



Safeguarding Children Policy

This policy is applicable to all children in the school including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage. . It is available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils on the School website www.dodderhill.co.uk and on request.

Contacts

Cate Mawston, Headmistress	Designated Senior Member of Staff for Child Protection
Pat Lewis, Bursar	Person who acts in the absence of the Designated Senior Member of Staff
Jacky Hiorns,	Nursery Manager, Early Years Child Protection Officer
Fiona Warman	Governor responsible for safeguarding children

Introduction

Dodderhill School fully recognises its responsibilities for safeguarding children.

Our policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the school.

There are five main elements to our policy:

- Ensuring we practice safer 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 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.

Definitions and Possible Signs of Abuse

The following categories of abuse are recognised for the purposes of the child protection register:

- Neglect: persistent or severe neglect or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation. Possible signs may include:
 - Failure to thrive
 - Dirty, unkempt, poor personal hygiene
 - Constant tiredness and lack of energy and concentration
- Physical Injury: actual or likely physical injury to a child or failure to prevent physical injury (or suffering) to a child. Possible physical and behavioural signs may include:
 - Unusual bruising that is inconsistent with the explanation given

- Minor bruising in immobile infants
- Refusal / reluctance to discuss injuries or need for treatment
- Sexual Abuse: actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or adolescent. Possible physical or behavioural signs may include:
 - Injury, soreness, discharge and unexpected bleeding in the genital area
 - Soiling or constipation
 - Inappropriate sexual talk for the child's age displayed in activity, talk, play or drawings
- Emotional Abuse: actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill-treatment or rejection. Possible signs, symptoms and behaviour may include:
 - Child is given the impression that parents are disappointed
 - Parent is obsessive about cleanliness, diet, tidiness etc
 - Developmental delay
 - Self harming

Procedures

We will follow the procedures set out by the Worcestershire Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and take account of guidance issued by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).

The school will:

- Ensure that the Designated Senior Member of Staff (DSMS) and the Deputy will undertake regular, appropriate training for this role at least every TWO years;
- Ensure it has a member of staff who will act in the absence of the DSMS [Mrs Pat Lewis];
- Ensure it has a nominated governor responsible for safeguarding children [Mrs Fiona Warman];
- Ensure every member of staff (including temporary and supply staff and volunteers) and the governing body knows the name of the DSMS and their role and has regular training at least every THREE years;
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the DSMS;
- 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 school prospectus;
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding safeguarding matters including attendance at strategy meetings, initial case conferences, core group and child in need review meetings;
- Ensure that the duty of care towards its pupils and staff is promoted by raising awareness of illegal, unsafe and unwise behaviour and assist staff to monitor their own standards and practice;
- Be aware of and follow procedures set out by Children's Services and the Worcestershire LSCB where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer;
- Ensure safer recruitment practices are always followed.
- Ensure our procedures are reviewed annually and up-dated in accordance with current legislation.
- Ensure that after review, all staff are issued with the updated policy, are required to read it and sign that they have done so.

When staff join our school they will be informed of the safeguarding children arrangements in place. They will be given a copy of this policy and told who the DSMS is and who acts in their absence.

The induction programme will include basic safeguarding information relating to signs and symptoms of abuse, how to manage a disclosure from a child, when and how to record a concern about the welfare of a child.

All volunteers and regular visitors to our school will be told where our policy is kept and given the name of the DSMS.

Responsibilities

The Governing Body will nominate a member to be responsible for Safeguarding Children and liaise with the DSMS in matters relating to Safeguarding. It will ensure that Safeguarding Policies and procedures are in place and available to parents. It will review annually the Safeguarding Policies and procedures and the efficiency with which they and the related duties have been discharged.

The Headmistress will ensure that the Safeguarding Policies and procedures are fully implemented and followed by all staff and that sufficient resources are allocated to enable her and other staff to discharge their responsibilities with regard to Safeguarding. She will ensure that any deficiencies in or weaknesses in child protection arrangements are remedied without delay.

The DSMS will co-ordinate action on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children within the school ensuring that all staff, volunteers and visitors to the school know who the DSMS is and who acts in his/her absence, they are aware of their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and of their responsibility to report and record any concerns.

The DSMS will report to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA), within one month of leaving the school, any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or a pupil) whose services are no longer used because he or she is considered unsuitable to work with children.

The DSMS will report to the Worcestershire LSCB within 24 hours, any disclosure or suspicion of abuse.

In addition the DSMS will inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working or looking after children at the premises (whether that allegation relates to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere), or any other abuse which is alleged to have taken place on the premises, and of the action taken in respect of these allegations; this will be reported as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days.

Managing a Disclosure

Teachers and other staff in schools are in a unique position to observe children's behaviour over time and often develop close and trusting relationships with pupils. If a child discloses directly to a member of staff, the following procedures will be followed:

- Listen carefully to what is said.
- Ask only open questions such as:
 - ‘How did that happen?’
 - ‘What was happening at the time?’
 - ‘Anything else you want to tell me?’
- Do not ask leading questions e.g. which may be considered to suggest what might have happened, or who has perpetrated the abuse, e.g. ‘Did your Dad hit you?’
- Do not force the child to repeat what he/she said in front of another person.

Following a disclosure and before the end of the school day, the member of staff should talk immediately to the DSMS and complete a written record.

The DSMS will consult the Worcestershire Senior Adviser for Safeguarding Children in Education and inform the chairman of Governors / Governor with responsibility for Safeguarding Children

Information Sharing & Confidentiality

We recognise that all matters relating to Child Protection are confidential.

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

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

All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets.

Record Keeping

Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse from a child or young person, or noticing signs or symptoms of possible abuse, will make notes as soon as possible (within the hour, if possible) writing down exactly what was said, using the child's own words as far as possible. All notes should be timed, dated and signed, with name printed alongside the signature. Concerns should be recorded using the school's safeguarding children recording system.

All records of a child protection nature should be passed to the DSMS including case conference minutes and written records of any concerns.

Supporting Children

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. The 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. The school will endeavour to support the pupil through:

- The content of the curriculum;
- 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 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 Children's Services, Child and Adult Mental Health Service (CAMHS), education welfare service and educational psychology service and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children;
- Notifying Children's Social Care immediately 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.

Supporting Staff

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

Safer Recruitment and Selection of Staff

The school operates safe recruitment procedures in line with Independent School standards Regulations. It has a written recruitment and selection policy and procedures linking explicitly to this policy. The statement is included in all job details, publicity material, recruitment and candidate information packs.

The recruitment process is robust in seeking to establish the commitment of candidates to support the school's measures to safeguard children and to deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children or are otherwise unsuited to work with them.

Safer recruitment training has been completed by the Headmistress, the Bursar, Fiona Warman, Governor with responsibility for safeguarding children and the Deputy Headmistress (Pastoral)

Allegations against staff

We understand that a pupil may make an allegation against a member of staff.

If such an allegation is made, the member of staff receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Headmistress.

The Headmistress on all such occasions will discuss the content of the allegation with the Worcestershire's Senior Adviser for Safeguarding Children in Education, Mrs Sally Mills.

If the allegation made to a member of staff concerns the Headmistress who is the DSMS, the Bursar or Deputy Headmistress (Pastoral) or Nursery Manager will immediately inform the Chair of Governors who will consult with the Worcestershire's Senior Adviser for Safeguarding Children in Education.

The school will follow its Disciplinary Procedures which are issued to all staff on appointment as part of their contract.

Whistleblowing

All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the attitude or actions of colleagues

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

Complaints or Concerns expressed by Pupils, Parents, Staff or Volunteers

We recognise that listening to children is an important and essential part of safeguarding them against abuse and neglect. To this end any expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet in relation to an individual child will be listened to and acted upon in order to safeguard his/her welfare.

Where one pupil makes a complaint against another we would immediately seek advice from the LSCB

We will also seek to ensure that the child or adult who makes a complaint is informed not only about the action the school will take but also the length of time that will be required to resolve the complaint. The school will also endeavour to keep the child or adult regularly informed as to the progress of his/her complaint.

Prevention

We recognise that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our pupils by providing them with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection.

The school will therefore:

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

In addition we recognise that all staff require a clear understanding of what constitutes appropriate behaviour for adults who work with children.

The School will therefore provide all staff with the **DfES document “Guidance for Safe Working Practice for the Protection of Children and Staff in Education Settings 2006”** and require them to sign that they have read and understand it.

Abuse of Trust

We recognise that as adults working in the school, we are in a relationship of trust with the pupils in our care and acknowledge that it is a criminal offence to abuse that trust.

We acknowledge that the principle of equality embedded in the legislation of the Sexual Offenders Act 2003 applies irrespective of sexual orientation: neither homosexual nor heterosexual relationships are acceptable within a position of trust.

We recognise that the legislation is intended to protect young people in education who are over the age of consent but under 18 years of age.

Bullying

Our anti - policy is set out separately and acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under safeguarding children procedures.

E-safety

Our Code of Conduct for Internet and E-mail Use and Staff acceptable usage policies recognise that Internet safety is a whole school responsibility (staff, pupils, parents).

Children and young people may expose themselves to danger, whether knowingly or unknowingly, when using the Internet and other technologies. Additionally, some young people may find themselves involved in activities, which are inappropriate or possibly illegal.

We therefore recognise our responsibility to educate our pupils, teaching them the appropriate behaviours and critical thinking skills to enable them to remain both safe and legal when using the Internet and related technologies.

Health & Safety

Our Health & Safety policy, set out in a separate document, reflects the consideration we give to the safeguarding of our children both within the school environment and when away from the school when undertaking school trips and visits.

Other Relevant Policies

The Governing Body's legal responsibility for safeguarding the welfare of children goes beyond basic child protection procedures.

The duty is now to ensure that safeguarding permeates all activity and functions. This policy therefore complements and supports a range of other policies, for instance:

- Complaints Procedure
- Behaviour Management
- Anti-Bullying
- Special Educational Needs
- Guidance for Safe Working Practice for the Protection of Children and Staff in Education Settings 2006
- School Visits Policy
- Work experience
- First aid and the administration of medicines
- Health and Safety
- Sex and Relationships Education
- Equal Opportunities
- E-safety
- Extra curricular activities.

The above list is not exhaustive but when undertaking development or planning of any kind the school will need to consider safeguarding matters.

External Contacts

Out of Hours Emergency Duty Team	01905 768020
Police Family Protection Unit:	
Worcester	01905 331045
Redditch & Bromsgrove	01527 58373
24hrs non-emergency	08457 444888
NSPCC Helpline	0808 800 5000

See over: Government Documentation pertaining to independent schools

From “Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education” DfES January 2007

2.22 Proprietors of independent schools have similar responsibilities to those of governing bodies of maintained schools.....In any event, proprietors should ensure that:

- The school has a child protection policy and procedures in place that are in accordance with locally agreed inter-agency procedures, and the policy is made available to parents on request;*
- The school operates safe recruitment procedures and makes sure that all appropriate checks are carried out on staff and volunteers who work with children, as set out in Chapters 3 and 4;*
- The school has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff or volunteers that comply with locally agreed inter-agency procedures and the guidance in Chapter 5 of this document. These include procedures for the proprietor to liaise with other agencies in the event that allegations are made involving the head teacher (where the proprietor is not the head teacher);*
- A senior member of the school’s management structure is designated to take lead responsibility for dealing with child protection issues and liaising with other agencies where necessary. As in maintained schools, the designated person need not be a teacher but must have the status and authority within the school management structure to carry out the duties of the post (see Appendix 3 about broad areas of responsibility) including committing resources to child protection matters and where appropriate directing other staff. In many independent schools a single designated person will be sufficient, but a deputy should be available to act in the designated person’s absence, and in schools which are organised into separate junior and senior parts on different sites or with a separate management line, there should be a designated person for each part or site;*
- In addition to basic child protection training, the designated person undertakes training in inter-agency working that is provided by, or to standards set by, the LSCB, and refresher training at two yearly intervals to keep his or her knowledge and skills up to date;*
- The head teacher, and all other staff who work with children undertake training that equips them with the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out their responsibilities for child protection that is kept up to date by refresher training at three yearly intervals, and temporary staff and volunteers who work with children are made aware of the school’s arrangements for child protection and their responsibilities;*
- Any deficiencies or weaknesses in regard to child protection arrangements are remedied without delay; and*
- The proprietor undertakes an annual review of the school’s policies and procedures relating to safeguarding, and how the above duties have been discharged.*