

# ST SWITHUN'S SCHOOL

## SAFEGUARDING: CHILD PROTECTION

**Policy Statement** (note: this policy can be accessed on the school's website at [www.stswithuns.com](http://www.stswithuns.com))

The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The Child Protection (CP) policy is written in accordance with the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Board, DCSF guidelines found in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2006) and Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (2007).

Every child has the right to freedom from neglect and emotional, physical, sexual, racial, verbal or mental abuse (this includes bullying and intimidation). The overriding aim must be the protection of the individual child within the school to prevent abuse from occurring and, if any child is subject to abuse, to enable that child to feel sufficiently secure to disclose it to a member of staff so that steps can be taken to remedy the situation. In the event of an official enquiry into abuse the School will provide whatever support the child needs during the process.

- All staff are required to be fully aware of what constitutes child abuse and the different forms in which it may present itself.
- Appropriate training, which complies with DCSF requirements, will be provided for staff, both as part of staff induction and as an ongoing process. Training is compulsory and will be provided every three years for all staff and every two years for the designated Child Protection Officer (CPO).
- Training includes information on the signs of possible abuse, which include not only physical signs of injury but also unhappy, anxious or withdrawn behaviour in a previously happy individual; solitariness; deterioration of work and relationships; and other new patterns of behaviour which may cause concern. Training will also cover what to do if abuse is suspected and what will happen when external agencies are contacted.
- Staff will be made aware that the possibility of abuse exists between child and child, parent and child, adult and child or staff member and child.
- All part-time and voluntary members of staff who work with children will be made aware of the school's policy and procedures.
- Communication within the School on child protection issues will be maintained to a high standard and follow recognised channels, co-ordinating smoothly, via the Child Protection Officer, Jayne Webber (the Senior Housemistress), with outside agencies. (In her absence, the Junior School Headmistress has also been trained to take up this responsibility.)
- The Headmistress will ensure that the recommended procedures are followed when recruiting staff or volunteers, including CRB checks and compliance with all ISI regulations. Checks will be made to ensure that similar procedures have been followed with staff working with pupils of the school for another organisation or on another site
- CP procedures will be subject to constant review, liaison, and vigilant co-ordination between Headmistress, the CPO, senior and house staff, teachers, pupils and outside agencies eg Hants SCB.
- The School undertakes to remedy immediately any deficiency or weakness within the Child Protection policy and procedures as soon as they are identified, without delay. An annual review of the Child Protection policy, and the efficiency with which it is implemented, is undertaken by the School Council, one of whose members has specific responsibility for Child Protection matters.

- Allegations of abuse or suspected abuse including those against staff or volunteers must be reported without delay to the Child Protection Officer (Jayne Webber, SHOM). The CPO recognises and accepts her duty to involve external agencies if there is a suspicion or allegation of abuse.
- Where there is an allegation or suspicion of abuse, the CPO will make a referral to the Local Authority Child Protection Unit within 24 hours, confirming a telephone referral in writing.
- All staff must be aware that if they have concerns about the behaviour of senior staff with respect to child abuse they have a right and duty to take the matter to the Child Protection Officer (Jayne Webber, SHOM), or ultimately the Governing Body. If their concern is with the behaviour of the Child Protection Officer or the Headmistress they should take it directly to the Governing Body.
- Adequate professional and personal support for staff involved in abuse cases will be provided by the Headmistress and/or external counsellors where necessary.
- Should any person be required to leave the School because he/she is considered unsuitable to work with children, this will be reported within one month to the Independent Safeguarding Agency (ISA) at PO Box 181, Darlington DL1 9FA (Tel: 0300123 1111).

### **PASTORAL CARE PROCEDURES - GENERAL**

Much of our time is, quite rightly, spent listening to, advising and counselling girls. Tact, sympathy and commonsense are usually sufficient, but the following guidelines should also be borne in mind when dealing with more serious issues.

- Listening is the most helpful thing you can do.
- Pastoral concerns about a girl, which are not actual child protection concerns, should be discussed with House and Form staff before action is taken. These people will usually know more about the girl than other staff and they must be kept informed. Co-ordinated, considered and agreed action is most effective.
- Staff will be supported by the Headmistress and Deputy Headmistress who are there to be consulted and to advise, and who should be kept informed of any issues regarded as important. Staff should note the school's Whistle Blowing policy and its assurance of immunity to those acting in good faith.
- It is most important that staff do not agree in advance to keep confidential anything that a girl wishes to tell them. The very fact that a girl has asked to talk means that she has accepted that she cannot cope on her own and is asking for help.
- In cases of family problems, divorce or bereavement, the Headmistress, Chaplain, Deputy Head, Housemistress/Housemaster and Form teacher should all be informed and they will pass the information to other relevant staff.
- If a girl raises a problem or concern about another member of staff which is not specifically a child protection issue it should be taken to the Head of Department or Deputy Head.
- Staff should, on all occasions, take steps to ensure that their behaviour does not place pupils or themselves at risk of harm, or risk of allegations of harm to a pupil. This is particularly important when teaching, counselling or coaching on a one to one basis. They should refer to the school's professional guidelines in *Safe To Learn: Maintaining A Safe Environment*, in the Teachers' Handbook. Further advice and guidance can be found in Guidance for Safe Working Practice (2005) a copy of which can be found in the staff room and is available on the DCSF Website.

## PASTORAL CARE PROCEDURES – CHILD PROTECTION

- The signs of neglect and abuse, sexual, physical and emotional, are documented in the Children Act, (found in the staff room or view at [www.hmsso.gov.uk](http://www.hmsso.gov.uk)) and summarised at the end of this document.
- These procedures apply to the abuse or suspected abuse of a child by other children, and by adults.
- Abuse, whether current or in the past, MUST be reported immediately to Jayne Webber, the Senior Housemistress. She is the School's Child Protection Officer and is required by law to inform the relevant external agencies, beginning with the Child Protection Team.
- In the case of non-accidental injuries, medical attention may, if necessary, take priority over other concerns and procedures but this decision will be taken by the Child Protection Officer.
- It is important that staff do not prejudice any possible legal proceedings by asking leading questions or tape-recording any interview or conversation with the pupil. Staff may encourage the child to talk, but should be very careful not to put words into the child's mouth. The primary role at this stage is to listen. Staff must never agree in advance to keep what a child may tell them confidential. Child protection concerns MUST be referred to the Child Protection Officer (Jayne Webber, SHOM)
- If a child wishes to talk to you, do not feel inadequate - the child has chosen to talk to you; above all listen first and then, immediately, inform the Child Protection Officer (Jayne Webber).
- It is important that staff do not discuss the circumstances surrounding any case of suspected abuse with the parents or suspected perpetrator.
- The facts concerning suspicions or disclosures of abuse must be fully recorded in writing. The recorded information must distinguish clearly between objective facts, reported information and subjective inferences. The report should be dated and signed.
- The Child Protection Officer and staff concerned with reporting abuse will be kept fully informed of, and involved in, the subsequent process of investigation and its outcome, even when the responsibility for that process has passed out of their control.
- You should be aware that if abuse is referred to external agencies, the issues will be investigated by:
  - (i) the Police;
  - (ii) the Local Authority Child Protection Team;
  - (iii) the School's own disciplinary process where appropriate.

A finding that there is insufficient evidence to pursue a prosecution by the police does not necessarily mean that a member of staff would not face disciplinary procedures within School.

If staff feel that a child abuse issue has not been dealt with appropriately, or have reason to be concerned about the behaviour of a senior member of staff, they should speak first to the Chairman of Council. If the concerns remain, they should, without fear of recrimination, go directly to the Local Authority Child Protection Unit or contact **Ofsted on 08456 404040**

**Barbara Piddington** [Allegations.officer@hants.gov.uk](mailto:Allegations.officer@hants.gov.uk)  
**The Child Protection Coordinator/Allegations Officer**  
**Hants Direct Children's Service Professionals' line**  
**Winchester Social Services Department:**  
**Hampshire Safeguarding Children' Board (SCB)**  
**Children's Rights Director**

**01962 876265**  
**07903649503**  
**01329 225379**  
**01962 869313**  
**01962 876231**

[www.rights4me.org](http://www.rights4me.org)

All our procedures for dealing with these problems are constantly monitored and reviewed to ensure their effectiveness. Please also refer to the paper [Child Protection and Child Abuse: 10 key points](#) which follows.

## ST SWITHUN'S SCHOOL

### CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILD ABUSE: TEN KEY POINTS

Adults looking after children or young people in schools (or in residential establishments or youth organisations) and older students in positions of responsibility should be aware of the risks of abuse (by adults or other young people), and take steps to reduce those risks.

Adults (staff or volunteers) in charge of children or young people and older students in positions of responsibility should know what to do if they suspect that someone is being physically or sexually abused, or if someone tells them that this is happening. The following key points give a guide on what to do and not to do:

#### **Ten key points to follow if you suspect, or are told of, abuse**

1. Always stop and listen straight away to someone who wants to tell you about incidents or suspicions of abuse.
2. If you can, write brief notes of what they are telling you while they are speaking (these may help later if you have to remember exactly what was said) – and keep your original notes, however rough and even if you wrote on the back of something else. It's what you wrote at the time that may be important later – not a tidier and improved version you wrote up afterwards! If you don't have the means to write at the time, make notes of what was said as soon as possible afterwards. Sign and date the notes.
3. Do not give a guarantee that you will keep what is said confidential or secret – if you are told about abuse you have a responsibility to tell the right people to get something done about it (see below). If asked, explain that if you are going to be told something very important that needs to be sorted out, you will need to tell the people that can sort it out, but that you will only tell people who absolutely have to know.
4. Don't ask leading questions that might give your own ideas of what might have happened (e.g. "did he do X to you?") – just ask "what do you want to tell me?" or "is there anything else you want to say?"
5. Immediately tell the person in charge of the House or Jayne Webber, the Senior Housemistress - who is the Child Protection officer (unless they are themselves accused or suspected of abusing). Don't tell other adults or young people what you have been told.
6. Discuss with the person in charge whether any steps need to be taken to protect the person who has told you about the abuse (this may need to be discussed with the person who told you).
7. Never attempt to carry out an investigation of suspected or alleged abuse by interviewing people or other actions; social services and police staff are the people trained to do this and you could cause more damage and interfere with possible criminal proceedings.
8. As soon as possible (and certainly the same day) the Child Protection officer should refer the matter to the local social services department (helped by your notes). Follow their requests about what to do next. They will set up any necessary investigations, and can advise you – that is their statutory job. (If someone has made an allegation about the Headmistress or the Senior Housemistress YOU should contact the Chairman of Governors and he will contact the social services department and ask them what to do next).
9. Never think abuse is impossible in your school or group, or that an accusation against someone you know well and trust is bound to be wrong.
10. Children and young people often tell other young people, rather than staff or other adults, about abuse – so it is important that senior pupils know the points on this sheet as well as the responsible adults (e.g. prefects, young people leading activities for others).

HLH

February 2010

## ST SWITHUN'S SCHOOL

### SAFEGUARDING : CHILD PROTECTION : DEFINITIONS

#### **Abuse and Neglect**

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them, or more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

#### **Physical abuse**

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.

#### **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, 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, 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.

#### **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

#### **Neglect**

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:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

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

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**Children in need** are those whose vulnerability is such that they are unlikely to reach or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development, or their health and development will be significantly impaired, without the provision of services, plus those who are disabled.

Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 places a duty on local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need and to provide a range and level of services appropriate to those children's needs.

**Significant harm** is the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children.

Section 47 Children Act 1989 requires local authorities to make child protection enquiries if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child in their care is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, and for local authorities and other organisations to assist them with those enquiries if asked to do so.

There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm. Consideration of the severity of ill-treatment may include the degree and the extent of physical harm, the duration and frequency of abuse and neglect, the extent of premeditation, and the presence or degree of threat, coercion, sadism and bizarre or unusual elements.

A single traumatic event may constitute significant harm, e.g. a violent assault, suffocation or poisoning. More often, significant harm is a compilation of significant events, both acute and long-standing, which interrupt, change or damage the child's physical and psychological development.

### **Section 31 Children Act 1989 (as amended by the Adoption and Children Act 2002)**

„Harm’ means ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development, including e.g. impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another; „Development’ means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development; „Health’ means physical or mental health; and „Ill-treatment’ includes sexual abuse and forms of ill-treatment which are not physical.

### **Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children**

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006 defines Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care

and undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

Section 175 Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies of maintained schools and FE colleges to make arrangements to ensure their functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and in doing so, they must also have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

- S157 Education Act 2002 places a similar duty on Proprietors of Independent Schools
- S11 Children Act 2002 places a similar duty on other organisations and some individuals

Except where a specific duty exists, enforcing an individual's compliance is a matter for disciplinary procedures.

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## **Child Abuse – possible indicators**

Although these signs do not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused, they may help adults recognise that something is wrong. The possibility of abuse should be investigated if a child shows a number of these symptoms, or any of them to a marked degree:

### **Neglect**

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Poor state of clothing
- Emaciation
- Untreated medical problems
- No social relationships
- Compulsive scavenging
- Destructive tendencies

Note: A child may be subjected to a combination of different kinds of abuse. It is also possible that a child may show no outward signs and hide what is happening from everyone.

### **Emotional abuse**

- Physical, mental and emotional development lags
- Sudden speech disorders
- Continual self-deprecation (“I’m stupid, ugly, worthless, etc.”)
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Extreme fear of any new situation
- Inappropriate response to pain (“I deserve this”)
- Neurotic behaviours (rocking, hair twisting, self-mutilation)
- Extremes of passivity or aggression.

### **Physical abuse**

- Unexplained recurrent injuries or burns
- Improbable excuses or refusal to explain injuries
- Wearing clothes to cover injuries, even in hot weather
- Refusal to undress for gym
- Bald patches
- Chronic running away
- Fear of medical help or examination
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Aggression towards others
- Fear of physical contact – shrinking back if touched
- Admitting that they are punished, but the punishment is excessive (such as a child being beaten every night to „make him study”)
- Fear of suspected abuser being contacted.

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## **Sexual abuse**

- Being overly affectionate or knowledgeable in a sexual way inappropriate to the child's age
- Medical problems such as chronic itching, pain in the genitals, venereal diseases
- Other extreme reactions, such as depression, self-mutilation, suicide attempts, running away, overdoses, anorexia
- Personality changes such as becoming insecure or clinging
- Regressing to younger behaviour patterns such as thumb sucking or bringing out discarded cuddly toys
- Sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating
- Being isolated or withdrawn
- Inability to concentrate
- Lack of trust or fear of someone they know well, such as not wanting to be alone with a babysitter or child minder
- Starting to wet again, day or night/mares
- Become worried about clothing being removed
- Suddenly drawing sexually explicit pictures
- Trying to be „ultra-good' or perfect; overreacting to criticism.

## **Suspected abuse**

If you suspect that a child is being abused, seek advice from the police or social services. It is preferable that you identify yourself and give details. Knowing how damaging abuse is to children, it is up to the adults around them to take responsibility for stopping it.

(information taken from [Kidscape](#))

JT

December 2009