



## **Policy on Child Protection**

(see also Health, Safety and Welfare)

### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The health, safety and welfare 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.
- 1.2 Child 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 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.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 We recognise that abuse and neglect can result in underachievement. We strive to ensure that all our children make good educational progress.
- 1.5 Our teaching of Personal, Social and Health Education, Religious Education, and Citizenship, as part of our curriculum, 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.
- 1.6 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 schools to have appropriate child-protection procedures in place. This policy takes account of the requests set out in the Children Act 2004 ('Every Child Matters').

### **2 Aims and objectives**

- 2.1 Our aims are:
- to provide a safe environment for children to learn in;
  - to establish what actions the school can take to ensure that children remain safe, at home as well as at school;
  - to raise the awareness of all staff to these issues, and to define their roles and responsibilities in reporting possible cases of abuse;
  - to identify children who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm;

- to ensure effective communication between all staff on child protection issues;
- to set down the correct procedures for those who encounter any issue of child protection.

### **3 Staff responsibilities**

3.1 It is the responsibility of the High Mistress to ensure all of the following:

- that the Board of Directors adopts appropriate policies and procedures to safeguard children in the school;
- that these policies are implemented by all staff;
- that sufficient resources and time are allocated for staff to carry out their responsibilities effectively;
- that all staff and adult helpers in the school are able to voice their concern if they feel that a child is vulnerable, or that there are any particular practices that are unsafe.

3.2 There is a named person designated as the Child Protection Coordinator. This is normally the High Mistress, but s/he may delegate this responsibility in some circumstances. The Coordinator is guided by two principles:

- In accordance with the Children's Act, the welfare of the child is always paramount.
- Confidentiality should be respected as far as possible.

A key role of the Coordinator 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 Coordinator must also make sure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of their responsibilities in relation to child protection. The Coordinator will work closely with Social Services, as well as the ACPC, when investigating any allegations of abuse. All parties involved will handle such investigations in a sensitive manner, remembering all the time that the interests of the child are of paramount importance.

3.3 In the EYFS the Child Protection Coordinator will be the Head of the Infant School. She will have the same responsibilities as those of the whole school Coordinator as defined in 3.2 above. In addition she will inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working or looking after children at the school (whether that 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. This information should be given to Ofsted as soon as is reasonably practicable but at the latest within 14 days.

3.4 All staff have a responsibility to report to the High Mistress or Child Protection Coordinators any concern they have about the safety of any child in their care.

### **4 Employment and recruitment**

4.1 We will do all we can to ensure that all those working with children in our school are suitable people. This involves scrutinizing applicants, verifying their identity and obtaining references, as well as the mandatory check of List 99, CRB and Independent Safeguarding Authority checks. We follow the DfES guidance set out in Child Protection: Preventing

Unsuitable People from Working with Children and Young Persons in the Education Service, DfES 2002/0278. Our HR officer keeps a central register of all recruitment and vetting checks.

We will state on all our advertisements that Abercorn School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

- 4.2 All appropriate child protection checks and procedures apply to any staff employed by another organisation working on the school's premises (e.g., catering, clubs) and also those staff employed by another organisation and working with Abercorn pupils on another site (e.g., tour guides).
- 4.3 Staff have a responsibility to ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place pupils or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a pupil (for example, in one-to-one tuition, sports coaching, conveying a pupil by car, engaging in inappropriate electronic communication with a pupil, etc.).
- 4.4 The school will notify to the Independent Safeguarding Authority within one month of leaving the school any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) whose services are no longer used because he/she is considered unsuitable to work with children, regardless of whether the person has been dismissed or has resigned.

## **5 Procedure to be followed if an adult has concerns about a child**

- 5.1 Any action taken by the named Child Protection Coordinator when dealing with an issue of child protection will be in accordance with the procedures outlined below.
- 5.2 All adults in our school share responsibility for keeping our children safe. We may on occasion report concerns which, on investigation, prove unfounded.
- 5.3 If teachers suspect that a child in their class may be a victim of abuse, they should not try to investigate as it is important to avoid leading questions, but should immediately inform the Child Protection Coordinator about their concerns. Children cannot be promised confidentiality if giving evidence.
- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 A child may be experiencing abuse if he or she is:
  - Frequently dirty, hungry or inadequately dressed
  - Left in unsafe situations or without medical attention
  - Constantly "put down," insulted, sworn at or humiliated
  - Seems afraid of parents or carers
  - Severely bruised or injured
  - Displays sexual behaviour which does not seem appropriate for their age
  - Growing up in a home where there is domestic violence
  - Living with parents or carers involved in serious drug or alcohol abuse.

This list does not cover every child abuse possibility. You may have seen other things in the child's behaviour or circumstances that worry you.

- 5.6 If a child alleges abuse or abuse is suspected, the school will make a referral within 24 hours to Social Services without first informing parents. However, in some circumstances parents will be informed first.
- 5.7 If a referral is made, a case conference will be held within eight working days. Case conferences offer the opportunity to share information and formulate a plan of action. Staff are expected to attend and participate in all case conferences and meetings held.
- 5.8 If a pupil alleges abuse by another pupil or pupils, this abuse constitutes bullying and reference should be made to the school's bullying policy.

## **6 Physical restraint**

- 6.1 There may be times when adults, in the course of their school duties, have to intervene physically in order to restrain children and prevent them from coming to harm. Such intervention will always be the minimum necessary to resolve the situation. We follow the guidance given in the DfES circular 10/98 on The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils. The High Mistress will require the adult(s) involved in any such incident to report the matter to him or her immediately, and to record it.

## **7 Allegations against staff**

- 7.1 If an allegation is made against a member of the school staff (or a volunteer helper), it will always be investigated by the High Mistress, or, in the case of the allegation being against the High Mistress, by the chair of the Board of Directors. If it is felt, after these initial investigations, that a further enquiry is needed, then the member of staff will be suspended. Suspension is a neutral act, and in no way implies that the person is guilty of any wrongdoing. However, it is acknowledged that this would be distressing for the person concerned, and the school will do all it can to balance the interests of any individual with that of the need to keep children safe. The school will seek advice from Social Services on these matters, and comply with national and locally agreed guidance.

## **8 Staff training**

- 8.1 All adults in the school receive regular training to raise their awareness of abuse, and to improve their knowledge of the child protection procedures that have been agreed locally. The maximum period of time before refresher training must take place is three years.
- 8.2 Designated persons will be trained every two years. (This person will also be CAF trained)

## **9 Confidentiality**

- 9.1 We regard all information relating to individual child protection issues as confidential, and we treat it accordingly. We pass information on to appropriate persons only.
- 9.2 We comply with the government requirements set out in DHS Circular LA 83/14 with regard to confidentiality. The files we keep on children are open to those children's parents. Information from third parties will not be disclosed without their prior consent. Access to these files may be withheld in certain prescribed cases where there are instances

of actual or alleged abuse (see DfES Circular 16/19). Working notes are not subject to disclosure, but will be summarised and then kept on file. These guidelines of ours are in line with the safeguards on disclosure of information set out in the Education (School Records) Regulations 1989.

**10 Monitoring and review**

- 10.1 The Board of Directors will ensure that the school has a senior member of staff designated to take lead responsibility for dealing with child protection issues. Directors will regularly monitor and review any incidents relating to child protection, while the High Mistress participates in the school's training with regard to child protection procedures. Any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements will be remedied without delay.
- 10.2 This policy is reviewed annually by the Board of Directors.

**11 Contact numbers**

Westminster Child Protection Advisers	0207 641 5395
Westminster Children and Families Assessment Service	0207 641 7525

**Signed: Senior Leadership Team**

**Date: August 2009**