

## Bedales Child Protection Policy

*Last updated August 2009*

The Three Schools' Child Protection Officer is Leo Winkley, Managing Head of the Senior School. 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. 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**
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 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 Managing Head. The student should be told that any disclosure must be reported to the Managing Head who is the designated Child Protection Officer and will decide on the school's course of action, in consultation with the Headmaster. Any child protection matter must be referred to the local social service department **within 24 hours** of the disclosure.

The Managing Head will call in the appropriate assistance, including Hampshire LSCB, 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 Managing Head - 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 Deputy Head.

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 (from 22 October 2007)*

All childcare concerns and referrals in the East Hampshire district are now covered by the Alton/Aldershot Reception and Assessment Team. Should need arise, call **01252 314221** and ask for Childcare Duty: you will be put through to the Duty Officer. Out of hours, call Hampshire Social Services Direct on **0845 600 4555** (Emergencies). Fax number is 01252 327755. The team manager is **Becky Geddis**.

### *Local Safeguarding Children Board (from April 1, 2006)*

We fall under the stewardship of Hampshire LCSB. The designated officer for Schools and Education is **Barbara Piddington**, who acts as Child Protection co-ordinator for the area. (01962 876 265). 'What if' advice can be sought through this channel.

*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.*