

SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

For Boarding Tutors and Residential Staff

1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

This policy outlines the principles, procedures, and responsibilities for safeguarding and protecting children within our boarding environment. All boarding tutors and residential staff must read, understand, and adhere to this policy.

The safety and welfare of children is paramount. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding. Boarding tutors and residential staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early and provide help for children to prevent concerns from escalating.

Key Principle: All children have a right to be safe and protected from harm. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

2. LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND DEFINITIONS

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by:

- Children Acts 1989 and 2004
- Education Act 2002
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (latest version)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (latest version)
- National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools
- [Additional relevant legislation for your country/region]

Key Definitions:

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Child protection refers to the processes undertaken to protect children who have been identified as suffering or being at risk of suffering significant harm.

Child refers to anyone under the age of 18 years.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All Boarding Tutors and Residential Staff must:

- Read and understand this policy and related procedures
- Complete required safeguarding training
- Be alert to signs of abuse and neglect
- Report any concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Record concerns accurately and promptly
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries with students
- Follow the staff code of conduct
- Ensure their behavior does not place students or themselves at risk of harm
- Never promise confidentiality to a student

Key Safeguarding Personnel:

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): [Name]

Contact: [Phone number and email]

Deputy DSL: [Name]

Contact: [Phone number and email]

Head of Boarding: [Name]

Contact: [Phone number and email]

Local Authority Safeguarding Contact: [Name/Department]

Contact: [Phone number and email]

Emergency Contact (out of hours): [Phone number]

4. RECOGNIZING ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Someone may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family, institutional, or community setting by those known to them or by others (e.g., via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Categories of Abuse:

Physical Abuse: A form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Emotional Abuse: The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

Sexual Abuse: Involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

Neglect: 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.

Signs of Possible Abuse:

- Unexplained injuries or burns
- Excessive fear of making mistakes or of certain adults
- Aggressive behavior or severe temper outbursts
- Flinching when approached or touched

- Reluctance to change clothes or for physical activities
- Depression or withdrawal
- Inappropriate sexual knowledge or behavior
- Frequent lateness or absence from school
- Poor personal hygiene or constant hunger
- Self-harm or suicidal thoughts
- Running away from home or boarding house
- Substance misuse

Important Note: This is not an exhaustive list, and the presence of one or more of these signs does not necessarily indicate abuse. However, they should raise concerns and prompt further investigation.

5. SPECIFIC SAFEGUARDING ISSUES IN BOARDING ENVIRONMENTS

Boarding environments present unique safeguarding challenges that require specific awareness and procedures:

Peer-on-Peer Abuse:

Children can abuse other children. This can include bullying (including cyberbullying), physical abuse, sexual violence, sexual harassment, upskirting, sexting, and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

Mental Health Concerns:

Boarding students may experience homesickness, anxiety, depression, eating disorders, self-harm, or suicidal thoughts. Staff must be vigilant for signs of mental health difficulties.

Online Safety:

Boarding students often have increased internet access during evenings and weekends. Staff must be aware of online risks including cyberbullying, grooming, radicalization, and inappropriate content.

Cultural Considerations:

International boarding students may have different cultural backgrounds and expectations. Staff must be culturally sensitive while ensuring all students are protected according to UK standards.

Missing Students:

Procedures must be in place for responding to students who are missing from the boarding house, including when to contact parents and authorities.

6. REPORTING PROCEDURES

If a student discloses abuse:

1. Listen carefully and take the disclosure seriously
2. Reassure the student they have done the right thing by telling you
3. Do not promise confidentiality
4. Do not ask leading questions
5. Explain what will happen next
6. Report immediately to the DSL
7. Record the disclosure in writing as soon as possible

If you have concerns about a student:

1. Record your concerns in writing, including dates, times, and specific observations
2. Report to the DSL as soon as possible (within the same working day)
3. If the DSL is unavailable, report to the Deputy DSL or Head of Boarding
4. In an emergency or if a child is in immediate danger, contact the police (999)
5. Follow up if you do not receive feedback on your concern

Reporting Form Location:

Safeguarding concern forms are located [specify location]. Electronic reporting can be done via [specify system if applicable].

Remember: It is not your responsibility to investigate concerns or determine the truth. Your responsibility is to report concerns promptly and accurately.

7. CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING

All matters relating to child protection are confidential, but information must be shared with appropriate staff on a "need to know" basis to safeguard children.

- Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about an allegation
- Consent should be sought to share information unless it would put the child at risk or impede a criminal investigation
- Information sharing decisions should be recorded
- All written records must be stored securely

The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

8. SAFER RECRUITMENT AND STAFF CONDUCT

The school follows safer recruitment procedures to ensure all staff working with children are suitable:

- Enhanced DBS checks (or equivalent) for all staff
- Verification of identity and qualifications
- Overseas checks where applicable
- References and employment history checks
- Prohibition from teaching checks where applicable
- Section 128 checks for management positions
- Comprehensive induction including safeguarding training

Staff Conduct:

All boarding tutors and residential staff must adhere to the Staff Code of Conduct, which includes:

- Maintaining appropriate professional boundaries
- Guidelines for physical contact with students
- Communication with students (including electronic communication)
- One-to-one situations with students
- Appropriate dress and language
- Reporting concerns about colleagues (whistleblowing)

9. TRAINING AND SUPPORT

All boarding tutors and residential staff will receive:

- Induction training including safeguarding procedures
- Regular safeguarding updates (at least annually)
- Formal safeguarding training (at least every three years)
- Training on specific safeguarding issues relevant to boarding

Staff involved in safeguarding cases will be offered appropriate support through:

- Regular supervision with line managers
- Access to counseling services if needed
- Debriefing following significant incidents

10. POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if there are significant changes to legislation or guidance.

Last reviewed: [Date]

Next review due: [Date]

I confirm that I have read, understood, and agree to comply with this Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.

Signature

Full Name (printed):

Position:

Date: