

29.2 Child Protection

29.2.1 Introduction

The Board of Directors takes seriously its responsibility under section 157 of the Education Act 2002, as detailed in "Working together to safeguard children" and in "What to do if you're worried a child is being abused", to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to promote work with other agencies to ensure adequate arrangements within our organisation to identify assess and support those children who are suffering harm.

All adults, including all employees, temporary workers, volunteers and Directors, have a full and active part to play in protecting students from harm.

Our schools should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical, emotional and moral development of the individual student.

The aims of this policy are:

- To support the student's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence.
- To provide an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued, respected and comfortable in sharing their concerns with adults.
- To raise the awareness of all teaching and non-teaching employees of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.
- To provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk.
- To provide effective communication between all employees.
- To develop a procedure to be followed by all members of staff in cases of suspected abuse.
- To develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, especially the Police and Social Care.
- To ensure that all adults within our school who have substantial access to children have been checked as to their suitability.
- To remedy any deficiency or weaknesses in Child Protection arrangements without delay.

29.2.2 Abuse

There are 4 main areas that have been identified as forms of 'abuse', within safeguarding children legislation & guidance. These are noted as:

Sexual Abuse
Emotional Abuse
Physical Abuse
Neglect

A person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.

Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

The following behavioural signs may or may not be indications that abuse has taken place, but the possibility should be considered:

Signs of Possible Physical Abuse

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries, which occur to the body, in places which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc.
- Injuries which have not received medical attention
- Neglect—under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care, etc.
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained stomach pains
- Bruises, burns, bites, fractures, etc., which do not have an accidental explanation
- Cuts/scratches/substance misuse

Signs of Possible Emotional Abuse

- Changes or regression in mood or behavior, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clingy—also depression, aggression and extreme anxiety
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under achievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Attention seeking behavior
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away/stealing/lying

Signs of Possible Sexual Abuse

- Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse
- Child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters, and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behavior, or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing

(This list is not exhaustive and is meant as a guide only.)

29.2.3 Procedures

All members of the Board of Directors will understand and fulfill their responsibilities.

Each campus will follow the Child Protection Procedures published by their local Safeguarding Children Board LSCB.

<http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/safeguardingchildren> (Cobham & Egham)

<http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/index.jsp?articleid=6759> (Hillingdon)

Each campus will have a Designated Person whose role will be clearly

communicated within the school, including a statement explaining the school's role in referral and monitoring cases of suspected abuse. The Designated Person will receive training (updated every 2-years) in Child Protection and 'inter-agency working.'

In Cobham the designated persons are:
Ryn Brandse (Designated Main Contact/EYFS)
Melanie Nicholls (Deputy Designated Contact)
Anneke Theron (Deputy Designated Contact)

In Egham the designated persons are:
Cindy Blanes (Designated Main Contact/EYFS)
Virginia McKniff (Deputy Designated Contact)
Savita Choudhary (Deputy Designated Contact)

In Hillingdon the designated persons are:
Michelle Eriksen (Designated Main Contact/EYFS)
Jennifer Ridley (Deputy Designated Contact)

Contact Details for Local Children's services for each Campus are as follows:-

ACS HILLINGDON

Local Children's Services Contact Andrea Nixon
01895 277463

ACS COBHAM & EGHAM

Local Children's Services Contact Elaine Edwards
0208 541 7401

Local Children's Services Team 0208 541 8914

Urgent referrals can be made to the Emergency Duty Team on 01483 517 898.

All employees, including volunteers, will know how to respond to a student who discloses abuse.

All parents/guardians are made aware of the responsibility of employees with regard to child protection procedures through the school's Child Protection Policy.

We will ensure that our selection and safer recruitment procedures of employees includes checks for their suitability with the Criminal Records Bureau. Such checks are carried out on employees upon recruitment and every three years thereafter. These checks comply with the Independent School Standards Regulations.

We will ensure that any employee found not to be suitable for working with children will be notified to the suitable authorities within one month of leaving the school(List 99 for academic employees and Independent Safeguarding Authority).

Our Child Protection Policy and Procedures, as well as the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, will be reviewed yearly and updated if required.

29.2.4 Allegations against students

Abuse by one or more students against another student is not tolerated especially those in positions of trust, including senior students.

29.2.5 Allegations against members of staff

Any allegations against an employee or volunteer must be referred to the Head of School and Designated Person, who will in turn refer the matter to the Managing Director. The school understands its responsibility to refer all such allegations to the LADO for initial advice.

Any allegations against a Designated Person should be referred to the Head of School and Managing Director.

Any allegations against the Head of School must be referred to the Managing Director and Chairman of the Board.

When deciding whether to make a referral, following an allegation or suspicion of abuse, the head and Designated Person should not make their own decision over what appear to be borderline cases, but rather the doubts and concerns should be discussed with the local authority designated officer (LADO). This may be done tentatively and without giving names in the first instance. What appears trivial at first can later be revealed to be much more serious, and an allegation of child abuse or neglect may lead to a criminal investigation. Thus, the school should not do anything that may jeopardize a police investigation, such as asking a child leading questions or attempting to investigate the allegations of abuse. In cases of serious harm, the police should be informed from the outset.

29.2.6 Early Years Foundation Stage

The Child Protection policy also applies to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS.) Each campus will designate a practitioner to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children within the EYFS setting and liaising with Local Statutory Children Agencies as appropriate.

In Cobham the designated persons are:
Ryn Brandse (Designated Main Contact/EYFS)
Melanie Nicholls (Deputy Designated Contact)
Anneke Theron (Deputy Designated Contact)

In Egham the designated persons are:
Cindy Blanes (Designated Main Contact/EYFS)
Virginia McKniff (Deputy Designated Contact)
Savita Choudhary (Deputy Designated Contact)

In Hillingdon the designated persons are:
Michelle Eriksen (Designated Main Contact/EYFS)
Jennifer Ridley (Deputy Designated Contact)

ACS will inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises (whether the allegation relates to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere), or any other abuse which is alleged to have taken place on the premises, and of the action taken in respect of these allegations as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days

ACS will notify local child protection agencies of any serious accident or serious injury to, or the death of, any child whilst in our care and act on any advice given.

29.2.7 Boarding (Cobham Campus)

In the event of an allegation against a member of staff in the Dormitory, alternative accommodation (away from the children) will be sought whilst the investigation takes place.

Senior students given positions of responsibility over other students should be briefed on appropriate action to take, should they receive any allegations of abuse.

The Boarding staff has a procedure to follow for Missing or Absconding Students.

ACS ensures that students have immunity from retribution and disciplinary action for "whistle blowing" in good faith.

ACS adheres to the National Minimum Boarding Standards outlined by Ofsted (August 2011).

29.2.8 Responsibilities

The Designated Person is responsible for:

- Referring a child if there are concerns about possible abuse and acting as a focal point for staff to discuss concerns.
- Keeping written records of concerns about a student (in consultation with the Head of School). All records should be confidential and kept separately from other records.
- Liaising with other agencies and professionals. The Head of School and Designated Person must consult the local agencies if cases of borderline abuse are discussed. Any concerns will be addressed with the local authority designated officer (LADO), taking care to remember child protection issues can lead to criminal investigations.
- Reporting incidents within 24 hours to the relevant agencies.
- Working with the Head of School, divisional Principals and the child's social care Key Worker to monitor any student subject to a child protection plan who is absent from school without explanation.
- Working with the Head of School to organise child protection training for employees as appropriate.
- Working with the Head of School to provide an annual report to the Managing Director, detailing any changes to procedures in place, training undertaken in the school (including the Designated Person) and the number and type of incidents/cases and the number of students subject to a child protection plan.

29.2.9 Training

It is ACS's responsibility to provide training to new employees, existing employees, the Designated Persons and Board members on safeguarding children that will enable them to fulfill their responsibilities in respect of child protection. Employees who do not have designated lead responsibility for child protection receive updated training every three years. Designated Persons require training updates every two years. Temporary and voluntary staff who work with children are made aware of child protection procedures on each campus.

ACS' training includes guidance to ensure staff behavior and actions minimize the risk of allegations.

29.2.10 Confidentiality

The school recognises that all matters relating to child protection are confidential. The Head of School or Designated Person will only disclose that information to staff which they deem to be appropriate.

All employees must be aware that the school, through the Designated Person, has a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard students.

All employees must be aware that they cannot promise a student to keep secrets which might compromise the student's well-being or safety. Staff are also instructed not to ask leading questions when dealing with child protection issues and are urged to write comprehensive notes using the children's words verbatim.

The school, through the Head of School, will undertake to share its intentions to refer a student to the Child Protection Services (or otherwise named local authority) unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation.

29.2.11 Support

The school will support students by:

- Encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness through the curriculum.
- Not condoning bullying or aggression.
- Promoting a caring, safe and positive environment within the school.
- Liaising and working with other support agencies involved with the safekeeping of students.
- Notifying the Designated Person and team as soon as there is a significant concern.
- Providing continuing support to a student about whom there have been concerns who leaves the school, by ensuring that appropriate information is forwarded under confidential cover to the student's new school and ensuring that medical records are forwarded as a matter of priority.

The school will support employees by:

- Recognising that employees working in the school who have become involved with a case when a child has suffered abuse or appears likely to have suffered harm, may find the situation stressful and upsetting and will endeavour to provide appropriate support.

29.2.12 Physical intervention

A member of staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort (in their judgement), such as when a child is endangering him/herself or others. It must be the minimum force needed to prevent injury to another person.

29.2.13 Bullying

A separate policy on bullying is provided. This includes physical, verbal, emotional, racist, sexual, cyber and material bullying.

29.2.14 Prevention

The school community will:

- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are always listened to by the staff.
- Ensure that all students know there is an adult in the school who they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.
- Include in the curriculum opportunities for students to develop skills that will keep them safe and free from harm.

29.2.15 Health and Safety

The school Health and Safety policy recognises the need to provide students with protection when within the school environment and also when away from the school on school trips or visits.

(Sept 2011)