

Marymount International School London

Child Protection Policy

1 Policy statement

- 1.1 This policy has been authorised by the Governors, is addressed to all members of staff and volunteers and is available to parents on request. It applies wherever staff or volunteers are working with pupils even where this is away from the School, for example at an activity centre or on an educational visit.
- 1.2 Every pupil should feel safe and protected from any form of abuse which, in this policy, means any kind of neglect, non-accidental physical injury, sexual exploitation or emotional ill-treatment.
- 1.3 Marymount International School (**School**) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The School will take all reasonable measures to:
 - ensure that we practise safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers (including staff employed by another organisation) to work with children and young people in accordance with regulations and guidance given in the Department for Children Schools and Families (**DCSF**) publication “*Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education*” and the Department of Health “*National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools*”;
 - ensure that we carry out all necessary checks on the suitability of people who serve on the School's governing body in accordance with regulations and guidance given in the DCFS publication “*Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education*” and the Department of Health “*National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools*”;
 - ensure that where the School ceases to use the services of any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) because that person was considered unsuitable to work with, a prompt and detailed report is made to the DCSF;
 - follow the local inter-agency procedures of the Royal Borough of Kingston, Local Safeguarding Children's Board (**KLSCB**);
 - protect each pupil from any form of abuse, whether from an adult or another pupil;
 - be alert to signs of abuse both in the School and from outside;
 - deal appropriately with every suspicion or complaint of abuse;
 - design and operate procedures which promote this policy;
 - design and operate procedures which, so far as possible, ensure that teachers and others who are innocent are not prejudiced by false allegations;
 - support children who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan;
 - be alert to the medical needs of children with medical conditions;
 - operate robust and sensible health & safety procedures;
 - take all practicable steps to ensure that School premises are as secure as circumstances permit;

- operate clear and supportive policies on drugs, alcohol and substance misuse;
- consider and develop procedures to deal with any other safeguarding issues which may be specific to individual children in our schools or in our local area;
- have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills in accordance with section 157 Education Act 2002 and associated regulations.

1.4 Every complaint or suspicion of abuse from within or outside the School will be investigated and in all proper circumstances will be referred to an external agency such as the Royal Borough of Kingston Learning & Children's Services (**KLCS**), the child protection unit of the police (**CPU**) or the NSPCC. In each case, the matter should be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (**LADO**), Royal Borough of Kingston, Dr Ming Zhang (Telephone 020 8547 5243).

2 The Designated Person

2.1 The School has appointed a senior member of staff with the necessary status and authority (**Designated Person**) to be responsible for matters relating to child protection and welfare. The main responsibilities of the Designated Person are:

- to be the first point of contact for parents, pupils, teaching and non-teaching staff and external agencies in all matters of child protection;
- to co-ordinate the child protection procedures in the School;
- to maintain an ongoing training programme for all School employees;
- to monitor the keeping, confidentiality and storage of records in relation to child protection;
- to liaise with the Designated Person responsible for Child Protection appointed by the KLCS (Local Authority Designated Officer).

2.2 The Designated Person for the entire School site is Mrs Xochitl Hunt, College/University Counsellor who may be contacted on 020 8329 4267. She will:

- advise and act upon all suspicion, belief and evidence of abuse reported to [him/her];
- keep the Headmistress informed of all actions unless the Headmistress is the subject of a complaint. In this situation, the Designated Person should consult with Sister Rosamond Blanchet, Chair of Governors;
- liaise with the KLCS and other agencies on behalf of the School.

2.3 If the Designated Person is unavailable or is herself the subject of a complaint, her duties will be carried out by the Headmistress or other Deputy, who has received appropriate training which is updated every two years.

All staff will receive Child Protection training which is updated every two years and part time and voluntary staff who work with children are made aware of the schools arrangements for child protection .

2.4 The Designated Person has undertaken child protection training and training in inter-agency working and will attend refresher training at two yearly intervals.

2.5 The Headmistress ensures that there are sufficient resources and time allocated to allow the Designated Person to properly discharge her responsibilities.

3 Signs of abuse

3.1 Possible signs of abuse include (but are not limited to):

- the pupil says she has been abused or asks a question which gives rise to that inference;
- there is no reasonable or consistent explanation for a pupil's injury; the injury is unusual in kind or location; there have been a number of injuries; there is a pattern to the injuries;
- the pupil's behaviour stands out from the group as either being extreme model behaviour or extremely challenging behaviour; or there is a sudden change in the pupil's behaviour;
- the pupil asks to drop subjects with a particular teacher and seems reluctant to discuss the reasons;
- the pupil's development is delayed;
- the pupil loses or gains weight;
- the pupil appears neglected, e.g. dirty, hungry, inadequately clothed;
- the pupil is reluctant to go home, or has been openly rejected by her parents or carers.

4 Duty of employees, Governors and volunteers

4.1 Every employee and Governor of the School as well as every volunteer who assists the School are under a general legal duty:

- to protect children from abuse;
- to be aware of the School's child protection procedures and to follow them;
- to know how to access and implement the procedures, independently if necessary;
- to keep a sufficient record of any significant complaint, conversation or event;
- to report any matters of concern to the Designated Person.

5 Procedures

5.1 **Initial complaint:** A member of staff suspecting or hearing a complaint of abuse:

- must listen carefully to the child and keep an open mind. Staff should not take a decision as to whether or not the abuse has taken place;
- must not ask leading questions, that is, a question which suggests its own answer;
- must reassure the child but not give a guarantee of absolute confidentiality. The member of staff should explain that they need to pass the information to the Designated Person who will ensure that the correct action is taken;
- must keep a brief but sufficient written record of the conversation. The record should include the date, time and place of the conversation and the essence of what was said and done by whom and in whose presence. The record should be signed by the person making it and should use names, not initials. The record must be kept securely and handed to the Designated Person.

5.2 **Preserving evidence:** All evidence, (for example, scribbled notes, mobile phones containing text messages, clothing, computers), must be safeguarded and preserved.

5.3 **Reporting:** All suspicion or complaints of abuse must be reported to the Designated Person, or if the complaint involves the Designated Person, to the Headmistress or other Deputy.

Specifically, staff are required to report any concern or allegation about school or home practices or the behaviour of colleagues which are likely to put pupils at risk of abuse. In doing so, the reporting staff member is provided with immunity from retribution or disciplinary action for 'whistleblowing' in good faith [see Whistleblowing Policy and Procedures in Staff Handbook].

5.4 **Action by the Designated Person:** The action to be taken will take into account:

- the local inter-agency procedures of the Royal Borough of Kingston Safeguarding Children's Board (KSCB).
- the nature and seriousness of the suspicion or complaint. A complaint involving a serious criminal offence will always be referred to the KCSB or the police without further investigation within the School;
- the wishes of the pupil who has complained, provided that the pupil is of sufficient understanding and maturity and properly informed. However, there may be times when the situation is so serious that decisions may need to be taken, after all appropriate consultation, that override a pupil's wishes;
- the wishes of the complainant's parents, provided they have no interest which is in conflict with the pupil's best interests and that they are properly informed. Again, it may be necessary, after all appropriate consultation, to override parental wishes in some circumstances. If the Designated Person is concerned that disclosing information to parents would put a child at risk, he or she will take further advice from the relevant professionals before making a decision to disclose;
- duties of confidentiality, so far as applicable;
- the lawful rights and interests of the School community as a whole including its employees and its insurers;
- if there is room for doubt as to whether a referral should be made, the Designated Person may consult with the Local Authority Designated Officer or other appropriate professionals on a no names basis without identifying the family. However, as soon as sufficient concern exists that a child may be at risk of significant harm, a referral will be made without delay. If the initial referral is made by telephone, the Designated Person will confirm the referral in writing to KSCBS within 24 hours. If no response or acknowledgment is received within three working days, the Designated Person will contact KLCS again.

5.5 **Referral guidelines:** A referral to the KSCB or police will not normally be made where:

- the complaint does not involve a serious criminal offence; and
- a referral would be contrary to the wishes of a pupil complainant who is of sufficient maturity and understanding and properly informed, and contrary also to the wishes of the complainant's parents; and
- the case is one that can be satisfactorily investigated and dealt with under the School's internal procedures, the parents being kept fully informed, as appropriate.

However, if during the course of the internal procedures, it appears that the situation is more serious, the Designated Person will again consider whether a referral should be made in

accordance with section 5.4 above. The police will be called wherever a child is considered to be in a position of immediate risk.

- 5.6 **External agencies:** Whether or not the School decides to refer a particular complaint to the SSD or the police, the parents and pupil will be informed in writing of their right to make their own complaint or referral to the KSCB or the Child Protection Unit of the police and will be provided with contact names, addresses and telephone numbers, as appropriate.
- 5.7 **Allegations against staff:** The School has procedures for dealing with allegations against staff (and volunteers who work with children) that aim to strike a balance between the need to protect children from abuse and the need to protect staff and volunteers from false or unfounded allegations. These procedures follow the guidance in chapter 5 of *Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education*.

Suspension will not be an automatic response to an allegation. Full consideration will be given to all the options, subject to the need to ensure:

- the safety and welfare of the pupils or pupil concerned; and
- the need for a full and fair investigation.

If a member of boarding staff is suspended pending a child protection investigation, arrangements will be made for alternative accommodation away from children.

Where an allegation or complaint is made against the Headmistress, the Designated Person will report to and consult with the Chair of Governors, or in her absence her nominated Governor.

The School will report to 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; the ISA commenced operation on 20 January 2009 and its address for referrals is PO Box 181, Darlington DL1 9FA (tel: 0300 123 1111). The School also has a legal duty to respond to requests from the ISA for information already held about any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student).

- 5.8 Detailed guidance is given to staff 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).
- 5.9 **All staff receive guidance on safer working practices for the safeguarding of children during their induction. Allegations against pupils:** A pupil or pupils against whom an allegation of abuse has been made may be suspended from the School during the investigation and the School's policy on behaviour, discipline and sanctions will apply.
- 5.10 **Suspected harm from outside the School:** A member of staff who suspects that a pupil is suffering harm from outside the School should seek information from the child with tact and sympathy using "open" and not leading questions. A sufficient record should be made of the conversation (as outlined in 5.1 above) and if the member of staff continues to be concerned he or she should refer the matter to the Designated Person. In this situation, the child will be protected under the normal guidelines of the School's Child Protection Policy.
- 5.11 Senior pupils given positions of responsibility over other pupils are briefed on appropriate action to take should they receive any allegations of abuse.

- 5.12 Missing Persons: there is a Missing Persons procedure, known to staff and used in practice, for searching for and, if necessary reporting, any boarder or day pupil missing from school (and recording any incident, the action taken and the reasons given by the pupil for being missing).
- 5.13 The Designated Person will monitor the operation of this policy and its procedures and make an annual report to the Governors.
- 5.14 The LADO will undertake an annual review of this policy.
- 5.15 Governors will undertake an annual review of this policy and how their duties under it have been discharged.
- 5.16 The Governors will ensure that any deficiencies or weaknesses in regard to child protection arrangements are remedied without delay;

6 Contact numbers

- 6.1 The telephone numbers of the Royal Borough of Kingston Learning and Children's Services are as follows:

Safeguarding Team	020 8547 6587
LADO	020 8547 5243 (allegations against staff)
Out of Hour Services	020 8770 5000

- 6.2 The following telephone numbers may be useful for pupils:

Learning & Children's Services Safeguarding Team	
	020 8547 6587
Childline	0800 1111
NSPCC	0808 800 5000
OfSTED Helpline	08456 404 040