

Guidance on Interaction with Pupils: Code of Conduct for Staff Policy

Date Originated	
Issue Number	
Last Revision Date	January 2011
This policy is endorsed by	The Governors and The Heads
This policy is owned by	The Managing Head of Bedales
This policy is maintained by	The Managing Head of Bedales

Guidance on Interaction with Pupils: Code of Conduct for Staff

INTRODUCTION

The safety and well-being of every pupil at Bedales school is of paramount importance. Every child has the right to grow up and to live in a safe environment. All staff have a duty to protect pupils from abuse and bullying and to promote their well-being.

Every member of staff should read this code of conduct in conjunction with the school's other child protection policies.

SAFER RECRUITMENT

The school follows the Government's guidelines for the safer employment of staff who work with children. We obtain enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) certificates on all new members of staff, temporary staff, visiting and peripatetic staff, contractors' employees, such as catering staff, who work unsupervised in the school. Governors, together with parent helpers who have regular unsupervised access to children are also required to have up to date CRB certificates. [CRB certificates are also required for the adult members of the families of members of staff who are accommodated on site].

PROMOTING AWARENESS

Our curriculum and pastoral systems are designed to foster the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all our pupils. All our teaching staff play a vital role in this process, helping to ensure that all of our pupils relate well to one another and feel safe and comfortable within the school. We expect all the teaching and medical staff to lead by example, and to play a full part in promoting an awareness that is appropriate to their age amongst all our pupils on issues relating to health, safety and well-being. All the staff, including all non-teaching staff, have an important role in insisting that our pupils always adhere to the standards of behaviour set out in our behaviour policy and in enforcing our anti-bullying policy. [Boarding house staff have a particularly important role to play].

Time is allocated in PSHE and house assemblies to discussions of what constitutes appropriate behaviour and on why bullying and lack of respect for others is never right. Assemblies, JAW and PSHE are used to promote tolerance and mutual respect and understanding. We use appropriate opportunities to teach about the unacceptability of bullying and abusive behaviour and to promote the safe use of the internet and mobile phones, inside and outside of school.

Child Protection

The Three Schools' Child Protection Officer is Dominic Oliver, MHSS and Deputy Head Bedales Schools. The Three Schools Deputy Child Protection Officer is James Beatty, Deputy Head, Dunhurst

Every member of staff is CRB checked before they take up their post. Child protection training is compulsory for new members of staff. Update and refresher training is compulsory for all staff. The annual INSET programme includes updates for all staff on child protection. Copies of the following key documents are held by the Child Protection Officer and may be consulted for further guidance: "Working Together to Safeguard Children" (2006); "Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education" (2006); "What to do if you're worried a child is being abused" (2006).

All members of staff are asked to note the following good practice guidelines:

- treat all young people with dignity and respect
- watch your language, tone of voice and body language
- in one-to-one situations, keep the door ajar and ensure other adults are around
- don't invade a child's privacy, especially when toileting or washing
- don't play rough or provocative games
- don't be sexually suggestive about or to a child, even in fun
- don't touch a child inappropriately or obtrusively
- don't scapegoat, ridicule or reject a child
- don't show favouritism
- don't involve children in excessive attention seeking
- don't give lifts to children or young people on their own. If unavoidable, ask them to sit in the back of the car.
- don't share sleeping accommodation with young people
- don't invite a young person to your home alone: invite a group and ideally make sure another adult is present
- don't permit abusive peer activities e.g. bullying, ridiculing, initiation ceremonies
- don't allow unknown adults access to children in your care. Visitors should wear a label and be accompanied by a known person
- use the internet sensibly and responsibly

Evidence of abuse

Every member of staff must be vigilant in recognising possible signs of abuse of children. It is the responsibility of each member of staff to take action whenever abuse is suspected. Evidence of abuse may take the following forms:

- physical abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise.
- emotional abuse which is the persistent emotional ill treatment 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.

- sexual abuse which involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- neglect which is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Action

If a student discloses any sort of abuse to a member of staff reassurance should be given, but it must be made clear to the student that confidentiality cannot be preserved. Staff should listen sympathetically, but take care not to ask leading questions, since this could invalidate any possible legal proceedings. Any disclosure or otherwise gathered information suggestive of child abuse must be investigated immediately. The following 10 key points may be helpful:

1. **Always stop and listen** to anyone who wants to talk to you about incidents or suspected abuse
2. **Write notes** – if not at the time then straight after
3. **Never make a promise** that you will keep it secret. Instead, give reassurance that only those who need to know will be told
4. **Do not ask leading questions**
5. Immediately after the discussion, **inform the Child Protection Officer** (Dominic)
6. **Discuss** with the CPO whether steps need to be taken to protect the person who may be being abused
7. **Never attempt to carry out an investigation:** Social Services and the Police are trained to do this
8. **As soon as possible** the CPO should notify Havant Social Services
9. **Never think abuse is impossible** or that the accusation is bound to be wrong
10. **Young people often tell other young people**, rather than adults: ensure that other young people are aware of the issue of abuse and how to report it

Procedure:

A detailed record of any allegation of abuse must be made at the time of disclosure, and given to the MHSS. The student should be told that any disclosure must be reported to the MHSS who is the designated Child Protection Officer and will decide on the school's course of action, in consultation with the Head. Any child protection matter must be referred to the local social service department **within 24 hours** of the disclosure.

The MHSS will call in the appropriate assistance, including Hampshire Social Services Child Protection Unit, who will advise on the support of the child and the passing of information to parents and others.

If they haven't already done so, the student may then also wish to seek the support of House Staff or Tutors, and this should be encouraged. It is important to convey to the student a sense of support and sympathy.

If an allegation is made against a member of staff - including the MHSS - similar procedures should be followed, but the adult to whom the allegation has been made must go straight to the Head who will take over the liaison with Social Services and the member of staff at the earliest opportunity. The member of staff about whom the allegation has been made shall not continue their duties until the matter has been resolved. If an allegation is made against the Head, the disclosure should be notified immediately to the MHSS

Staff involved with a disclosure and the subsequent care of the child must write a follow up record of the case to its resolution.

Any child has the right to go direct to the Social Services to seek help, or to any other competent person or agency outside the school.

Staff responsibility

Staff must report to the designated Child Protection Officer, or to Ofsted, **any concern or allegation** about school practices or the behaviour of colleagues, which may put students at risk of harm.

Intimate care and appropriate contact

Intimate care can be defined as care tasks of an intimate nature associated with bodily functions (examples include care associated with continence or menstruation). There are currently no students at the school who require intimate care. However, the school holds a model policy on intimate care. We hold to the guiding principle that every child's privacy, dignity and autonomy should be respected at all times.

Children's Services

Children's services for Hampshire may be contacted directly on the Professional Line: **01329 225379**.

Out of hours, call Hampshire Social Services Direct on **0845 600 4555** (Emergencies). Fax number is **01252 327755**.

Local Safeguarding Children Board

We fall under the stewardship of Hampshire LCSB. The designated officer for Schools and Education is Lyn Clarke, who acts as Child Protection co-ordinator for the area and is based at the Alton/Aldershot Office (**01252 796418**).

'What if' advice can be sought through this channel.

(Contact details checked and updated by the Bedales CPO 17th January 2011)

Further more detailed training notes, advice and information can be sought from the CPO: never sit on a nagging concern – talk to someone about it.

Working with Children in Isolation

Introduction

Staff should be aware of the dangers of being alone with a student. Whilst acknowledging that sensitivity and respect by definition might lead to a member of staff working alone with a child, colleagues are reminded of the following precautions they might wish to take:

Action

- Work with a door open
- Use a room in a 'public space' - an extra coaching session in a classroom rather than a departmental office, for example
- Tell a colleague where you are and whom you are with
- Work with another colleague where possible
- Remember that physical contact, however innocent or well-meant, can be misconstrued or cause embarrassment

Reporting

Any colleague with concerns about this either of a specific or general kind should speak in the first instance to the MHSS.

The Use Of Reasonable Force To Control Or Restrain Students

Introduction

It is entirely against School policy (and the law under the Education Act 1996 Section 550A) for a teacher to use any degree of physical contact which is deliberately intended to punish a student, or which is primarily intended to cause pain or injury or humiliation. That ban is absolute. It applies regardless of the seriousness of the student's misbehaviour or the degree of provocation.

Context

The Education Act 1996 allows for reasonable force to be used to control or restrain students.

In general terms, and outside the remit of the Act anyway,

Everyone has the right to defend themselves against an attack, provided they do not use a disproportionate degree of force to do so.

In an emergency, for example if a student was at immediate risk of injury or on the point of inflicting injury on someone else, any member of staff would be entitled to intervene.

The Act seeks to define other situations in which teachers and other authorised staff are entitled to intervene, thus, reasonable force may be used by staff to prevent students from doing, or continuing to do, any of the following:

- Committing a criminal offence (including behaving in a way that would be an offence if the student were not under the age of criminal responsibility)
- Injuring themselves or others
- Causing damage to property (including student's own property)
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among any of its students, whether that behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere

Definition

There is no legal definition of 'reasonable force'. There are two relevant considerations:

- The use of force can be regarded as reasonable only if the circumstances of the particular incident warrant it. The use of any degree of force is unlawful if the particular circumstances do not warrant the use of physical force.
- The degree of force employed must be in proportion to the circumstances of the incident and the seriousness of the behaviour or the consequences it is intended to prevent. Any force used should always be the minimum needed to achieve the desired result.

Action

Physical contact may be necessary in other circumstances - for example to demonstrate exercises or techniques in PE or games, to administer First Aid, or to comfort a student in distress.

Teachers should bear in mind that some children find physical contact unwelcome; physical contact between teachers and students of opposite sex becomes increasingly open to question as students reach and proceed through adolescence.

Innocent and well-intentioned physical contact can be misconstrued.

Reporting

Staff with specific or general concerns on this matter should speak in the first instance to the MHSS.

Staff Access to Individual Student Records

Student records are stored in The Headmaster's secretary's office. Tutors should ask the secretary or the MHSS when they want to read information in the files. Files must not be removed from the office. Tutors and House Staff will necessarily keep their own records about the students in their care. A copy of any important or new information - a record of a disciplinary incident, for example - should be lodged in the central files.

Any confidential student information is held in the central files.