

**NORTHEASE MANOR SCHOOL**  
**CHILD PROTECTION POLICY – GUIDANCE FOR STAFF**

**Date of policy:**                   **May 2011**

**Date of Review:**               **April 2012**

**Reviewer:**                       **Paul Smith (Head of Boarding)**

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The Children Act brings together a range of legislation and organises it on the basis of one key principle – that “the welfare of the child is paramount”.

The school operates all provisions of this Act and abides with local Area (East Sussex) Child Protection Committee procedures. Members of staff need to inform themselves of its requirements. Copies of Regulations and guidance books are in the Head of Boarding’s Office.

Children have the right to protection from neglect, physical, emotional and sexual abuse. The community as a whole has a responsibility for the protection of children and for reporting concerns about a child’s welfare or safety and in particular school staff have an important role because of their concern for the welfare and development of children.

Dealing with suspected or actual child abuse is always stressful and upsetting. All staff (teaching and support) are in daily contact with pupils and/or in the course of their interaction with other school staff and parents may become aware of concerns for the welfare of children attending the school and therefore need to know how to recognise the indications of abuse, what action they should take and where to access personal support.

The Designated Member of staff at Northease Manor School for Child Protection issues is the Head of Boarding/Head teacher. In their absence or if you have a concern involving the Head of Boarding, please refer to the Deputy Head.

The school also provides a handbook on child protection for all its Staff..

## **GUIDELINES/PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE**

### **Aims**

- Protection of the Child
- Prevention of further abuse
- Collection of information/evidence for immediate referral to investigating authority.

### **What is Child Abuse?**

Working Together to Safeguard Children (DOH, DFES and Home Office Joint Guidance 1999) Definitions.

- **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy or Fabricated or Induced Illness, may also constitute a physical abuse whereby a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health in a child

- **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse 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 in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing children to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

- **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person 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**

Neglect 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. It may involve a parent or a carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to the appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of a child's basic emotional needs.

**Recognition: What staff need to be aware of:**

**1. Physical abuse**

- Injuries to any part of the body
- Children who find it painful to walk, sit down, to move their jaws or are in some other kind of pain
- Injuries which are not typical of the bumps and scrapes associated with children's activities
- The regular occurrence of unexplained injuries
- The child who is frequently injured, even where apparently reasonable explanations are given
- Confused or conflicting explanations of how the injuries were sustained

**Behavioural Signs;**

- Furtive, secretive behaviour
- Uncharacteristic aggression or withdrawn behaviour
- Compulsive eating or sudden loss of appetite
- The child who suddenly becomes ill co-ordinated
- The child who finds it difficult to stay awake
- The child who is repeatedly absent
- Consider what is known about the family - Do you or other colleagues have concerns about the family?

## **2. Emotional Abuse**

The recognition of emotional abuse is based on observations over time of the quality of relationships between parent/carer and the child. Be aware of reported or observed parent/carer behaviours:

- Poor attachment relationship with the child
- Unresponsive or neglectful behaviour towards the child's emotional or psychological needs
- Persistent negative comments about the child
- Inappropriate or inconsistent developmental expectations of the child
- Parental problems that supersede the needs of the child
- Dysfunctional family relationships including domestic violence

Child behaviours are also important and can be indicative of emotional abuse.

Emotional indicators such as low self esteem, unhappiness, fear, distress, anxiety

Behavioural indicators such as attention seeking, opposing, withdrawn, insecure

Physical indicators such as failure to thrive/faltering growth, delay in achieving developmental, cognitive or educational milestones.

## **3. Sexual Abuse**

There may be no recognisable signs of sexual abuse but the following indicators may be signs that a child is or has been sexually abused

### **Physical signs;**

- Signs of blood or other discharge on the child's under clothes
- Awkwardness in walking or sitting down
- Tummy pains
- Regression into enuresis (wetting)
- Tiredness

### **Behavioural signs;**

- Extreme variations in behaviour e.g. anxiety, aggression or withdrawal
- Sexually provocative behaviour or knowledge that is incompatible with the child's age and understanding
- Drawings and or written work which are sexually explicit (indirect disclosure)
- Direct disclosure; It is important to recognise that children have neither the experience nor the understanding to be able to make up stories about sexual assault.

#### **4. Neglect**

Indicators of neglect are recognisable in the child, in the parent/carers behaviours and within the home or school environment. Be aware of reported or observed

##### **Physical signs;**

- Abnormal growth including failure to thrive
- Underweight or obesity
- Recurrent infection
- Unkempt dirty appearance
- Smelly
- Inadequate/unwashed clothes
- Hunger
- Listlessness

##### **Behavioural signs;**

- Attachment disorders
- Indiscriminate friendliness
- Poor social relationships
- Poor concentration
- Developmental delays
- Low self esteem

##### **Environmental signs;**

- Insufficient food, heating and ventilation in the home
- Risk from animals in the household
- Inappropriate sleeping arrangements and inadequate bedding
- Dangerous or hazardous environment

##### **What Action to Take: Who to tell and what to tell them.**

If you or a member of staff have concerns about the well-being of a child you have a duty to report it to a Designated Member of Staff for Child Protection (Head of Boarding) within the school who will normally consult with the Headteacher or her deputy in her absence before making an enquiry to the custodian of the child protection register and report the concerns to the local Social Services Child Protection Team. This can be done by 'phone in the first instance to the local child protection team, but must be followed up in writing within 24 hours, a copy of the referral should be sent to the placing LA Lead Officer for Child Protection.

Anyone with concerns relating to a child may contact East Sussex Child Protection office (01323 466606) or OFSTED, the government department responsible for the inspection of schools at Freshfield House, Redcliffe Way, Bristol, B51 6NL (08456 404040).

When making a referral the Designated Member of Staff (Head of Boarding/Headteacher) should have available.

- The child's name, date of birth, address, race, religion, language and any known special needs
- Parents/carers names, address,
- The reason for your concern
- Any other known factors within the family which may be contributing to the problem
- Lack of any elements of the above information should not deter the Designated member of staff from contacting Social Services

The maintenance of good records along with notes kept of significant events or conversations will assist with any referral and subsequent investigation.

#### **Addendum to Guidelines for Child Abuse**

- (a) Do not touch a child in such a way that the child could either genuinely or mischievously misconstrue what you are doing. There are occasions in every school day when children may need to be comforted or attended to but an over-familiar; tactile relationship with a pupil is a very dangerous thing.
- (b) If you think a situation could be potentially difficult, try to avoid being alone with the pupil. If not possible, inform another adult before any meeting takes place and record information in the Communication Book as appropriate.
- (c) Avoid any over familiar language to children, such as 'love' or 'darling'.
- (d) If in doubt about a pupil's behaviour or attitude, take advice from senior colleagues.

This is **NOT** an acknowledgement of weakness or incompetence.

Our aim is to strike the right balance between being available and able to help the pupils while at the same time, doing our utmost to avoid potentially dangerous situations.

**Signed:**

**Date:**

**Head of Boarding:**