

Godstowe

School Policy

Child Protection - Safeguarding

Aims

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all our staff are clear about the actions necessary with regard to a child protection issue. The policy is further based on recommendations from the **DCFS**. Our aims are:

- to raise the awareness of all staff, and to identify responsibility for reporting possible cases of abuse;
- to ensure effective communication between all staff on child protection issues;
- to set down the correct procedures for those who encounter an issue of child protection.

All staff at Godstowe are subject to the rigorous procedures associated with the safe recruitment of staff and the school retains a full register of all staff appointments which highlights information relating to applicants CVs, qualifications, right to work in the UK, a full CRB (enhanced) disclosure or the appropriate, permissible equivalent, references (which are doubly authenticated), interview notes and proof of identification in at least two parts. **The Chairman's CRB is cleared through DCFS**. The policy is available on request and on the school's website.

Introduction

The health, safety and well-being of all our children are of paramount importance to all the adults who work in our school. Our children have the right to protection, regardless of age, gender, race, culture or disability. They have a right to be safe in our school.

In our school we respect our children. The atmosphere within our school is one that encourages all children to do their best. We provide opportunities that enable our children to take and make decisions for themselves.

We recognise that abuse and neglect can result in underachievement. We strive to ensure that all our children make good educational progress.

Our teaching of personal, social and health education and citizenship, helps to develop appropriate attitudes in our children, and makes them aware of the impact of their decisions on others. We also teach them how to recognise different risks in different situations, and how to behave in response to them.

This policy is based on DfES Circular 10/95 – Protecting Children from Abuse: The Role of the Education Service. Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 introduced a new duty requiring governing bodies and LEAs to have appropriate child protection procedures in place. In 2003 the Government announced new proposals in the Green Paper Every Child Counts (2003). The DfES is currently reviewing its guidance to schools.

Abuse takes a variety of forms:

- Physical abuse involves the hitting, shaking or other treatment of a child that can cause actual bodily harm.
- Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child into sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware about what is happening. This includes non-contact situations, such as showing children pornography.
- Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of children, such as frightening them, or putting them in positions of danger. It is also an abuse to convey to children the feeling that they are worthless or unloved.
- Children are abused also if they are neglected. This could involve failure to provide proper food and warmth, but it might also be failure to see to the emotional well-being of the child.

Procedures

- There is always a named person in our school who is the Designated Person. This is **Mrs C Gainer**. She is supported by **Mrs I Kenyon** (a second designated person) both of whom have had appropriate training in Child Protection issues. Godstowe also has a named Governor responsible for overseeing child protection policy and issues.
 - In accordance with the Children Act, the welfare of the child is always paramount.
 - Confidentiality should be respected as far as possible.
- A key role of the **designated person** is to be fully conversant with the procedures of the Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) and to ensure that the school takes action to support any child who may be at risk. The Designated Person must also make sure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of their responsibilities in relation to child protection. Training is updated every two years.
- Computerised pastoral care systems throughout the school help to ensure that staff working with EYFS and in the pre-prep(children aged 3 to 7) are continually in contact with all aspects of Child Protection procedure. Confidential systems exist to make CP notes solely for the attention of the Headmaster and/or the designated person(s). Weekly meetings ensure a constant flow of information.
- The Headmaster and Headmaster's wife (designates person) hold weekly meetings and have daily contact with the boarding staff for the purposes of management of pastoral care issues.
- Staff receive training in child protection (updated every three years) and part-time and voluntary staff who work with children are made aware of the arrangements.
- If teachers suspect that a child in their class may be a victim of abuse, they should not try to investigate, but should immediately inform the named person (see 3.1) about their concerns. Abuse can be of a physical, sexual or emotional nature. It can also be the result of neglect. Staff must not keep to themselves any information about abuse which a child gives them; they are required by law to pass this information on.
- Any action that the named person takes when dealing with an issue of child protection must be in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Child Protection guidelines.
- The school's named Designated Person works closely with the Social Services department and the Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) when investigating any allegations of abuse. All parties involved handle such investigations in a sensitive manner, but remembering that the interest of the child is of paramount importance.
- If a child alleges abuse, the school usually makes a referral without communicating with parents first. In some circumstances we inform parents first.
- If a child alleges abuse by a member of staff (other than the Headmaster or his wife) this will be reported immediately to the Headmaster who will investigate according to the procedures laid out in the school's staff disciplinary policy. In the case of there being an allegation against the Headmaster or his wife, the investigation will be invoked by the second designated person (presently Mrs I Kenyon) and will again follow set disciplinary procedure. In any event, the Chairman of the governors will always be informed.
- If a serious allegation is made concerning a boarding member of the staff, immediate arrangements will be made to accommodate that member of staff elsewhere (if appropriate) whilst investigations are undertaken. In this event, temporary staffing arrangements will be implemented.
- If a child protection referral is made, a case conference is held. The case conference offers the opportunity to share information and formulate a plan of action. Staff are expected to attend and participate in all case conferences and meetings.

Child Protection Handbook for Staff

It is important that any allegations of abuse are dealt with correctly. Please read the following information carefully.

Godstowe's 'Designated Person' is Mrs Gainer, supported by Mrs Kenyon (Deputy Head (Pastoral))

All staff at Godstowe are subject to the rigorous procedures associated with the safe recruitment of staff and the school retains a full register of all staff appointments which highlights information relating to applicants CV's, qualifications, right to work in the UK, a full CRB (enhanced) disclosure or the appropriate, permissible equivalent, references, interview notes and proof of identification in at least two parts.

Recognising abuse

- Many forms of abuse may not leave physical signs
- Many kinds of sexual abuse do not leave physical evidence
- Forensic evidence can disappear within a short period of time
- Sexually abused children can suffer physical injury
- Children of all ages, able-bodied, disabled, children with or without learning disability, boys and girls from all races, cultures and classes, are abused
- Children may indicate in different ways that they are being abused
- Young children's unhappiness and distress can often be seen in their behaviour
- Older children may also show unhappiness, but can be adept at hiding their distress
- Race and culture may influence children's behaviour, their distress showing in different ways.
- Signs and types of behaviour may indicate a child is being abused, but may not be evidence of abuse

There can be other explanations for children's behaviour

TEN KEY POINTS to follow if you suspect, or are told, of abuse

Adults looking after children or young people in schools should be aware of the risks of abuse and take steps to reduce those risks.

Adults (staff or volunteers) in charge of children or young people 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:

1. Always **stop and listen** straight away to someone who wants to tell you about incidents or suspicious 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. 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.
3. **Never make a promise** that you will keep what is said confidential or secret. If you are told about abuse you have a responsibility to report it so that action can be taken, Give reassurance that only those who need to know will be told.
4. **Do not 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 "anything else you want to say?"
5. **Immediately tell the person in charge** of the school or group (unless they are themselves accused or suspected of abusing) - don't tell other adults or young people what you have been told. (If someone has made an accusation to you about the adult in charge of the group, YOU should contact the local

Social Services Department yourself or the school's designated person, and ask them what to do next).

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 etc – Social Services and police staff are the people trained to do this – you could cause more damage and spoil possible criminal proceedings.
8. **As soon as possible** (and certainly the same day) the person in charge should refer the matter to the local **Social Services Department** (helped by your notes). Follow their guidance about what to do next. Their statutory responsibility is to initiate any necessary investigations, and they can advise you.
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 – make sure that your senior young people (e.g. Gap Year Assistants) know the points on this sheet as well as the responsible adults

NEGLECT

Neglect includes:

- Children who are left alone inappropriately
- Children who are abandoned
- Children who are inappropriately supervised
- Children who are left with inappropriate carers
- Children who are punitively or carelessly deprived of food
- Children from whom necessary medical attention is withheld or omitted

Impact/indicators

- Socially repressed
- Emotionally distant/flat
- Lacking self love, esteem or efficacy
- Poor physical growth
- Deficient social skills
- Aggressive or withdrawn behaviour
- Aimlessness

Fears

- Being intimate
- Being known
- Being rejected
- Being wrong or a failure

Perpetrators

- Parents
- Carers
- Anyone given the care, charge and control of a child

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse includes:

- Terrorising, teasing, taunting, tormenting a child
- Withdrawing/withholding attention, affection, emotional care

- Persistently blaming, rejecting and isolating a child
- Derogatory remarks about a person's race, gender, physical characteristics, names and academic or sporting abilities or lack of ability
- Breaking confidentiality/using pupils' problems as gossip or humour
- Systematically denying a child privacy or access to needed emotional support
- Ascribing nicknames that are offensive or derogatory and unwanted by the child
- Shunning, rubbishing or publicising concerns of the child
- Persistently ignoring the child

Research now documents the emotionally harmful impact of domestic violence. Children may see, hear or be held to ransom during incidents. Domestic violence is now recognised to be an emotionally abusive environment for children.

Impact/Indicators

- Failure to reach potential
- Poor self esteem
- Self denigration
- Sense of insecurity
- Withdrawn behaviour/poor socialisation
- Poor academic achievement
- Social isolation
- Needy dependent behaviour
- Experimenting behaviour

Fears

- Being different
- Being loved/unloved
- Being known
- Being rejected
- Being emotionally exposed

Abusers can be parents, carers/teachers, other adults and children

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse includes:

- Genital and sexual contact between a child and an adult/another person
- Penetration – oral, vaginal or anal
- Genital exposure
- Exposing children to pornographic materials
- Any act where the child is the object of another's sexual gratification

Impact/indicators

- Nightmares
- Sexually precocious behaviour
- Bedwetting
- Eating problems
- Self harm or mutilation

- Substance or drug misuse
- Unexplained aggressive or withdrawn behaviour
- Suicide attempts
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Bruises
- Pregnancy
- Sexually transmitted diseases

Fears

- Pregnancy
- Physical damage
- Being blamed for the abuse
- Being disbelieved – called a liar
- Escalation of the abusive behaviour
- Being sent away – punishment
- Intimacy
- Sexually transmitted diseases

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse includes:

- Displeasure shown in physical assault
- Loss of temper or control leading to assault
- Restraint that leads to bruising or injury
- Idiosyncratic punishments that cause injury
- Bullying that leads to physical assault
- Over-chastisement/excessive discipline
- Corporal punishment causing actual bodily harm

Impact/Indicators

- Bruises*
- Fractures
- Pinch marks
- Bites
- Scalds
- Bruised eyes
- Flinching
- Withdrawn or rebellious behaviour

Fears

- Of a certain person, a particular gender or group
- Of antagonising their abuser
- Of losing face
- Of being disbelieved or called a liar – children unable to give a clear account of what has happened fear they will be viewed with suspicion
- Of being called a 'wimp'

- Of others finding out
- That it won't stop or be addressed
- Of physical injury

Abusers can be parents/relatives, teachers/carers, other adults and children

NB: some disabilities (or their onset) affect balance, co-ordination or the blood condition so that the child has frequent bruising. Even within these situations abuse might still be present.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Aim

The purpose of our '**Child Protection Policy**' (separate document) is to ensure the physical, emotional and mental welfare of all boarding and day pupils. The provision of a comfortable, secure and happy environment in which to grow without anxiety is essential. It is our responsibility to protect all children from any form of abuse or incident likely to lead to abuse. Our aim is to create an environment of mutual trust where children are able to share anxieties or concerns and to take specific precautions to minimise the likelihood of harm arising.

Channels of communication

A child's pastoral care is the concern of all staff. Each pupil in the preparatory school has a Divisional Head, Form Tutor and, if a boarder, a Housemistress responsible for her welfare. There is direct contact and awareness of a child's academic progress in conjunction with her social development in and out of school care because regular meetings take place with all the staff concerned with the welfare of the girls. Although the Headmaster is ultimately responsible for the pastoral care in the school, the Deputy Head (Pastoral) takes a leading role in the day to day management of the team of staff ensuring that all pastoral matters are being handled satisfactorily and with the best interests of the girls at heart.

On a day-to-day basis, any concern for the individual would be notified:

- within school to the Form Tutor first or, if necessary important, the Divisional Head who would liaise with the housemistress if necessary. They may decide to inform the Deputy Head (Pastoral).
- within the house by the house staff who would liaise with the housemistress, notifying school staff if thought relevant.

Within the house, written notes would be made in a central daybook for relevant staff reference. Housemistresses meet regularly with the Headmaster and his wife who have overall jurisdiction over the welfare of the boarders in the school. They also meet with each other separately. Medical concerns are logged daily, no matter how minor, and are communicated in writing to the Sister each day.

Each child is encouraged to talk over any personal problems with Housemistresses, Assistant Housemistresses, Form Tutors, Divisional Heads, Sister or any member of staff with whom they feel comfortable. The Deputy Heads and Headmaster are also freely available. In addition, the School's Independent Listener, who is external to the staff, is available for the children should they have a concern which they feel unable to discuss with a member of staff. Via the telephone, the children have unrestricted access to their parents and external agencies such as Childline.

Other direct communications are made (as appropriate or necessary) with ...

Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Team
Buckinghamshire Social Care

Implementation of Procedures

We work on the basis that all children have a right to confidentiality. Consequently, any issues which are particularly sensitive could be brought directly to the Deputy Head's (Pastoral) personal attention and not minuted for general staff information. Similarly, if a sensitive issue arises out of school, it is the normal practice for parents to speak to the Head directly.

Each case is considered individually. However, our policy is that we believe everything the child confides in us unless proved to the contrary.

Actions

Any actions taken as a result of our Child Protection Policy would be discussed between the Headmaster, the Chairman, designated persons or relevant members of the governing body and possibly external agencies if necessary.