

Child Protection Policy

Policy Statement

The governing body is committed to ensuring that the College:

- provides a safe environment for young people to learn in;
- identifies young people who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm;
- takes appropriate action to see that such young people are kept safe, both at home and at the College.

In pursuit of these aims, the governing body will approve and annually review policies and procedures with the aim of:

- raising awareness of issues relating to the welfare of children and young people and the promotion of a safe environment for young people learning within the College;
- aiding the identification of young people at risk of significant harm and providing procedures for reporting concerns;
- establishing procedures for reporting and dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff;
- ensuring the safe recruitment of staff.

Guidance Notes

In developing the policies and procedures, the governing body will consult with and take account of guidance issued by the Department for Education, the Local Safeguarding Children Boards and other relevant bodies and groups.

Throughout this policy and these procedures, reference is made to “young people”. This term is used to mean “those under the age of 18”. The governing body recognises that some adults are also vulnerable to abuse, accordingly, the procedures may be applied (with appropriate adaptations) to allegations of abuse and the protection of vulnerable adults.

The Sixth Form College, Farnborough has a statutory and moral duty to ensure that the College functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people receiving education and training at the College.

The Principal and all staff working with young people will receive training adequate to familiarise them with child protection issues and responsibilities and the College procedures and policies, with refresher training at least every three years. Staff with particular responsibility for curriculum planning will receive additional training.

The senior member of the College management team with special responsibility for child protection issues is Catherine Cole, Deputy Principal (Student Services). She shall be assisted by members of the designated Child Protection Team.

The governing body will receive, from the designated senior member of staff with lead responsibility for child protection, an annual report which reviews how the duties have been discharged.

Appendix 1

Designated staff with responsibility for Child Protection

The designated Senior Child Protection Team – trained at Level 2:

- Catherine Cole Designated Child Protection Officer (01252 688302)
- Tracey Falzon Health & Wellbeing Co-ordinator (01252 688301 or 1586)
- Ann Horsley Assistant Director of Teaching for Learning (01252 688280)

Other staff with Level 1 Child Protection training:

- Helen Diffenthal Assistant Principal, Advice and Guidance (01252 688318)
- Russell Hume Lead Tutor (01252 688305)
- Alison Woolley Lead Tutor (01252 6888312)
- Paul Fortescue Personal Tutor (01252 688310)

Senior staff member with lead responsibility

The designated senior member of staff with lead responsibility for child protection issues is Catherine Cole, Deputy Principal (Student Services), telephone: 01252 688302 or e-mail ccole@farnborough.ac.uk. She is assisted by members of the designated Child protection Team.

The Deputy Principal (Student Services) is a senior member of the College Principalship team. She has a key duty to take lead responsibility for raising awareness within the staff of issues relating to the welfare of young people and the promotion of a safe environment for the young people learning within the College.

All members of the senior designated Child Protection Team have received training in child protection issues and inter-agency working and will receive refresher training at least every 2 years. Staff with Level 1 training will be updated every 3 years. They will keep up to date with developments in child protection issues.

The designated senior member of staff is responsible for:

- overseeing the referral of cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the relevant investigating agencies;
- providing advice and support to other staff on issues relating to child protection;
- maintaining a proper record of any child protection referral, complaint or concern, even where that concern does not lead to a referral;
- ensuring that parent(s)/guardian(s) of young people within the College are aware of the College's child protection policy;
- liaising with the LEA, Local Safeguarding Children Boards and other appropriate agencies;

- liaising with secondary schools which send pupils to the College to ensure that appropriate arrangements are made for the pupils;
- liaising with employers and training organisations that receive young people from the College on long term placements to ensure that appropriate safeguards are put in place;
- ensuring that all staff receive basic training in child protection issues and are aware of the College child protection procedures. In addition, ensuring that all staff with particular responsibility for curriculum planning receives enhanced training and support.

The designated senior member of staff will provide an annual report to the governing body of the College setting out how the College has discharged its duties. She is responsible for reporting deficiencies in procedure or policy identified by the Local Safeguarding Children Boards (or others) to the governing body at the earliest opportunity.

These designated staff members:

- report to the senior member of staff with lead responsibility;
- will know how to make an appropriate referral;
- will be available to provide advice and support to other staff on issues relating to child protection;
- have particular responsibility to be available to listen to young people studying at the College;
- will deal with individual cases, including attending case conferences and review meetings as appropriate;
- have received training in child protection issues and inter-agency working, as required by the Local Safeguarding Children Boards and will receive refresher training at least every 2 years.

Designated Governor

The designated member of the governing body with responsibility for child protection issues is Terri Willcocks: telephone 01252 545356.

The designated governor is responsible for liaising with the Principal and the Deputy Principal (Student Services) over matters regarding child protection, including:

- ensuring that the College has procedures and policies which are consistent with the Local Safeguarding Children Board's procedures;
- ensuring that the governing body considers the College policy on child protection each year;
- ensuring that each year the governing body is informed of how the College and its staff have complied with the policy, including but not limited to, a report on the training that staff have undertaken.

The designated governor is responsible for overseeing the liaison between agencies such as the police or social services in connection with allegations against the Principal or the Deputy Principal (Student Services). This will not involve undertaking any form of investigation, but will ensure good communication between the parties and provide information to assist enquiries. To assist in these duties, the designated governor shall receive appropriate training as advised by the Local Safeguarding Children Boards.

Appendix 2

Dealing with disclosure of abuse and procedure for reporting concerns

Detailed guidelines are to be found in the Child Protection Procedure document: 'Safeguarding our Students'. All members of the College community must endeavour to adhere to these guidelines if abuse is disclosed or suspected.

In accordance with DfEE Circular 10/95, the governing body recognises the following as definitions of abuse:

What is abuse?

Child abuse is a term which describes all the ways in which a child's health and development are damaged by the actions or inaction of others:

- usually by adults, sometimes other children;
- physical abuse;
- sexual abuse;
- emotional abuse;
- neglect;
- types of abuse may overlap.

Most abuse is committed by a member of the young person's own family or persons entrusted with their care.

Definitions of abuse

The following categories of abuse are recognised for the purpose of the child protection register (a register of children at risk of abuse which is maintained by a local social services department or by the National society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) on behalf of a local social services department):

Neglect: persistent or severe neglect, or the failure to protect a young person from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation, or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive;

Injury – physical abuse: actual or likely physical injury to a young person, or failure to prevent physical injury (or suffering) to a young person including deliberate poisoning, suffocation or Munchausen's syndrome by proxy;

Sexual abuse: actual or likely sexual exploitation of a young person or adolescent. The young person may be dependent and/or developmentally immature;

Emotional abuse: actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a young person caused by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection.

Detecting abuse

Risk analysis involves scrutiny of the wide range of factors, which might impact on a young person or as a member of a particular grouping. A composite picture has to be put together; single factor explanations or reasons are seldom, if ever, adequate. Abuse may cover more than one category; it can be argued that young people who are physically or sexually abused are inevitably also emotionally abused.

The following checklists should then be used with caution. There may be other explanations of any of the following signs e.g. medical conditions. Risk assessment is about putting a constellation of factors together, with the help of the designated teacher, plus other agencies, sometimes over time. IT IS HARDLY EVER A SIMPLE OR SINGLE FACTOR.

NEGLECT

Neglect is often characterised by the young person being underweight, small in stature and a poor physique. The care of neglected young people is often poor and they present as unwashed, unkempt and inadequately fed and clothed. Of course there are loving families who live differently to many others. Assessment over time and with the help of other agencies is vital.

Signs which **may indicate** neglect:

- constant hunger;
- poor personal hygiene;
- constant tiredness;
- inadequate clothing;
- emaciation;
- frequent lateness or non-attendance at College;
- untreated medical problems;
- destructive tendencies;
- poor relationship with peers;
- compulsive stealing and scavenging;
- rocking, hair twisting and thumb sucking;
- running away;
- low self-esteem.

INJURY – physical abuse

Signs which **may indicate** physical abuse:

- unexplained injuries or burns, particularly if they are recurrent;
- improbable excuses given to explain injuries;
- refusal to discuss injuries;
- untreated injuries;
- admission of punishment which appears excessive;
- shrinks from physical contact;
- refusal to get changed – keeps arms and legs covered in hot weather;
- fears medical help;
- self destructive behaviours;
- aggression towards others;
- running away;
- fears or is reluctant to return home.

Suspicious injuries

Identification of non-accidental injuries is a skilled job, which ultimately needs to be undertaken by a doctor or paediatrician with specialist skills. There are however a number of injuries which should be regarded with concern and may indicate a non-accidental cause. Some may need medical assessment and treatment, occasionally urgently:

- bruises and abrasion around the face, particularly if they are recurring;
- damage or injury around the mouth;
- bilateral injuries such as two black eyes;
- bruising to soft areas of the face e.g. cheeks;
- fingertip bruising to the front or back of torso, suggesting grabbing or shaking;
- bite marks;
- burns or scalds (note patterns and spread of injury e.g. cigarette burns);
- weals suggesting beatings;
- injuries to the genital area.

Injuries need to be accounted for. Inadequate, inconsistent or excessively plausible explanations or a delay in seeking treatment for the child should signal concern.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse affects a young person emotionally and physically. It is difficult to detect as the physical indicators are not directly visible. Often the indicators that a young person is being sexually abused are exhibited through behaviour. Sexual abuse occurs in every class, cultural and occupational group. Sexually abused young people may take refuge in an appearance of normality e.g. some young people immerse themselves in school work as a way of 'blanking out' the abuse.

Signs which **may indicate** sexual abuse:

- sudden changes in behaviour and school performance;
- displays of affection which are sexual and age inappropriate;
- tendency to cling or need constant reassurance;
- tendency to cry easily;
- regression to younger behaviour;
- distrust of a familiar adult, or anxiety about being left with a relative;
- unexplained gifts or money;
- depression and withdrawal;
- apparent secrecy;
- wetting day or night;
- anorexia or bulimia;
- behavioural and emotional problems such as phobias or panic attacks;
- chronic problems with health such as vaginal discharges;
- fear of undressing for PE.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

A young person might be clean and physically cared for but still be emotionally neglected. The parent's or carer's attitude to the young person might be characterised by coldness, hostility and disinterest. They may show signs that the young person can never please, or may have expectations which are inappropriate, excessive or unrealistic.

Signs which **may indicate** emotional abuse:

- physical development lags;
- over-reaction to mistakes;
- continual self-depreciation;
- sudden speech disorders;
- fear of new situations;
- self-mutilation;
- extremes of passivity and/or aggression;
- compulsive stealing;
- rocking, thumb sucking, hair twisting;
- drug, alcohol, solvent abuse;
- fear of parents being contacted.

These checklists are based on materials developed by NSPCC and the Community Education Development Centre in Coventry.

All forms of abuse have elements in common:

- secrecy;
- fear;
- guilt;
- powerlessness.

Appendix 3

Procedure for reporting and dealing with allegations of abuse against a member of staff

1. Initial assessment by the Principal (or member of the Principalship)

- 1.1 Allegations regarding a member of the College staff must be reported using the procedure outlined in the College Child Protection Procedure document. The Principal (or member of the Principalship), in collaboration with Catherine Cole, Deputy Principal, (Student Services) will decide whether the matter should be referred to Social Services and/or the Police Child Protection Team.
- 1.2 It is important that the Principal (or member of Principalship) does not investigate the allegation. The initial assessment should be on the basis of the information received and is a decision whether or not the allegation warrants further investigation.

1.3 Other potential outcomes are:

1.3.1. The allegation represents inappropriate behaviour or poor practice by the member of staff and is neither potentially a crime nor a cause of significant harm to the young person. The matter should be addressed in accordance with the College disciplinary procedures.

1.3.2. The allegation can be shown to be false because the facts alleged could not possibly be true.

2. Enquiries and investigations

2.1. Child protection enquiries by social services or the police are not to be confused with internal, disciplinary enquiries by the College. The College may be able to use the outcome of external agency enquiries as part of its own procedures. The child protection agencies, including the police, have no power to direct the College to act in a particular way; however, the College should assist the agencies with their enquiries.

2.2. The College shall hold in abeyance its own internal enquiries while the formal police or social services investigations proceed; to do otherwise may prejudice the investigation. Any internal enquiries shall conform with the existing staff disciplinary procedures.

2.3. If there is an investigation by an external agency, for example the police, the Principal (or member of Principalship) should normally be involved in and contribute to the inter-agency strategy discussions. The Principal (or member of Principalship) is responsible for ensuring that the College will give every assistance with the agency's enquiries. He/she will ensure that appropriate confidentiality is maintained in connection with the enquiries, in the interests of the member of staff about whom the allegation is made. The Principal (or member of Principalship) shall advise the member of staff that he/she should consult with a representative, for example, a trade union.

2.4. Subject to objections from the police or other investigating agency, the Principal (or member of Principalship) shall:

2.4.1. inform the young person(s) or parent(s)/guardian(s) making the allegation that the investigation is taking place and what the likely process will involve;

2.4.2. ensure that the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the young person making the allegation have been informed that the allegation has been made and what the likely process will involve;

2.4.3. inform the member of staff against whom the allegation was made of the fact that the investigation is taking place and what the likely process will involve;

2.4.4. inform the Chair of Governors and/or the designated governor of the allegation and the investigation.

2.5. The Principal (or member of Principalship) shall keep a written record of the action taken in connection with the allegation.

3. Suspension of staff

- 3.1. Suspension should not be automatic. In respect of staff other than the Principal, suspension can only be carried out by the Principal. In respect of the Principal, suspension can only be carried out by the Chair of Governors (or in his absence, the Deputy Chair).
- 3.2. Suspension may be considered at any stage of the investigation. It is a neutral, not a disciplinary act and shall be on full pay. Consideration should be given to alternatives: eg paid leave of absence; agreement to refrain from attending work; change of, or withdrawal from, specified duties.
- 3.3. Suspension should only occur for a good reason. For example:
 - 3.3.1. where a young person is at risk;
 - 3.3.2. where the allegations are potentially sufficiently serious to justify dismissal on the grounds of gross misconduct;
 - 3.3.3. where necessary for the good and efficient conduct of the investigation.
- 3.4. If suspension is being considered, the member of staff should be encouraged to seek advice, for example from a trade union.
- 3.5. Prior to making the decision to suspend, the Principal (or Chair/Deputy Chair of Governors) should interview the member of staff. This should occur with the approval of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. In particular, if the police are engaged in an investigation the officer in charge of the case should be consulted.
- 3.6. The member of staff should be advised to seek the advice and/or assistance of his/her trade union and should be informed that they have the right to be accompanied by a friend. The member of staff should be informed that an allegation has been made and that consideration is being given to suspension. It should be made clear that the interview is not a formal disciplinary hearing, but solely for raising a serious matter which may lead to suspension and further investigation.
- 3.7. During the interview, the member of staff should be given as much information as possible, in particular the reasons for any proposed suspension, provided that doing so would not interfere with the investigation into the allegation. The interview is not intended to establish the member of staff's innocence or guilt, but give the opportunity for the member of staff to make representations about possible suspension. The member of staff should be given the opportunity to consider any information given to him/her at the meeting and prepare a response, although that adjournment may be brief.
- 3.8. If the Principal (or Chair/Deputy Chair of Governors) considers that suspension is necessary, the member of staff shall be informed that he/she is suspended from duty. Written confirmation of the suspension, with reasons, shall be despatched as soon as possible and ideally within one working day.

- 3.9. Where a member of staff is suspended, the Principal (or Chair/Deputy Chair of Governors) should address the following issues:
- 3.9.1. the Chair of Governors should be informed of the suspension in writing;
 - 3.9.2. the Governing Body should receive a report that a member of staff has been suspended pending investigation, the detail given to the governing body should be minimal;
 - 3.9.3. where the Principal has been suspended, the Chair/Deputy Chair of Governors will need to take action to address the management of the College;
 - 3.9.4. the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the young person(s) making the allegation should be informed of the suspension. They should be asked to treat the information as confidential. Consideration should be given to informing the young person making the allegation of the suspension;
 - 3.9.5. senior staff who need to know of the reason for the suspension should be informed;
 - 3.9.6. depending on the nature of the allegation, the Principal should consider with the nominated Governor whether a statement to the students of the College and/or parent(s)/guardian(s) should be made, taking due regard of the need to avoid unwelcome publicity.
- 3.10. The Principal shall consider carefully and review the decisions as to who is informed of the suspension and investigation. The Local Safeguarding Children Board and external investigating authorities should be consulted. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be informed if necessary.
- 3.11. The suspended member of staff should be given appropriate support during the period of suspension. He/she should also be provided with information on progress and developments in the case at regular intervals.
- 3.12. The suspension should remain under review in accordance with the College disciplinary procedures.

4. The disciplinary investigation

- 4.1. The disciplinary investigation should be conducted in accordance with the existing staff disciplinary procedures.
- 4.2. The member of staff should be informed of:
 - 4.2.1. the disciplinary charge against her/him;
 - 4.2.2. her/his entitlement to be accompanied or represented by a trade union representative or friend.
- 4.3. Where the member of staff has been suspended and no disciplinary action is to be taken, the suspension should be lifted immediately and arrangements made for the member of staff to return to work. It may be appropriate to offer counselling.

- 4.4. The young person(s) making the allegation and/or their parent(s)/guardian(s) should be informed of the outcome of the investigation and proceedings. This should occur prior to the return to College of the member of staff (if suspended).
- 4.5. The Principal (or member of Princiaship) should give consideration to what information should be made available to the general population of the College.

5. Allegations without foundation

- 5.1. Obviously false allegations may be indicative of problems of the Local Safeguarding Children Boards in order that other agencies may act upon the information.
- 5.2. In consultation with the designated senior member of staff and/or the designated Governor, the Principal shall:
 - 5.2.1. inform the member of staff against whom the allegation is made orally and in writing that no further disciplinary or child protection action will be taken. Consideration should be given to offering counselling/support;
 - 5.2.2. inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the alleged victim that the allegation has been made and of the outcome;
 - 5.2.3. where the allegation was made by a young person other than the alleged victim, consideration to be given to informing the parent(s)/guardian(s) of that young person;
 - 5.2.4. prepare a report outlining the allegation and giving reasons for the conclusion that it had no foundation and confirming that the above action had been taken.

6. Records

- 6.1. It is important that documents relating to an investigation are retained in a secure place, together with a written record of the outcome and, if disciplinary action is taken, details retained on the member of staff's personal and confidential file.
- 6.2. If a member of staff is dismissed or resigns before the disciplinary process is completed, he/she should be informed about the College's statutory duty to inform the Secretary of State for Education.

7. Monitoring effectiveness

- 7.1. Where an allegation has been made against a member of staff, the nominated Governor, together with the senior staff member with lead responsibility should, at the conclusion of the investigation and any disciplinary procedures, consider whether there are any matters arising from it that could lead to the improvement of the College's procedures and/or policies and/or which should be drawn to the attention of the Local Safeguarding Children Boards. Consideration should also be given to the training needs of staff.

7.2. Adjustments will be made to this policy as appropriate.

Recruitment and selection procedures

College recruitment and selection procedures have been reviewed in order to ensure that they take account of the following:

- they should apply to staff and volunteers who may work with young people;
- the post or role should be clearly defined;
- the key selection criteria for the post or role should be identified;
- vacancies should be advertised widely in order to ensure a diversity of applicants;
- require documentary evidence of academic/vocational qualifications;
- obtain professional and character references;
- verify previous employment history;
- Criminal Records Bureau disclosure checks (maintain sensitive and confidential use of the applicant's disclosure);
- use a variety of selection techniques (eg qualifications, previous experience, interview, reference checks);
- at least one member of the selection panel should be trained in safeguarding;
- the single Central Record held by the HR Manager.