



# THE OXFORD SCHOOL

## Child Protection Policy

### Rationale

The Oxford School recognises that because of their day -to-day contact with children, school staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. The school will therefore:

- establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to, whilst remembering that unconditional
- confidentiality cannot be promised (it may be necessary to seek help from others for the child);
- ensure children know that there are adults in the school who they can approach if they are worried;
- include opportunities throughout the curriculum, including ICT and PSHE, for children to develop the skills they need to recognise, and stay safe from, abuse (including online abuse).

### Aims

This policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the school. The policy has five main elements:

- ensuring we practise safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers 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 students who have been abused, in accordance with their agreed child protection plan;
- establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop

### Roles and Responsibilities

Staff in this school is well placed to observe possible signs of abuse in children. It is neither the role nor responsibility of those working with children in the school to assess, diagnose or investigate whether a child is at risk of or suffering harm or abuse. It is the responsibility of all staff to be aware of the need to report any concerns about a child to the Designated Member of Staff as a matter of priority or to one of the Designated Members of Staff.

### The School Principal will ensure the following:

The policies and procedure adopted by the School are fully implemented, and followed by all staff; resources and time are allocated to enable the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and other staff to discharge their responsibilities, including taking part in strategy discussions and other inter-agency meetings, and contributing



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to the assessment of children; all staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice in regard to children, and such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner.

There are two principles that the SENCO should always bear in mind:

1. The welfare of the child is paramount and should always be at the forefront of all decisions taken
2. Confidentiality must be respected at all times

## **The SENCO will ensure the following:**

- ♣ The school has a child protection policy and procedures in place, and the policy is made available to Parents on request.
- ♣ The school operates safe recruitment practices, including appropriate use of References and checks on new staff
- ♣ There are procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff
- ♣ There is a member of the school's senior management team (SMT), who is designated to take lead responsibility for dealing with child protection (the "Designated Senior Person for Child Protection")
- ♣ The Principal and all other staff who work with children, undertake appropriate training as part of their induction of the school's arrangements for child protection and their responsibilities.
- ♣ Policies and procedures are reviewed annually

## **Senior Leadership Team will ensure the following:**

- Make sure all staff know about the procedures relating to child protection
- Ensure that all staff are clear about their responsibilities within the child protection procedures
- Make sure that all staff know that the designated teacher should be informed about any suspicions or allegations of abuse
- Ensure the Heads of School are kept informed of every situation , including those cases of uncertainty, as well as giving an update report on the welfare of those children who have a Child Protection Plan or are being monitored
- Attend relevant Child Protection INSET
- Keep all records up to date
- Advise staff in cases of uncertainty and give informed advice and guidance to new staff
- Consider, in conjunction with the Head of School, at what point to involve parents/carers
- Contact and Liaise with other relevant agencies
- Be supportive to those members of staff to whom pupils have made disclosures
- Be active in supporting the Child Protection Plan
- Ensure, in consultation with the Head of School, that arrangements are in place for police checks on voluntary helpers



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## The Role of Staff

- All staff will be alert to signs of abuse and will act upon any concerns or suspicions. Observations/comments should be recorded on the relevant form and passed on immediately to the SENCO
- All staff, including the SENCO, will receive adequate and appropriate training
- All staff will respect confidentiality and share information on a need to know basis
- If the SENCO is not in school, staff should go to the Head of School.

## Partnership with Parents

The Oxford School recognises that the protection of children should always be of paramount importance and consideration and that the primary focus in child protection should always be the child's safety and welfare. However, good child protection practice and outcome relies on a positive, open, honest working partnership with parents. We will ensure that all parents are treated with respect, dignity and courtesy.

We will respect parents' right to privacy and confidentiality unless they give permission for information to be shared or it is necessary to infringe this in order to protect the child or children.

When a referral has been made without informing parents we will clearly explain that we have acted:

- following consultation, and
- in line with our statutory responsibilities, this policy and UAE laws and Guidelines.

We will make parents aware of this policy and guidance on the school website and state that we may, on occasion, need to make referrals without consultation with them. However, we will make every effort to maintain a positive working relationship with them whilst fulfilling our duties to protect the child or children. Parents will be made aware that they can view this policy on request.

## Pupil Information

We recognise the importance of keeping up-to-date and accurate information about pupils. We will regularly ask all parents/carers to provide us with the following information and to notify us of any changes that occur.

- names and contact details of persons with whom the child normally lives
- names and contact details of all persons with parental responsibility
- emergency contact details
- details of any persons authorised to collect the child from school (if different from above)
- any relevant court orders in place including those which affect any person's access to the child (e.g. Residence Order, Contact Order, Care Order, Injunctions etc.)
- name and contact detail of G.P.
- any other factors which may impact on the safety and welfare of the child
- medical conditions/allergies



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## Confidentiality

Information about pupils given to us by the children themselves, their parents or carers, or by other agencies will remain confidential. Staff will be given relevant information only on a “need to know” basis in order to support the child if that is necessary and appropriate.

We are, however, under a duty to share any information which is of a child protection nature. We understand that this is in the best interests of the child and overrides any other duties we have regarding confidentiality and information sharing.

We have a duty to keep any records which relate to child protection work undertaken by us and to ensure that these are kept apart from the main pupil record, stored securely and only accessible to key members of staff. We also have a duty to send copies of these records to any school to which the pupil transfers.

## Key points to follow if abuse is suspected or observed:

Adults looking after children or young people should be aware of the risks of abuse (by adults or other young people), and take steps to reduce those risks.

Staff in charge of children or young people should know what to do if they suspect that someone is physically or sexually abused, or if someone tells them that this is happening. The following key points give a guide on what to do and what not to do:

1. **Always stop and listen** straight away to someone who wants to tell you about incidents or suspicions of abuse.
2. **Write brief notes** of what they are telling you while they are speaking (these may help later if you have to remember exactly what was said) – and keep your original notes, however rough and even if you wrote on the back of something else (it’s what you wrote at the time that may be important later – not a tidier and improved version you wrote up afterwards). If you don’t have the means to write at the time, make notes of what was said or observed as soon as possible afterwards.
3. **Never make a promise** that you will keep what is said confidential or secret – if you are told about abuse you have a responsibility to tell the right people to get something done about it. If asked, explain that if you are going to be told something very important that needs to be sorted out, you will need to tell the people who can sort it out, but that you will only tell the people who absolutely have to know.
4. **Do not ask leading questions** that might give your own ideas of what might have happened (e.g. “did he do X to you?”) – just ask “what do you want to tell me?” or “is there anything else you want to say?”.



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5. **Immediately tell** the person in charge of the group (unless they are themselves accused or suspected of abusing) – don't tell other adults or young people what you have been told.
6. **Discuss with the person** in charge whether any steps need to be taken to protect the person who has told you about the abuse (this may need to be discussed with the person who told you).
7. **Never attempt to carry out** an investigation of suspected or alleged abuse by interviewing people etc. – Social Services and police staff are trained to do this – you could cause more damage and spoil possible criminal proceedings. It is your duty to refer concerns on, not investigate.
8. **As soon as possible** (and certainly the same day) the person in charge should refer the matter to the Principal (helped by your notes). Follow their request about what to do next. They will set up any necessary investigations, and advise you – that is their statutory job.
9. **Never think abuse is impossible** in your organisation or group, or that an accusation against someone you know well and trust is bound to be wrong.
10. Children and young people often tell other young people, rather than staff or other adults, about abuse – make sure that your senior young people know the points on this sheet as well as the responsible adults.

## **Important**

These points are no substitute for the proper selection and training of adults trusted to look after children and young people, or for the organisations/groups having their own clear “child protection” procedures for their particular setting.

## **Definitions of child abuse**

Defining child abuse is not easy. The most important aspect in defining abuse is sound professional practice where judgements are made supported by evidence from research and from thorough assessments.

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by knowingly not preventing harm. Children may be abused in a family, the community, an institutional setting, or more rarely by a stranger. Most young people who are abused know their abuser.

## **Physical Abuse**

This may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.



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## **Emotional Abuse**

Is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child, such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects to the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children they are worthless, unloved, and inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may cause the child to feel frightened, in danger, or to be exploited or corrupted.

## **Sexual Abuse**

Involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. It may involve physical contact, penetrative or non-penetrative acts and also includes children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual images, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

## **Neglect**

This is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs which is likely to result in serious impairment to their health and development. May involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter, clothing or a failure to protect from physical and emotional harm or danger, or allow access to medical care or treatment. It may also include the neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

## **FIRST STEPS IN CHILD PROTECTION**

### **Indicators of Abuse**

The following is a summary of some of the indicators that may suggest that a child is being, or is at risk of harm under each category. It is important to recognise that indicators alone cannot confirm whether a child is being abused. Every child needs to be seen in the context of their family and wider community and a proper assessment carried out by appropriate persons.

The important message is that if it makes you feel unsure, or worried, do something about it, don't keep it to yourself.

### **Physical observations**

Bruising especially:

- bruises on trunk
- bruises on upper arm, shoulders, neck consistent with gripping
- finger tip bruising/finger marks.



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Burns and scalds especially:

- cigarette burns
- burns caused by lengthy exposure to heat.

Injuries or impressions:

- Human bite marks
- Fractures, particularly spiral fractures
- Swelling and lack of normal use of limbs
- Any serious injury with no explanation or conflicting explanations/inconsistent accounts.
- Untreated injuries.

## **Behavioural observations**

- Unusually fearful with adults
- Unnaturally compliant to parents
- Refusal to discuss injuries/fear of medical help
- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Aggression toward others
- Wears cover-up clothing
- Neurotic behaviour (such as rocking, hair-twisting, thumb sucking)
- Self-mutilation
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Drug/solvent abuse
- Running away
- Compulsive stealing, scavenging
- Aggressive behaviour

## **Indicators of neglect**

### **Behavioural observations**

- Constant hunger
- Constant tiredness
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school
- Destructive tendencies
- Low self-esteem
- Neurotic behaviour



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- No social relationships
- Running away
- Compulsive stealing or scavenging
- Multiple accidents and accidental injuries.

## **Physical observations**

- Poor personal hygiene
- Poor state of clothing
- Emaciation, pot belly, short stature
- Poor skin tone and hair tone
- Untreated medical problems

## **Indicators of sexual abuse**

### **Physical observations**

- Damage to genitalia, anus or mouth
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Unexpected pregnancy especially in very young girls
- Soreness in genital area, anus or mouth
- Unexplained recurrent urinary tract infections and discharges or abdominal pain

### **Behavioural observations**

- Sexual knowledge inappropriate for age
- Sexualised behaviour in young children
- Sexually provocative behaviour/promiscuity
- Hinting at sexual activity
- Inexplicable falling off in school performance
- Sudden apparent changes in personality
- Lack of concentration, restlessness, aimlessness
- Socially withdrawn
- Overly compliant behaviour
- Acting out, aggressive behaviour
- Poor trust in significant adults
- Regressive behaviour, onset of wetting, by day or night
- Onset of insecure, clinging behaviour
- Arriving early at school, leaving late, running away from home
- Suicide attempts, self-mutilation, self-disgust



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- Eating disorders, hysteria attacks in adolescents

## **Indicators of emotional abuse**

- Physical, mental and emotional development lags
- Acceptance of punishment which appears excessive
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Continual self-deprecation
- Sudden speech disorders
- Fear of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations.

## **Consistency of Policy**

This policy should be read alongside the following other school policies:

- Teaching and Learning
- SEN
- Gifted and Talented
- Behaviour
- Recruitment
- Health and Safety

This Policy is reviewed by the Senior Management Team. It will be next reviewed in August 2018.