors or in positions where they may become aware of concerns, have had basic child protection awareness, and are clear about their role, and the need to report concerns to the CPLO.
- 1.18 All pupils receive an age appropriate induction session from the CPLO on entry to the school. This covers what is abuse, what to do and who to get help from in school, guidance on the value of personal space and that NO means NO. Junior pupils have a follow up CP session every year, and Secondary pupils through PHSE.

Safer Recruitment

- 1.19 The school operates safer recruitment procedures and vets all staff, and members of their families living in Boarding premises over the age of 16 years, in line with regulatory requirements having regard to relevant guidance issued by the Secretary of State³
- 1.20 Where it is found that a person may not be suitable to work with children, following action agreed with the Local Authority Designated Officer LADO, and any criminal or disciplinary process, that person will be referred by the Headmaster to the Independent Safeguarding Authority ISA and any relevant professional body.
- 1.21 The North Downs Way runs through the school grounds, which are therefore open to the public. Our visitor signing in system ensures that all those visiting school buildings have had clearance to do so.
- 1.22 Our Lettings Policy has a clause requiring those responsible for activities involving children on site to ensure the suitability of adults they engage to work with children
- 1.23 Community users organising activities for children are made aware of the school's child protection policy and procedures

2. Recognising abuse

- 2.1 All members of staff should be alert to the possibility of signs of abuse or neglect of any of our pupils — by parents, siblings, other relatives, guardians, other carers, friends, acquaintances, strangers and of course members of the school community including staff and fellow pupils.
- 2.2 Abuse or neglect of a child can arise through inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm and can take many forms. The following categories, used nationally, are taken from Working Together to Safeguard Children HM Government March 2010
- 2.3 **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 fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child
- 2.4 **Emotional abuse** is the persistent ill-treatment or rejection of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or

³ Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education Jan 2007, and the Ofsted Boarding School National Minimum Standards 2011.

valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or "making fun" of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capacity, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), 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 maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

- 2.5 **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the Internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse as can other children.
- 2.6 **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. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:
- 2.6.1 Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
 - 2.6.2 Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
 - 2.6.3 Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
 - 2.6.4 Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

- 2.7 Abuse can occur in a variety of circumstances and across all socio-economic groups. The following characteristics in the pupil may be indications of potential abuse, though staff will receive more advice on this in their training.:
- 2.7.1 Unexplained or unusual injuries (e.g. in inaccessible sites like the neck, behind ears, on the soles of feet);
 - 2.7.2 Cuts, bite marks, scalds or bruising; apparent age of injuries not being consistent with account given;
 - 2.7.4 Evidence of injuries being repeated;
 - 2.7.5 Evidence of poor overall care and a failure to thrive (e.g. pupil appears dirty and unkempt);
 - 2.7.6 Swallowing harmful substances or consuming inappropriate food or drink;
 - 2.7.7 Evidence of self-harm or self-mutilation;
 - 2.7.8 Unexplained deterioration in performance at school;
 - 2.7.9 Evidence of sexual activity that is inappropriate for the pupil's age;
 - 2.7.10 Behavioural or sudden changes in behaviour (e.g. aggression, hyperactivity, nervousness, social withdrawal).

2.8 It must be emphasised that the presence of one or more of these characteristics can only indicate that abuse may have taken place. Behavioural problems, for instance, are often associated with other conditions.

2.9 The conduct of parents can also be indicative. Inconsistent explanations of their child's injuries, a lack of concern for or general detachment from their child's problems, a refusal or reluctance to allow treatment or discuss problems, and displays of aggressive behaviour towards their child should all alert staff to the possibility of abuse or neglect.

3. Bullying, and Child on Child Abuse

3.1 Nationally, children report bullying as the thing they most experience and fear, and incidents may in themselves be so serious as to constitute the need for a child protection referral to be made⁴.

3.2 **Cyberbullying** is an increasing concern, and RAAS provides guidance for E Safety to all in the community, and a monitoring mechanism to pick up misuse of networked electronic media. Some abusive behaviour online, perpetrated via social networking sites, smartphones, and any electronic media may constitute a criminal offence, and be referred via the child protection procedures where necessary to the police.

3.3. Children living together in a school setting can be vulnerable to abuse by those with whom they share facilities. A significant proportion of sex offences are committed by teenagers and, on occasion, by younger children. Staff need to be able to differentiate between consenting, appropriate and abusive, or exploitative peer relationships. When in doubt, staff should consult the CPLO. The SSCB procedures include action which considers the needs of both abused and abusing children.

4. The Role of the Governing Body

4.1 The Governing Body is accountable for ensuring RAAS has effective policies and procedures in place, and monitoring the schools compliance with them, through an annual review.

4.2 At any time, the Governing Body will remedy without delay any weaknesses in regard to child protection arrangements that are brought to their attention.

4.3 The Chair of Governors is the nominated governor for child protection, and understands his role in keeping the rest of the Governing Body abreast of any developments, and liaising with the LADO in the event of an allegation against the Headmaster.

5. The Role of the Child Protection Liaison Officer CPLO

The Child Protection Liaison Officer is Diane Martin on extension 9021.

The CPLO is responsible for:

5.1 Acting as a focal point for staff and others to discuss concerns about possible abuse to children;

5.2 Co-ordinating referrals of a child for whom there are concerns to the Contact Centre Children's Team;⁵

5.3 Ensuring that a referral is made within 24 hours of any allegation being made;

5.4 Faxing a written record of the referral if requested;⁶

⁴ Children Act 1989

⁵ Surrey Contact Centre Children's Team, 0300 200 1006 . Out of office hours, urgent referrals can be made to the Emergency Duty Team, 01483 517898. Where a young person's home is outside Surrey, the Contact Centre Children's Team will assist with the relevant contact details for the home area.

⁶ Using the SCC Multi-agency Referral Form available online at www.surreycc.gov.uk.

- 5.5 Keeping written records of concerns about a child even if there is no need to make an immediate referral;
- 5.6 Ensuring that all such records are kept confidentially and securely and are separate from pupil records, until a child's 25th birthday, and copied on under separate cover to the Headmaster or Principal of any school or college a pupil moves to, up to age 18.
- 5.7 Ensuring that an indication of further record-keeping is marked on the pupil records;
- 5.8 Liaising with other agencies and professionals;
- 5.9 Ensuring attendance at strategy meetings, case conferences, core groups, or other multi-agency planning meetings, contributes to assessments, and provides reports as requested;
- 5.10 Ensuring that any pupil currently subject to a child protection plan who is absent without explanation for two days is referred to their key worker's Social Care Team;
- 5.11 Developing and directing child protection training following SSCB guidelines for all school staff
- 5.12 Reviewing and updating the school's child protection policy in line with changes in legislation and recommended 'best practice' procedures;
- 5.13 Providing, in consultation with the Headmaster, an annual report for the Board of Governors, detailing any changes to the policy and procedures, training undertaken by the CPLO, and by all staff and governors, the number and type of incidents and cases, and the number (but not names) of children with child protection plans

6. Procedure for Responding to Suspected Abuse

- 6.1 Children rarely disclose abuse, and it is up to staff to apply their training to recognise signs and information which suggests abuse may be occurring. Information may come from a variety of other sources.
- 6.2 Children may begin to disclose abusive experience to trusted adults in any setting or situation that serves to trigger memories – staff members may be completely unprepared or pre-occupied with other matters when they do. All staff are advised, however, that it is vital that the child is listened to with sensitivity, and that the adult is able to project empathy and understanding whatever the child's emotional state.
- 6.3 In all matters of suspected abuse, it is important to facilitate an open account, and not to question a child. No promises of confidentiality should be made to a child, rather that if matters are reported which are of concern, they will need to be shared with the CPLO in order to secure the best help. Disclosures should be recorded with as much accuracy as possible after the event, using the child or discloser's actual words, and forwarded to the CPLO as soon as possible in order that a referral can be made to social care within 24 hours. If the abuse is alleged to have been by a member of staff, the information should normally be passed to the Headmaster rather than the CPLO, *see the section below*.
- 6.4 The CPLO will consult the Contact Centre Children's Team on 0300 200 1006 regarding a referral, and where one is accepted, will contribute to the inter-agency safeguarding strategy meeting that will determine what action must be taken. The CPLO will not undertake further enquiries without the agreement of social care, or where relevant the police, where a referral has been accepted by them.
- 6.5 Where exceptionally the CPLO does not feel a referral to social care is required, but the person sharing the concern disagrees, that person may decide to make the referral themselves
- 6.6 Detailed confidential notes, with full chronology, with reference to the reason for decisions, actions, etc should always be made, signed and dated, and be filed in the child's own child protection file, This must be kept securely with limited access to the CPLOs Confidential information should be shared on a 'need to know' basis only.

7. Allegations of abuse by a member of staff

- 7.1 All school staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position regarding their work with pupils in both formal and informal settings. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents to be conducted in view of other adults where possible, or to notify a senior member of staff if a one to one session is planned.
- 7.2 Communication with pupils and parents by whatever means including those that make use of modern technology, should take place within professional boundaries. Pupils should never for example be accepted as “friends” on social networking sites, and where pupils are already known to a member of staff in a family or outside friendship connection, this should be made clear to the person’s senior manager. Subject matter of a personal nature should be avoided. Staff should be circumspect in their communications with pupils so their motives or behaviour are not misconstrued.
- 7.3 It is understood that a pupil may make an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer. If such an allegation is made, whoever receives the allegation, whether directly from the pupil or via a third party, will immediately inform the Headmaster who will without delay consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer LADO on 01372 833321. Together they will decide what action to take. If the allegation concerns the Headmaster the person receiving the allegation will inform the CPLO, who will in turn inform the Chairman of Governors and support them in contacting the LADO, and the Local Education Officer LEO for further support. Neither must notify the Headmaster of the referral at that stage.
- 7.4 Parents or guardians of a child or children involved will be told about the allegation as soon as possible, pending agreement with the investigating agencies on what can be explained and when. They will be kept informed about the progress of the case, but are not entitled to know the outcome of any disciplinary process. Under no circumstances will a child be sent home, pending any investigation, unless this advice is given exceptionally, as a result of a Strategy Meeting.
- 7.5 The school will also keep the member of staff or other adult who is the subject of the allegation informed of the progress of the case and consider what other support is appropriate for the individual. If a member of a union or professional association, the member of staff will be advised to contact that organization at the outset. The power to suspend a member of staff is vested in the Headmaster, or in the case of an allegation against the Headmaster, the Chair of Governors. Suspension should not be automatic in such cases.

Further guidance is available in “Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and other Staff” DfE July 2011 and in the SSCB procedures.

8. Complaints

- 8.1 The school has in place formal complaints procedures for both pupils and parents. Complaints relating to child protection issues should be addressed in the first instance to the CPLO who will attempt to resolve the matter in a satisfactory way having regard to all concerned

9. Supporting Children

- 9.1 We recognise that a child who is abused or witnesses violence may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame themselves, and find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self worth.

- 9.2 We recognise that the school may provide the only stability in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm.
- 9.3 We accept that research shows that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn.
- 9.4 Our school will support all pupils by :
- Encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness, through the curriculum as well as our relationships, whilst not condoning aggression or bullying.
 - Promoting a caring, safe and positive environment within the school.
 - Liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children.
 - Notifying Social Care as soon as there is a significant concern.
 - Providing continuing support to a pupil about whom there have been concerns who leaves the school by ensuring that appropriate information is copied under confidential cover to the pupil's new school or FE College and ensuring the school medical records are forwarded as a matter of priority.

10. Supporting Staff

- 10.1 We recognise that staff working in the school who have become involved with a child who has suffered harm, or appears to be likely to suffer harm, may find the situation stressful and upsetting.
- 10.2 We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the CPLO and to seek further support as appropriate.

11. Confidentiality

- 11.1 We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential.
- 11.2 The Headmaster or CPLO will disclose any information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need to know basis only.⁷
- 11.3 All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.
- 11.4 All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or wellbeing.
- 11.5 The CPLO will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to Social Care with their parents /carers unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm, or impede a criminal investigation. If in doubt, the CPLO will consult with a Duty Manager at the Contact Centre Children's Team⁹ on this point.

12. Missing Children

- 12.1 Staff working within the school know and implement the school's policy on Missing Children. Staff actively search for children who are missing, including working with the police where appropriate. Any child subject to a Multi-Agency Child Protection Plan

⁷ Guidance about sharing information, can be found in the booklet "What to do if You are Worried a Child is being Abused" DoH 2003 www.doh.gov.uk and as at footnote 3

who is missing without satisfactory explanation will be reported to their Key Social Worker as soon as possible and within two days in any case.

13. Whistle-blowing

- 13.1 The school recognises that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so. Childline posters are available throughout the school for pupils to access the helpline where they wish to do so, and confidential telephone access is available to them.
- 13.2 All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of child protection, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues. If necessary they should speak in the first instance to the CPLO or to the Headmaster, to whom they must report any concern or allegation about school practices or the behaviour of colleagues that are likely to put pupils at risk of abuse or other serious harm. They may also speak to the Chair of Governors, who is also the nominated governor for child protection. The school's whistle-blowing procedure is set out in full in a separate document, and explains how and to whom to progress a concern. Parents, staff and pupils are made aware that having taken a concern to the Chair of Governors, if they remain unsatisfied, they may also contact the Local Education Officer, or use the Ofsted Whistleblowing line⁸.

14. Physical intervention

- 14.1 The school's policy on physical intervention by staff is set out separately⁹. It recognises that all staff may use physical intervention, but advises staff only to use physical intervention as a last resort when a child is endangering him or herself or others, and that at all times it must entail the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person.
- 14.2 Such events should be recorded and signed by a witness, and reported as soon as possible to the child's parent. It must be understood that physical intervention of a nature that causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures.
- 14.3 Pupils and their parents are made aware through the school's Behaviour Management Policy that some possessions are not permitted in school time, and some articles are banned. Where necessary, staff will search and confiscate banned items, taking heed of the guidance in doing so¹⁰. These incidents will also be notified to parents, and recorded.

15. Health & safety

- 15.1 The school's health & safety policy, together with other published procedures and policies, reflect the consideration given to the protection of pupils and concern for their welfare, both physically within the school environment, and, for example, in relation to internet use, and when away from the school undertaking school trips and visits.

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⁸ whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk or tel 0300 123 3155 Mon – Fri 8.00am-6.00pm

⁹ Use of Reasonable Force, DfE Sept 2011

¹⁰ Screening Searching and Confiscation, DfE Sept 2011

