

FALKNER HOUSE CHILD PROTECTION (SAFEGUARDING) POLICY AND PROCEDURE – NURSERY TO YEAR 6 DCSF Standard 3 2b compliant with DCSF “What to do if you are worried a child is being abused” and also “Safeguarding children and Safer Recruitment in Education section 2.22” and with the Kensington and Chelsea Safeguarding Children Board (and their inter agency procedures).

Aims

- That any concern a pupil may have will be dealt with in a friendly and supportive manner
- That each pupil will develop the understanding that staff can be trusted to help in any situation.
- To provide a secure environment for the pupils to talk to and consult adults who can give help if and when it is required.
- To make parents aware that the policy and procedure is available on the school web site
- To ensure safe recruitment procedures
- To ensure that any weaknesses or deficiencies in child protection arrangements are remedied without delay
- Ensure that the designated person is trained, at least every two years, in child protection and inter-agency working
- To ensure that all staff are trained in child protection (updated every three years) and that part-time and voluntary staff who work with children are aware of the arrangements.
- **To safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school,**

Action

A pupil may approach any member of staff and seek advice or help. That member of staff cannot promise absolute confidentiality, since after listening to the concerns raised, if they have any doubts on the matter, they should refer the episode to the senior designated person (the Headteacher Mrs Griggs). Mrs Griggs also takes lead responsibility for Child Protection for Nursery and Reception pupils (EYFS). If there is suspicion, or evidence, of Child Abuse in any form, then the Child Protection Co-ordinator will refer the incident to Social Services within 24 hours (contact details on Pg 4). Any referral will be noted in the pupil's file. If the pupil indicates any illegal actions, then the matter may be referred to the School Police Liaison Officer.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF ADULTS

Any person who is over the age of 16, and who has parental responsibilities, charge or care of a child under 16, has certain responsibilities with regard to the child's welfare, and can be held criminally liable for failure to meet them. The Partners, Headteacher and staff fall within the definition of those having "charge" or "care" of a child. Criminal liability arises if the adult: "wilfully assaults, ill-treats, neglects, abandons, or exposes him... in a manner likely to cause unnecessary suffering or injury to health" This includes mental as well as physical health, and applies whether or not harm actually occurred. It is sufficient that it was "likely" to occur.

Adults are all to

- be observant so as to recognise variations in pupil behaviour which may indicate emotional and physical concerns or possible abuse.
- respond when a child tells about abuse, or expresses a desire to talk about a private problem.
- familiarise themselves with Falkner House's procedures and policies for Child Protection.
- To provide a caring environment for pupils where trust between pupils and staff can develop and be assured.
- To give guidance to pupils who may be experiencing difficulties of a sensitive nature either within school or at home.
- To further enhance the relationship between parents and school for the benefit of each pupil.

The responsibilities of the senior designated person - Mrs Griggs (Miss Lisa Day – Lower School Co-ordinator deputy and Mr Larvin – Bursar assistant deputy) who also covers EYFS are to:

- ensure safe recruitment (incl. CRB checks and compliance with Independent School Standards Regulations)
- all staff are aware of the school's protection procedures, and any amendments
- supply new members of staff with a written copy of procedures, and to emphasise their importance
- organise staff training on child protection
- help and guide children to protect themselves from abuse

- liaise with other agencies on general issues relating to child protection
- Ensure that as far as possible all external centres etc. used by the school comply with safe recruitment practices
- Report to ISA (0300 123 111) within one month of leaving the school any person (employed, self employed or volunteer) who services are no longer used because he or she is considered unsuitable to work with children.
Compromise agreements do not apply in this connection

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST

STAFF (INCLUDING VOLUNTEERS)

Any allegation against a member of staff must be reported to the Headteacher (Miss Lisa Day in the case of the Headteacher's absence). It must be taken seriously and fully investigated. Even if unfounded, the parents of the child concerned must be made fully aware of the allegations. However, the identity of the member of staff involved should not be given until specific legal advice has been obtained. In the event of enquiries being made by other parents, they should be told only that an allegation of misconduct has been made against a member of staff and that it is being investigated. No further information should be given without first seeking legal advice. In a case of serious harm, police inform the police from the outset

THE SENIOR DESIGNATED PERSON who is the HEADTEACHER

This must be immediately reported to the Miss Lisa Day without notifying the head who will make up a panel consisting of herself, the bursar and at least another senior member of staff. Miss Day will also inform Mrs Nunes who is the other member of the Partnership. The panel will then take independent action and in a case of serious harm, inform the police from the outset

OTHER PUPILS

This may involve physical / emotional or sexual abuse. In minor incidents, the school's normal disciplinary procedures should apply. In more serious cases, it will have to be decided whether to involve the parents of the victim and the alleged perpetrator. The Headteacher may wish to discuss with the victim and her parents whether there should be police involvement.

FAMILY MEMBERS

If it is suspected or reported that child abuse may be occurring within a family, then the school will have to decide whether first to get in touch with the parents. Only the senior designated person can make this decision after consultation with Social Services. If a matter is deemed sufficiently serious or if the child alleges that they have been abused or if the School believes that by contacting the parents, the child may be placed at greater risk, then the senior designated teacher will contact the Duty Officer at the Social Services before any contact is made with the child's parents. Social Services will give advice about the next steps. Any fears of the children in these situations must be sensitively handled, and social workers informed of these fears and concerns. If both the reporter and the Child Protection Co-ordinator believe there to be clear and immediate evidence of abuse caused by a known person, then immediate contact will be made with the Police. The Police will take the responsibility of informing all other appropriate agencies.

LEGAL CONCERNS

DEFAMATION - One of the main concerns quoted by adults in their reluctance to report suspicions of abuse is the fear that the person suspected will sue them for defamation if the allegation turns out to be unfounded. To be defamatory, a statement must first of all be untrue. Even if subsequently shown to be untrue, the statement will be protected by "qualified privilege" if it is made to the appropriate authority in response to a duty whether legal, moral or social or in the protection of an interest.

BREACH OF CONFIDENCE - If certain conditions are met, information may be regarded as confidential. Passing on confidential information without permission could lead to an action for breach of confidence. If the conditions listed below are satisfied and an action is raised, it would be a defence to show that the information was passed on in pursuit of the public interest. As there is a clear public interest in the protection of children, it is difficult to envisage any such action succeeding. Information would be regarded as confidential if:

- The information disclosed was confidential in character (not for example, a matter of public record, such as a person's age)
- Disclosure has or would cause actual harm to the person whose confidence was breached
- One could infer that the confider did not want the information passed on.

CONFIDENTIALITY - Confidentiality is an important issue for children, parents and professionals. Children and parents may wish to raise or share concerns, but be fearful of setting in train a series of events, which will have far-reaching and unwanted consequences. They may seek an assurance of confidentiality before expressing their concerns. Staff will also be concerned because they do not want to lose the trust of those who may have sought their help. Neither do they wish to feel responsible for initiating what might be seen as uncomfortable procedures but they recognise they have a responsibility towards the children.

Problems may arise when a child consults a member of staff about a problem and does not want that information to be shared with parents. Whilst staff will try to encourage children to share the information with parents, there may be circumstances in which any pressure to pass the information on could result in the child keeping the problem to herself, or not sharing concerns in the future. Whilst every effort will be made to respect a desire for confidentiality, if serious concerns arise about a child's welfare, it may be necessary for that information to be passed on to the appropriate authorities. It will be made clear to those seeking advice that the staff member may not be able to promise confidentiality but that they will not breach the confidence without letting the person know that they intend to do so.

The policy of Falkner House is to work in partnership with parents in order to promote the welfare of children and to build up relationships of trust with children. Children and parents should feel able to raise with the school concerns about safety and welfare in the knowledge that these will be dealt with sensitively. Due to the nature of such concerns, the school will operate on the presumption that anything imparted in confidence will be treated in confidence. This is subject to three qualifications.

1. Anything imparted "in confidence" to a member of staff or person approached as an associate of the school may be shared with a restricted number of colleagues, if that person feels in need of support and guidance
2. If serious concerns are raised about the safety or welfare of a child, the person approached may be obliged, in terms of the school's child protection procedures, to pass that information on to the Child Protection Co-ordinator. In these circumstances, the person approached would not, except in an emergency, breach the confidence without letting the child know that they intended doing so.
3. Falkner House School will, of course, pass on information when legally obliged so to do.

INTERACTION WITH PUPILS

To protect children from abuse, and staff from suspicion of abuse, the natural inclination to comfort and reassure children through physical contact should be curbed, and impulse restrained, by a considered assessment of the situation. It is not that that physical contact is never permissible, but adults touching children must operate within understood limits, and contact outside those limits must be a considered response which can be justified if necessary. Physical contact may be for the purpose of care/instruction/restraint. Restraint should involve only the minimum force necessary to protect children at imminent risk of burning themselves or others, or inflicting damage to property. Should physical contact appear necessary colleagues should, if at all possible, be summoned to assist. The incident must be noted in the pupil red file and the parents informed

Rigid rules about what is and is not permissible are not acceptable, and are difficult to implement. The simplest advice is to try, as far as is possible, to avoid being alone with a child. Where one-to-one contact does happen e.g. in music, lessons, guidance interviews, then it should be arranged with others, where possible, within ear shot or vision and whenever practicable, with the door open. Any unusual situation e.g. were a member of staff to have to be alone in a taxi with a child this occurrence should be immediately reported to the Headteacher

It is essential that staff should

Salacious /demeaning remarks should never be made to or in the presence of children. Remarks about a child's physical characteristics or development, or suggestive or derogatory comments could fall into this category.

Attachments if staff suspect that a pupil is becoming inappropriately attached to them or another member of staff, or that your relationship with or feelings towards a child is placing you at risk of unprofessional behaviour they are strongly advised to share their concerns with a senior colleague.

Staff should not have cyber contact with pupils e.g. they must not be "Facebook friends". Staff should not have direct telephone / email contact with pupils outside school. Any such contact regarding homework / fixtures should be made via parents

STAFF CHECKLIST IF:

child discloses abuse or a third party expresses concern to you or an anonymous allegation is received

THEN STAFF SHOULD:

- Respond without showing signs of disquiet, disbelief, anxiety or shock.
- Enquire casually about how an injury was sustained or why a child is upset
- Listen with care
- Reassure the child that he/she is not to blame
- Not give a guarantee of confidentiality
- Affirm the child's feelings as expressed (don't tell the child how he/she should feel)
- Avoid being judgmental about the information given by a child.
- Observe carefully the behaviour or demeanour of the child or the person expressing concern.
- Record in detail and immediately what you have seen or heard.
- Do not interrogate or enter into detailed investigations or ask leading questions; rather encourage the child to say what he or she wants until enough information is gained to decide whether or not a referral is appropriate.
- REPORT immediately to the Child Protection Co-ordinator Mrs Griggs (who is also the lead person for EYFS)
- Keep the allegation confidential (aside from discussions with the Child Protection Co-ordinator)

THE SENIOR DESIGNATED PRACTITIONER SHOULD

- Contact the social services immediately
 - Kensington and Chelsea child protection team: 020 7598 4886 / 020 7361 3298 (Lynda Deacon) 020 8846 7992 (Sarah) or Educational Welfare 020 7598 4876 (Hilary Shaw)
 - NSPCC 0800 800 500 or
 - Police 020 8246 0826
- Consider the need for support for the child and for the member of staff who made the report.
- Decide if medical treatment or assessment is required
- Examine the implications for siblings and other member's of the child's family
- Examine the implications for other pupils
- Consider the likely attitude of parents/guardians
- Be aware of the immediate welfare of child — how does he/she get home; fear of going home;
- Keep accurate confidential minutes of every meeting and any notes about referral decisions and rationale.
- Give a report of the incident in confidence to the Partnership. If the allegation is against a member of staff, they will be named as the Partnership is responsible for his/her employment

CHILD ABUSE

There are several forms of child abuse. In 1992, The Scottish Office issued the following guidance: "To define an act or omission as abusive and/or presenting future risk for the purpose of reporting, three elements must be taken into account.

1. whether there is demonstrable damage or harm to a child or a prediction of harm to a child
2. whether the injury/state of the child could have been avoidable through action by parents or carers responsible for that child
3. whether the potential harm or risk is linked to the action or inaction of the parent or other carer.

This would also apply where it was not possible to establish the identity of the perpetrator". These three points can be itemised under five categories of abuse, but it is important to remember that there may be overlap and interaction between these categories and a particular case of child abuse may not always fit neatly into one category. It is understood that in England, only Police and Social Workers have a legal duty to pass information about abuse to higher authorities but there does exist a professional obligation and teachers are advised that there is an expectation that they will follow a procedure to report suspicions of abuse. There could be action taken for failing to act upon the child's disclosure or upon justified concerns which had been expressed to a teacher. Similarly, an action could be brought for encouraging, or turning a blind eye to, or failing to protect a child from bullying.

PHYSICAL INJURY

Actual, or attempted physical injury to a child where there is definite knowledge, or reasonable suspicion, that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented. This could include deliberate poisoning, attempted drowning or smothering, unreasonable physical chastisement etc...

Possible signs of possible physical abuse include

Unexplained injuries or burns, particularly if they are recurrent;
Improbable excuses given to explain injuries;
Refusal to discuss injuries;
Running away.

Untreated injuries, or delay in reporting
Excessive physical punishment;
Arms and legs covered in hot weather;
Fear of returning home;
Aggression towards others;

SEXUAL ABUSE

Any child under the age of 16 may be deemed to have been sexually abused when any person or persons, by design or neglect, exploits the child, directly or indirectly, in any activity to lead to the sexual arousal or other forms of gratification of that person or any other persons, including organised networks. This definition holds whether or not there has been genital contact and whether or not the child is said to have initiated the behaviour... Sexual abuse may include incest, rape, sodomy or intercourse with children; lewd or libidinous practices or behaviour towards children; indecent assault of children; taking indecent photographs of children, or encouraging prostitution, or witnessing of pornographic materials or acts. Sexual exploitation may be indicated by lack of consent; inequalities of age, development or size; actual or threatened coercion.

Possible behavioural signs of sexual abuse

Lack of trust, or over-familiarity with adults
Fear of a particular individual
Social isolation — withdrawal or introversion
Running away from home
Girls taking over the mothering role
Reluctance or refusal to participate in physical activity or to change clothes
Low self esteem;
Drug, alcohol or solvent abuse;
Display of sexuality beyond child's years;
Unusual interest in the genitals of adults or children or animals;
Fear of bathrooms, showers, and closed doors;
Abnormal sexualised drawing;
Fear of medical examinations;
Development regression;
Poor peer relationships;

Over sexualised behaviour;
Compulsive masturbation;
Stealing;
Psychosomatic factors, e.g. recurrent abdominal pain or headache;
Sleeplessness, nightmares, fear of the dark;
Bruises, scratches, bite marks to thighs or genitals areas;
Obvious discomfort in the rectal or genital area Pain when passing urine;
Stained clothing, particularly underwear;
Unusual genital odour;
Anxiety or depression;
Eating disorder;
Discomfort in walking/sitting;

Not all children are able to tell parents that they have been assaulted. Changes in behaviour may be a signal that something has happened. These are general indicators that the child may be troubled though not necessarily about a sexual assault. The child may have some of these problems or none at all. It is the combination, frequency and duration of signs that will alert to a problem. Try to notice all changes in usual behaviour, but remember that in sexual assault there may well be no physical or behavioural signs.

NON-ORGANIC FAILURE TO THRIVE

Children failing to reach normal growth and development milestones, where physical and genetic reasons have been medically eliminated, and a diagnosis of non-organic failure to thrive has been established... This could be due to persistent withholding of food as a punishment, and the sufficiency and/or suitability of food for the child. This category can give rise to serious childhood illnesses, and may even be life threatening.

Signs of possible non-organic failure to thrive:

Significant lack of growth
Weight or hair loss

Poor skin or muscle tone

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Failure to provide for the child's basic emotional needs such as to have a severe effect on the behaviour and development of the child. This may include children being rejected, denigrated or used as a scapegoat; inappropriately punished, denied opportunities for exploration, play and socialisation appropriate to stage of development, or encouraged to engage in anti-social behaviour; put in a state of terror or extreme anxiety by use of threats or intimidation... Children left on their own for long periods, those who are under-stimulated; who do not experience adequate nurturing, or who are subject to a large number of carers, may also come into this category.

Signs of possible emotional abuse:

Low self-esteem;
Continual self-deprecation;
Sudden speech disorder;
Significant decline in concentration;
Socio-emotional immaturity;
"Neurotic" behaviour (e.g. rocking, head banging);

Self-mutilation;
Compulsive stealing;
Extremes of passivity or aggression;
Running away;
Indiscriminate friendliness

PHYSICAL NEGLECT

This occurs when a child's essential needs are not met and this is likely to cause impairment to physical health and development. Such needs include clothing, good, cleanliness, shelter and warmth. A lack of appropriate care results in persistent or severe exposure, through negligence to circumstances which endanger the child... This may also include failure to secure appropriate medical treatment for the child. It should be borne in mind that abuse may in some cases be being perpetrated by another child rather than an adult...

Signs of possible neglect:

Constant hunger;
Poor personal hygiene;
Constant tiredness;
Poor state of clothing;
Stealing.

Frequent lateness and/or unexplained non-attendance at school;
Untreated medical problems;
Poor peer relationships;

Key dates

Policy last reviewed 30th March 2010

To be reviewed again by 1st September 2010

Notes of reviews:

05 October 2009 the Bursar and the Headteacher (who is the senior designated person) reviewed the whole policy and procedures and the efficiency of the systems in the light of ISI training. The relevant sections of the staff handbook and the policy were merged and a more holistic approach adopted.

31st March 2010 The Bursar and the Headteacher updated various details of the policy

On an annual basis policy and procedures and the efficiency of the school's systems are examined and reviewed

Staff training 4th November 2008 (Hilary Shaw K&C)
to be repeated by 4th November 2010

Included inter – agency training of lead person

Additional staff training 29th April 2010 (Hilary Shaw K&C)