

Harrogate Ladies' College Highfield Prep School Bankfield Pre-School



Child Protection Policy

1. **Policy Statement**

- The Harrogate Ladies' College group of schools (**Bankfield, Highfield, Harrogate Ladies' College**) is committed to working with children, parents and the community to safeguard and promote the welfare of its pupils.
- It is of paramount importance that pupils who attend the Harrogate Ladies' College group of schools feel safe, secure and free from any form of abuse.
- The Harrogate Ladies' College group of schools operates a safe recruitment procedure.
- The Harrogate Ladies' College group of schools requires training in child protection and inter-agency working, updated every two years, for the Designated Person(s) for Child Protection. This is provided by the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board.
- The Harrogate Ladies' College group of schools requires training in child protection procedures, updated every three years, for all staff, all part time and voluntary staff who work with children.
- The Harrogate Ladies' College group of schools provides that the Governing body will undertake an annual review of the school's Child Protection Policy and Procedures and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged.
- This policy complies with the aims of current government legislation and guidance:
 - all staff in school must be pro-active in trying to identify possible child abuse and in reporting concerns to one of the school's Designated Persons.
 - the Governing body must safeguard and promote the welfare of children

Designated Persons for Child Protection in the Harrogate Ladies' College Group of Schools:

Harrogate Ladies' College Senior School:	Mrs Rhiannon Wilkinson (Headmistress) Ms Joanne Cuthbert (Head of Learning Support)
Highfield Preparatory School:	Mrs Carole Cameron (Headmistress)
Bankfield Pre- Preparatory School:	Mrs Alison Collings (Headmistress)

The Designated Persons at Highfield and Bankfield will liaise at all times with the Headmistress of the Harrogate Ladies' College Group of Schools, Mrs Rhiannon Wilkinson.

The nominated Governor for Child Protection at the Harrogate Ladies' College Group of Schools is Mr Alan Taylor and the Chair of Governors is Mr Alan Skidmore.

Concerns reported to or observed by staff, governors or volunteers should be passed on immediately to a Designated person, who acts as the contact between school, family and external agencies.

2. Aims of safeguarding practice in the Harrogate Ladies' College Group of Schools

All staff, governors and volunteers must play a part in preventing abuse and neglect through:

- Knowing and complying with the School's policy and procedures on child protection
- Being knowledgeable about, and alert to, the signs and symptoms of abuse in children
- Helping pupils, through the teaching of the curriculum and as positive adult role models, to understand what is and what is not acceptable behaviour towards them and how they can stay safe
- Creating and maintaining a safe and secure environment for students and staff
- Being approachable so that pupils will share their worries and concerns

3. Intended outcomes

School procedures are designed to work towards fulfilment of the five stated outcomes in *Every Child Matters: change for children* (2004):

- Stay healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve

- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

4. Providing a Safe and Supportive Environment

SAFE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

- The school pays full regard to DfES guidance “Safer Recruitment and Selection in Education settings” June 2005 and “Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education” January 2007.
- Safe recruitment practice includes scrutinising application forms, verifying identity and academic or vocational qualifications, obtaining two professional and character references prior to interview, checking previous employment history and ensuring that candidates have the health and physical capacity for the job. Curriculum vitae and testimonials are not accepted.
- Interviews and enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks are always undertaken. Members of the Senior Leadership Team have completed Safer Recruitment training and will always be present at interviews.
- Applicants must bring two forms of identification with them to interview, one with a photograph. The interview is a fair and consistent assessment which we review regularly.
- Once a suitable applicant is chosen that person will receive a formal letter of appointment from the Headmistress of Harrogate Ladies’ College.
- On the first day of employment information the new member of staff will be given all policy documentation to read and sign. A staff handbook is also issued for personal reference
- All employment decisions are documented.
- CRB forms, bank detail request forms, a staff record form and pension information are sent to successful candidates.
- Once cleared CRB forms are returned a starting date is given, and the CRB number is recorded and kept in staff files by the Bursar.
- Enhanced CRB checks are made every three years
- Any person whose services are no longer required at the Harrogate Ladies’ College group of schools because he/she is considered unsuitable to work with children will be reported to the Secretary of State, via the DCSF, within one month of leaving the school.

5. Identifying Children who may be Suffering Significant Harm

Teachers and other adults in school are well placed to observe any physical, emotional or behavioural signs that could give rise to concerns that a child may be suffering significant harm. The relationship between staff, pupils, parents and the public which fosters respect, confidence and trust can lead to disclosure of abuse, and/or school staff being alerted to concerns.

Definitions

As in the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, a **child** is anyone who has not yet reached his/her 18th birthday.

Harm means ill-treatment or impairment of health and development, including, for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another; **Development** means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development; **Health** includes physical and mental health; **Ill-treatment** includes sexual abuse and other forms of ill-treatment which are not physical.

Abuse and Neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or 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. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

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 fabricates the symptoms of or deliberately induces illness in a child.

Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (eg rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

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 so far as they meet the needs of another person. 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 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.

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 material substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate caretakers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Signs of Physical Abuse	Signs of Emotional Abuse
Unexplained injuries or burns particularly if recurrent	Physical, mental and emotional development loss
Improbable excuses given to explain injuries	Over-reaction to mistakes
Refusal to discuss injuries	Continual self-depreciation
Untreated injuries	Sudden speech disorders
Admission of punishment which appears excessive	Admission of punishment which appears excessive
Bald patches	Fear of new situations
Withdrawal from physical contact	Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
Arms and/or legs kept covered in hot weather	Neurotic behaviour eg rocking, hair twisting
Fear of returning home	Self-mutilation
Fear of medical help	Fear of parents being contacted
Self-destructive tendencies	Extremes of passivity or aggression
Aggression towards others	Drug/solvent abuse
Running away	Running away
	Compulsive stealing

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Neglect	Signs of Sexual Abuse
Constant hunger	Sudden changes in behaviour or school performance
Poor personal hygiene	Displays of affection in a sexual way inappropriate to age
Constant tiredness	Tendency to cling or need constant reassurance
Poor state of clothing	Tendency to cry easily
Emaciation	Regression to younger behaviour such as thumb-sucking, playing with discarded toys
Untreated medical problems	Distrust of familiar adult or anxiety about being left with a relative, babysitter or lodger
Destructive tendencies	Unexplained gifts of money
Low self-esteem	Depression and withdrawal
Neurotic behaviour	Apparent secrecy
No social relationships	Wetting day/night
Running away	Sleep disturbances or nightmares
Compulsive stealing	Chronic illness, especially throat infections and venereal disease
	Anorexia or bulimia
	Fear of undressing for PE
	Phobias or panic attacks

Obviously many of these signs and symptoms may be attributed to other causes but it is worth considering that they may be related to abuse.

CONFIDENTIALITY

We are not in a position to offer wholly unconditional confidentiality, although the duty of confidentiality owed to young people is the same as that owed to any person. The confidentiality of a pastoral discussion must be respected, as far as possible, unless there are strong reasons not to do so, for example, child protection concerns or the health and safety of others. Children should be made aware at the onset that, in their own best interest, it might be necessary to seek the advice and support of another adult.

6. **Procedures in Cases of Suspicion or Disclosure**

If you notice symptoms which give cause for anxiety or child disclosure, then the Designated Person for Child Protection in your 'school' should be informed and reasons given for your concern.

If a child discloses:

- you should remain calm, sympathetic and not appear shocked or angry
- remember that the pupil has chosen you as someone to trust and respect
- if the pupil has difficulty talking, encourage him/her to write everything down
- reassure them that you believe what they are saying and that what has happened is not their fault
- try to keep questions to a minimum and of an 'open' nature eg 'Can you tell me what happened?'
- give them praise for telling you and let them talk at their own pace about what has happened without asking direct questions
- be honest with the pupil and do not make promises that cannot be kept
- you must make sure that the pupil knows that in order to help, you will need to pass the information on to other people

Never attempt to carry out an investigation of suspected or alleged abuse by interviewing people. It is your duty to refer concerns on, not investigate.

Such information cannot remain confidential. You should immediately communicate what you have been told to the Designated Person for Child Protection and make a contemporaneous record.

Information brought to the attention of the Designated Person for Child Protection should be filtered and set against whatever else is known before deciding on a course of action. This could involve consulting with one or more of the following people:

- The Child
- Teacher
- Pastoral staff
- School Nurse
- Social Care
- Educational Psychologist
- Parents
- Police

If difficult decisions have to be made then the following must be taken into account::

1. The welfare and best interests of the child are of paramount importance.

2. Once the school decides that suspicion of child abuse exists there is a direct obligation to inform Social Care immediately. It is the responsibility of the Headmistress to complete a Child Protection Referral Form and contact the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Board (SCB).
3. Social Services and the Police have a legal duty to investigate.

There are 3 levels of response:

EMERGENCY	HIGH SUSPICION	LOW SUSPICION
Concerns the child who has a serious injury or is in danger of abuse if he/she returns home.	Concerns child who may have been injured or abused but in is no immediate danger. Evidence suggests an investigation is needed to gauge risks and what steps to take.	Concerns situations where parental behaviour towards the child or things that the child does or says arouse suspicions but there is no clear evidence or physical ill treatment, neglect or abuse.
Ensure prompt medical attention and inform the Emergency Duty Team on 01904 762314	Notify the Duty Officer at Social Care on 01423 700151 and negotiate who is responsible for contacting parents.	Consider steps to be taken to monitor the child within school and over what period.

RECORDING AND MONITORING INFORMATION

- Only record vital information.
- Make clear the source of any information.
- Keep records as factual and evidence based as possible.
- Avoid the use of subjective language; use the words the child uses.
- Distinguish between fact, observation, allegation and opinion.
- Record the child's non-verbal/body language.
- Make clear statements about any action taken, record to whom you spoke and when.
- Give time, date and sign all records and place in chronological order.
- Don't write something you are not prepared for somebody else to read

7. **Handling Allegations Against Staff**

An allegation follows when a child is hurt or harmed by the act of a member of staff.

(This is dealt with differently from a complaint)

Allegations made about a member of staff



Designated Person to Inform the Headmistress of Harrogate Ladies' College



Facts of the allegation considered with reference to the nominated governor for Child Protection if necessary.



Depending on the circumstances, the designated Local Authority Officer is contacted.



Discussion and decision about a course of action with the LA officer takes place



All Early Years allegations will be reported to Ofsted



Depending on the nature of the allegation there may be consultation with Social care and/or Police



The allegation may be false or unfounded in which case no further action will be taken



The capability of the member of staff to continue in post is decided and/or disciplinary proceedings will begin



- Staff facing allegations will be given support.
- The nature of the allegation determines the time scale.
- The LA officer will give guidance as to at what point the member of staff should be informed of the allegation.

Revised March 2010