



REIGATE ST MARY'S  
PREPARATORY AND CHOIR SCHOOL

## Child Protection Policy

November 2009

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the *Children Act 1989*; and in line with the government publication *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education* (DFES-04217-2006), and the Surrey Safeguarding Children Board's (SSCB) Procedures.

### 1. Aims

- ⌚ To raise the awareness of teaching and non-teaching staff of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.
- ⌚ To provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm, and ensure we, the school, contribute to assessments of need and support packages for those children.
- ⌚ To emphasize the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff.
- ⌚ To develop a structured procedure within the school which will be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse.
- ⌚ To develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, especially the Police and Social Services.
- ⌚ To ensure that all adults within the school who have substantial access to children have been checked as to their suitability.

### 2. Principles

2.1 Reigate St Mary's is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment.

2.2 The school aims to provide an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued and respected, and feel confident, and know how to, approach adults if they are in difficulties believing they will be effectively listened to.

2.3 We recognise that all adults have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm, and that the child's welfare is our paramount concern.

2.4 The school will work with other agencies to ensure adequate arrangements to identify, assess and support those children who are suffering harm.

### 3. Management of Child Protection

3.1 The Board of Governors takes seriously its responsibility to uphold the aims of the charity and its duty of care in promoting the welfare of children, ensuring their security and protecting them from harm. The Criminal Records Bureau checks all members of the Board of Governors and changes to this information are passed to the DCSF with the annual census. A Governor is nominated by the Board of Governors to have oversight of pastoral care and the relevant policies at Reigate Grammar School and Reigate St Mary's, (currently Professor Finbarr Cotter) including child protection, and the name of the nominated governor can be found on the RGS school website and in the Parents' Handbook. The nominated governor also instigates the annual review of this policy.

3.2 The Headmaster is accountable to the Board of Governors for the provision of an ethos, curriculum and procedures which will support every child's development in line with the published aims of the school. The Headmaster is also responsible for ensuring that the procedures contained in this policy are followed, and for

ensuring that relevant legislation is incorporated as necessary. Any identified deficiencies or weaknesses in the child protection arrangements will be remedied without delay.

3.3 Two members of staff (Mrs J Akerman (Early Years) and Mrs T Clifford (Years 1 – 6) ), will act as the school's **Child Protection Liaison Officers** (CPLOs), having undertaken the Two Day Child Protection Foundation Training delivered through the ACPC Training Manager or the NSPCC equivalent. The Early Years Coordinator is the designated practitioner who takes lead responsibility for safeguarding children in the EYFS setting. The CPLOs receive updated training in Child Protection and Inter-Agency working every two years from a recognized and approved provider. The CPLOs will liaise with local statutory children's agencies as appropriate contacting OFSTED regarding any allegations of serious harm or abuse as soon as is reasonably practicable and always within 14 days.

3.4 The CPLOs are responsible for raising awareness of Child Protection with staff, and for organising training where required. Key pastoral leaders and adults who are most likely to come into contact with child protection cases or who receive referrals as part of usual pastoral routines for ensuring the welfare of children have received appropriate training. All teaching staff receive Child Protection and Inter-Agency working training from a recognized and approved provider every three years as part of their INSET day. Courses in Child Protection are also made available to staff who wish to undertake them as part of the school's performance management programme. A current training register is accessible to staff and governors, and can be made available to parents on request.

3.5 Other members of staff, including new members of staff, are made aware of procedures through the staff handbook and during their induction as new members of staff. They receive safeguarding and welfare promotion training from the CPLOs. All part-time, ancillary, voluntary staff and lay clerks receive safeguarding and welfare promotion training from the CPLOs every three years. The staff handbook contains the child protection policy with a link to the DCFS booklet *What to do if you think a child is being abused*. Further information is available from [www.surreycc.gov.uk](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk)

#### **4. Responsibilities of CPLOs**

The CPLOs are responsible for:

- ⌚ Where there are concerns about possible abuse, referring the child to the Children's Services Assessment Team, and acting as a focal point for staff to discuss concerns. A written record of the referral will be faxed to the Assessment Team and a copy faxed to the Development Manager for Welfare and Protection, within one hour of making a referral by telephone.
- ⌚ Keeping written records of concerns about a child even if there is no need to make an immediate referral.
- ⌚ Ensuring that all such records are kept confidentially and securely and are separate from pupil records.
- ⌚ Ensuring that an indication of further record-keeping is marked on the pupil records.
- ⌚ Liaising with other agencies and professionals. (Surrey County Council contact no 0300 200 1006. Emergency Duty Team 01483 517898).
- ⌚ Ensuring that either they, the form tutor or other delegated member of staff, attend case conferences, core groups, or other multi-agency planning meetings, contribute to assessments, and provide a report which, where appropriate, has been shared with the parents.
- ⌚ Ensuring that any pupil currently on the child protection register who is absent without explanation for two days is referred to their key worker's Social Care Team.
- ⌚ Organising child protection training for school staff and informing all staff of child protection procedures.
- ⌚ Providing the Headmaster with an annual report detailing any changes to the policy and procedures; training undertaken by the CPLOs, and by members of staff; the number and type of incidents/cases, and number of children currently on the child protection register (anonymised).

## **5. Supporting children**

5.1 It is recognised that a child who is abused or witnesses violence may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame themselves, and may find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self worth.

5.2 The school recognises that it may provide the only stability in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm.

5.3 The school accepts that research shows that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn.

5.4 The school will support all pupils by:

- ⌚ Encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness, through the curriculum as well as our relationships, whilst not condoning aggression or bullying.
- ⌚ Promoting a caring, safe and positive environment within the school.
- ⌚ Liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children.
- ⌚ Notifying the Assessment Team as soon as there is a significant concern.
- ⌚ Providing continuing support to a pupil about whom there have been concerns who leaves the school by ensuring that appropriate information is forwarded under confidential cover to the pupil's new school and ensuring the school medical records are forwarded as a matter of priority.

## **6. Pastoral education and bullying**

6.1 The school promotes the welfare of children through the PSHE curriculum, the ICT curriculum, pastoral days and parents' forums. Pupils are given the information to avoid situations and persons, including over the internet, which could lead them into harm.

6.2 The school is determined that no kind of bullying will be tolerated. The school's anti-bullying policy can be found in the staff handbook and on the school website. The school acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures. This includes homophobic and gender related bullying.

## **7. Health & Safety and Educational Visits**

7.1 The school's Health & Safety and Educational visits procedures are set out in separate documents, and reflect the consideration we give to the protection of our children both physically within the school environment and away from the school when undertaking school trips and visits.

## **8. Confidentiality**

8.1 We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential.

8.2 The Headmaster or CPLOs will disclose any information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need to know basis only.

8.3 All staff are made aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.

8.4 All staff are made aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or welfare.

8.5 We will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to Children's Services with their parents or carers, unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm, or impede a criminal investigation. If in doubt, we will consult with the Duty Manager at the Assessment Team.

## **9. Appointment of staff**

9.1 School procedures for appointing staff are in line with *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education* (DFES-04217-2006), and SSCB procedures. These procedures will be reviewed regularly in the light of new legislation and guidance.

9.2 Child protection issues must be uppermost in our mind throughout the process of appointing both teaching and support staff. Staff responsible for the appointment of new teaching and support staff have completed training in safer recruitment run by an approved body.

9.3 The appointment process is designed to deter potential offenders from applying. All applicants are required to complete application forms which are designed to prompt interviewers to spot lacunae, frequent changes of jobs and movement around the country. They state the primacy of child protection

concerns at the school and require a declaration of past convictions and whether or not the candidate is on List 99 or disqualified from working with children. References are taken up in advance, and interviews include questions regarding child protection issues.

9.4 All applicants who are offered employment in posts involving access to children (whether teaching or support) are subject to a criminal record check with the Criminal Records Bureau before the appointment is confirmed. Other adults who may come into direct contact with pupils as part of their business with the school or on an infrequent basis (coach drivers, parents helping on trips) are checked against List 99.

9.5 Any member of staff found not suitable to work with children will be notified to the appropriate bodies. In line with DCSF guidance, any serious concern raised, whether proven or not, will be reported in staff references.

#### **10. Supporting staff**

10.1 We recognise that staff working in the school who have become involved with a child who has suffered harm, or appears to be likely to suffer harm, may find the situation stressful and upsetting.

10.2 We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the CPLO and to seek further support as appropriate.

#### **11. Whistleblowing**

11.1 We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.

11.2 All staff should be aware of their duty to raise any concerns about the management of child protection, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues. If the member of staff reporting suspicions remains dissatisfied by a decision not to act by the Headmaster or the CPLOs, he or she may, as a responsible citizen, report concerns directly to Social Services. He or she will be considered to have acted in a private capacity and will not be held accountable for undermining a school decision.

#### **12. Physical intervention**

12.1 School policy on physical intervention by staff is set out in the *Safeguarding Children, Protecting Staff document April 2008* (available electronically in the staff handbook and a hard copy on request. This requires staff to use physical intervention only as a last resort when a child is endangering him/herself or others; at all times, such intervention must involve the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person. All such events should be recorded and signed by a witness.

12.2 Physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures.

#### **13. Allegations against staff**

13.1 Any allegation of abuse made against a teacher or other member of staff or volunteer will be dealt with 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.

13.2 All school staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents to be conducted in view of other adults. If this is not possible, staff are advised to select a room with a window and to place themselves in a position in which they can be seen.

13.3 Staff are required to read the school's document entitled *Safeguarding Children, Protecting Staff* (issued to all staff), which provides clear guidelines on appropriate behaviour, and how to report concerns.

13.4 An allegation should be made if a teacher or other member of staff 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 children in a way that indicates he or she is unsuitable to work with children in his or her present position, or in any capacity.

13.5 An allegation against a member of staff may be made by a pupil, a parent or another member of staff.

13.6 All allegations will be taken seriously, and the Headmaster (or, if the allegation concerns the Headmaster, the Chairman of Governors) must be informed immediately. A full procedure for dealing with such allegations can be found at Appendix 1.

13.7 In cases of serious harm, the police will be involved from the outset.

13.8 If the allegation is made against a volunteer, a supply teacher, contractor or other person not directly employed by the school, the investigation must involve the organisation or agency of employment. For those who are self-employed, the allegation will be passed directly to the Surrey ACPC team for advice or action.

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13.9 In the event of the school ceasing to use a person's services as a result of them being unsuitable to work with children the school will contact the ISA and will provide the ISA with information held on file in response to any request that is made.

# Appendix 1

## Procedures following an allegation of abuse against a member of staff

### 1. Considerations

Once an allegation has been made, the Headmaster (or the Chairman of the Governing Body, if the allegation is made against the Headmaster) will investigate to establish whether the allegation is not substantially false or unfounded. He may decide to use an independent adviser, or a Head or Governor of another school.

If the allegation is found not to be substantially false or unfounded, it will be usually the case that Surrey ACPC will action a strategy discussion for the protection of the child concerned or will contact the police for further investigation.

If the child is not likely to suffer significant harm, but a criminal offence has been committed, the police will be informed directly.

### 2. Record Keeping

A clear and comprehensive summary of any allegations made against a member of staff, and all details leading to and including a resolution, will be kept on the confidential personnel file and will be retained until the member of staff reaches retirement age or for a period of 10 years after the allegation has been made. The school will provide information regarding an allegation for the purposes of future references and CRB disclosures in accordance with paragraph 9.5 above.

### 3. Procedures

If it is decided that the allegation does not involve a criminal offence and/or does not require formal disciplinary action, the Headmaster will institute appropriate action **within 3 working days**. If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, the hearing should be held **within 15 working days**.

According to the terms of the teacher's contract, the Headmaster may suspend a member of staff whilst an investigation is progressing, dependent on the seriousness of the case. Suspension will always occur if there is cause to suspect a child is at risk of significant harm. The decision to suspend remains with the Headmaster. Suspension itself does not constitute disciplinary action, and the member of staff will continue to receive full pay. Parents or guardians of a child concerned will be told about the case, if they do not already know, and will be kept informed of the progress, including the outcome, but not the details of any disciplinary process.

The person who is subject to the allegation will be kept informed at all times of developments. Those who are members of a union are advised to contact the union at the outset.

### 4. Action

If the allegation is found to be false, and the person has been suspended, then the school will support him or her as best it can, if necessary with the provision of a mentor to return to work, and will attempt to minimise contact with the pupil(s) involved in making the allegation if they remain at school. The school will consider serious disciplinary action against a child who has been found to make deliberately false allegations.

If the allegation is substantiated, the normal disciplinary procedure for staff will be followed. A criminal offence, regardless of significant harm to a child, would be considered as gross misconduct and is liable to dismissal, subject to appeal to the governors.

The school will report the dismissal of any member of staff or volunteer following a substantiated allegation to the DCSF, the CRB and the police.

### 5. Review

A review of procedures will take place after any allegations made.