



4. Child Protection Policy

This Child Protection Policy forms part of the aim and ethos of our school and is for all children within it. It seeks to support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence. The policy applies to all the school.

General Aims

- * The welfare of all our children is paramount.
- * That we promote the development of all children to their full potential intellectually, physical, socially, emotionally and behaviourally.
- * That we promote the protection of children from harm or ill treatment, including supporting a child's development in ways which will foster self-esteem, security, trust, confidence and independence to help ensure their own protection and understand the importance of protecting others.

The school operates safe recruitment procedures including CRB checks and compliance with Independent Schools Standards Regulations.

Objectives

- * To develop an awareness in teaching and non-teaching staff of the need for Child Protection and their responsibilities in identifying abuse. They should remain vigilant at all times.
- * To develop a structured procedure to follow to prevent and deal with child abuse.
- * To involve and consult with outside agencies as appropriate on relevant issues.
- * Make contact before allegation/suspicion emerges.
- * To have effective school practices to monitor and counter bullying.
- * To properly select and train staff.
- * Where a pupil sees a member of staff alone, doors must be left open.
- * Make sure that any physical contact is as impersonal as possible.
- * Members of staff should avoid being alone in a car with a pupil unless the Head Teacher is informed.
- * All staff are informed that all computers and videos may be checked.



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Roles and Responsibilities

At Linley House School, the Head Teacher, is responsible for co-ordinating action within school and liaison with other agencies. In the Head's absence the Deputy Head Teacher will deputise.

The role of the Head Teacher at Linley House School is:-

- * To maintain records in case conferences and other sensitive information in a secure, confidential file.
- * To disseminate information about the child only on a need to know basis, bearing in mind the importance of confidentiality.
- * To pass on records when a child who is on the Child Protection Register leaves the school.
- * To liaise with outside agencies
- * To offer support and advice to staff who have suspicions about a child.

Procedures at Linley House School

Child protection procedures are in accordance with Kingston inter agency procedures. If any suspicions arise regarding the abuse of a child, consultation must take place with the Head Teacher before further referral. If further referral is felt necessary, the procedure illustrated in the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames' Child Protection – Procedural Guidelines must be followed. (This booklet is kept in the office.) The telephone number for the Duty Social Worker is 020 8547 5888. Carla Thomas is the LEA Advisor.

Records

All records about Child Protection and S.E.N. issues are kept in secure, confidential files to be located in the Head Teacher's office.

Records should be kept by anyone dealing with a child when there are concerns about the welfare of that child, e.g. poor attendance, appearance and dress, changed behaviour or unusual behaviour, health and emotional well-being of the child, deterioration in educational progress, any discussion with parents about the concern, the response of parents to you and the child and home conditions.

All records and subsequent reports should be factual, non-judgmental, clear, accurate and relevant.



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“The Safe Child”

A safe child is valued, is self-confident, has self-esteem, has the skills and knowledge to protect him/herself. A safe child knows that they have the right to be safe, knows that they have rights over their own body, knows that it's OK to say no, knows how to be assertive.

A safe child understands: the difference between good and bad secrets, what might be a potentially dangerous situation, who can help or be trusted, and the difference between appropriate and inappropriate touches.

A safe child is able to: trust, recognise and express their feelings, solve problems, make judgments, make decisions and be assertive.

Child Abuse

There are five recognised main categories of child abuse:-

- * **Physical Injury** – any form of injury or ill-health, including deliberate poisoning, where there is definite knowledge, or reasonable suspicion the injury was inflicted, or knowingly not prevented, by any person having custody of the child.
- * **Neglect** – the persistent or severe neglect of a child (for example, by exposing to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation) that results in serious impairment of the child's health and physical and emotional development.
Failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- * **Emotional Ill-treatment** – the severe adverse effect upon behaviour and emotional development caused either by persistent or severe neglect or rejection, on the part of the parent or carer.
- * **Sexual Abuse** – the involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children and adolescents in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent which violate the social taboos of family roles, or are against the law.
- * **Potential Abuse** – children in situations where they have not been abused, but where social and medical assessments indicate a high degree of risk that they might be abused in the future, including situations where another child in the household has been harmed, or the household contains a known abuser.



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Increasing Awareness

There is a danger in thinking that non-accidental physical injuries are large and obviously visible. Minor injuries can be as important as more serious ones. If the former are not recognised, a more serious injury may follow.

Visible injuries are often noticed by either teachers or welfare assistants.

Many non-accidental injuries are not easily visible; often they are covered by clothing.

When children are changing for P.E., going swimming, etc. there can be useful, discreet opportunities to notice anything unusual. Sometimes children who have an injury are reluctant to change for P.E., want to change alone, or repeatedly “forget” their kit. If a child is suffering bullying at school, he/she may be reluctant to leave the classroom, go to the toilet, or be in the playground.

Suspicious injuries need to be noticed and noticed sympathetically:

- * We expect parents/guardians to tell us if there is anything wrong with a child. If you notice an injury that you were not aware of, then it may be appropriate to enquire gently about it. If you are unsure about whether to take action about a child, or are concerned about an injury, refer your concerns to the Head Teacher. Children should never be made to show their injuries or have their clothing removed for them without permission – this is contrary to the “Children Act”.
- * Injuries are not always obvious. Children sometimes show unexplained changes in behaviour, especially clinginess, repeated head or tummy aches. Obsession with either eating or not eating can also be a symptom of abuse.
- * Children who suffer physical abuse themselves often show violence to other children. It can be tempting to assume they probably “got what they deserved” or got into a fight. Children, however, rarely bully others without some reason – real or imagined. Behaviour of this type should be referred so that possible causes can be investigated.
- * When dealing with incidents or suspicions, it is important that all relevant factors are noted as soon as possible. These notes should be objective, stating facts, statements made by yourself or others, times and dates of specific incidents. You should always avoid speculation. CONFIDENTIALITY is, of course of prime importance, but cannot be promised.
Avoid asking leading questions
- * Particular incidents should be discussed only with those dealing with the situation.



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Many symptoms are acknowledged as being potential signs of neglect/physical/sexual/emotional abuse. These include:-

Physical Abuse

unexplained injuries/bruises	improbable excuses
untreated injuries	bald patches
withdrawal from physical contact	fear of medical help
arms and legs covered in hot weather	fear of returning home
self-destructive tendencies	aggression
burns/bites	accumulation of minor injuries
unexplained absences	reluctance to change clothes
and over-rehearsed answers	

Emotional Abuse

physical, emotional, social, developmental delays	running away
over-reaction to mistakes	self-mutilation
fear of parents being contacted	drug/solvent abuse
inappropriate emotional responses	scavenging and stealing
thumb-sucking, rocking, hair twisting	fear of new situations
excessive attachment to people outside family	low self-esteem
excessive punishment/expectations by parents	eating disorders

Neglect

constant hunger/weight loss	poor personal hygiene
constant tiredness	emaciation
poor state of clothing	low self-esteem
frequent lateness, non-attendance	scavenging and stealing
untreated medical problem	running away
failure to thrive/slow development	poor social development

Sexual Abuse

sudden changes in behaviour/performance	tendency to cling
displays of affection in a sexual way	tendency to cry



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acting "like a baby"
distrust of (familiar) adults
wetting and soiling
sleep disturbance and nightmares
throat infections, VD
fear of undressing
play/language indicating sexual
knowledge

genital itching
unexplained money
apparent secrecy
depression, withdrawal
anorexia, bulimia
phobias/panic attacks
emotional distress

Dealing with Disclosure of Abuse

If a child chooses to disclose to us, we may have feelings of anger, disgust, revulsion, sorrow or fear. The child may also be feeling many of these emotions, but also accompanied by confusion, responsibility, guilt, insecurity, fear, inability or reluctance to trust adults. There are things that we, as adults, should do.

We can try to:

- * **Stay Calm** – the child needs us to be composed and in control.
- * **Listen Carefully** – and sympathetically without probing straight away.
- * **Do not promise to keep secrets and ask questions for clarification only.**

It is NOT our duty to investigate.

- * **Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling us and that:**
 - it was right to tell
 - we are glad they told us
 - we believe them
 - it was not their fault
 - we are sorry that it happened
 - that they will be asked to repeat their information
 - that it will be shared with the Head Teacher, Susan Mallin (who is the Designated Child Protection Teacher)
- * **Note** – the main points calmly and carefully using the child's own words. Sign and date everything. Keep original notes. And transfer this information to the Head Teacher, Susan Mallin, who is the Designated Child Protection Teacher for the school and the Deputy Head Teacher – Mrs. Angela Haines, the designated Child Protection Officer in the Head's absence.



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- * **Never make promises** you may not be able to keep, e.g. promising confidentiality when you will have to pass on information given by the child.
- * **Look after** the child while arrangements are being made.
- * **Make the rest of the day** as normal as possible for everyone concerned (i.e. the child, the other children and yourself).
- * **Write up a full account as soon as possible and in any case before the end of the day**

Dealing with Suspicion of Abuse

Suspicion can often be more difficult to deal with than disclosure as we may be left with unresolved feelings of anger and frustration because the matter cannot be proven one way or the other, as well as those detailed in the section on disclosure.

Again, however, there are things that we can do:-

- * **Stay calm** – the child needs us to be composed and calm.
- * **Be available** – no doubt you have already worked hard to create an atmosphere of stability, security and trust within the classroom. It may be useful to be available sometimes at playtimes or lunch as a matter of routine.
- * **Listen actively** – to what the child is saying to others and to us.
- * **Question normally** – without pressuring, ignoring something said, written or drawn is not what we would normally do. Try to make questions open-ended, e.g. “Can you describe what this shows?”
- * **Don’t put words** into the child’s mouth (by doing the describing for them or completing their sentences etc.).
- * **Keep a full record or log** – dates, times, what the child did, said, etc. This should be kept under lock and key in the file in the Office. Use the child’s own words. Sign and date.
- * **Discuss your views** – with the designated person who may well have other information to add – or indeed may be able to solicit other information which may well influence how the child behaves: e.g. death in the family, illness of a family member, accidents. If there are a number of worrying signs or symptoms or a strong “gut feeling”, the duty team for the Child and Family Services can be contacted for advice by the Head Teacher.



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- * **Look after** the child while arrangements are being made to protect the child. Check arrangements with child.
- * **Make** the rest of the day as normal as possible for everyone concerned, (i.e. the child, the other children and yourself).
- * **Write up a full account as soon as possible, and in any case before the end of the day (times, dates, behaviour, factual notes.)**

Don't carry out an investigation by interviewing people etc. - social services and police are trained to do this.

Allegation against Staff/Volunteers within School

Allegations against staff/volunteers should be reported to the Head. If the Head is absent, the allegations should be reported to the Bursar. If the allegation concerns the Head the person receiving the allegation should immediately inform the Bursar without notifying the Head first. In the case of serious harm the police should be informed from the outset.

The school will follow a fair procedure in the event of a serious allegation being made against a member of staff or an adult volunteer helper in School.

1. Upon receipt of such an allegation the member of staff concerned will be suspended from work on full pay and benefits whilst the investigation proceeds.
2. The school will appoint a senior member of staff to carry out the investigation, The Head to be the 'Investigating Officer'.
3. The investigation will follow the same procedure as the Disciplinary Procedure outlined in the legal Linley House School Staff Handbook.

The school will follow a fair procedure in the event of a serious allegation being made against The Head Teacher.

1. Upon receipt of such an allegation of the Head Teacher they will be suspended from work on full pay and benefits whilst the investigation proceeds.
2. The school will appoint The Bursar to carry out the investigation (the 'Investigating Officer').
3. The investigation will follow the same procedure as the Disciplinary Procedure outlined in the legal Linley House School Staff Handbook.



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4. The School will report 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 or she is considered unsuitable to work with children.
5. The designated officer will be trained every two years in Child Protection and in inter agency working. The Staff and the Head have training in child protection (updated every three years) and part time and voluntary staff who work with children are made aware of the arrangements.
6. Any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements are remedied without delay.
7. The Governing body/proprietor undertakes an annual review of the School's child protection policies and procedures and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged.

Procedures for dealing with abuse by one or more pupils against another pupil:

Staff, to whom it is reported, to listen to pupil concerns. If appropriate, immediate medical treatment/advice to be sought. Reassure they have done nothing wrong and that it was the right thing to report. Staff should refer pupil immediately to designated Child Protection officers ie Headteacher, Susan Mallin or Deputy Headteacher, Angela Haines. This person will listen to the child and make a written record of the incident and identify evidence and seek witnesses. The Child Protection officers cannot guarantee confidentiality of information and will inform pupils that the school will be speaking to inter agency bodies and the alleged abuser. Report information to parents.

The school will report to a welfare agency within 24 hours of a disclosure or suspicion of abuse.

The contact details for agency involvement - Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames' Child Protection – The telephone number for the Duty Social Worker is 020 8547 5888. Carla Thomas is the LEA Advisor.

Guidance for staff is given, 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, and so on).

Assurance is obtained that appropriate child protection checks and procedures apply to any staff employed by another organisation and working with the school's pupils on another site (for example, in a separate institution), and the requirement to report to the Independent Safeguarding Authority.