

Child Protection Policy

Immanuel College

March 2010

POLICY ON CHILD PROTECTION

The policy on child protection is in accordance with the locally agreed inter-agency procedures (Hertfordshire Area Child Protection Committee, telephone number: 01923 471500) and is made available to parents on the school website and on request.

Policy statement

1. 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.
2. Our policy and our commitment at Immanuel College is to take all reasonable measures to safeguard and promote the welfare of each child and young person (pupil) in our care and:
 - 2.1. to ensure that we practise safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children and young people
 - 2.2. to protect each pupil from any form of abuse, whether from an adult or another pupil
 - 2.3. to be alert to signs of abuse both in the School and from outside
 - 2.4. to deal appropriately with every suspicion or complaint of abuse
 - 2.5. to design and operate procedures which promote this policy and which, so far as possible, ensure that teachers and others who are innocent are not prejudiced by false allegations
 - 2.6. to support children who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan
 - 2.7. to be alert to the medical needs of children with medical conditions
 - 2.8. to operate robust and sensible health & safety procedures
 - 2.9. to take all practicable steps to ensure that school premises are as secure as circumstances permit
 - 2.10. to operate clear and supportive policies on drugs, alcohol and substance misuse
 - 2.11. to 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.
 - 2.12. to 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.
3. The school obtains assurances that appropriate child protection checks and procedures apply to any staff employed by another organisation and working with the

school's pupils on another site (for example, in a separate institution) where pupils are not supervised by Immanuel College staff.

4. It is the school's policy to 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 Independent Safeguarding Authority's address for referrals is PO Box 181, Darlington, DL1 9FA (Tel: 0300 123 1111).
5. 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 social services department of the local authority (SSD), the child protection unit of the police (CPU) (Tel: 0845 33 00 222) or the NSPCC (Tel: 0808 800 5000) in accordance with the procedures published by Hertfordshire Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) (Tel:01923 471 500).

The Designated Person

6. The School has appointed a senior member of staff ("**Designated Person**") to be responsible for matters relating to child protection and welfare. The main responsibilities of the Designated Person are:
 - 6.1. To be the first point of contact for parents, pupils, teaching and non-teaching staff and external agencies in all matters of child protection.
 - 6.2. To co-ordinate the child protection procedures in the School.
 - 6.3. To maintain an ongoing training programme for all school employees, at least every 3 years for the Head and all staff, ensuring that part-time and voluntary staff who work with children are made aware of all the arrangements.
 - 6.4. To monitor the keeping, confidentiality and storage of records in relation to child protection.
 - 6.5. To liaise with the child protection officer appointed by the SSD.
 - 6.6. To monitor the child protection arrangements and ensure that any deficiencies or weaknesses are remedied without delay (within 24 hours).
7. The Designated Person is Mrs Beth Kerr, the Director of Pastoral Education, who may be contacted on 0208 950 0604 extension 453. She will:
 - 7.1. Advise and act upon all suspicion, belief and evidence of abuse reported to her.
 - 7.2. Keep the Head Master informed of all actions unless the Head Master is the subject of a complaint.
 - 7.3. Liaise with the SSD and other agencies on behalf of the School.

8. If the Designated Person is unavailable or is herself the subject of a complaint, her duties will be carried out by the Head Master or one of the Deputies who has received appropriate training.
9. The Designated Person has undertaken appropriate training and will attend refresher training at two-yearly intervals.

Signs of abuse

10. Possible signs of abuse include (but are not limited to):
 - 10.1. The pupil says s/he has been abused or asks a question which gives rise to that inference.
 - 10.2. 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.
 - 10.3. 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.
 - 10.4. The pupil asks to drop subjects with a particular teacher and seems reluctant to discuss the reasons.
 - 10.5. The pupil's development is delayed.
 - 10.6. The pupil loses or gains weight.
 - 10.7. The pupil appears neglected, eg. dirty, hungry, inadequately clothed.
 - 10.8. The pupil is reluctant to go home, or has been openly rejected by his/her parents or carers.
 - 10.9. The procedures for dealing with abuse by one or more pupils against another pupil are to be found in the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

Duty of employees

11. Every employee of the School is under a general legal duty:
 - 11.1. To protect children from abuse.
 - 11.2. To be aware of the School's child protection procedures and to follow them.
 - 11.3. To know how to access and implement the procedures, independently if necessary.
 - 11.4. To keep a sufficient record of any significant complaint, conversation or event.
 - 11.5. To report any matters of concern to the Designated Person.

- 11.6. To undertake appropriate training including refresher training at 3-yearly intervals.
- 11.7. 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).

Procedures

12. Initial Complaint

A member of staff suspecting or hearing a complaint of abuse:

- 12.1. 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.
- 12.2. Must not ask leading questions, that is, a question which suggests its own answer.
- 12.3. 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.
- 12.4. Must keep a 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.

13. Preserving Evidence

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

14. Reporting

All suspicion or complaints of abuse must be reported to the Designated Person, or if the complaint involves the Designated Person, to the Head or one of the Deputies.

15. Action by the Designated Person

The action to be taken will take into account:

- 15.1. The procedures published by Hertfordshire Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC).
- 15.2. The nature and seriousness of the suspicion or complaint. A complaint involving a serious criminal offence will always be referred to the SSD or the police without further investigation within the School.
- 15.3. 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.

- 15.4. 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.
- 15.5. Duties of confidentiality, so far as applicable.
- 15.6. The lawful rights and interests of the school community as a whole including its employees and its insurers.
- 15.7. If there is room for doubt as to whether a referral should be made, the Designated Person may consult with SSD 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 SSD within 24 hours. If no response or acknowledgment is received within three working days, the Designated Person will contact Social Services again.

16. **Referral Guidelines**

A referral to the SSD or police will not normally be made where:

- 16.1. the complaint does not involve a serious criminal offence; and
- 16.2. 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
- 16.3. 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 13 above.

17. **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 Social Services Department or the Child Protection Unit of the police and will be provided with contact names, addresses and telephone numbers, as appropriate.

18. **Allegations Against Staff**

The School has procedures for dealing with allegations against the Head and 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.

Where an allegation or complaint is made against the Designated Person or any other member of staff or a volunteer, the matter should be reported immediately to the Head Master.

Where an allegation or complaint is made against the Head, the person receiving the allegation should immediately inform the Chair of Governors, or in his/her absence, the Vice Chair, without first notifying the Head.

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. This guidance is contained in the Staff Handbook.

If the School ceases to use the services of a member of staff (or a governor or volunteer) because they are unsuitable to work with children, a compromise agreement will not be used and there will be a prompt and detailed report to the Independent Safeguarding Authority. Any such incidents will be followed by a review of the safeguarding procedures within the School, with a report being presented to the Governors without delay.

19. **Allegations Against Pupils**

A pupil 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.

20. **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 and if the member of staff continues to be concerned he or she should refer the matter to the Designated Officer.

21. **Monitoring**

The Child Protection Policies and the efficiency with which they are carried out will be subject to an annual review by the governing body and the Designated Child Protection Officer.

Legal Status: Complies with *Regulation 3(2)(b) of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003* and DFES Guidance "Safeguarding Children in Education".

Policy Date: March 2010