



## Child Protection Policy

### Section 1

St. Clare's, Oxford recognises its responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of Children. We seek to establish a safe and nurturing environment free from discrimination or bullying.

This policy applies to the whole of St. Clare's workforce including volunteers and governors.

We recognise that because of their day-to-day contact with children, College staff are ideally placed to observe the outward signs of abuse.

Staff will therefore:

1. Report any concerns to the Child Protection Officer – Tom Walsh.
2. Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, encouraged to talk and are listened to.
3. Ensure that students know that they can approach any adult in College if they are worried and they will receive a consistent supportive response.
4. Include in the curriculum opportunities for students to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

St. Clare's undertakes to:

1. follow the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board (OSCB) procedures in all cases of abuse, or suspected abuse and have regard to the statutory obligations placed on us by Section 175 or Section 157 of the 2002 Education Act.
2. ensure that we have a designated member of staff for child protection (and inform the Schools Safeguarding Team Administrator - Sue Grantham, telephone 01865 810515 when this changes).
3. ensure that the designated member of staff receives appropriate training (child protection and inter-agency work updated every 2 years) approved by the OSCB and that this training is disseminated to all others in the school in line with statutory requirements
4. ensure that all staff have training in child protection (updated every 3 years). Part-time and voluntary staff who work with children are to be made aware of the arrangements
5. ensure that all staff (volunteers etc), have been appropriately checked for their suitability through the Safe Recruitment procedures (see "Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education", January 2007).
6. ensure that all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to, and acting appropriately in, cases of abuse or suspected abuse
7. ensure that Senior Managers and Governors of St. Clare's, Oxford will undertake an annual review of the school's child protection policies and procedures and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged to ensure our College is aware of the most recent expectations and will act to remedy any deficiencies in our policies without delay



8. establish and maintain links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with enquiries of a child protection nature
9. keep accurate written records of concerns on students even where referral is not appropriate immediately
10. ensure that all child protection records are kept secure and confidential and separate from the main student file
11. ensure that all staff, governors, volunteers understand that there is a procedure to be followed in dealing with allegations made against teaching and non-teaching staff. This procedure must be followed on all occasions ('copies of Safeguarding Children in Education: Dealing with allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff' – November 2005, are available from the Child Protection Officer)
12. in cases where a member of boarding staff is suspended pending investigation of a child protection nature arrangements will be made for alternative accommodation away from students
13. report to the Secretary of State, via the DFCS, within one month of leaving the school any person (whether employed, contracted, volunteer or student) whose services are no longer used because he or she is considered unsuitable to work with children
14. ensure that this policy is reviewed annually and is in line with Oxfordshire's OSCB procedures

It is noted that the provisions of Section 175 and Section 157 of the Education Act, place a general duty on school to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in our care and, as such, staff will adhere to other related school policies, i.e. Behaviour Policy, Anti-bullying Policy, Health and Safety etc.

Explanation of this policy to all newly appointed staff is an essential part of the induction procedure at St Clare's, Oxford.

## **Section 2**

### **THE KEY POINTS TO FOLLOW IF YOU SUSPECT, OR ARE TOLD OF, ABUSE**

It is a requirement of the Children Act (1989) and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (2002) that adults looking after children (those under the age of 18) in St Clare's, Oxford should be aware of the risks of abuse (by adults or other young people), and take steps to reduce those risks. They should know what to do if they suspect that someone is being physically or sexually abused, or if someone tells them that this happening. This includes physical and sexual abuse that is occurring in College, or to a student of St Clare's at home or outside the College.

The following key points give a guide on what to do and not to do:

1. Always stop and listen straight away to someone who wants to tell you about incidents or suspicions of abuse.
2. 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.

3. Do not give a 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 (see below). 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.
4. Don't ask leading questions that might give your own ideas of what might have happened (e.g. "did he do X to you?") – just ask "what do you want to tell me?" or "is there anything else you want to say?"
5. Never attempt to carry out an investigation of suspected or alleged abuse by interviewing people etc – social services and police staff are the people trained to do this – you could cause more damage and spoil possible criminal proceedings.
6. Immediately tell the designated Child Protection Officer – the Vice Principal, (unless he/she is accused or suspected of abusing). Don't tell other adults or young people what you have been told. In case of unavailability of the Vice Principal, tell the Principal, other SMG member or Director of Short Courses (during the vacation course periods).
7. Discuss with the Child Protection Officer (the Vice Principal) whether any steps need to be taken to protect who has told you about the abuse. This may need to be discussed with the person who told you.
8. As soon as possible (and certainly within 24 hours) the Child Protection Officer will refer the matter to the Oxfordshire social services department (helped by your notes) on (01865) 815489 or (0800 833408 outside office hours). The referral will be made in writing or with written confirmation of a telephone referral and the contact name taken. They will set up any necessary investigations and will advise about correct procedures – that is their statutory job.
9. If someone has made an allegation about the Child Protection Officer YOU should immediately contact the Principal. If the Principal is absent, the allegation should be passed to the Chairman of Governors. If the allegation concerns the Principal, you should immediately inform the Chair of Governors, without notifying the Principal first. Staff should point out to the person reporting abuse (especially if it is a student) that action will be taken as a result of the allegation and steps must always be taken to ask them of any action they would like to be taken to protect them now they have made the allegation.
10. Never think abuse is impossible in your school or group, or that an accusation against someone you know well and trust is bound to be wrong.
11. Staff are required to report to the Child Protection Officer any concern or allegation about College practices or the behaviour of colleagues which are likely to put students at the risk of abuse or other serious harm. No disciplinary action will be taken against such staff who make such reports in good faith.

This policy is consistent with the requirements of Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (DfES January 2007) and the Oxfordshire Area Child Protection Committee procedures (2002).

Ofsted are responsible for boarding inspections under the National Minimum Boarding Standards. They may be contacted through [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)



## **Section 3**

### **DEFINITIONS OF CHILD ABUSE, VULNERABILITY FACTORS AND THE SIGNS OF ABUSE (from p11-14 Oxfordshire Child Protection Procedures 2002)**

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

#### **4.1 Definitions:**

##### **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as factitious illness by proxy, induced or fabricated illness or Munchausen syndrome by proxy.

##### **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 insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to 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 (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, 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/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or 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 appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

#### **4.2 Vulnerability Factors:**

(CAUTION: A finding should not be used in isolation but should be taken into account along with the history and other findings)

##### **Child**

- A child may be vulnerable to abuse if he / she was an unwanted child or is
- perceived as different, bad or difficult

##### **Parents**



- Where parents are young
- Where there is a history of deprivation or violence in childhood
- Where they suffer emotional problems or depression
- Where there is evidence of an anti - social personality
- A history of drug / alcohol abuse
- When parents have unrealistic expectations of a child

### **Family**

- A history of family violence
- A history of abnormal parent / child attachment
- Where the family is isolated with few support systems
- Deviant extended family network. e.g. record of child sexual abuse by relatives

### **4.3 The Signs of Abuse:**

#### **Physical Abuse**

Any of the following factors could be found in situations of potential or actual child abuse, and may be indicators of concern, especially when several of them are present.

#### *General-*

Physical findings which are discrepant with the account given as to their occurrence:

- Conflicting or unrealistic explanation of cause of injury
- Delay in reporting the injuries or seeking medical attention
- Prior episodes of registration of child or siblings

#### *Bruises –*

- any bruises on a baby not yet mobile, multiple bruises, bruise on cheeks, centre of back, buttocks or upper part of the limbs (don't mistake Mongolian blue spots for bruising especially in non-Caucasians)
- human bite marks
- bloodshot "Purple ear"
- petechiae ( from rough handling) or bizarre marks and bruises in the skin e.g. belt, ligature, hand etc
- finger and thumb marks (pinching)

#### *Fractures –*

- any fracture in the first year which has no clear accidental history
- unexplained fractures of collar bones, ribs or limbs in a "healthy looking child"
- multiple fractures of different ages especially metaphysical chip fractures
- Skull fractures especially wide or depressed, those in bone other than parietal bones or those which spread across several bones

#### *Burns and scalds –*

These may be caused by immersion, contact splash or cigarette etc.

(Cigarette burns are usually characteristic circular blobs and may be present in clusters and of different stages of healing ).

Burns and scalds are usually found on palms, soles, buttocks, perineum, ankles or wrists and will therefore have to be looked for, fully undressed.

#### *Mouth –*

- Injuries to the inside and around the mouth especially torn frenulum



- sundry cuts, scratches, abrasions or sores around the mouth often of different ages
- unexplained broken teeth
- Radiological evidence of root fractures or foreign bodies

#### *Eyes –*

- Bilateral periorbital haematoma forehead (two bruised eyes) especially without any marked contusions on forehead
- retinal haemorrhage especially with convulsions ( think of subdural haematomas due to severe shaking etc)
- bloodshot eyes from chest compressions or shaking
- intra abdominal / intra thoracic injuries (unexplained)

#### *Fabrication of child's illness by parents (Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy or Meadow's Syndrome) –*

"Illness" may be mimicked: most common presentations are bleeding, fits depressed conscious level, stopping breathing, diarrhoea, vomiting, fever and rash. Inexplicable illness or very rare and uncertain diagnosis. Symptoms which do not occur in the absence of the parent. Parents may refuse to leave the child at all, or seem less worried by child's illness than the professional staff.

#### **Neglect**

Child neglect is recognised through:

- History - preferably from more than one source
- Direct observations on neglect of the child
- Observations of the effects of neglect on the child's development

Where appropriate, confirmation is obtained through the demonstration of improvement in the child's condition on removal to an appropriately caring environment. The following are examples of how child neglect might be evidenced, though each of these may have other causes besides child neglect;

#### *Physical condition –*

- Failure to thrive or, in older children, short stature
- Severe nappy rash
- Dirty, unkempt condition
- Inadequately clothed, cold
- Frequent infections

#### *Development –*

- General delay, especially speech and language delay
- Learning difficulties in older children
- Inadequate social skills and poor socialisation

#### *Behavioural and emotional presentations –*

- Attachment disorders
- Absence of normal social responsiveness
- Indiscriminate behaviour
- Emotionally needy
- Aggressive and impulsive behaviour
- Disturbed peer relationships
- Self harming behaviour



## Section 4

### STAFF PROTECTION

A special feature of St Clare's is its relaxed and informal atmosphere. Wardens and teachers fulfil many roles, not least that of temporary parent. Given the risk, however slight, of teenage confusion about their roles leading to imagined offences, staff must ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place themselves or students at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a student

Staff should bear in mind the following points.

1. Avoid private one-to-one meetings with students in your own home or at social events outside the college. Obviously this does not apply to Wardens talking to students in their houses or to teachers talking to students in the college, though it would be prudent to have another person present even in a "public" area if the matter under discussion is serious or very delicate.
2. If you have to accuse a student of some failing beyond the trivial, make a brief written record of it and put it on file.
3. The students' bedrooms are private areas. Staff visiting them should always knock on the door before entering.
4. Staff in charge of activities or facilities where safety regulations and precautions are required must make sure that these are clearly published and should draw students' attention to them from time to time. Any accidents or unusual incidents should always be recorded, signed and dated.
5. All staff should be acquainted with the following documents, copies of which are on the intranet.
  - a. College Regulations
  - b. Complaints Procedure
  - c. Trips Policy

Policy title	Child Protection Policy
Drafted by	Tom Walsh, Oct 2001
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Ratified by	SMG, Nov 2004
Update/Review	TW, Sept 2007