



Abbey Gate College

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Abbey Gate College is fully committed to the safeguarding of children and the following policy (updated 2009) complies with DCSF guidelines: *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education*. We will follow the procedures set out by Cheshire Local Safeguarding Children's Board with due regard to Every Child Matters (ECM). We are committed to ensuring that all learning activities provide a safe, enjoyable and positive experience for children and young people. It is important to be aware that child abuse happens in all strata of society and at all ages; children have a right to be "safe from maltreatment, neglect, violence and sexual exploitation" (ECM.03).

The policy applies to all staff (teaching, administrative and support), governors, peripatetic teachers and volunteers working in the College. Appropriate information on safeguarding procedures will be made available to all volunteers who come into contact with pupils. At Abbey Gate College we understand that children cannot learn effectively unless they feel secure and we recognise our responsibility to provide an environment that promotes self-esteem and self-worth, where pupils are confident that their concerns will be listened to and acted upon.

Aims

- To ensure we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children
- To raise awareness of child protection issues
- To use curricular and extra-curricular opportunities to ensure that children are fully informed and educated, equipping them with the skills needed to keep them safe from abuse and to develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life
- To ensure that all staff are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities, are familiar with the policy and are adequately trained in safeguarding procedures
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases of abuse
- Supporting pupils in accordance with their Child Protection Plan if required
- Establish a safe environment in which children can grow in confidence, learn and develop in all areas
- Maintain links with local agencies in order to ensure compliance with procedure and to sustain cooperation with organisations such as the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and to co-operate with any investigation of child protection matters as appropriate.

The College recognises the importance of positive staff/pupil relationships and that day to day contact with children means that staff are often well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse.

Principles

- Establish and maintain an environment where all children feel secure and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to
- Ensure that children know that there are adults in College that they can approach if they are worried
- Include opportunities in the Personal and Social Health Education (PSHE) programme for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse
- Ensure that assemblies and our pastoral system provide opportunities to raise awareness and understanding
- Maintain appropriate training for staff to ensure that they are well informed, fully aware of the correct Child Protection procedures and understand the importance of adhering to a professional code of conduct

For the purposes of this policy abuse can be categorised into four main forms:

1. **Physical abuse:** deliberate injury or infliction of physical suffering
2. **Neglect:** active or passive failure to protect a child from any kind of danger likely to impair the child's health or development; failure to thrive physically, emotionally or intellectually
3. **Sexual abuse:** sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent
4. **Emotional abuse:** persistent or severe emotional ill treatment likely to have an adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of the child

Key responsibilities of all staff

All members of the teaching staff, support staff, governors, those people working for externally managed services within the College and volunteers should be familiar with this policy.

Procedure for dealing with disclosures of abuse – guidance for staff

1. **Listen carefully** to what you are being told. Try not to interrupt or prompt. Do not ask leading questions. If necessary ask open questions; if possible and appropriate, take notes and ask the pupil to check that they are accurate. It is vital that you do not try to investigate the situation.
2. **Be calm and sympathetic** but try not to display shock and do not express disbelief. Do not jump to conclusions or put words into the child's mouth.
3. **Reassure** the pupil that they were right to speak to you but do not promise confidentiality.
4. **Explain** that you will need to speak to the designated person about the disclosure and that they will probably need to speak to the DP but that you may be present too if they would prefer.
5. **Report** the disclosure to the DP/Child Protection Officer (CPO) as soon as possible. The report must be made on the same day as the disclosure took place.

6. **Record** the disclosure in writing as soon as possible. If you did not take notes during the disclosure – this must be completed within 24 hours of the disclosure.

The written record must be accurate, detailed and factual. Try to use the actual words used and note down any visible physical injuries. Record your observations of the child's behaviour during the disclosure but do not give a personal opinion on either the situation or any observed behaviour. The record must be dated and signed. Give the written record to the DP within 24 hours of the disclosure.

Training and Responsibility

We will ensure that all staff are appropriately trained and that all staff, parents and Governors are aware of their responsibilities. All disclosures of abuse and suspicions of abuse should be reported to the appropriate Designated Person without delay. Training will be given to all staff every three years and safeguarding procedures will be a regular item on the agenda at staff meetings and a standing item at Board Meetings.

We will:

- Ensure that we have a Designated Senior person for Child Protection (CPO) who has received appropriate training and support. The **designated person is the Head of Pastoral, Mrs Jennifer Jones** (next updated training due in March 2011)
- Ensure that we have a nominated Governor responsible for child protection – regular meetings are held and reported to the Governing Board. The **designated Governor is Canon Christopher Humphries** (training updated every 3 years - next training due 2012).
- **Head of Aldford, Rebecca Walker, is the Deputy CPO and nominated liaison for Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)** (next training due in November 2011)
- All staff and a nominated Governor(s) will have the required training for Child Protection (next due in 2012)
- Key members of the extended Pastoral Team will receive additional training and support in child protection
- Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed upon the College for child protection by making them aware of this policy which is published on the website (current parents informed by letter July 2009)
- New/prospective parents are informed with Prospectus Pack
- If a child is on the child protection register – CPO will notify social services if there is an unexplained absence of more than 2 days for a pupil
- Develop effective links with local agencies and cooperate fully with their enquiries
- Attend case conferences or meetings if required
- Keep written records of concerns about children
- Ensure that all records are kept securely, separate from the pupil file, and locked away
- The CPO will ensure that the Head is kept informed of any child protection issues

Action of CPO following a disclosure or report of suspected abuse.

Following a verbal report the CPO will follow the Chester West and Chester Local Children's Safeguarding Board (LCSB) procedures (www.cheshire.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/children/child_protection/manual). The CPO will confer with another member of the Designated team if possible and a decision will be taken on an appropriate course of action. This may involve a discussion with the pupil who made the disclosure but ideally should not be asked to repeat their disclosure.

The Designated person(s) will decide on an appropriate course of action based on professional judgement, experience and training. It is good practice to discuss concerns with parents but this will only be done if it does not place the pupil at increased risk of harm. The child's views will be taken into consideration on the matter of contacting parents.

If there are still concerns that may be of a child protection nature, discussions can then take place - without identifying the child in question if necessary - with the front line staff in Children's Social Care or the Safeguarding Unit. Should child protection concerns then be established, it will be necessary to identify the child at that point and a referral to the LSCB must be made within 24 hours of the disclosure or suspicion.

Safer Recruitment

Abbey Gate College is fully committed to ensuring that safe recruitment practice is followed outlined by the following procedures. We comply with Independent Schools Inspectorate regulations in all employment matters.

- Job Advertisements state our commitment to Child Protection and this is included in the job specification
- Application forms, two references, and request for disclosure must be submitted for each applicant
- In interview, any gaps in employment are queried
- Conditional offer of appointment made prior to pre-appointment checks
- At least one person on the interview panel will be appropriately trained in Safer Recruitment
- Head, Deputy Head and Bursar are trained in Safer Recruitment (2009)
- References received include reference to any child protection issues
- Identity will be verified } *At interview*
- Qualifications will be checked } " "
- All appointments are subject to an Enhanced Disclosure, full Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check and List 99 which includes provision of two forms of identity check
- Prospective staff must declare their medical fitness for the role
- Appropriate registration and confirmation of General Teaching Council (GTC), Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and statutory Induction where applicable
- The Bursar keeps a Central Register of staff with appropriate documentation
- Staff files are kept either by the Bursar or Head depending on line management

Children who have been the victims of abuse or have witnessed violence or trauma may need additional support and care in order to develop their self esteem. Their behaviour maybe challenging and the College will endeavour to support the pupil in a number of ways:-

- Appropriate curriculum
- Maintaining an ethos promoting a positive, secure and supportive environment to build pupil self esteem
- Ensuring that the Behaviour Policy provides support for vulnerable pupils
- Liaison with other agencies and professional services (e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS))
- Ensuring that if any child on the Child Protection register leaves that their information is transferred to the new school and that the child's social worker is informed
- If any child leaves the College mid year without explanation the Registrar will inform the LEA

The College sets out the following guidelines for staff to support them and ensure that they understand the Child Protection policy and their role in ensuring safe practice:-

- If a child speaks to a member of staff about a sensitive issue they cannot promise confidentiality
- Staff must not ask leading questions or promise that things will be resolved
- Staff must note the discussion – date and sign and pass to the CPO

Allegations against Staff

The College has procedures for dealing with allegations against staff (and volunteers who work with children) that aim to strike a balance to protect children from abuse (the overriding principle but also to protect staff or volunteers from false or unfounded allegations. If an allegation of abuse is made about a member of the teaching staff, support staff, governing body, someone working for externally managed services within the College or a volunteer, the Head should be informed immediately. The colleague about whom the allegation has been made should not be informed. In a case of serious harm, the police should be informed from the outset.

All allegations of abuse against a member of staff should be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The LADO's first step will be to discuss the allegation with the Head. to confirm details of the allegation and establish whether there is sufficient substance in the allegation to warrant an investigation. Suspension of the member of staff may not be an automatic response to an allegation but maybe procedural and done without prejudice.

Contact details for the LADO are printed at the end of the policy.

Full consideration will be given to all options in order to ensure:-

- a) the safety and welfare of the pupil or pupils involved
- b) the need for a full and fair investigation
- c) that the College has fulfilled its obligations with regard to involving other agencies if required

Staff must ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place the pupils or themselves at risk of harm or allegations of harm to a pupil. Procedures regarding allegations that maybe made against a member of staff are included in the Staff Handbook

Concerns regarding a member of staff should be reported directly to the Head – if the concern is regarding the Head, Designated Person or Bursar then the matter should be brought to the immediate attention of the Chairman of Governors.

The College undertakes to report to the Secretary of State via the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) 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. Such reports should contain as much evidence as possible – failure to take this action constitutes an offence.

Links to additional policies in the College

- Behaviour Policy (pupils)
- Complaints Procedure
- Recruitment Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct/Guidelines
- Policy to prevent Bullying
- EYFS guidance
- ICT Code of Conduct
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Race Policy

Role of the Governors

The Governors will conduct an annual review of the College safeguarding policy and procedure and the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged. It must ensure that the policy and procedures work in accordance with locally agreed interagency procedures and that the policy is accessible on the school website.

Governors must also ensure that the College operates a safe recruitment procedure and carries out appropriate checks on staff or volunteers who work with pupils.

This policy and its efficiency and effectiveness will be reviewed on an annual basis as a minimum as soon as possible after any changes in the most recent advice or guidance. The Designated Person (CPO) will (in conjunction with the nominated Governor) monitor this policy and prepare an annual Report to the Governing Body.

Contact information

Local children's service office:

Cheshire Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)
Goldsmith House
Hamilton Place
Chester
CH1 1SE

Tel: 01244 603400
Fax: 01244 603130

Opening times: Mon-Thurs 8:30am-5pm, Fri 8:30am-4:30pm
Emergency Duty Team: 01606 76611

ISA:
Independent Safeguarding Authority
PO Box 181
Darlington
DL1 9FA
0300 123 1111.

LADO:
Sonia Thomas (Allegations Officer) 01606275064

Ofsted:
08456 404040

Other useful numbers:
NSPCC 01925 418430 Warrington
NSPCC Child Protection Helpline 0800 800 500
National Childline 08001111

Prepared by: Mrs L M Horner

Policy to be reviewed October 2010

Authorised and approved by the Board of Governors

Dated