



BRUTON SCHOOL

FOR GIRLS

Safeguarding Children

Bruton School for Girls fully recognises its responsibilities for safeguarding children throughout the school including the Early Years Foundation Stage (that is, the Nursery and Reception class). The Deputy Head (Boarding & Welfare) is the designated Safeguarding (Child Protection) Lead.

Our policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the School. There are five main elements to our policy:

- Ensuring we practise safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children.
- Raising awareness of safeguarding issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe.
- Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
- Supporting pupils who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan.
- Establishing a safe environment in which all children can learn and develop.¹

We recognise that because of the day to day contact with children, school staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. The School will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the School whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Include opportunities in the PSHE curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.²

It is also alert to its obligations articulated in ‘Safeguarding Children in Education’ (Sept 2004)

- To take all reasonable measures to ensure that risks of harm to children’s welfare are minimised.
- To take all appropriate actions to address concerns about the welfare of a child, or children, working in full partnership with local agencies.

Obligations identified in the 2004 guidance are considered in a range of policies in place at the School.

¹ Equal Opportunities Statement

² ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ 2006

Pupil health and safety is safeguarded in the School Health and Safety Policy, and the standing Health and Safety Committee which meets termly;

The safeguarding of those exposed to bullying is addressed in the School Counter Bullying Policy;

Students' medical well-being is safeguarded in the School's Medical Centre policies;

The availability of First Aid to students is promoted by the School's policy of training teaching staff to deliver First Aid in the work place and by a range of protocols including policies on Asthma and Anaphylaxis;

The security of students is safeguarded by the School Security Policy;

Students are safeguarded from drugs and substance misuse by the School's Abuse of Substances Policy and the Drugs Education currently being delivered within the PSHE programme.

We will follow the procedures set out by the Somerset Local Safeguarding Children Board and take account of guidance issued by the Department for Education (formerly DCSF and DfES):

- Ensure we have a designated senior person for child protection ("Safeguarding (Child Protection) Lead") who has received appropriate training and support for this role, currently the Deputy Head (Boarding & Welfare). This role includes responsibility for EYFS.
- Ensure we have a Deputy Safeguarding (Child Protection) Lead who has received appropriate training and support for this role, currently the Head of Sunny Hill Preparatory School.
- Ensure we have a nominated governor responsible for child protection, currently the Chairman of Governors.
- Ensure every member of staff (including temporary and supply staff and volunteers) and governing body knows the name of the designated senior person responsible for safeguarding children and their role.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated senior person responsible for safeguarding children.
- Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the School and staff for child protection by setting out its obligations in the School information packs and website.
- Notify Children's Services if there is an unexplained absence of more than 24 hours of a pupil who is on the child protection register.
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences.
- Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
- Ensure all records are kept securely, separate from the main pupil file, and in locked locations.
- Develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.
- Ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed.¹

We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The School may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at School, their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. The School will endeavour to support the pupil through:

- The content of the curriculum.

¹ Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (2007)

- The School ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued.
- The School behaviour policy which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the School. The School will ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
- Liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as Children's Services, Child and Adult Mental Health Service, education welfare service and educational psychology service.
- Ensuring that, where a pupil on the child protection register leaves, their information is transferred to the new School immediately and that the child's Social Worker is informed.

Responsibilities

The Governors: The legal responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children under the Education Act 2002 lies with School Governors. The Governors discuss, review and endorse the School's Safeguarding Children Policy, and the Headmaster's report of its working, annually and ensure that any deficiencies or weaknesses are remedied without delay.

The Headmaster has a legal duty to ensure that procedures exist to ensure the proper protection of children at the School and to deal efficiently with suspicions of abuse either at home or in the School.

The Safeguarding (Child Protection) Lead ('Designated Person') – The Deputy Head (Boarding and Welfare) will:

- Be responsible for drafting the School's safeguarding children policy and for presenting it for discussion by the SMT and endorsement by the Head and Governors.
- Be responsible for publishing appropriate details of the policy in information documents for staff, pupils and parents, and for ensuring that the relevant procedures are presented to the Bursar in order to inform the School's support staff.
- Be responsible for the day-to-day management of the policy and associated procedures.
- Act as the School's e-safety co-ordinator and carry out the routine monitoring of computer use by pupils and staff, following up as required.
- Act as a source of advice and coordinate action with the School over suspected cases of abuse.
- Liaise with all relevant agencies involved in the protection of children building a good working relationship with colleagues from these agencies.
- Be responsible for action in cases of suspected child abuse, as the first person to whom suspicions are reported by staff, and as the person who discusses the situation with the relevant agencies
- Liaise with the Head, in accordance with NEOST¹ and 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' procedures, when alerted to possible or actual child abuse or an allegation against a member of staff.
- Have received regular training (updated every 2 years) in how to identify abuse and know when it is appropriate to refer a case. She will have a working knowledge of NEOST procedures, and of how Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) operates.
- Will attend and contribute to a child protection case conference when required.
- Keep detailed accurate secure written records of concerns about (or referrals upon) child protection issues.
- Ensure the key issues (or new developments) in the field of child protection are communicated promptly to staff employed at Bruton School for Girls, and make sure that all staff have had training in safeguarding children, appropriate to their role in the School.
- Provide induction training for all newly appointed staff and volunteers.

¹ National Employers Organisation for School Teachers (NEOST/Teacher Unions), 'Guidelines on Practice and Procedure' for staff facing an allegation of abuse. Sept 2002. Paper copy lodged with DH (B & W)

- Liaise with and support families if there is concern that their child has been abused or bullied.
- Ensure that the School's safeguarding children policy is updated and reviewed annually and work with the Head and SMT regarding this.

The Deputy Safeguarding (Child Protection) Lead – the Head of Sunny Hill Preparatory School will:

- Have received appropriate regular training
- Assist and deputise for the Safeguarding (Child Protection) Lead as appropriate

Housemistresses will:

- Put into practice, within their houses, methods for encouraging pupils to tell someone if they are being abused physically, emotionally, sexually or by neglect.

Teaching Staff will:

- Know the School's Safeguarding Children Policy and procedures
- Deal with suspected or actual abuse according to the policy
- Receive regular training in safeguarding children updates every three years

The Bursar will:

- Be responsible for ensuring that the School's support staff are alert to the signs of possible abuse and know what they have to do if they have any suspicions.

Support Staff will:

- Know the procedure they must follow if they become alert to suspected or actual child abuse
- Follow the procedure in cases of possible or actual abuse
- Receive regular training in safeguarding children updates every three years.

Pupils should:

- Be issued with a copy of the Policy together with appropriate guidelines.
- Inform a trusted person within the School if they are being abused physically, emotionally, sexually, or by neglect, or if they are aware of such abuse
- Reject the idea that disclosing abuse of any form is 'telling tales'.

Parents should:

- Be issued with a copy of the Policy together with appropriate guidelines.
- Be aware of the School's Safeguarding Children Policy.
- Contact the Deputy Head if they suspect that their daughter is being abused physically, emotionally, sexually or by neglect.

Whistle-blowing

Research indicates that adults who target children for abuse frequently seek out jobs and positions that bring them into close contact with children. Bruton School for Girls is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child and expects the highest possible standards of openness. It recognizes that the decision to report a concern can be difficult, but commends to its employees their moral and legal duties to raise any concerns they develop. All concerns will be treated confidentially and the School will make every effort not to reveal the identity of a 'whistleblower' (if an expression of concern eventually results in a prosecution the whistleblower may be required to give evidence). Furthermore, if a suspicion is voiced in good faith but not confirmed in ensuing investigations, no action

will be taken against the whistleblower. Employees should be assured that the School will not tolerate harassment or victimisation of those who report a concern.

Safeguarding Children in the Curriculum

Bruton School for Girls seeks to raise awareness of safeguarding issues through safety education as part of the PSHE programme.

In this programme, pupils will be taught to:

- Recognise the range of behaviours (physical, emotional, sexual or neglectful) that can constitute 'abuse'.
- Recognise the risks present in particular situations and to decide how to behave responsibly in that context.
- Distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable physical contact.
- Develop effective ways of resisting pressures and to decide when and where to seek help if they are being physically, emotionally or sexually pressurised.
- Use assertiveness techniques to resist abusive pressures.
- Use ICT (including mobile telephones, emailing and social networking sites) responsibly and with due regard to their personal safety.

External Agencies

The Office for Standards in Education (OfStEd) operates a helpline for any person with concerns or queries relating to safeguarding issues. The telephone number is: 08456 404045.

Other agencies which may be consulted include:

Somerset County Council Children's Services department
Somerset Local Safeguarding Children Board
Department for Children, Schools and Families

Appendix 1

Safeguarding Children: Procedures for Members of Staff

The Safeguarding (Child Protection) Lead is responsible for safeguarding children procedures. Any reports of suspicion of child abuse should go directly to her. She decides when to report this to the appropriate agencies, if at all. Although there is no legal duty on schools to report suspected abuse, the Safeguarding (Child Protection) Lead would usually do so as a matter of good practice.

All staff and sixth form students will be given guidance in good practice in Safeguarding Children, and issued with prompt cards.

This is a complex issue that requires fine judgement, and it is important to keep a sense of proportion. Some 'suspicious' circumstances are entirely innocent.

However, we must not turn a blind eye to any symptom. It is important not to be a victim of prejudices. Child abuse happens in all strata of society and at all ages. The perpetrator may be adult or another young person. Children have a right to be safe. Remember that making a report of suspected abuse can be the first step in preventing abuse escalating and in protecting the child from harm.

Some, such as PE staff, are more likely than others to see signs of abuse; we all have a responsibility to guard our students by noting their general physical and mental health. In practice, therefore, you might well have confided some early observations to the child's Tutor/Head of Hall/Sister, but discretion is of the utmost importance at every point once you begin to feel uneasy.

Types of Abuse (The italics are some signs of such abuse but they are neither conclusive nor exhaustive.)

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| Physical | deliberate injury or infliction of physical suffering <i>unusual bruises especially symmetrical ones; scalding; burns; bites; scars</i> |
| Sexual | sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent <i>inappropriate knowledge/language; drug abuse; self mutilation; hostility to men or women</i> |
| Emotional | persistent or severe emotional ill treatment likely to have an adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of the child <i>apathy; low self esteem; attention seeking behaviour; too keen to please</i> |
| 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 <i>neglected appearance; voracious appetite; diarrhoea; unresponsiveness; continuously left unattended by parents</i> |

Further information is available at www.somerset safeguarding children board.org.uk

Signs of abuse may be obvious and sudden or a pattern of several small signs observed over a period of time. In general, be alert to behaviour unusual to age, a lack of interest, especially if sudden, isolation or introversion. Such observation should be relayed to the Sister or Safeguarding (Child Protection) Lead as part of the usual pastoral care for our students.

If your suspicions develop

- treat the matter seriously
- make tentative enquiries of her (there could be a very innocent explanation)
- seek advice if in doubt
- tell only those who need to know (usually the Head of Hall/Sister/Deputy Head/Headmaster)
- keep a careful watch on the child/situation
- keep an accurate and dated record on what you have observed and done

If you are told of ill treatment

React to what you are told seriously and be reassuring that it was right to tell you. Make it clear you will have to inform someone else.

If a child makes a disclosure to you

Always stop and listen straight away to someone who wants to tell you about incidents or suspicions of abuse. Statistics suggest that they may try up to ten times before they are heard. For a member of staff to leave unreported known or suspected abuse will be regarded as serious misconduct and could leave that member of staff open to disciplinary action.

If you can, write brief notes of what they are telling you while they are speaking (these may help later if you have to remember exactly what was said) – and keep your original notes, however rough and even if you wrote on the back of something else (it's what you wrote at the time that may be important later – not a tidier and improved version you wrote up afterwards!). If you don't have the means to write at the time, make notes of what was said as soon as possible afterwards. Don't forget to date and sign it.

Do not guarantee that you will keep what is said confidential or secret – if you are told about abuse you have a responsibility to tell the right people to get something done about it. If asked, explain that if you are going to be told something very important that needs to be sorted out, you will need to tell the people who can sort it out, but that you will only tell people who absolutely have to know, and not without the child's knowledge.

Don't ask leading questions that might give your own ideas of what might have happened (for example: 'did he do X to you') – just ask 'what do you want to tell me?' or 'is there anything else you want to say?'

Immediately tell the designated Safeguarding (Child Protection) Lead – do not tell other adults or young people what you have been told.

It is not your duty to investigate the matter. Under the Children Act 1989 Section 47 the Local Authority has a duty to make enquiries concerning suspicion of child abuse. The School would wish staff to co-operate in these investigations e.g. teachers can be asked to make assessments or to help a student express her wishes and feelings.

The Safeguarding (Child Protection) Lead will decide whether to refer the matter to the local social services department, and, if so action will be taken the same day.

Alleged Abuse of a Pupil by another Pupil

The alleged abuser may be suspended pending investigation in accordance with the School's Discipline and Countering Bullying policies.

Alleged Abuse by a Member of Staff

If an allegation is made, the appropriate procedures will be applied with common sense and judgement. The Head will be informed and the Safeguarding (Child Protection) Lead will conduct an immediate preliminary investigation to establish whether the abuse could have taken place. She will take a signed statement from the child. The Head will consult a Legal Adviser.

If the abuse cannot have taken place, the Head will contact the parents to discuss the accusation and its impossibility. He may inform the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) if the parents do not accept this.

If the allegation seems to rest on a misinterpretation, for example of a gesture of comfort, the Child Protection Lead will contact the parents to discuss the accusation and try to resolve the matter. If the parents accept this view, she will counsel or warn the member of staff on future conduct. If the parents refuse this view, she may report the incident to the LSCB.

If it is impossible to establish that the abuse could not have taken place, the Child Protection Lead will report the matter to the LSCB where the allegation concerns sexual abuse or physical assault. In other cases, she may report the matter to the LSCB. In either case, she will recommend to the Head whether or not to suspend the member of staff pending the investigation.

Suspension would be on full pay and does not imply guilt. The Head would carry out investigations as required to determine whether or not to instigate disciplinary procedures.

Allegations found to be malicious will be removed from personnel records. Records will be kept of all other allegations but any that are not substantiated, are unfounded or malicious will not be referred to in future employer references.

Reporting of Allegations

All allegations relating to safeguarding children concerns within the School will be investigated according to NEOST and 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' guidelines. The Safeguarding (Child Protection) Lead is trained in dealing with such allegations. All allegations will be placed on file.

Where a member of staff, the child's family or any other person is considered to present a risk to a child's wellbeing, the allegation or serious concern will be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer within 24 hours. If a child's safety is at risk, the police will be informed.

If there is an allegation of serious harm or abuse by anyone living, working, or looking after children on the premises, OfStEd will also be informed of the allegation and action taken by the School, as soon as possible and at the latest within 14 days.

If any person leaves the School or whose services are no longer used because he or she is considered unsuitable to work with children, this will be reported to the Independent Safeguarding Authority. The report will include as much evidence concerning their case as possible. Failure to do so constitutes an offence and the School may be removed from the DfE Register of Independent Schools. [Contact details for ISA: Box 181, Darlington, DL1 9FA; 0300 123 1111.]

Appendix 2

Guidelines for Members of Staff on Good Safeguarding of Children

We all want to maintain the very good relationships that exist between staff and students in this school.

However, there are certain situations which could allow allegations of abuse to be made. You need to consider these and make up your own mind on how to conduct yourself – in the same way you would make a risk assessment for health and safety purposes.

1. Remember that allegations of sexual abuse apply to both men and women and other young people.
2. By adhering to the School policy you are often doing the best you can to safeguard yourself: for example, School procedure requires a female member of staff to accompany a male colleague on trips for his safety and comfort and well as theirs.
3. If lessons or discussions on a one-to-one basis cause you concern, you could arrange to conduct them in a busy area of the School, to inform a colleague, to leave the door open, to delegate this task if necessary.
4. It could be unwise to offer a lift to a girl on her own. It would be sensible for male staff to avoid this circumstance altogether.
5. It is normal to offer comfort in times of distress, but gestures of comfort and friendly contact can be misinterpreted. In some cases, with some children, this might be unwise; you might decide it is unwise in principle.
6. Personal communication with a pupil can be misinterpreted. Members of staff should not e-mail, message or text individuals except on professional matters. In the case of emails, copy the message explicitly to a colleague and/or the pupil's parent. Members of staff should not accept or issue invitations from/to pupils to become 'friends' on a social networking site.
7. Physical abuse in a school context tends to focus on two areas: physical assault and restraint. Corporal punishment is forbidden and would result in a disciplinary procedure; if you feel your temper rising, it is better to detach yourself by sending or letting the pupil go out. You can follow it up later with the help of colleagues. It may be necessary to restrain a pupil for their own safety. Refer to School policy on the Use of Restraint.
8. Victimisation is often cited as emotional abuse. If a pupil accuses you of this, it is wise to discuss it with your Line Manager. Always be alert to suggestions from other people that you are not being fair to a particular child.
9. It is best practice to inform Tutors, Heads of Department etc if the behaviour of a pupil is causing you concern, and this will not be regarded as a sign of professional weakness.
10. If you recognise that a child is so irritating to you that you are in danger of not being able to keep a professional detachment, discuss this with your Head of Department or a member of the Senior Management Team.