

## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT**

**In all of the work that we do at Vinehall, we see the rights, safety and welfare of children as paramount. This means that sometimes we have to take actions which some parents/carers could find threatening. In such cases we will work towards mutual understanding. We will explain our professional responsibilities and we will give every reassurance as to our motives but we will always stress that, for us, children's needs have to come first.**

Our policy applies to all staff and governors working in the school, all of whom have a responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and for ensuring that they are protected from harm. There are five main elements to our policy:

- Ensuring that we practise safe recruitment and selection procedures to ensure that all staff and volunteers have been appropriately screened prior to appointment and are suitable to work with children.
- Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe.
- Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
- Supporting pupils who have been abused (in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan).
- Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.

We recognise that because of the day to day contact with children, staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse, particularly in a boarding school setting. We will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Ensure that children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Include opportunities in the PSHE curriculum for children to develop the skills that they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

We will follow the procedures set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) (previously the Area Child Protection Committee) and take account of guidance issued by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) to:

- Provide a designated Child Protection Officer (CPO) and Welfare Team who have received appropriate training in child protection and inter-agency working and support for this role together with training updates every two years.
- Designate a school governor to be responsible for overseeing child protection; reviewing the school's policies and procedures annually; reviewing, annually, the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged.
- Ensure that every member of staff and governor knows the name of the CPO, his deputy and their roles.
- Provide training in child protection for the Head and all staff (including Support Staff), with updates every three years.
- Ensure all staff understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the CPO.
- Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection by setting out its obligations in the Parents' Handbook.
- Notify Social Services if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a pupil who is on the child protection register.
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences.
- Keep written, dated and signed records of concerns about children, even when there

is no need to refer the matter immediately.

- Keep records in a locked drawer, separate from the main pupil file.
- Develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff (see Staff Handbook Appendix 2 to Annex 8: Crisis Management Procedures in cases of Suspected Child Abuse and Chapter 5 of Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education dated Nov 06, held by the CPO).
- Ensure that safe recruitment and selection practices are always followed (see SOP 002 below).
- Follow the agreed inter-agency procedures set out in the Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures.
- Ensure that any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements are rectified without delay.

We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. School may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at school their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. We will endeavour to support the pupil through:

- The content of the curriculum (for example PSHE lessons).
- The school ethos, which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued.
- The school behaviour policy which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the school. The school will aim to ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
- Liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as social services, Child and Adult Mental Health Service, education welfare service and educational psychology service.
- Ensuring that, where a pupil on the child protection register leaves, their information is transferred to the new school immediately and that the child's social worker is informed.

All staff and parents should be fully aware of the school's Child Protection Policy and to whom they should report any concerns. Pre-Prep staff should report any concerns to Head of Pre-Prep, who will discuss with the CPO.