

## **INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF CREATIVE ARTS - SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

**This policy follows DCSF guidelines in 'Safeguarding Pupils in Education' (Sept 2004)**

### **SECTION A – CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

#### **Objectives**

- To provide a safe environment for our students to learn
- To identify students who are suffering or are likely to suffer significant harm and to take appropriate action with the aim of making sure that they are kept safe both at home and at school.

#### ***Systems are required to:-***

- prevent unsuitable people working with our students;
- promote safe practice and challenge poor and unsafe practice and take all reasonable measures to ensure that risks of harm to students' welfare are minimised;
- identify circumstances in which there are grounds for concern about a child's welfare, and initiate/take appropriate action to keep them safe (working to agreed local policies and procedures in full partnership with local agencies);
- Contribute to effective partnership working between all those involved in providing services for students (e.g. health, social services, police);

Independent schools under Section 157 of the Education Act 2002 and the Education Regulations 2003 are required to have arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils. The Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board provides advice and training and acts as a link with other local children's services. This policy is available to parents on request.

#### **Duties include:-**

- ensuring that procedures are in place that are in line with procedures outlined in the Blue Book Child Protection Procedures;
- operating safe recruitment procedures and carrying out CRB checks on new staff and regular volunteers;
- ensuring that there are procedures in place for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff/volunteers (including the Principal) that comply with Buckinghamshire procedures;
- providing a designated person for child protection;

- providing training for all staff and training for the designated person and deputy designated person in inter agency work (all staff every three years and designated person training every two years);
- remedying any weaknesses in child protection arrangements without delay;
- undertaking an annual review of child protection policies and procedures;
- ensuring that all staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice in regard to students, and that such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner, in accordance with the school whistle blowing policy.

#### Procedures:

- Staff are trained in child protection.
- The Principal is the Designated Person for Child Protection and has attended the Buckinghamshire training course. If any staff (teaching or non-teaching) have any concerns that a child may be being abused, they should speak to the Principal (or in his/her absence, the deputy designated person). (If their concern involves the Principal they should speak to the Chairman of the Board). If the Principal believes that a child has been abused or is at serious risk of being abused it is his duty to contact Social Services.
- All staff including part-time and voluntary staff who work with students are made aware of arrangements for child protection.
- All applicants for jobs at the school are scrutinised by verifying their identity and suitability for working with students by a Criminal Records Bureau 'enhanced' check. and by asking for evidence of any academic or vocational qualifications, obtaining professional and character references, checking previous employment history and that the candidate has the health and physical capacity to do the job.
- All staff are aware of the advice in the DCSF Circular 10/98 'The use of force to control or restrain students' and are aware of what constitutes inappropriate physical contact.
- Procedures are in place for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff (and volunteers who work with students) – see Section C. Staff have a duty to inform the Principal if they have concerns that a child is being abused, even if the concern involves another employee at the school (see 'whistle blowing policy'). In the case of a concern involving the Principal, staff should inform the Chairman of the Board.
- New members of staff (including volunteers) are given induction on the school's child protection policy and procedures and given a written statement, which includes the information that the Principal acts as the designated person for child protection.
- Any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements will be remedied straight away. The Chairman of the Board undertakes an annual review of the School's child protection policies and procedures and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged.
- The designated person will report any concerns about possible child abuse to the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board or make a referral to The Buckinghamshire Social Services.

- Guidance for staff on safe working practice for the protection of students and staff in educational settings is available in the 'Safeguarding Pupils' file in the Staff Room. Staff should refer to this document to ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a student, for example in one-to-one tuition, sports coaching, conveying a pupil by car or engaging in inappropriate electronic communication with a student.

## **Educating Children**

The statutory framework for Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) provides opportunities for students to learn about keeping safe, and who to ask for help if their safety is threatened.

We teach students (via PSHE, class and assembly time) to develop a healthy and safe lifestyle and give opportunities to help them:

- to recognise and manage risks in different situation and then behave responsibly
- to judge what kind of physical contact is acceptable and unacceptable
- to recognise when pressure from others (including people they know) threatens their personal safety and well-being and develop effective ways of resisting pressure; including knowing when and where to get help
- to use assertiveness techniques to resist unhelpful pressure
- to learn that it is acceptable to talk about their own problems and where to find help.

## **Listening to Students**

Students will speak to people that they feel they can trust and they feel comfortable with. This will not always be a tutor/teacher. For this reason all staff (teaching staff and support staff) are trained in child protection so that they know how to respond sensitively to a child's concerns, whom to approach for advice about them, and the importance of not guaranteeing complete confidentiality.

Posters giving national students' help lines (Child line/NSPCC) are displayed in the school.

Any member of staff who is approached by a student wanting to talk should listen positively and reassure the child. They should record the conversation on an encounter form as soon as possible, distinguishing clearly between fact, observation, allegation and opinion, noting any action taken and signing and dating the note. They should then inform the Principal.

The member of staff should be aware that the way in which they talk to the student could have an effect on the evidence that is put forward if there are subsequent proceedings. Staff should not jump to conclusions, ask leading questions, or put words in a student's mouth.

Staff should be aware that:-

- it is not their responsibility to investigate suspected cases of abuse
- they should not take any action beyond that advised in the Buckinghamshire County Council's Child Protection Procedures

- they cannot promise a student's complete confidentiality – instead they must explain that they may need to pass information to other professionals to help keep the student or other students safe
- if they have concerns about a student's welfare, or if a student discloses that s/he is suffering abuse or reveals information that gives ground for concern, they should speak to the Principal
- accusations of abuse by one or more students against another student should be immediately reported to the designated person, who will take advice from the Buckinghamshire SCB
- procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse by a member of staff are outlined in Section C of this policy. All such allegations should be reported immediately to the designated person, who will contact the Buckinghamshire LSCB within 24 hours of disclosure or suspicion of abuse

Abuse or neglect can have a damaging effect on a child's health, educational attainment and emotional well-being. Staff may see changes in behaviour patterns in existing students which are likely to impact adversely on a student's performance at School. Such changes may not necessarily indicate that a child is suffering abuse or neglect. In some cases those changes may be symptoms of a hidden disability or undiagnosed medical condition and the need to distinguish those cases reinforces the need for careful and thorough assessment of the child and his/her needs when concerns are passed on.

Students are put at risk of harm by a variety of behaviours. These may include:

- Drug/alcohol abusing parents
- Domestic Violence
- Students and young people who sexually abuse
- Sexual exploitation of students
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Forced Marriages

### **Parental Involvement**

Parents need to understand that the School has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of the students at the School, that this responsibility necessitates a child protection policy and procedures and that the School may need to share information and work in partnership with other agencies when there are concerns about a child's welfare.

The School will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a child's welfare with the family and, where possible, seek their agreement to making referrals to social services. If the Principal has reservations about involving the child's family, he will seek advice from the Buckinghamshire Local Safeguarding Children Board.

## **SECTION B – DEFINITIONS AND SIGNS OF ABUSE**

### **Definitions of abuse**

Child abuse may fall into one of the following four categories. These categories represent the criteria for registration on the Child Protection Register.

1. NEGLECT

The persistent or severe neglect of a child or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation, or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in significant impairment of the child's health and development.

2. PHYSICAL INJURY

Actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent injury (or suffering) to a child, including deliberate poisoning, suffocation and Munchausen's Syndrome by proxy (where individuals present their students at different hospitals with different spurious complaints).

3. SEXUAL ABUSE

Actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent.

4. EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional well-being and ill-treatment or rejection. All abuse involves some emotional ill-treatment.

The appropriate category should be used when it is the main or sole form of abuse.

### **Signs of Abuse**

***These are included for guidance and one should look for clusters and changes to behaviour.***

#### Emotional/Neglect

Tantrums/attention seeking/mood swings/weight loss/ lack of hygiene/fainting/slow physical development/ poor knowledge of right and wrong/ isolation – lack of communication/ hunger/ tiredness/ nightmares / imagining friends.

#### Physical

Bruising/ aggression/ moody/ bed-wetting/ absences / lethargy / make up to cover bruising /hanging about after school/ anxious on Friday afternoon and the end of term. (For further information on bruising which indicates abuse and the use of body maps see Buckinghamshire Local Safeguarding

Children Board website).

### Sexual

Provocative behaviour/ new sexual language / fear of men /secretive /refusing to allow physical contact / desire to cleanse / emphasising sex through play /self-mutilation /pregnancy /bleeding / anorexia /bulimia.

These are for guidance only and many indicators can be common to all kinds of abuse.

## ***SECTION C – DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE AGAINST STAFF***

This document outlines school procedure for managing cases of allegations that might indicate that a person is unsuitable to continue to work with students in their present position, or in any capacity.

It will be used if it is alleged that a teacher or a member of staff in the School (including volunteers) has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or students in a way that indicates that s/he is unsuitable to work with students.

We aim to deal with any allegation of abuse made against a teacher or other member of staff or volunteer fairly, quickly and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection for the child and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

These procedures follow DCSF guidance – Safeguarding Pupils in Education: Dealing with allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff.

There may be up to three strands in the consideration of an allegation:

- a police investigation of a possible criminal offence
- enquiries and assessment by pupils' social care about whether the child is in need of protection or in need of services
- consideration by the School of disciplinary action in respect of the individual. (In some cases the school may need to act jointly with another organisation e.g. a teacher supply agency).

Some cases will also need to be reported to DCSF for consideration of including the person on List 99, or consideration by the General Teaching Council (GTC) about possible sanctions against the individual.

## ***School Procedure***

### **Initial consideration**

All allegations against a member of staff (including volunteers) should be reported to the Principal. If the allegation is against the Principal, the allegation should be reported to the Chairman of the Board. Details of the allegation should be written out on a concern form, signed and dated.

The Principal will inform the Chairman of the Board and, depending on the nature of the allegation, may report the matter to the designated person at the Buckinghamshire LSCB, Ofsted and/or the DCSF. The Principal should investigate the allegation personally. An allegation may require consideration from any of the following four inter-related perspectives:

- Child protection enquiries by Pupils' Social Care
- Criminal investigation by the police
- Staff disciplinary procedures of the employing agency
- Complaint procedures of employing agency.

If there is cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, or a criminal offence might have been committed, the designated person at the Buckinghamshire LSCB will advise the Principal to make a referral to the Buckinghamshire County Council's Social Services. If it is clear following initial consideration or from the conclusions of any Strategy Meeting, that neither the police nor the Buckinghamshire Social Services need to be involved, the designated person at the Buckinghamshire LSCB should discuss the next steps with the Chairman of the Board.

### ***Whistle Blowing Policy***

The School operates a 'whistle blowing' policy. This means that, if you have any concerns about the behaviour of another member of staff (or volunteer) you should raise them with the Principal, or if you are concerned about the behaviour of the Principal, with the Chairman of the Board.

### **Supporting those involved**

Parents of the child involved will be told about the allegation as soon as possible and will be kept informed about the progress and outcome of the investigation.

The School, in consultation with Students' Social Care and/or the police, will offer the child appropriate support.

The School, in consultation with the Buckinghamshire LSCB and DCSF, will keep the person who is the subject of the allegations informed of the progress of the case and will offer appropriate support to the individual. (The School will not automatically suspend the individual concerned but where the decision to suspend is taken, e.g. where there is cause to suspect a child is at significant risk of harm, the individual will be kept informed and offered appropriate support.)

### **Confidentiality**

Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated/considered.

### **Record keeping**

A clear and comprehensive summary of any allegations made, details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved and a note of any action taken and decisions reached will be kept in the person's confidential file and a copy will be provided to the person concerned.

### **Action following initial considerations**

Where, after the initial consideration, it is decided that the allegation does not involve a criminal offence, the School will deal with the matter internally. In such cases, if the nature of the allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, the Chairman of the Board will institute appropriate action within 3 working days. If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, the hearing will be held within 15 days.

Where further investigation is required prior to consideration of disciplinary action, the Principal will act as investigating officer and will aim to provide a report to the Chairman of the Board within 10 working days.

On receipt of the report the Principal and Chairman of the Board will decide whether a disciplinary hearing is needed within 2 working days. If a hearing is needed it will be held within 15 working days. (In cases where the Buckinghamshire Social Services have undertaken enquiries, the Principal and Chairman of the Board will take into account any relevant information obtained in the course of these enquiries.)

### **Resignations and Compromise Agreements**

The fact that a person resigns or ceases to provide services will not prevent an allegation being followed up according to these procedures. It may be difficult to reach a conclusion in these circumstances and it may not be possible to impose disciplinary sanctions but it is important to reach and record a conclusion. Compromise Agreements will not be used in cases of allegations of abuse.

***Please note that the contents of this policy are subject to review.***