

TONBRIDGE SCHOOL

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Aims

Tonbridge School aims to provide an environment in which there are effective procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils in our care. The school starts from the premise that the welfare of the child is paramount. We aim to establish an ethos where children feel secure, know that there are adults to whom they can talk in times of difficulty and where positive steps are taken to build self-esteem and confidence. We also recognise the importance of working with other agencies to ensure the welfare of children under our protection. There are two main elements to our Child Protection Policy:

- a. Preventing threats to pupil welfare by creating a safe school environment and a strong pastoral system.
- b. Protecting those in our care by following agreed procedures and ensuring staff are appropriately recruited, trained and supported to respond appropriately to child protection concerns.

This policy applies to all teaching, non-teaching and volunteer staff, and to School Governors. The school also notes the requirement that any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements are remedied without delay.

Roles and Responsibilities

All adults working with children have a responsibility to safeguard and promote their welfare. There are however, key people within Tonbridge School who have specific responsibilities:

The Second Master, Mr. D.R.Walsh, is the Designated Child Protection Co-ordinator (DCPC) to whom all child protection issues should be notified. He will report on such issues to the Headmaster.

The Lower Master, Mr. J.E.Perriss, is the official Deputy Child Protection Co-ordinator, who will act in the absence of the Second Master.

Mrs. Sara Tozzi chairs the Governors' Pastoral Committee which has responsibility for child protection issues, including reviewing annually the school's child protection policy and procedures and reporting to the school governors on the effectiveness with which these have been implemented.

Those members of management involved in recruiting staff are required to operate safe recruitment procedures in line with the statutory guidance set out in 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education' (DCSF January 2007).

All members of staff, both teaching and non-teaching, should be able to recognise signs of child abuse and be familiar with the correct procedures for communicating their concerns. They must also ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place pupils or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a pupil. All should be aware of the school's 'Whistleblowing Policy' and the way that this impacts on issues of child protection, and the notes on confidentiality set out in the Pastoral Handbook. They are expected to carry with them the 'Child Protection' cards issued by the Second Master or Personnel Manager.

What is child abuse?

Physical injury This can be the result of excessive use of physical force by an adult or a senior boy.

Neglect This can range from ignoring a child's developmental needs to not supervising him adequately.

Sexual abuse This is the involvement of a child or adolescent in sexual activities they do not understand, cannot give consent to, and which are not acceptable to our society. This includes inappropriate touching, obscene photographs, child pornography, as well as attempted or actual sexual acts.

Emotional abuse This ranges from rejecting a child, refusing to show love or affection, or deliberately making a child unhappy by continual verbal abuse.

Some indications of possible abuse

- unusual, even bizarre behaviour.
- unexplained injuries.
- emotional withdrawal – showing lack of trust in adults.
- eating problems.
- not growing or putting on weight.
- timid and withdrawn.
- over-demanding, mood swings, aggressiveness.
- poor academic work, under-achievement.
- tiredness.

Behaviour that is out of character for a given pupil is not in itself an indication of abuse. Any staff concerned about a pupil's behaviour or demeanour should however report it to the boy's housemaster, who is in the best position to see the fuller picture and may already have other evidence leading to concern.

Procedure to follow by a member of staff if abuse is suspected or reported

If any member of staff:

- suspects that child abuse is occurring;
- identifies child abuse;
- is concerned that school practices or the behaviour of others may be putting a child at risk of abuse;
- has an incident, complaint or suspicion reported to him/her;

he/she must:

- Make brief notes at the time or as soon as possible afterwards and ensure that these original notes are kept.
- Immediately stop any other activity to listen.
- Not ask leading questions (it may prejudice the investigation).
- Not give guarantees of confidentiality but give assurances that only those who need to know will be informed.
- Not make any attempt to investigate the incident themselves.
- Within twenty-four hours inform the Designated Child Protection Co-ordinator (the Second Master). If the complaint is likely to involve the Second Master, the informant must report it to the Headmaster.

Subsequent action taken by the DCPC and/or the Headmaster

The DCPC, together with the Headmaster, will decide upon any action needed to ensure the immediate protection of the pupil concerned and any further means of investigation. Where an allegation has been made against a member of staff, the Headmaster and DCPC will follow procedures in line with school disciplinary policy and statutory guidance from the DCSF entitled 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education' (January 2007). This statutory guidance has been adopted as an appendix to the school's Disciplinary Policy.

Where it is alleged that a member of staff has behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child, possibly committed a criminal offence against a child or behaved towards a child in way that indicates that he/she is unsuitable to work with children, the Headmaster must report it within twenty-four hours to the Designated Officer in the Child Protection Team, Tonbridge Social Services. Further details of the process can be found in the above statutory guidance.

- The Chair of the Pastoral Committee will be informed of any child protection issue as soon as possible after it arises.
- Any allegation involving the Headmaster will be handled by the Chairman of Governors and Chair of the Pastoral Committee.

The Headmaster is required to report to the Secretary of State via the DCSF within one month of leaving the school any person whose services are no longer used because he or she is considered unsuitable to work with children.

Records and Monitoring

Well kept records are essential to good child protection practice. All incidents relating to child protection must be recorded on incident report forms, together with any accompanying notes. This form must be given to the DCPC, who will ensure that a copy is kept in a separate child protection file in the Headmaster's office. The DCPC will also ensure that details are given to any other person who needs to know about the particular child under threat, and who might be involved in the monitoring of that child. He will also be responsible for liaising with any other agencies to whom a referral might be warranted.

Other relevant school policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies involving welfare. These policies are:

Anti-bullying policy
Physical restraint policy
Behaviour Policy
Whistleblowing policy and Confidentiality

Child Protection Training

It is school policy to follow DCSF guidance in 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education' that all members of staff should have appropriate training in child protection issues. The DCPC and his deputy, and the school governor responsible for child protection issues should undertake an initial child protection training course and then a refresher course every two years, and other members of staff, including part-time and voluntary staff, should have a training course every three years. In addition, the DCPC must have training in 'inter-agency working' provided by the

local Area Child Protection Committee. Responsibility for the training of the teaching staff lies with the Second Master, and all other school employees with the Personnel Manager.

Ofsted

The name, address and telephone number of the body now responsible for inspecting and safeguarding child protection issues is Ofsted.

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