



HUNTERHOUSE COLLEGE

SAFEGUARDING POLICY

(formerly Child Protection Policy)

Date/date Reviewed: October 2010

Previous: January 2007

Next Review due: October 2011

This policy is available in pdf format from the school website

www.hunterhousecollege.org.uk

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Hunterhouse College Safeguarding¹ Statement

There are two aspects to safeguarding and promoting pupil welfare. They are:

- Arrangements to take reasonable measures to ensure that risks to children's welfare are minimised; and
- Arrangements to take all appropriate actions to address concerns about the welfare of a child, or children, working to agreed policies and procedures in full partnership with other agencies. (from *Safeguarding Children in Education*, 2004)

The Hunterhouse College Safeguarding Team

- The Designated Teacher – Mrs Ruth Millar
- The Deputy Designated Teacher – Miss Linda Hamill
- The Principal – Mr Andrew Gibson
- The Chair of the Board of Governors – Mr Charles Redpath
- The Board of Governors member with delegated responsibility for Child Protection – Mrs Rosemary Wilson

Role of the Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teacher

- To disseminate child protection training to all school staff
- To promote a child protection ethos within the school
- To provide a written report to Governors on child protection issues
- To notify the Chairperson of the Board of Governors, Principal, BELB Designated Officer, Social Services, PSNI as appropriate
- To take the lead in the development of the school's Child Protection Policy
- To participate in child protection training
- To maintain appropriate and required records

Role of the Chairperson of the Board of Governors

The main role of the Chairperson will be in relation to handling complaints and allegations. This will involve;

- Establishing the facts (clarification process)
- Seeking advice from the BELB Designated Officer and referring to Social Services where appropriate
- Seeking advice from the BELB HR Manager and consider if disciplinary procedures apply
- To assess the appropriateness of precautionary suspension or removal of direct contact duties

Role of the Delegated Governor with responsibility for Safeguarding and Child Protection

To ensure that

- They have undertaken appropriate child protection training
- That there is a confidential child protection recording and storage system in place
- That there is a robust Code of Conduct for all adults working within the school
- That child protection features on the agenda of Board of Governors' meetings

¹ Please note – The term safeguarding is used throughout to include child protection

The Role of the Principal

- To ensure that s/he has a fundamental understanding of child protection in a school environment
- To promote a safeguarding ethos within the school
- To ensure that all role and responsibilities are clearly identified
- To ensure that the school has relevant and up to date pastoral care policies that are agreed and ratified by the Board of Governors
- To ensure that the school has safe recruitment and selection practices
- To manage allegations and complaints against school staff
- To ensure that the Board of Governors are kept fully informed of all developments relating to safeguarding and child protection

Child Protection – The Legal Context

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991)
- The Children (NI) Order 1995
- The Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Education and Libraries Order 2003 – Welfare and Protection of Pupils
- Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Order (NI) Order 2007
- Criminal Justice Order (NI) Order 2008
- DE Circulars 2006(06/07/08/09/25), 2007(01), 2008 (03)

Principles

The school has a primary responsibility for the care, welfare, and safety of pupils. This duty will be carried out by implementation of the school's pastoral care policies (see Linked Documents) which aim to value individuals for their unique talents and abilities and to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment in which girls can learn and develop to their full potential.

One way in which staff seek to protect pupils is by helping them learn about the risks of possible abuse, helping them to recognise unwelcome behaviour in others and by developing an ethos in which pupils feel secure, their viewpoints are valued, they are encouraged to talk and are listened to, and they develop the confidence and skills needed to keep themselves safe.

All our staff have been subject to appropriate background checks² and have adopted a *Code of Conduct* for behaviour towards pupils. This Code is set out in the **Appendices**.

The school will provide suitable support and guidance so that pupils have a range of appropriate adults whom they feel confident to approach.

Purposes

Implementation of the procedures on Child Protection as set out in **Appendix 1** protects our pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in Hunterhouse College has clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The overriding concern of all caring adults must be the care, welfare and safety of the child, and the welfare of each child is our paramount consideration. The problem of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in school, and we know that some forms of child abuse are also a criminal offence.

When possible, staff take part in In-Service training courses which can lead to a greater understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse, procedures for dealing with individual cases, roles and responsibilities of other agency staff with whom the school has to liaise and the use of the curriculum to build preventative approaches to child abuse.

At Hunterhouse College, we recognise that the following are forms of child abuse:

- **neglect**
- **physical abuse**
- **sexual abuse**
- **emotional abuse**

Definitions of CHILD ABUSE (ACPC³) used:

Definition of neglect

- Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical, emotional and /or psychological needs, likely to cause significant harm
- It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision
- It may also include non-organic failure to thrive

Definition of Physical Abuse

- Physical abuse is the deliberate physical injury to a child, or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering
- This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocation, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriate giving drugs to control behaviour

² Access NI Enhanced Disclosure ISA Check

³ *Area Child Protection Committees' Regional Policy and Procedures*

Definition of Sexual Abuse

- Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts
- They may include non contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways

Definition of Emotional Abuse

- Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development
- It may involve conveying to a child that he is worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as he meets the needs of another person
- It may involve causing a child to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of a child
- Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone
- Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose a child to emotional harm

Anti-Bullying

Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in Hunterhouse College. The school's policy and practice is stated elsewhere.

Linked Documents:

- Appendix 1: Procedures for reporting suspected (or disclosed) child abuse
- Appendix 2: Code of Conduct for Employees of Hunterhouse College
- Appendix 3: Child Protection Guidelines for Visiting Music Tutors
- Appendix 4: Child Protection Guidelines for Support Staff

Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy

Anti Bullying Policy

Behavioural Policy

Curriculum Policy (section on PSHE)

DENI Circular 1999/10 Pastoral Care in School: Child Protection

DENI Circular 2006/25 Child Protection: Vetting of School Governors

DENI Circular 2006/06 Child Protection: Recruitment of People to work with children and Young People in Educational Settings

DENI Circular 2006/07 Child Protection: Employment of Substitute Teachers

DENI Circular 2006/08 Child Protection: Training Requirement for School Governors on Staff Recruitment and Selection Panels

Educational Visits (residential and non residential) Policy

Hunterhouse College Staff Guide: Child Protection Guidelines for Staff

Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy

Rewards & Sanctions Statement

Appendix 1: Procedures for reporting suspected (or disclosed) child abuse

The Designated Teacher for Child Protection is Mrs Ruth Millar, Vice Principal. The Deputy Designated Teacher is Miss Linda Hamill, Pastoral Care Coordinator.

If a pupil makes a disclosure to a teacher or other member of staff which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a pupil, **the member of staff must act promptly. He/she should not investigate** - this is a matter for the Social Services – but should report these concerns immediately to the Designated Teacher, discuss the matter with her, and make full written notes.

The Designated Teacher will discuss the matter with the Principal as a matter of urgency to plan a course of action, and ensure that a written record is made.

The Principal, in consultation with the Designated Teacher, will decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to Social Services. **If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral.** Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed immediately.

The Principal may seek clarification or advice and consult with the BELB's Designated Officer or the Senior Social Worker before a referral is made. No decision to refer a case to Social Services will be made without the fullest consideration and on appropriate advice. **The safety of the child is our first priority.**

Where there are concerns about possible abuse, the Principal will inform:

1. the Social Services
2. BELB's Designated Officer for Child Protection

This will be done in an envelope marked 'CONFIDENTIAL – CHILD PROTECTION'

The school is obliged to refer to the appropriate agencies any girl about whom there is significant concern. Parents do not have to be present for this to be done.

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal (or the Designated Teacher, if the Principal is not available) must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about the Designated Teacher). Where the matter is referred to Social Services, the member of staff will be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils, and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by Social Services. The Chairman of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

If a complaint is made against the Principal, the Designated Teacher must be informed immediately. The Designated Teacher will inform the Chairman of the Board of Governors and together they will ensure that the necessary action is taken.

If any member of staff feels unsure about what to do if there are concerns about a child, or unsure about being able to recognise the signs or symptoms of possible abuse, he/she should speak to the Designated Teacher.

It should be noted that information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held 'in confidence'. In the interests of the child, staff may need to share this information with other professionals. **However, only those who need to know will be told.**

Appendix 2: Code of Conduct for Employees of Hunterhouse College and for Visiting Teaching Staff or Learning Support Staff ⁴

Introduction

All actions concerning children and young people must uphold the best interests of the young person as a primary consideration. Staff must always be mindful of the fact that they hold a position of trust, and that their behaviour towards the children and young people in their charge must be above reproach. This Code of Conduct is not intended to detract from the enriching experiences children and young people gain from positive interaction with staff within the school. It is intended to assist staff in respect of the complex issue of child abuse, by drawing attention to the areas of risk for staff and by offering guidance on prudent conduct.

1. Private Meetings with Pupils

- a. Staff should be aware of the dangers which may arise from private interviews with individual pupils. It is recognised that there will be occasions when confidential interviews must take place. As far as possible, staff should conduct such interviews in a room with visual access, or with the door open.
- b. Where such conditions cannot apply, staff are advised to ensure that another adult knows that the interview is taking place. It may be necessary to use a sign indicating that the room is in use, but it is not advisable to use signs prohibiting entry to the room.
- c. Where possible another pupil or (preferably) another adult should be present or nearby during the interview, and the school should take active measures to facilitate this.

2. Physical Contact with Pupils

- a. As a general principle, staff are advised not to make unnecessary physical contact with their pupils.
- b. It is unrealistic and unnecessary, however, to suggest that staff should touch pupils only in emergencies. In particular, a distressed child, especially a younger child, may need reassurance involving physical comforting, as a caring parent would provide. Staff should not feel inhibited from providing this.
- c. Staff should never touch a child who has clearly indicated that she is, or would be, uncomfortable with such contact, unless it is necessary to protect the child, others or property from harm. (DENI Circular 1999/9, on the use of reasonable force, gives guidance on Article 4 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (*Power of member of staff to restrain pupils*)).
- d. Physical punishment is illegal, as is any form of physical response to misbehaviour, unless it is by way of necessary restraint.
- e. Departments may, in particular circumstances, such as use of certain areas, draw up their own guidelines for these circumstances. These guidelines must be agreed by the Principal.
- f. Staff who have to administer first-aid to a pupil should ensure wherever possible that this is done in the presence of other children or another adult. However, no member of staff should hesitate to provide first-aid in an emergency simply because another person is not present.
- g. Any physical contact which would be likely to be misinterpreted by the pupil, parent or other casual observer should be avoided.
- h. Following any incident where a member of staff feels that his/her actions have been, or may be, misconstrued, a written report of the incident should be submitted immediately to his/her line manager and to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection.
- i. Staff should be particularly careful when supervising pupils in a residential setting, or in approved out of school activities, where more informal relationships tend to be usual, and where staff may be in proximity to pupils in circumstances very different from the normal school/work environment.

⁴ This includes volunteers

3. Choice and Use of Teaching Materials

- a. Teachers should avoid teaching materials, the choice of which might be misinterpreted and reflect upon the motives for the choice.
- b. When using teaching materials of a sensitive nature a teacher should be aware of the danger that their application, either by pupils or by the teacher, might after the event be criticised. The school has received advice on the value of consulting parents and Governors when proposing to use materials such as the AIDS education for schools and in connection with sex education programmes.
- c. If in doubt about the appropriateness of a particular teaching material, the teacher should consult with the Principal before using it.

4. Relationships and Attitudes

Within the Pastoral Care Policies of the Hunterhouse College, staff should ensure that their relationships with pupils are appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupils, taking care that their conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation. **Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly in dealing with adolescent girls.**

Conclusion

It would be impossible and inappropriate to lay down hard and fast rules to cover all the circumstances in which staff interrelate with pupils, or where opportunities for their conduct to be misconstrued might occur.

In all circumstances, employees' professional judgement will be exercised and for the vast majority of employees this Code of Conduct will serve only to confirm what has always been their practice. **If employees have any doubts about points in the Code, or how they should act in particular circumstances, they should consult one of the following:**

- the Designated Teacher for Child Protection
- their line manager
- a representative of their professional association.

From time to time, however, it is prudent for all staff to reappraise their teaching styles, relationships with pupils and their manner and approach to individual young people, to ensure that they give no grounds for doubt about their intentions, in the minds of colleagues, of young people or of parents.

These guidelines are to be used in conjunction with the school's Safeguarding Policy, a copy of which has been supplied to each member of teaching staff, visiting teaching staff, or learning support staff.

Ruth Millar & Linda Hamill

October 2010

APPENDIX 3: SAFEGUARDING (CHILD PROTECTION) GUIDELINES FOR VISITING MUSIC TUTORS

1. Tutors should teach in a room with a glazed door and window looking into the room.
2. No obstructions (e.g. instrument cases or music stands) should be placed between the student and the exit door.
3. There should be a "walk-in" culture where other staff or students can walk in at any stage during a lesson.
4. Physical contact should be avoided. Tutors should endeavour to find ways of congratulating and encouraging pupils without giving them a friendly tap on the shoulder or arm.
5. Tutors should refrain from tapping the pulse of the music on any part of a pupil's body.
6. When teaching breathing exercises, tutors must never touch any part of the pupil's body.
7. When changing a pupil's playing position, tutors should announce their intention very clearly. If a tutor wishes to correct a playing position he/she must ask the student if she is happy for the tutor to touch her. If the student agrees, the tutor may proceed. If, however, the student does not consent, the tutor should record exactly what was said and report the matter as soon as possible to Mr Phillip Elliott (Head of Music).
8. There may be occasions when a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance, e.g. after an examination or a solo performance. Such reassurance should be given verbally. A tutor should never touch a pupil when comforting them.
9. Tutors should never physically restrain a child UNLESS it is to prevent physical injury to another child, a member of staff or themselves.
10. Tutors should never make insensitive or personal comments to any individual, especially in group situations such as rehearsals or shared lessons, where an individual might feel humiliated or degraded in the presence of others. Raised voices or comments which might cause embarrassment or emotional hurt are unacceptable and could be construed, in terms of a formal complaint, as abusive.
11. Tutors must make a written note of any allegations a child makes and report it immediately to the school's designated Child Protection Officer (Mrs Ruth Millar) or the Deputy Child Protection Officer (Miss Linda Hamill). However, if a visiting tutor is unable to locate either Officer, they should report the allegation to Mr Phillip Elliott (Head of Music) or Mrs Christine Cairns (Assistant Teacher), who will inform one of the designated teachers. In the unlikely event of none of the above being available, they should report to the Principal or his P.A.

These guidelines are to be used in conjunction with the school's Safeguarding Policy, a copy of which has been supplied to each Visiting Music Tutor.

Phillip Elliott
November 2010

**Appendix 4: SAFEGUARDING (CHILD PROTECTION) GUIDELINES FOR SUPPORT STAFF
(WHOSE RESPONSIBILITIES DO NOT USUALLY REQUIRE THEM TO HAVE DIRECT CONTACT WITH PUPILS
e.g. MAINTENANCE & CLEANING)**

1. Staff should ensure that they are never working in an area where they are on their own with a pupil.
2. If a member of staff encounters an injured pupil they should report this immediately to a member of the Hunterhouse College staff or to their Line Manager, or **contact Emergency Services by dialling 999**.
3. If a member of staff encounters a distressed pupil they should report this immediately to a member of the Hunterhouse College staff or to their Line Manager who will assess the situation and contact a member of the Hunterhouse College staff.
4. If a member of staff becomes aware of any evidence of behaviour which could be harmful to a young person they must report this immediately to their Line Manager who will submit a written report to Hunterhouse College or, in an emergency, contact a member of the Hunterhouse College staff. (Examples include: graffiti; cigarette butts; evidence of substance abuse; damaged property; food or property disposed of inappropriately.)
5. Never make any physical contact with a pupil and do not physically restrain a pupil UNLESS it is to prevent physical injury to another child, a member of staff or themselves.
6. The school's designated Child Protection Officer is Mrs Ruth Millar and the Deputy Child Protection Officer is Miss Linda Hamill.

These guidelines are to be used in conjunction with the school's Safeguarding Policy, a copy of which has been supplied to the company employing the staff.

Ruth Millar & Cara Donaldson

November 2010

Appendix 5: Contractors on Site

Procedures:

The contractor will be given a copy of the Hunterhouse College Child Protection Policy and the contractor will be asked to supply a copy of the Code of Conduct/Method Statement which he issues to his workers. (The contractor may wish to use the version below which was used in BELB training of building contractors.) In addition the contractor would be expected to inform his workers that:

- Hunterhouse College is a no-smoking campus
- noise should be kept to a minimum
- there must be no swearing
- there should be no communication with pupils.

Hunterhouse College will remind pupils of their expected conduct and, for extended work by a contractor on site during school hours, a letter with an acknowledgement slip will be sent out to parents.

Ruth Millar & Cara Donaldson

February 2010

Code of Conduct for School Building Site Workers

Please note that in Northern Ireland, in law, a child is defined as anyone under the age of 18 years (This also applies to vulnerable adults, many of whom attend our special schools and units until the end of the term of their 19th birthday)

Your site manager will know what to do if there are concerns about any of the following situations:

- Avoid any form of communication with school children on site, even if they are known to you
- Never ask children to run a message for you
- Never offer children sweets, cigarettes, etc., on site or within the school vicinity
- Do not text message or photograph any of the school children
- Report any concerns you might have about a child to the site manager
- If a child in distress approaches you, bring him/her to the site manager – do not deal with it yourself
- If any children try to talk or behave inappropriately with you, report this to the site manager so that the school can be informed

Brenda Walker (BELB)

February 2010



Hunterhouse College

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF SAFEGUARDING INFORMATION

Title:	
First Name:	
Surname:	
Date:	

Capacity	Tick
Full time member of staff	
Visiting Tutor	
Volunteer	
Contractor	

I acknowledge receipt of:

Document	Signature
Hunterhouse College Safeguarding Policy	
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