



# 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 (Vice Principal).
2. Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are 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 of the 2002 Education Act.
2. Ensure this policy and our practice are consistent with the requirements of *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (HM Government 2010) and *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education* (HM Government 2007).
3. Ensure that we have a designated member of staff for child protection (and inform the Schools Safeguarding Team Administrator – Alan Blackmore, telephone 01865 810515 when this changes).
4. 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.
5. Ensure that all staff have training in child protection (with refresher training every 3 years). Part-time and voluntary staff who work with children are to be made aware of the arrangements.
6. 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* (HM Government 2007)).
7. Ensure that all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to, and acting appropriately in, cases of abuse or suspected abuse.
8. 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.

9. Establish and maintain links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with enquiries of a child protection nature.
10. Keep accurate written records of concerns on students even where referral is not appropriate immediately.
11. Ensure that all child protection records are kept secure and confidential and separate from the main student file.
12. 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 (see chapter 5 of *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education* (HM Government 2007) available from the Child Protection Officer).
13. 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.
14. Report to the Independent Safeguarding Authority, 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.
15. 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 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, updated 2010) 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 you are told, right after the conversation (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!).
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 either Susan Tawse (Dean of Students) or Tessa Ely (Senior Resident). During vacation course periods, Lawrie Coupland (Director of Short Courses) has responsibility for Child Protection.
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 Children's Services department (helped by your notes) on 01865 815956 (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



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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 (HM Government 2007) and the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board procedures.

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) or telephone 0300 1231231. The Local Authority Designated Officer for Child Protection is Barry Armstrong and he can be contacted at (01865) 810603.



### **Section 3**

#### **DEFINITIONS OF CHILD ABUSE AND THE SIGNS OF ABUSE**

(from Safeguarding Children in Education 2010)

##### Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

##### Signs that may indicate sexual abuse

- Sudden changes in behaviour and school performance
- Displays of affection which are sexual and age inappropriate
- Self harm, self mutilation or attempts at suicide
- Alluding to secrets which they cannot reveal
- Tendency to cling or need constant reassurance
- Regression to younger behaviour for example thumb sucking, playing with discarded toys, acting like a baby
- Bed wetting / incontinence
- Unexplained gifts or money
- Depression and withdrawal
- Fear of undressing for gym activities
- Sexually Transmitted Disease
- Fire setting

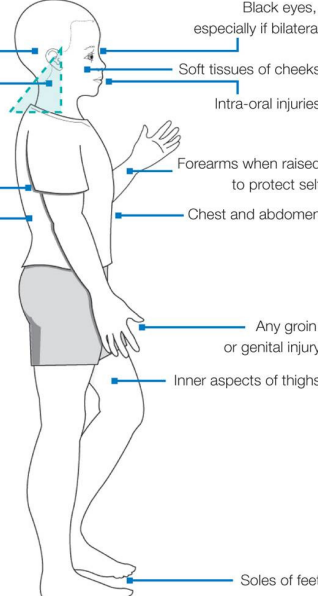
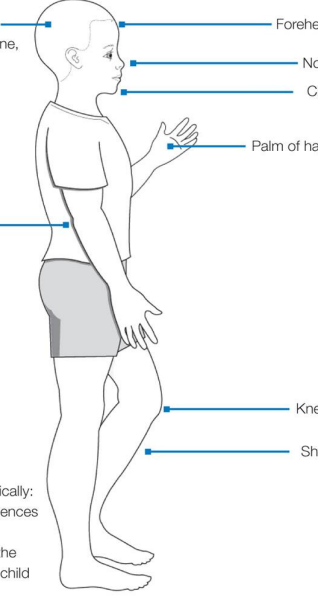
It is also important to note that there may be no signs.

##### Physical abuse

May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.



Typical abusive injuries	Typical accidental injuries
<p>Ears – especially pinch marks involving both sides of the ear</p> <p>The “triangle of safety” (ears, side of face, and neck, top of shoulders): accidental injuries in this area are unusual</p> <p>Inner aspects of arms</p> <p>Back and side of trunk, except directly over the bony spine</p> <p><b>REMEMBER</b> Concerns are raised by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• injuries to both sides of the body</li><li>• injuries to soft tissue</li><li>• injuries with particular patterns</li><li>• any injury that doesn't fit the explanation</li><li>• delays in presentation</li><li>• untreated injuries</li></ul> 	<p>Head injuries tend to involve the parietal bone, occiput or forehead</p> <p>Forehead</p> <p>Nose</p> <p>Chin</p> <p>Palm of hand</p> <p>Elbows</p> <p>Knees</p> <p>Shins</p> <p><b>REMEMBER</b> Accidental injuries typically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• involve bony prominences</li><li>• match the history</li><li>• are in keeping with the development of the child</li></ul> 

### 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. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

### Signs that may indicate neglect

- Excessive hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Frequent tiredness
- Inadequate clothing
- Frequent lateness or non attendance at school
- Untreated medical problems
- Poor relationship with peers
- Compulsive stealing and scavenging
- Rocking, hair twisting and thumb sucking
- Running away
- Loss of weight or being constantly underweight (the same applies to weight gain, or being excessively overweight)
- Low self esteem
- Poor dental hygiene.



## Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment 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 include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children.

These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.

It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.

It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), 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 maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

## Signs that may indicate emotional abuse

- Over reaction to mistakes
- Lack of self confidence / esteem
- Sudden speech disorders
- Self harming
- Extremes of passivity and /or aggression
- Compulsive stealing
- Drug, alcohol, solvent abuse
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Unwillingness or inability to play
- Excessive need for approval, attention and affection.



## 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. Private one-to-one meetings with students in your own home or at social events outside the college are prohibited. Obviously this does not apply to Wardens talking to students in their houses or to teachers talking to students in the non-residential areas of 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 a serious disagreement with a student, make a brief written record of it and pass this to your line manager.
3. The students' bedrooms are private areas and only residential, cleaning and maintenance staff, as well as Senior Management (or those given express permission by a member of the SMG) can access those areas in connection with the fulfilment of their duties.
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 on the College's accident/incident form.
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

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Drafted by	Tom Walsh, Oct 2001
Latest Updates/Reviews	TW, Sept 2007 TW/PH, July 2010 TW, Sept 2010 TW, June 2011