

Herne Hill School

for love, care and an excellent education

Independent Co-Ed Pre-Prep & Nursery,

Founded 1978, Member ISA

www.hernehill-school.co.uk



SAFEGUARDING POLICY

1. Introduction

Herne Hill School is committed to promoting a climate where children and adults feel confident about sharing any concerns which they may have about their own safety or the well-being of others. The School embraces the 'Every Child Matters' agenda which seeks to improve outcomes for all children. This agenda calls for transparency and for the School to communicate its policies and procedures openly to parents. The statutory EYFS welfare requirements state that a provider must take the necessary steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This includes the implementation of an effective safeguarding policy and procedures.

We fully recognise the duty we have to safeguard and promote the welfare of our pupils and our obligation to provide a caring, safe, positive and stimulating environment which promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child. All staff, including volunteers, have an active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm.

We also recognise the need to be alert to the risks posed by strangers or others who may wish to harm children in school or when travelling to and from school and will take all reasonable steps to lessen such risks.

Safeguarding encompasses many aspects of school life, wherever a child's welfare might be compromised; child protection is one very important aspect of safeguarding. Our Safeguarding Policy and child protection procedures are in place to recognise and deal with issues of concern or abuse.

This policy draws upon duties conferred by the Children Act 1989 and 2004, S.175/157 of the Education Act 2002, the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the guidance contained in "Working Together to Safeguard Children", "What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused", the DCSF Circular 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education' 2007 and procedures produced by the London Safeguarding Children Board and the Southwark Safeguarding Children Board. The policy is applicable to all on and off-site activities undertaken by pupils whilst they are in the responsibility of the School.

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2. Child protection procedures

Staff are committed to fostering an ethos which:

- encourages and supports parents/carers and works in partnership with them;
- listens to and values pupils - appreciating each one as a 'unique' child;
- ensures all staff are aware of signs and symptoms of abuse, know the correct procedures for referring concerns or allegations and receive appropriate training to enable them to carry out these requirements;
- maintains a safe school environment for all pupils;
- exercises their duty to work in partnership with other agencies and to share information with them in accordance with legislation (Children Act 2004).

We recognise that, because of their contact with and knowledge of the children in their care, our staff are well placed to identify concerns and report appropriately. Statements about or allegations of abuse or neglect made by children will always be taken seriously and acted upon. We also recognise that the School is an agent of referral and not of investigation; no action will be taken knowingly which might undermine a criminal investigation.

3. Recognising signs of abuse

Anyone who cares for a child may be responsible for abuse. Parents, step-parents, nannies, au pairs, baby-sitters, brothers and sisters, other relatives and people in positions of responsibility have all been known to be abusers either within a school or outside. Sometimes these people may indicate that they lack the capacity to care for a child (e.g. they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol, have mental health problems, etc.). Usually the abuser is well known to the child. Abuse can occur in well-off families as well as in poor homes. Even the most apparently respectable person or sibling can be an abuser.

All members of staff should be alert to possible signs of abuse. It is essential that even vague worries are passed on at the earliest stage to the Designated Member of Staff, who is in a position to involve other agencies, collate information and make decisions about further referral. The following may, with other indicators, point to the possibility of abuse:

- **Physical abuse** may involve hitting, shaking, scalding or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.
- **Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making the child feel worthless, unloved, or inadequate.
- **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

- **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet the child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

4. Guidelines for staff if they have concerns

If a member of staff thinks a child at Herne Hill School is in need because they are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, s/he **MUST** do the following:

- Make a note of what you have seen or been told.
- Don't make assumptions - keep an open mind.
- Don't ask any leading questions and don't cross-examine the child. Only ask simple and open questions - Who? What? Where? When? Etc.
- Don't physically examine the child (other than in an emergency when no first aider is available).
- Never promise to keep "secrets". Explain that you can listen, but make it clear that if you perceive that the child is in any danger of harm, then you will have to seek advice because you have a duty to protect children. Reassure the child that it can be helped and kept safe. Suggestions for how to talk to the child include: "It is not your fault; I believe you; I am glad you told me; you have been brave to come and tell me; etc."
- Maintain confidentiality for the child. It is important that you never ring home or contact Children's Social Care services yourself - that is the role of the Designated Person.
- Be discreet - do or say nothing that may place the child or yourself at risk.
- Act quickly and share the information with your Designated and/or Deputy Designated Person for Safeguarding at Herne Hill School. They are:

DESIGNATED PERSON: Jane Beales

DEPUTY DESIGNATED PERSON: Ginger Irby

Please inform Jane Beales in the first instance (or Ginger Irby if she is not available).

- If neither of the Designated Persons is available and you are extremely concerned about the safety of a child, then see Ngaire Telford.
- If the disclosure or your concern relates to a member of staff, this must as soon as possible be shared with the Designated Person and nothing should be said to the colleague involved.

If a member of staff is in any kind of doubt about procedures for Safeguarding Children, then s/he should see Mrs Beales straight away.

When an individual concern/incident is brought to the attention of the Designated Person, she will be responsible for deciding upon whether or not this should be reported to Children's Social Care, of the local authority where the child lives, as a safeguarding issue.

The School's child protection concerns record sheet should be used for recording. This form should then be passed on to the Designated Person who will keep it and any other records in a secure locked file. Child Protection records are not open to pupils or parents. They must be kept securely by the Designated Person, separately from educational records and can only be accessed by the Designated Person, her Deputy and the senior management of the School. This information should be shared with other agencies as appropriate.

The parent/carer will normally be contacted before a referral is made to Children's Social Care (Children's Services). However, if the concern involves alleged or suspected sexual abuse or the Designated Person has reason to believe that informing the parent at this stage might compromise the safety of the child or a member of staff, nothing will be said ahead of the referral.

5. Vulnerable pupils

We acknowledge that children who are affected by abuse or neglect may demonstrate their needs and distress through their words, actions, behaviour, demeanour or schoolwork. We are strongly committed to implementing our Harassment and Anti-Bullying Policy and will consider all coercive acts and inappropriate 'child on child' behaviour within a child protection context. Moreover, we recognise the additional needs for support and protection of those children who are particularly vulnerable due to their special educational needs or disability.

6. Staff training and recruitment

The Designated Members of Staff who have the training necessary to deal with Child Safeguarding issues are:

Jane Beales Headteacher

Ginger Irby Deputy Head

[Ngaire Telford Nursery and Kindergarten Coordinator - training planned]

These designated people are required to have training in child safeguarding and inter-agency working (updated every two years). Whole School in-service training on safeguarding issues is organised on a regular three year basis. All newly recruited staff are familiarised with this policy and the School's staff code of conduct as part of our induction procedures. It is essential that all training emphasises the practitioners' responsibility to identify and act on 'signals and clues' to a range of needs both in children and their parents.

Herne Hill School is committed to the process of becoming a Safe Organisation. Safe recruitment processes are followed and all staff recruited to the school are subject to appropriate identity, qualification and health checks. References are verified and

Criminal Records Bureau Checks (CRB) are completed before staff are appointed and commence their duties.

7. Staff code of conduct

Herne Hill School's "loving and caring" ethos implies a strong commitment to dealing with children in a caring way. This is also central to our staff code of conduct. At all times we listen to children, and their welfare is our primary concern. We expect staff to be sensitive to the emotional and physical needs of the children in their care. Children will be treated with respect and dignity and no punishment, detention, restraint, sanctions or rewards is allowed outside of those detailed in the School's Behaviour Management Policy. Whilst it would be unrealistic and undesirable to preclude all physical contact between adults and children, staff are expected to exercise caution and avoid placing themselves in a position where they might be open to criticism or misinterpretation.

The Code of Conduct applies to all teachers, peripetatic instructors, support staff, volunteers and visiting staff working with pupils on and off-site and requires that these adults:

- place the welfare of pupils as their first and paramount consideration,
- accept responsibility for their own actions and behaviour and avoid any conduct that might lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions,
- be 'fit' and ready to work, free from the influence of drugs, alcohol, physical/emotional/mental health needs or a preoccupation with personal life,
- work in an open and transparent way,
- make a record of any incident and promptly consult their line manager,
- apply the same professional standards, regardless of gender, race or sexual orientation,
- be aware of the name of the Designated Person with responsibility for safeguarding pupils and her Deputy and understand their responsibilities under the Safeguarding Policy,
- understand that any breaches in the law or professional expectations might lead to criminal or disciplinary action and barring,
- understand their responsibilities to report the unprofessional conduct of other adults working in or on behalf of the School, and
- establish 'boundaried' relationships with parents and pupils that do not become of a romantic/sexual nature.

For their own safety and protection, staff should exercise caution in situations where they are alone with pupils. Other than in formal teaching situations the door to the room in which the teaching, counselling or meeting is taking place should be left open.

Except in cases of emergency, First Aid should only be administered by qualified First Aiders. If it is necessary for the child to remove clothing for First Aid treatment there should, wherever possible, be another adult present.

If a child needs help with toileting or washing after soiling themselves, another adult should be present or within ear-shot. If a male member of staff is providing any form of intimate care, a female colleague should be present. Cameras, including mobile phones with cameras, should not be taken into an area where intimate care is given.

All first aid treatment and non-routine changing or personal care should be recorded on the appropriate form and shared with parents/carers at the earliest opportunity. Each teacher should have one such form for their classroom.

Staff should be alert to the possible risks that might arise from social contact with pupils outside school hours. Home visits to pupils should only take place with the knowledge and approval of the Headteacher. Staff should consider carefully before disclosing their personal telephone numbers and e-mail addresses to pupils or parents. The guiding principle for staff is that they should be friendly, but not friends with parents.

In addition to adhering to the 'Rules of Conduct' listed in the Employee Handbook, staff should follow the guidance in the model code of conduct for staff, which is attached as an appendix to this policy in the School Handbook and is based on the guidance provided by Southwark Children's Services, Schools Safeguarding Coordinator.

8. Complaints/allegations made against staff

Herne Hill School takes seriously all complaints made against members of staff. Procedures are in place for pupils, parents and staff to share any concern that they may have about the actions of any staff member or volunteer. All such complaints will be brought immediately to the attention of the Head (or Deputy Head), in order that they may activate the appropriate procedures. At this point, advice may be sought to determine if the complaint needs to be dealt with under the 'School's Complaint Procedure' or the 'Procedure for Dealing with an Allegation Made against a Member of Staff.'

If one of the following criteria applies, the complaint should be dealt with by the 'Procedure for Dealing with an Allegation Made against a Member of Staff':

- The allegation is one of actual bodily harm - i.e. an injury has necessitated first aid or medical treatment.
- There is reason to suspect parental instigation or collusion.
- The allegation has been reported to the Police or Children's Services by the child or parent.
- The child is Looked After in Public Care.
- The child is the subject of a Child Protection Plan.
- The child has a disability or Statement of Special Educational Needs.
- The member of staff concerned has been subject to previous complaints.
- The allegation is one of sexual abuse.

In these cases, advice will be sought from the Local Authority (LA) Lead Officer for education services (or the Education Welfare And Safeguarding (EWAS) Duty Manager) with a view to a Strategy Meeting or Discussion being held in accordance with the London SCB procedures. This process will agree upon the appropriate course of action and the timescale for investigations. In considering whether or not a referral to Children's Services is appropriate, the Head may seek advice from the Director, Dominik Magyar, and the LA's Lead Officer and advisers. Parents should also be advised of their independent right to make a formal complaint to the Police. Temporary and visiting staff will be subject to the same procedures. If the complaint concerns alleged abuse by the Head, this should be brought to the attention of the Deputy Designated Person, who will inform the Director and the LA's Lead Officer, if appropriate.

The LA's Lead Officer is: Mr John Guest (Head of Education Welfare & Safeguarding), reachable on 0207 525 2696.

The LA's Deputy is: The EWAS Duty Manager, reachable on 0207 525 2702.

Staff who are formally disciplined for the mistreatment of pupils (or who resign before disciplinary action can be completed), will be notified to the Children's Social Care LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) and the Independent Safeguarding Authority for possible inclusion on their PoCAL consultative index. The Independent Safeguarding website should be referred to for the most up to date requirements.

The Headteacher has a document describing in more detail the procedure to be followed if an allegation is made against a member of staff that is not covered by the School's Complaints Procedure (a copy can be requested from her). The legal framework for responding to an allegation against a member of staff is laid down in sections 3.3-3.15 of the EYFS Guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006, Appendix 5 and Section 15 of the London Child Protection Procedures 2007.

9. Safety in the School

The School maintains accurate records of those with parental responsibility and emergency contacts. Pupils are only released to the care of those with parental responsibility or someone acting with their consent.

Entry to School premises is controlled by doors that are secured physically or by constant staff supervision or video surveillance. Authorised visitors to the School are logged in and out of the premises and issued with visitor badges. Unidentified visitors should be challenged by staff or reported to the Headteacher or School office.

The presence of intruders and suspicious strangers seen loitering near the School or approaching pupils should be reported to the Police and other schools in the area.

10. Curriculum

Since children can join Herne Hill School in the term they turn three years old, the EYFS curriculum is a significant part of our provision. Accordingly, we place a high importance on seeing each child as unique and helping him/her form positive relationships. We believe that children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving, secure relationships. Central to children's learning journey is an understanding that we work with parents as partners and support learning by modelling positive interactions, listening to children and providing effective teaching. Teaching about keeping safe, developing social skills and making healthy choices are important elements of both key stages covered in our curriculum.

As outlined in the School's Personal Social Health (PSHE) Policy, we acknowledge the important role the curriculum can play in the prevention of abuse and in the preparation of our pupils for the responsibilities of adult life and citizenship. It is expected that curriculum co-ordinators consider the opportunities which exist in their area of responsibility for addressing personal safety issues. As appropriate, the PSHE curriculum should be used to help pupils to keep safe and to ask for help if their safety is threatened.

As part of developing a healthy, safer lifestyle, pupils are taught, for example, to

- recognise and manage risks in different situations and to decide how to behave responsibly
- help young children recognise that they have choices and give them opportunities to explore choosing for themselves
- judge what kinds of physical contact are acceptable and unacceptable
- recognise when pressure from others - including people they know - threatens their personal safety, and well-being; including knowing when and where to get help
- use assertiveness techniques to resist unhelpful pressure

All computer equipment and Internet access within the School is subject to appropriate 'parental controls' and Internet safety rules. Use of any ICT equipment by pupils is closely supervised. Staff are expected to not use computers for personal reasons during usual school hours unless this is essential, and then only during their non-contact time and when children are not present.

If staff contribute to internet blogs or access social networking sites such as Facebook, they should neither mention Herne Hill School nor make any reference to the School or their employment at it. Staff should also not communicate with parents or pupils via social networking sites and should not accept invitations from pupils or parents as contacts on such sites.