

22. SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Introduction

The Governors, Senior Management, staff (full and part-time) and volunteers at Westminster Cathedral Choir School have a significant role in the safeguarding of children. All have a full and active part to play in promoting the welfare of children – and in particular protecting them from significant harm.

All relevant Governors and Senior Management understand the requirement that any deficiencies or weaknesses in the School's Child Protection arrangements are remedied without delay.

The Governing Body undertakes an annual review of the School's Child Protection Policy and the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged.

All staff and Senior Management believe that WCCS should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment which promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child. This policy is available in full to all parents through our website, www.choirschool.com, or on request from the School office.

The aims of this Policy are

- To support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence
- To raise the awareness of both teaching and non-teaching staff of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse
- To provide a means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm
- To emphasise the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff
- To develop a structured procedure within the School for use by all members of the School community in cases of suspected abuse, in line with Working together to Safeguard Children, March 2010
- To develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, especially the Police and Social Services
- To ensure that all adults within the School who have access to children or who have access to information, data or meetings concerning children have had their suitability checked

Procedures

- Our School procedures for safeguarding children are in accordance with London Child Protection Procedures and the inter-agency procedures of the

Westminster Local Safeguarding Children Board. They also have reference to the DCSF's: Working together to Safeguard Children, March 2010

- A designated member of staff, Jonathan Jenkins, the Head of Pastoral Care, undertakes regular training at least every two years in Child Protection and inter-agency working and is the school's Designated Senior Person (DSP) for Safeguarding Children

- A member of staff, Robert O'Brien, the Head of Boarding, is the Deputy DSP and will act in the absence of Jonathan Jenkins. Both Robert O'Brien and the Head Master also undertake regular training at least every two years in Child Protection and inter-agency working

- All new members of staff are given a copy of our Safeguarding Children and Child Protection procedures as part of their staff induction training
- All members of staff develop their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse
- All members of staff know how to respond to a pupil who discloses abuse (see below for procedures)
- All parents/carers are made aware of the responsibilities of staff members with regard to Safeguarding Children and Child Protection procedures
- All pupils are made aware of the Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy through School Assemblies and information contained in their prep diaries
- Our procedures are regularly reviewed and up-dated
- Safeguarding Children and Child Protection training with all staff, including part-time and volunteers, is carried out annually. This includes discussion and policy review. Mr Jonathan Jenkins will inform any part-time staff and volunteers of the Safeguarding Children and Child Protection arrangements if they are unable to attend the annual Safeguarding Children and Child Protection training.

Responding to disclosure and referral procedures

If a disclosure is reported to you

- Ensure the pupil is safe and feels reassured. Respect his right to privacy and time to talk without interruption
- Listen to what is being said to you without pressure, judgement or horror. Do not ask leading questions. Always believe what the pupil has told you
- Reassure the pupil calmly and gently that he has done the right thing in telling you. Do not promise confidentiality. You must inform the Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding Children, Jonathan Jenkins (Head of Pastoral Care)

Mob 07818 067212 **Tel** 0207 798 9081 **email** jjenkins@choirschool.com

- Explain to the young person that to safeguard them, you must pass on the information that they are telling you. Tell them what will happen next, who you will tell and when
- Do not ask the pupil to remove any item of clothing to show you any injuries

- Report the contents of the disclosure to the Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding Children as soon as possible. In his absence, alert Neil McLaughlan

Mob 07717 493 509 **Tel** 0207 798 9395 **email** head@choirschool.com

- If he is also absent, speak to another member of the SMT
- Record in a clear and precise way what the young person has told you as soon as possible whilst it is still fresh in your mind; in most cases it is not appropriate to write down during the disclosure. Use actual words of sentences spoken by the pupil rather than an interpretation of what was said. Specific facts relating to named people, dates, places, times and context of disclosure should be recorded accurately
- Ensure you have signed your name legibly, and dated and timed recording. If any injuries are visibly shown, record where they are and what they look like
- Remember, all recordings must be accurate, factual and dated, as you may be required to produce the information as evidence for any further action on behalf of the Local Authority

Responsibilities

The Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding Children, Mr Jonathan Jenkins, is responsible for

- Adhering to the LSCB, LA, DCSF and School procedures with regard to referring a child if there are concerns about possible abuse
- Keeping written records of concerns about a child even if there is no need to make an immediate referral
- Ensuring that all such records are kept confidentially, securely and are separate from pupil records
- Ensuring that an indication of further record-keeping is marked on the pupil records
- Ensuring that any pupil currently on the Child Protection register who is absent without explanation for any significant period of time is referred to Social Services
- Reporting to the ISA in Darlington, within one month of leaving the School, any person whose services are no longer used because he or she is considered unsuitable to work with children
- Involving external agencies when dealing with abuse by one or more pupils against another pupil. This would occur when the Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding Children, Mr Jonathan Jenkins, feels that the School's Rewards and Sanctions Policy is not adequate

The role of the Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding Children (DSP)

Once an incident has been reported, the Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding Children refers the disclosure to the Child Protection Duty Team at Social Services. Any disclosure or suspicion of abuse will be reported to social services within 24 hours.

Tel 0207 641 7560 (Borough of Westminster)

If the pupil is already known to Social Services, the previously allocated Social Worker or the named team with responsibility should be contacted.

A CAF form should be sent with the Child Protection Front sheet (if required) within 48 hours of your telephone referral.

If the DSP cannot reach the Child Protection Duty Team he should contact the (Borough of Westminster) Emergency Duty Team.

Tel 020 7641 6000

The referral will require details of

- The reason for referral
- The pupil, including name, address, date of birth, etc.
- Any other agencies involved
- The nature of the concerns
- Any urgent action required to ensure that the young person is safe from harm
- Any need for medical attention or hospital referral
- Whether the pupil's parent/carer is aware of the referral
- Any action required to gain parental consent

The Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding Children will record the referral in the CP file and sign, date and record the name of the person they spoke to at Social Services.

Schools have no legal right to stop the pupil from going home at the end of the School day, so it is vital that referrals are made as early as possible, especially if it is believed that the pupil is not safe going home.

It is particularly important that any concerns about safeguarding and protecting a pupil is raised at as early a stage as possible to ensure that action can be taken prior to any School holiday breaks. This will enable checks to be made that systems are in place and relevant staff to attend any strategy meetings, conferences or to provide reports.

Supporting children

We recognise that a child who is abused or witnesses violence may find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self-worth. He may also feel helpless, humiliated, and may attribute blame to himself. The School may provide the only stability in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm.

Research suggests that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal, to aggressive or withdrawn.

Our School will support all pupils by

- Encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness whilst not condoning aggression or bullying
- Promoting a caring, safe and positive environment within the School
- Liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children
- Notifying Social Services as soon as there is a significant concern
- Providing continuing support to a pupil who leaves the School, about whom there have been concerns, by ensuring that appropriate information is forwarded under confidential cover to the pupil's new School

Confidentiality

- All matters relating to Safeguarding Children and Child Protection are confidential
- The Head Master/Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding Children will disclose any information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need-to-know basis only
- All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children
- All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets
- Safeguarding Children and Child Protection information must be sent through a secure system, internal email or fax/internal post

Giving support to staff (including supply staff)

A member of staff involved with a child who has suffered harm, or appears to be likely to suffer harm, may find the situation stressful and upsetting.

The School will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding Children and to seek further support as appropriate.

Guidance to Staff

Social Contact

Staff should not establish or seek to establish social contact with pupils for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. Even if a young person seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the member of staff should exercise her/his professional judgement in making a response and be aware that such social contact could be misconstrued. Staff should not give their personal details such as home/mobile phone number, home or e-mail address to pupils unless the need to do so is agreed with senior management.

Physical Contact

There are occasions when it is entirely appropriate and proper for staff to have physical contact with pupils, but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their professional role.

When physical contact is made with pupils this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate given their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. Appropriate physical contact in schools may occur most often with younger pupils. It is not possible to be specific about the appropriateness of each physical contact, since an action that is appropriate with one child in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another, or with a different child. Staff should, therefore, use their professional judgement at all times.

Where feasible, staff should seek the child's permission before initiating contact. Staff should listen, observe and take note of the child's reaction or feelings and – so far as is possible – use a level of contact which is acceptable to the child for the minimum time necessary.

Extra caution may be required where it is known that a child has suffered previous abuse or neglect. In the child's view, physical contact might be associated with such experiences and lead to staff being vulnerable to allegations of abuse. It is recognised that many such children are extremely needy and seek out inappropriate physical contact. In such circumstances staff should deter the child sensitively by helping them to understand the importance of personal boundaries.

The general culture of 'limited touch' should be adapted, where appropriate, to the individual requirements of each child.

Music and games staff

Some staff – for example, those who teach PE and games, or who offer music tuition – will, on occasions, have to initiate physical contact with pupils so that they can perform a task safely, to demonstrate the use of a particular piece of equipment/instrument or to assist them with an exercise. This should be done with the pupil's agreement.

Contact under these circumstances should be for the minimum time necessary to complete the activity and take place in an open and publicised environment. Staff

should remain sensitive to any discomfort expressed verbally or non-verbally by the child.

Showers and changing

Young people are entitled to respect and privacy when changing clothes or taking a shower. However, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard young people, satisfy health and safety considerations and ensure that bullying or teasing does not occur. This supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the young people concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

Staff therefore need to be vigilant about their own behaviour, ensure they follow agreed guidelines and be mindful of the needs of the pupils. Physical contact should never be secretive, or for the gratification of the adult, or represent a misuse of authority. If a member of staff believes that an action could be misinterpreted, the incident and circumstances should be reported as soon as possible to Mr Jonathan Jenkins, Head of Pastoral Care and Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding Children and, if appropriate, a copy placed on the child's file.

Allegations against the Head Master, all staff and any volunteers

A pupil may make an allegation against the Head Master, any member of staff or a volunteer at the School. In such a case, the member of staff who receives the allegation should listen, record the details and explain that they will speak to either the DSP or the Head Master immediately as outlined below:

- If an allegation concerning the Head Master is made to a member of staff, that member of staff must immediately contact the DSP without notifying the Head Master first. The DSP will then contact the Chair of Governors.
- If an allegation concerning another member of staff is made to a member of staff, the Head Master and DSP should be contacted. If the Head Master is absent, any staff allegation must go to the Chair of Governors as well as the DSP.
- If an allegation concerning the DSP is made, the Head Master or Deputy DSP (Robert O'Brien) should be contacted.

The DSP or the Head Master or Chair of Governors will discuss the content of the allegation with the Officer for Safeguarding and Child Protection in the Local Authority, or the NSO (nominated senior officer) or the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer).

The School will follow the LA procedures for managing allegations against staff, a copy of which will be readily available from the Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding Children.

Email jjenkins@choirschool.com

Safer Recruitment

The Governors, all members of staff, including the Head Master, supply staff and volunteers, follow safer recruitment procedures in accordance with the Criminal Records Bureau and Standard 4 of the Independent School Standards Regulations.

New staff employed on a permanent basis by the School will undergo a new CRB check. The School will check that any agency supplying staff to the School, or any agency that comes into contact with children, carries out appropriate checks

When pupils are being looked after by the staff of another organisation (i.e. outward bound instructors) the School needs to obtain assurance that appropriate checks have been applied to these staff

Whistle-blowing

The School's Policy on whistle-blowing is set out in a separate policy in the staff handbook. In brief:

- We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff do not do so
- All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the attitude or actions of colleagues
- A copy of the LA Policy will be made available in School
- Please refer to the School's full Whistle-blowing Policy in the staff handbook

Physical Intervention

The School's policy on physical intervention by staff is that:

- The School acknowledges that physical intervention by a member of staff must always be a last resort, and that the only the minimum required force may used, to prevent injury to another person
- We understand that physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child must be reported, and may need to be considered under safeguarding children, Child Protection or disciplinary procedures

Bullying

Bullying is a Safeguarding Children and Child Protection issue.

The School's Anti-Bullying Policy is published in the staff and parent handbooks and gives full details of procedures to follow if an allegation of bullying is made. Bullying may be physical, verbal or written in form, and may include bullying on the internet or by mobile phone.

Domestic Violence

Any pupil who has been witness to, or involved in, incidents of domestic violence is likely to have suffered some degree of trauma. He may also be at risk of emotional damage and/ or physical injury.

Should a pupil at the School be in such a situation we will make ourselves aware of his particular needs and set appropriate behaviour management strategies in conjunction with parents, carers, the SENCO at the School, and the Head of Boarding should the pupil be a boarding chorister.

Racist Incidents

The School's Rewards and Sanctions Policy acknowledges that racist incidents, whether isolated or repeated, may also need to be considered under Safeguarding Children and Child Protection procedures.

Prevention

WCCS plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to all pupils in its care. The School community will therefore

- Establish and maintain an effective, clear system of reporting concerns within School
- Establish and maintain clear, effective communication systems with all parents that involve them in the safeguarding and welfare of their children
- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are always listened to
- Ensure that all children know there is an adult in the School whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty
- Include in the curriculum opportunities for PSHCE which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm and to know to whom they should turn for help
- Ensure that pupils do not have access to internet chat sites at School and that they know of the dangers inherent in these sites
- Make sure staff are aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse listed in Appendix I below

Health & safety

Our Health & Safety Policy (in this handbook) reflects the School's concern for the safety and welfare of our pupils, whether on-site or off-site on trips or visits.

Appendix I

Child Abuse – signs and symptoms

Although these signs do not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused, they may help adults recognise that something is wrong. The possibility of abuse should be investigated if a child shows a number of these symptoms, or any of them to a marked degree.

Sexual abuse

- Being overly affectionate or knowledgeable in a sexual way inappropriate to the child's age
- Medical problems such as chronic itching, pain in the genitals, venereal diseases
- Other extreme reactions, such as depression, self-mutilation, suicide attempts, running away, overdoses, anorexia
- Personality changes such as becoming insecure or clinging
- Regressing to younger behaviour patterns such as thumb sucking or bringing out discarded cuddly toys
- Sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating
- Being isolated or withdrawn
- Inability to concentrate
- Lack of trust or fear of someone they know well, such as not wanting to be alone with a babysitter or child minder
- Starting to wet again, day or night/nightmares
- Become worried about clothing being removed
- Suddenly drawing sexually explicit pictures
- Trying to be 'ultra-good' or perfect; overreacting to criticism

Physical abuse

- Unexplained recurrent injuries or burns
- Improbable excuses or refusal to explain injuries
- Wearing clothes to cover injuries, even in hot weather
- Refusal to undress for gym
- Bald patches
- Chronic running away
- Fear of medical help or examination
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Aggression towards others
- Fear of physical contact – shrinking back if touched
- Admitting that they are punished, but the punishment is excessive (such as a child being beaten every night to 'make him study')
- Fear of suspected abuser being contacted

Emotional abuse

- Physical, mental and emotional development lags
- Sudden speech disorders
- Continual self-depreciation ('I'm stupid, ugly, worthless, etc')
- Overreaction to mistakes
- Extreme fear of any new situation
- Inappropriate response to pain ('I deserve this')
- Neurotic behaviour (rocking, hair twisting, self-mutilation)

- Extremes of passivity or aggression

Neglect

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Poor state of clothing
- Emaciation
- Untreated medical problems
- No social relationships
- Compulsive scavenging
- Destructive tendencies

A child may be subjected to a combination of different kinds of abuse. It is also possible that a child may show no outward signs and hide what is happening from everyone.

Person Responsible: Jonathan Jenkins

Review date: July 2012