



Scope

This policy is applicable to the whole College.

Policy Statement

Queen's College's whole-school Child Protection Policy aims to provide clear direction to staff and others about expected codes of behaviour in dealing with child protection issues. The policy also aims to make explicit the College's commitment to the development of good practice and sound procedures. The purpose of the policy is, therefore, to ensure that child protection concerns and referrals are handled sensitively, professionally and in ways that support the needs of the child. If any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements become apparent, these will be rectified without delay.

This policy applies to all employees of Queen's College, including volunteers.

Introduction

Queen's College fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect the children and support the pupils in its care. There are three main elements to Queen's College's Child Protection Policy:

- Prevention (positive school atmosphere, careful and vigilant teaching, pastoral care, support to pupils, providing good adult role models);
- Protection (following agreed procedures, ensuring staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to child protection concerns);
- Support (to pupils and school staff and to children who may have been abused).

Framework

Schools do not operate in isolation. Child protection is the responsibility of all adults and especially those working with children. Queen's College aims to help protect the children in its care by working consistently and appropriately with child protection agencies.

Roles and Responsibilities

All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to protect children. Within Queen's College the following individuals have special responsibilities:

- The Assistant Head Pastoral (Mrs Gill Watson) is the Senior Child Protection Officer (CPO) and the Head of Junior (Mrs Tracey Khodabandehloo) is the Junior, Pre-Prep and Nursery CPO. The Headmaster of the Senior School (Mr Chris Alcock) and the Head of Pre-Prep and Nursery (Mrs Jan Williams) are the Deputy CPOs for the whole College.

Role: to co-ordinate all matters relating to child protection issues. These will include:

- Dealing with reports of abuse against children;
- Making referrals to child protection agencies if appropriate;
- Keeping the Headmaster fully informed of all child protection issues that may arise;
- Ensuring all staff receive training in basic child protection;
- Ensuring that all new staff are properly inducted apropos child protection;

- There is an independent listener.

Role:

- Act as a sympathetic adult (outside of the school) whom children may approach with their concerns;
- To inform the CPO of any child protection issues that may be brought to his/her attention.

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Procedures

The CPO will be informed immediately by an employee of the school, pupil of the school, parent of the school, other persons, in the following circumstances:

- Suspicion that a child is being abused;
- There is evidence that a child is being abused;
- In the event of a complaint made by a child against an employee of the School.

The CPO will keep a full record of reports made and make referrals to child protection agencies if necessary. The Headmaster will be kept informed at all times.

Training and Support

Queen's College ensures that the Headmaster and CPOs receive training relevant to their role every two years. The College also ensures that all new staff receive training in their induction and all employees are kept informed about child protection issues through a programme of staff Inset every three years.

House Parents undergo Child Protection training every two years and have attended the 'Somerset Local Safeguarding Children Board' one-day safeguarding course in Somerset.

Resident Assistant House Parents undergo Child Protection training when appointed and then every two years.

The Head and Deputy Head (students) of each House also undergo Child Protection training with the CPO each September.

Each House has its own handbook with procedures for pupils and arrangements for visitors.

Professional Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. Whilst confidentiality cannot be guaranteed the best interests of the child will be paramount.

Records and Monitoring

Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Queen's College is clear about the need to record any concerns held about a child or children within its care, the status of such records and when these records should be passed over to outside agencies. A separate and secure record keeping system is in place away from the main files and with only limited access.

Attendance at Case Conferences

In the event of Queen's College being invited to attend a child protection conference, the Child Protection Officer will represent the School and provide information relevant to case conferences.

Supporting Children at Risk

Queen's College recognises that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world in a positive way. Queen's College may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of some of the children in its care. The College, therefore, recognises that such children might exhibit challenging and defiant behaviour and will take careful note of the context of such behaviour.

Queen's College also recognises that some children who have experienced abuse may in turn abuse others. This requires a considered and sensitive approach in order that the child can receive appropriate help and support.



Queen's College will endeavour to support all its pupils through;

- Assembly and Chapel services;
- The curriculum and co-curriculum, to encourage self-esteem and self-motivation;
- The College's Christian ethos, which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and which gives all pupils and adults a sense of being respected and valued;
- A coherent management of behaviour;
- A consistent approach which recognises and separates the cause of behaviour from that which the child displays. This is vital to ensure that all pupils are supported within the school setting;
- Liaison with other professionals and agencies who support children and parents;
- A commitment to develop productive, supportive relationships with parents whenever it is in the child's interest to do so;
- The development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable staff group whose role it is to respond appropriately in child protection situations.

Queen's College also recognises that in a home environment where there is domestic violence, drug or alcohol abuse, or other behaviours impacting on a child's welfare, children may also be vulnerable and in need of support and protection.

Please see Annex A attached outlining the procedures to be followed to comply with this Policy.

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OVERVIEW AND GOOD PRACTICE

Section 157 / 175 of the Education Act 2002 (157 relates to the independent sector)

Section 175 introduced new statutory duties for schools, governing bodies and LAs. *Safeguarding Children in Education* (www.publications.teachernet.gov.uk) gives advice in line with the provisions of the act on the procedures involved in identifying young people suffering or likely to suffer significant harm and outlines the infrastructures that need to be in place to ensure the safety of children.

Understanding the Basics

Children trust and depend on adults to protect and safeguard them from harm. It is therefore the responsibility of members of staff as adults who come into contact with children on a daily basis to report any suspicions or evidence of abuse which may have occurred or is occurring to a young person whether it is outside or inside school and whether that member of staff is a paid employee or volunteer (2008: 34,000 children throughout the UK became subject to a child protection plan).

The Role of Staff

- To keep eyes and ears open;
- To report;
- To be excellent adult role models.

NB. Identifying and investigating actual child abuse is the responsibility of child protection agencies.

Definitions

The term 'child abuse' is used to describe a range of ways in which people (usually adults) harm children. This 'harm' can be in the form of physical injury, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect (failing to protect a child).

➤ **Physical abuse**

When adults deliberately inflict injuries on a child or, knowingly, do not prevent them. It includes hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning or biting. It also includes excessive force. Giving a child poisonous substances, inappropriate drugs or alcohol, and attempting to suffocate or drown a child are also examples of physical abuse.

Results: physical abuse can cause injuries including bruising, burns, fractures, internal injuries and brain damage. In extreme cases it can cause death.

➤ **Emotional abuse**

When adults continually fail to show affection, or when they threaten, taunt or shout at a child, causing him/her to lose confidence and self-esteem and to become nervous or withdrawn. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of others.

Results: emotional abuse damages children deeply – they feel unloved and unlovable and this can have serious effects on the child's personality, making it hard for him/her to form successful relationships.

➤ **Sexual abuse**

When an adult forces a child to take part in sexual activity in order to satisfy his/her own sexual desires. It may involve sexual intercourse, fondling, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse or exposing children to pornographic videos, books, magazines or other material, and includes encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Results: can be very damaging and long term. Sexually abused children may become abusers themselves, they may suffer long term feelings of guilt, they may find subsequent relationships difficult to handle.

➤ **Neglect**

Where adults persistently and severely fail to care for children or protect them from danger.



Results: children appear ill cared for or unhappy; may be withdrawn or aggressive; may have injuries or ongoing health problems

Child abuse can/does happen anywhere – in poor and in affluent homes; in rural, suburban or city areas – involving one or both parents, guardians or teachers.

Child abuse happens often – at least 5,000 cases of abuse are reported each year nationally. Many more occur but are never reported.

- Children can suffer from one or a combination of these forms of abuse;
- Abuse can take place at home, at school or anywhere where children spend time;
- It can happen to children and young people of any age, sex, ethnicity, sexual orientation or disability;
- In almost all cases the abuser is someone known (and often trusted) by the child such as a parent, carer, teacher, relative or friend.

For further guidance, reference should be made to the HM Government 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010' document kept in the Pastoral Office.

How Staff Should Respond if a Child Confides in Them

It can take a great deal of courage for a child to talk to an adult about their abuse because the child is 'telling' on someone more powerful than they are. Therefore this should be kept in mind: the child may be having to betray a person who is not only close to them but also loved by them and they are risking a great deal in the hope that you will believe what they say.

Helpful responses:

- Do not panic. Try to be composed and sympathetic
- Listen carefully and keep on listening
- Do not ask "closed" questions and do not start to investigate; it is all right to clarify what is being told, without "leading" the conversation.
- Accept what is said without passing judgment and reassure the child that he or she was right to speak to you
- Do not promise confidentiality. Explain that the CPO or Headmaster will need to be informed as well as outside agencies where necessary.
- Stay with the child until they are reassured and comforted. Only leave the child once they know what needs to be done next.

What to do next immediately within 24 hours:

- Make an immediate, careful record of what has been said, using the child's actual words wherever possible (do not interpret them). If opinions are recorded, ensure that these cannot be confused with facts;
- Immediately contact the Child Protection Officer (07541 385332). The Child Protection Officer will make a decision based on the report within 24 hours, judging whether the issue should be referred to outside agencies or not. In the absence of the CPO the Headmaster (Senior) and Headmistress (Junior) should be informed (Headmaster 07805 066461; Headmistress 07766 168625);
- Record in writing the fact that the situation has been reported to the CPO; this is for the member of staff's own protection;
- Remain caring and supportive to the child.

In exceptional circumstances, where staff fear for the immediate safety of a child, contact the Police or Somerset Direct – Children's Social Care (0845 345 9122), stating that a child protection referral is being made. When this is complete, follow the normal procedures as laid down in the College's Child Protection Policy.

If the staff member has any doubts about making a report, remember the possible consequences of not reporting ie. consequences for both the child and staff member. (Not to report may be construed as neglect of care and therefore itself constitute abuse).

It might happen that staff become worried about a child's behaviour or injuries, but the child says nothing to suggest that he/she is being abused. What should be done?

- Be the sort of person a child can talk to;



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- Be available and be prepared to listen;
- Discuss the concerns with the CPO;
- Do not rely on someone else to take action.

What to avoid:

If a disclosure is made to a member of staff, that person;

- Should not allow their shock or distaste to show;
- Should not probe for more information than is being offered. Do not ask closed or leading questions but clarify what is being told if necessary.
- Should not attempt to counsel the child.
- Should not speculate or make assumptions;
- Should not make negative comments about the alleged abuser;
- Should not make any promises that cannot be kept, such as promising that 'everything will be alright';
- Should not agree to keep the information a secret. Make sure that the child knows that the information will be passed on to the CPO.

Staff's role is to:

- Be vigilant and responsible;
- Report accurately and carefully to the CPO;
- Support the child by being caring.

There is no more to their role.

Sharing Concerns with Parents

Generally this is to be encouraged, but in cases that may come under the child protection umbrella such sharing of concerns will be done by the CPO after discussion with the concerned member of staff. (If, after having discussed a concern about a child with his or her parents the staff member remains concerned, the issue may be a child protection one and should be reported immediately). If the CPO has concerns about the family environment, outside agencies will be involved.

All non-academic members of staff should discuss their concerns immediately with the CPO.

Staff should not share concerns about a child with parents if they believe that this may put the child at greater risk or if they suspect that abuse is occurring for which the parents appear to be responsible. Under these circumstances report immediately to the CPO.

Handling Inappropriate Behaviour from Colleagues

It is the College's responsibility to behave well in all its dealings with children and specifically with the children for whom there is a duty of care.

If, however, staff believe that a colleague is behaving inappropriately, they must immediately follow the procedures laid down in the Child Protection Policy; that is report it immediately to the CPO.. Loyalty to colleagues should not and must not deflect staff from their duty of care to the children within the College. The rule is: the safety and well being of children must come first.

What Happens Next?

Once a concern has been reported to the CPO and that officer has made a decision about the status of the concern (whether it is a child protection issue or not), a referral may be made by the CPO and all further responsibility for gathering information and deciding what happens next will rest primarily with Children's Social Care in liaison with the school and other agencies as appropriate.



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In some cases, a brief assessment might reveal the child to have needs which can be met by providing specific support. In other, more serious cases, the information provided to agencies by the CPO will trigger a full child protection investigation.

Children's Social Care will not automatically report to the school should any referrals be made to them from any agency about a child at the school. However, they should keep the school informed if they initiated the referral. Schools have a duty to proactively ask for follow-up information where appropriate.

PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

Safety

- The College must ensure that the site is a clean and safe environment for children;
- All staff must have access to an up-to-date copy of the Child Protection Policy and know who is the Child Protection Officer;
- The College must ensure that it has an accurate and up-to-date database detailing contact numbers and medical information. These databases are confidential and stored safely;
- The College must ensure that there are regular safety audits of all equipment (first aid kits, fire extinguishers, telephones etc.) and practise the fire drill;
- The College must ensure that a responsible adult is on site when children arrive and ensure the fully safety of children whilst on site;
- The College must ensure that assurance is obtained that appropriate child protection checks and procedures apply to any staff employed by another organisation and working with the College's pupils on another site, eg work experience, organised school trips, etc.

Recruitment, General Supervision and Code of Conduct

The College adheres to the DfE Safer Recruitment requirements.

- When recruiting staff and volunteers the College must ensure all appropriate checks are made;
- The College must keep a careful check on all visitors and guests whether their visit is by invitation or unsolicited;
- The College must ensure that there are sufficient staff (male/female balance) to run all activities;
- All College staff must be adult role models for children and young people: courteous, friendly and kind. No member of staff should make suggestive or discriminatory comments;
- All College staff should respect children and young people at all times regardless of their sex, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation;
- No member of College staff must ever allow or engage in inappropriate verbal or physical contact of any description. It is easy for certain types of behaviour to be misinterpreted;
- All College staff should be firm and fair with children. Favouritism should be avoided, as should singling out troublemakers. All staff should keep in mind the distinction between bad behaviour and the child exhibiting the unacceptable behaviour;
- No member of College staff should allow children or adults to engage in abuse activities such as initiation rites, ridiculing or bullying including e-safety, Facebook, e-technology, games consoles;
- All members of College staff should redirect excessive attention-seeking behaviour into positive activity where possible;
- The College must develop an ethos that allows staff to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out any inappropriate attitudes or behaviour to each other;
- The College must encourage children to trust their own feelings about adult behaviour and to assert their right to determine (within sensible limits) the behaviour with which they are comfortable;
- All College staff should avoid unobserved one-to-one contact with a child or young person. When such a situation is unavoidable, the door must be left open and a colleague must be within sight and hearing, or inform another member of staff. Please refer to the Code of Conduct policy;
- No male member of staff may enter an all-female room/dressing room etc. or vice versa;



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- All College staff should report disclosures or concerns to the Child Protection Officer;
- College staff should never trivialise child abuse issues;
- In cases where personal care tasks are required, College staff must carry out these tasks with the knowledge and agreement of parents;
- No member of College staff should drive or walk a young person home on their own unless the circumstances are exceptional. No member of College staff should ever take a young person to their home. In any one-to-one situation that is not a clear and proper part of your work you put yourself at risk of false allegations.
- All staff are advised within the "Code of Conduct" policy about acceptable use of IT to communicate with children.
- In every interview process one member of the interviewing team will have successfully completed the DfE Safer Recruitment Course.

Allegations

- Staff should never let allegations by a child or young person go unrecorded or unreported. In all instances the Child Protection Officer must be informed;
- If a concern is raised, or an allegation is made, that a pupil may be experiencing abuse/neglect by a pupil/pupils within the College, the Child Protection Officer must be informed immediately. Investigations into such allegations will be led by the Headmaster/CPO with advice from the Local Authority Designated Office (LADO)/Somerset Local Child Safeguarding Board. Attempts should be made to ensure that all the pupils involved are safe, whether Boarders or Day pupils, until the investigation is complete;
- If staff receive a disclosure it is important to reassure the child that what he/she says will be taken very seriously and everything possible done to help.
- If staff receive an allegation about any adult from within the College community (or even about themselves) they should record the facts as they are known and must report this immediately to the Headmaster. Investigations into such allegations will be led by the Headmaster with advice from the Local Authority Designated Office (LADO). Attempts should be made to ensure that no-one is placed in a position which could cause further compromise and remember: always refer, never investigate.
- In the unlikely event of the CPO or the Headmaster being implicated in some way in the child's concerns, staff should refer the matter to the Deputy Headmaster who will take the matter to the appropriate designated Governor.

Protective Behaviours

Teaching 'protective behaviours' is part of the College's PSHME programme. Children and young people are therefore made aware of the following:

- Potential dangers and how to avoid them;
- That if in trouble they should find an appropriate person in authority such as a teacher or policeman;
- That sometimes it is alright to scream and shout to attract attention if they think they are in danger;
- That they should not have to accept touching, kissing or language that makes them feel uncomfortable;
- That sometimes secrets are wrong and should not be kept;
- That adults will listen to them if they reveal a secret;
- Their right to say 'No' if someone tries to touch them in a way that frightens or confuses them;
- That their bodies are their own, particularly their sexual organs.

Conclusions

- If staff are concerned about a child or young person, or suspect that abuse is taking place, it is their statutory duty to act on it by reporting as directed by the College's Child Protection Policy;



- Staff must always report their concerns immediately, whether this is inappropriate adult behaviour, a false allegation, a disclosure from a child or merely having concerns about a child. Never wait to 'see what happens';
- Staff should never cross-examine a child or try to investigate the child themselves. This could prejudice a case by probing for more information than is given. If an investigation is necessary it will be handled by child protection professionals;
- Staff should ensure that their own behaviour is appropriate at all times and should never believe that 'it won't happen to me';
- Staff should make sure they have in their possession a copy of the College's Child Protection Policy and that they are well acquainted with its contents. This is a requirement.

See "Guidance for School Staff" for children and young people which was given legal force in the Children Act 2004.