



SAFEGUARDING AND PROMOTING THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN POLICY (formerly known as the Child Protection policy)

Downe House recognises its legal duty to work with other agencies in protecting children from harm and responding to abuse.

Downe House is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment and adhere to and comply with the school's Child Protection Policy statement at all times.

AIM

To ensure that all pupils at Downe House are in an environment which promises the welfare of children by, in this case, ensuring that the correct procedures are in place to enable Child Protection issues to be dealt with effectively, efficiently and sensitively.

PROCEDURES

1. Child Protection is recognised as an important issue by the School and is regularly brought up at House staff and other appropriate meetings.
2. Guidance on the best way to recognise abuse, react and deal with the issues is regularly updated and published in the Staff Handbook. Other documentation, including the Berkshire Area Child Protection Procedure Handbook, is available in the Staff Common Room and through the Deputy Headmistress.
3. The School seeks to adopt an open and accepting attitude towards pupils as part of our responsibility for pastoral care. Staff hope that parents and pupils feel free to talk about any concerns and see the School as a safe place if there are any difficulties at home.
4. The School offers pupils a range of 'listeners' to whom they may go to discuss problems or whom they may contact. These include outsiders and are published in each Boarding House and are published in the Student Planner.
5. The School has an Official Complaints procedure through which pupils can exercise their right to complain about issues or concerns in the School that are worrying them.
6. Child protection related issues are dealt with through the curriculum as appropriate but especially through the Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education programme.
7. The School seeks to promote positive working relationships with other agencies involved in protecting children from harm and responding to abuse.
8. Appropriate INSET will be provided for staff to ensure that they are up-to-date with Child Protection issues and procedures.
9. All pupils are encouraged to treat each other with respect and bullying is identified as an issue to be treated seriously and dealt with efficiently, effectively and sensitively.
10. The School seeks to promote an atmosphere in which there is mutual respect between staff and pupils. Pupils will not be punished within the School by any form of hitting, slapping, shaking or other degrading treatment.
11. The School supports the attached guidelines designed to protect Children and Young People who feel the need to whistle blow.

REVIEW

The Deputy Headmistress will review this policy annually with the Headmistress; the Board of Governors Education Committee will consider any amendments for approval.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the Child Protection Guidance published in the Downe House Staff Handbook.

Review Leader: Headmistress
Reviewed: August 2009
Next review: August 2010



**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
WHISTLE BLOWING GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOLS
Approved by the LSCB December 2005**

Adults working in a school are often the first to realise that someone's behaviour is, or is likely to cause harm to a child or young person.

Research also tells us that adults who target children for abuse will often seek out jobs and positions that bring them into close contact with children.

This School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child, and expects the highest possible standards of openness.

This School recognises that the decision to report a concern can be a difficult one to make, not least because of the fear of reprisals from those responsible.

This School will not tolerate harassment or victimisation and will take all possible measures to protect anyone who raises concerns in good faith.

All concerns will be treated in confidence and we will make every effort not to reveal your identity if you so wish. At the appropriate time, however, you may need to come forward as a witness.

If you voice suspicion in good faith but it is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against you.

If the investigation concludes that you have maliciously fabricated the allegations, disciplinary action may be taken against you. The earlier a concern is reported, the easier it is to take action.

As a first step any concerns regarding child welfare, no matter how minor they may seem, should be raised with the Headmistress or the Designated Person for Child Protection (Headmistress, Deputy Headmistress or Assistant Headmistress) (DPCP).

If your concerns relate to the Headmistress, then you should raise your concerns with the Deputy Headmistress who will inform the Chairman of Governors or CYP.

It is of the utmost importance that anyone concerned with a suspect case of abuse maintains confidentiality at all times. The Headmistress or the DPCP (as appropriate) should be informed by the person suspecting abuse. The Headmistress or DPCP will consider who else should be informed within the School.

If you feel that you cannot approach any of these, the lead officer in Education for Safeguarding can be consulted. (Tel 01635 19785) or the CYP Improvement Manager for Safeguarding Children can offer advice and support (01635 503159).

Concerns are better raised in writing. If you feel this is not possible you can telephone or meet the appropriate person.

Your report, written or verbal, should set out the background and history of the concern, giving names, dates and places where possible, and the reason why you are concerned about the situation.

N.B. This document should be read in conjunction with West Berkshire Confidential Reporting code April 2000. Policy and The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and all Downe House relevant policies.

TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURE Recognition of Child Abuse and Follow-up Action Procedure

THE CHILDREN ACT 1989

Please see 'The Welfare of Children in Boarding Schools: Practice Guide: Social Services Inspectorate 1991' Section 6 'Observing Practice in Schools' pp 18-33. All Housemistresses should have a copy of this document for reference by them and the staff in their teams.

PLEASE NOTE: - '

Schools should be aware that pupils may suffer physical, sexual or emotional abuse either at home or away from the school, or within the school itself ... Schools should have clearly laid down procedures for dealing with abuse.'

6.7 (p.19) The Social Services Department should assess the extent to which the school accepts the principles:

- Abuse, in whatever form, always constitutes a serious harm to the child;
- Suspicion, belief or evidence of abuse to a child currently, or in the past, **MUST** be passed to a person with the authority to investigate and evaluate the information.
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6.8 (p.20) Schools should nominate a senior member of staff to have responsibility for child protection and welfare issues in the school and for liaison with the SSD.

Note: At Downe House the senior member of staff is the Headmistress. The Deputy head or Assistant Headmistress may be informed on her absence. Should the Headmistress be suspected of abuse the Deputy Head should be notified. She has a duty to inform the Chairman of Governors or CYP immediately.

REMEMBER: REFER ON - do not hold knowledge to yourself. IF YOU HAVE ANY DOUBTS OR SUSPICIONS PLEASE INFORM THE HEADMISTRESS IMMEDIATELY.

CHILD ABUSE

The basis of all child abuse is the failure to recognise a child's basic needs and respond to them.

Our duty as professional workers is to be open to the possibility that various forms of abuse may take place, to identify the indicators of such abuse, and to ensure that our concerns, once raised, are transmitted the Headmistress or DPCP (as appropriate).

DELAY in doing this might leave the child open to further and possibly more serious abuse and might result in a possible loss of evidence which could have been used to improve and/or protect the child's position.

Ref: School In-Service Child Protection Programme (Woodspring Area Review panel).

PARTICULAR INDICATORS OF ABUSE IN SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

1. PHYSICAL injury in any form.
2. NEGLECT, which might impair a child's health and development.
3. EMOTIONAL neglect, with a severe effect upon behaviour and emotional development. It is caused by persistent or severe rejection, gross inconsistency or inadequacy.
4. SEXUAL ABUSE on immature children and adolescents in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend, and to which they are unable to give informed consent. Such activities violate the social taboo of family roles and are against the law.
5. POTENTIAL ABUSE - This governs the circumstances of children who have not been abused but where there is a high degree of risk for the future.

Child abuse could involve both parents, a single parent, sibling, other relative, carer (someone who has custody of the child), fellow pupil or member of staff at the School or an acquaintance or stranger.

POSSIBLE CAUSES OF CHILD ABUSE

1. FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

- (a) Little evidence of parent/child attachment.
- (b) Evidence of poor marital relationship with mental strife - particularly if one partner is not the parent of the child, i.e. a stepparent.
- (c) Parents appear to have unrealistic expectations in terms of the child's behaviour/performance. They may use authoritarian style of child management.
- (d) Obsessional behaviour by parent(s) regarding a child as a mini-adult.
- (e) An unwanted pregnancy.

2 SOCIAL PROBLEMS

- (a) Social isolation. One parent may be constantly away. No extended family. No neighbourhood or friendship support. No escape routes in times of stress.
- (b) Succession of partners.
- (c) Alcohol/drug/solvent abuse.
- (d) Single parent of children with no extended family support

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF CHILD ABUSE

- 1 PHYSICAL INJURY Including bruising, scratch marks, bites, and burns.
- 2 EMOTIONAL ABUSE The most common form - but the most difficult to define and prove. Basically a failure to perceive and meet the child's emotional needs. Possible at **any level of society**. An individual child may be selected for abuse and it can be done for 'good' motives with too aspirant parents.
 - (a) Children may exhibit difficult and disturbed behaviour.
(NB It is necessary to have knowledge of both child and family in order to establish a connection between the child's state and the behaviour of the parents.)
 - (b) Children may seek and crave adult attention and affection and may persistently seek physical contact - particularly if emotional needs are neglected or rejected.
 - (c) They may compensate by overeating.
 - (d) Over-protection and exploitation by parents may interfere with self-esteem and movement towards competence which are part of the child's normal growth.

Watch particularly for - Parents - personality, mental illness, feelings and responses about the child. Child - general development and behaviour, response to parents, emotional stability, relationship with peers.

3 SEXUAL ABUSE

Much more prevalent than was previously thought. Up to 1 in 5 girls and 1 in 10 boys may experience some form during childhood. The perpetrator is usually commonly known to the child and is usually in a position of trust in relation to her or him.

Signs (apart from physical) include:

- (a) Sudden change in mood or behaviour.
- (b) A knowledge of sexual matters far in excess of chronological age - evidence in play, words, drawing, etc.
- (c) Marked lack of trust in adults - particularly men.
- (d) Abused children tend to be lonely and friendless and in social isolation.

They lack the 'joy of childhood' and yearn substitutes to love - often trying to win or buy friends.

4 OTHER GENERAL SIGNS shown by older children include: -

- (a) Anti-social behaviour or delinquency in young teenagers e.g. sexually precocious behaviour, promiscuity.
- (b) Hysterical attacks or sudden changes in mood.
- (c) Truancy or running away from home.
- (d) Suicide attempts and self-mutilation.
- (e) Dependence on alcohol or drugs.
- (f) Change in eating pattern, e.g. loss of appetite, faddiness or excessive pre-occupation with food.
- (g) Disobedience, attention seeking, aimless behaviour, poor concentration.
- (h) Social isolation.
- (i) Severe sleep disturbance with fears - vivid dreams and nightmares.
- (j) Inappropriate display of affection between fathers and daughters (father may be over-concerned about his daughter).
- (k) Poor peer-group relationships and inability to make friends.
- (l) Inability to concentrate, learning difficulties, or a sudden drop in school performance. (School might be a haven for a sexually abused child who arrives early, leaves late and works very well).
- (m) Marked reluctance to take part in physical activities or change for PE
- (n) Regular avoidance and fear of school medical.

DEALING WITH DISCLOSURE

1. LISTEN try to understand. Do not ask leading questions.
2. BELIEVE reassure the child and support. (Be careful not to make promises about confidentiality which may have to be broken). If you are told about abuse you have a responsibility to tell the right people to get something done about it. Explain to the individual that if you are going to be told something very important then you may need to pass on some information, but that you will only tell the people who absolutely have to know.
3. AFFIRM accept the child's feelings and avoid projecting your own.
4. Make notes while the individual is speaking and keep your original notes or, if you do not have the means to write at the time, make notes immediately after finishing the session.
5. REFER ON do NOT hold knowledge to yourself. You must inform the Headmistress or DPCP immediately (in writing or with written confirmation of a telephoned referral) so the matter can be passed on within 24 hours. Please provide her/ the DPCP with a copy of your notes as soon as possible.
6. Ensure the child is handed onto a sympathetic, appropriate environment when she leaves you, e.g. Do not leave her on her own. Report back and discuss with the Headmistress/DPCP the next steps needed to protect the individual who has told you of the abuse.
7. Never attempt to carry out an investigation of suspected or alleged abuse yourself.

8. The Headmistress/DPCP will contact local Social Services when appropriate and follow up their instructions about what to do next.

PROFESSIONAL ROLE

POWERS None

DUTIES Teachers are by law 'in loco parentis' whilst a child is in their care. Responsibilities include protecting a child and promoting her/his welfare.

SKILLS They are qualified by training and experience to notice deviations from normal development and often have special opportunities to observe parent-child interactions.

THE SCHOOL'S ROLE

Most school teachers, at some time during their school careers, will find themselves teaching a child who has been a victim of child abuse. A teacher is in a unique position to detect the early signs and symptoms when a child has been abused, and should know how to seek protection for the child and help for the parent. However, the role of the school is wider than merely to report child abuse.

No other agency has contact with nearly every child in the country. Moreover, schools are the major social institution concerned with the development of children. It is only in school that a child regularly comes into contact with a professional trained in observation and assessment.

Teachers may feel that they are neither social workers nor therapists. However, it is in school in the classroom that children have an opportunity to experience a good child-adult relationship. It follows that the teacher has an important relationship with the child and can help her/him. Moreover, the teacher who is in daily contact with the child should have a key role in any inter-disciplinary treatment process.

The role of the teacher and the school in monitoring the progress of a child who is identified as a victim, or is at risk, of abuse will be a continuing obligation. Sometimes the teacher will need advice on how to respond to a child's behaviour in the classroom. At such times, she/he will need access to other professionals involved with the child such as the social worker, the education welfare officer, the school doctor and the educational psychologist. The Headmistress will help teachers to obtain access to other professionals.

At the same time teachers are not the only adults with whom children at school come into regular contact. All schools have clerical and administrative staff, school keepers, school catering, and a range of other professional and ancillary workers who see children at various times. Most primary schools and, increasingly, secondary schools encourage parents to play an active part in the life of the school. All these adults have a potential role to play in recognising the symptoms of child abuse. It follows that schools should assume a major responsibility in facilitating, reporting, and participating in bringing in professional help to the abused child. In fact, the school may be the only source of obtaining help for the child. Whilst the social worker may offer a therapeutic relationship to the child and the family, the school also offers the abused child positive experiences: a sense of achievement and self worth; the chance to establish safe peer relationships; and the opportunity to see adults in a supportive, consistent and caring role. It is also important to recognise that the next generation of baby batterers are now in our secondary schools and therefore schools have an important and preventative role to play by introducing into the curriculum sensitive and well thought out course units on child development and good parenting.

Children in both primary and secondary schools (and sometimes young adults) can be subject to the same range of maltreatment as very young children. Contrary to popular view, child abuse is not confined to infants and many children whose names are included in the child protection register files are of school age, remain at home with their parents, and attend local authority day schools. The notion that an older child is big enough to resist abuse, to run away, or to tell somebody of attempted physical

abuse is not altogether valid. In fact, minor physical abuse of older children often goes unnoticed because the child hides the marks of abuse from the adult at school. With secondary school pupils in particular teachers need to be aware of the possibility that child abuse is a contributory feature when a young person runs away from home or is potentially self-destructive. It is likely that such a pupil is imprisoned in a structure of emotionally abusive relationships in the family from which it is difficult to escape.

Our understanding about the abuse of secondary age children is limited by the small amount of investigation that has been undertaken. Furthermore, because of the difficulties of identification the number of abused children in secondary schools may be greater than the number on child abuse registers. Few older children tell of their trauma but they are likely to display behaviour in school which is either excessively withdrawn or which is disruptive, representing and acting out the bad effects of the relationship between themselves and the abusing adult(s) at home. Not enough is known about these relationships, but research into the long term effects of child abuse indicates that some children who are members of child protection registered families exhibit serious behaviour problems at school. It is therefore important that teachers carefully consider the possibility that an uncooperative or disruptive pupil is subject to abuse at home.

A research project conducted by the NSPCC investigating the abuse of older children noted that the effect of the actual injury was difficult to assess for various reasons. Small injuries, unless detected, were left to heal themselves. Many children played down the physical effects and on the surface accepted their parents' view of the incident. They also accepted blame and would therefore not attempt to use the injuries for sympathy. Some children readily adopted the role of victim and drew punishment to themselves. Even the children who went to hospital did not excite much sympathy. A boy who did not stay off school when he was told to was so severely punished that he was in hospital for two days. An otherwise caring ward sister told the worker, 'he is a menace and no wonder his father hit him'. It would perhaps not be unreasonable to think that he may well have behaved in a similar way at school. It was supposed that he was playing the same role in hospital that he had learned to play at home; an indication of the nature of the emotional abuse that was found.

Finally, an important point needs to be stressed. Education staff have a responsibility for the welfare of school children at all times but particularly when they think that a child is in difficulties.