

REPTON SCHOOL WHOLE-SCHOOL POLICIES: P5

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Information For Staff

Repton School fully recognises its responsibilities for Child Protection. Our policy extends to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the School. The School's policy will be regularly updated in order to comply with new legislation and good practice.

- a) The Manual of Procedures is kept in the Senior Mistress's Office. Mrs Cathy Goodhead is the Designated Senior Member of Staff for Child Protection.
- b) Mrs Cathy Goodhead and Mr Robert Holroyd are the Members of Staff nominated to liaise with the Social Services Division over welfare matters.
- c) Mrs Anne Hill is the nominated governor responsible for Child Protection.
- d) All appointments to the Staff of the School are checked in the following ways:
 1. Written references are obtained for all Staff. Those references will include specific comment about the suitability of Staff to work in a boarding school. Gaps in CVs are investigated.
 2. All Members of Staff, both teaching and non-teaching, will be checked by the Criminal Records Bureau.
- e) All pupils under the age of 18 are subject to the Children Act and therefore Child Protection procedures apply to them.

AIMS

- The School aims to provide pupils with relevant information, skills and attitudes to help them resist abuse and to prepare for the responsibilities of adult life.
- To allow Staff and Prefects to be aware of the appropriate Child Protection procedures and issues. This policy is intended to give clear guidance to all Staff and Prefects on the signs that may indicate abuse and the procedures to follow if a pupil discloses or a Member of Staff or a Prefect suspect abuse.
- To monitor and support children who have been identified as "at risk".

OBJECTIVES

- Skills and information will be delivered through the curriculum and especially through the PHSE programme which may take place in the classroom or through discussion groups in the boarding houses.
- The school will endeavour to create a safe environment and ethos in which pupils will feel secure.
- The School will ensure that pupils know that there is a range of adults to whom they may approach if they are in difficulties.
- Staff will treat pupils with respect and they are expected to treat each other and staff with respect.

- The School will provide Child Protection training regularly to School Staff. All new Members of Staff will undergo some initial training during the induction programme for new members of staff.
- All new Members of Staff must sign to say that they have read the policy and accept their duty to cooperate with Repton School management in promoting Child Protection.
- We inform parents/guardians in the introductory guide that Staff are required by law to follow the Area Child Protection Committee procedures if they suspect a child is a victim of abuse.

CATEGORIES OF CHILD ABUSE

There are four categories of child abuse defined in the Children Act:

Physical Abuse
Neglect
Emotional Abuse
Sexual Abuse

Physical Abuse

This includes non-accidental bruises and abrasions, slap marks, black eyes, damage to the mouth, bite marks, cigarette burns and fractures. Physical harm may also be caused when a carer suffers from Munchausen syndrome by proxy.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment to a child's health or development. This may involve exposing the child to cold, starvation or other dangers or failure to ensure access to appropriate medical treatment causing a failure to thrive.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional Abuse is the severe adverse affect on the behaviour and emotional development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, or the exploitation or corruption of children. All abuse involves some emotional ill treatment. This category is used where it is the main or sole form of abuse.

Sexual Abuse

This involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities that they may not fully comprehend, and to which they are unable to give informed consent, or that violate social taboos about family roles. These may involve non-contact activities such as looking at pornography.

The symptoms of stress and distress

An abused child will usually show signs of stress and distress, among which are those listed below. **It must be remembered that many of these may have nothing to do with abuse, but are worth consideration in trying to understand the pupil's behaviour.**

- A fall-off in school performance
- Aggressive or hostile behaviour
- Difficulties in relationship with peers
- Excessively affectionate or sexual behaviour towards adults or other children
- Regression to more immature forms of behaviour

- Self harming or suicidal behaviour
- Disturbed sleep

THE ROLES OF MEMBERS OF STAFF

The Designated Senior Member of Staff

The Designated Teacher is Mrs Cathryn Goodhead. She is responsible for contacting the Social Services to register concern about a child's welfare and implementing measures relating to Child Protection. She must:

- Be conversant with ACPC procedures
- Consult and refer cases under ACPC procedures
- Organise training on child protection within the School
- Attend training
- Keep the Headmaster informed if appropriate
- Be aware of the role of other agencies
- Keep appropriate records
- Support staff
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and the implementation of the School's Child Protection policy.

If the Designated Teacher is absent for any reason, the Headmaster acts as the Designated Senior Member of Staff.

Consultations/ Referrals

If the Designated Teacher considers that there may be a case of significant harm, or needs advice she will inform the Social services of her concerns within 24 hours (in writing or with written confirmation of a telephoned referral) of allegations or suspicions of abuse. If the case meets the criteria for eligibility, the Social Services department will make background enquiries including liaising with the police. If the concerns appear well founded, a strategy discussion will follow, normally within two working days. At this point a decision will be taken either to proceed with an S47 Enquiry/Criminal Investigation or not. If the concerns are substantiated and the child is deemed at continuing risk of significant harm, a Child Protection Conference will be convened

Record Keeping

Child Protection Records are kept securely by the Designated Teacher separately from other pupil records.

Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff

All staff have a professional duty to:

- be alert to signs of abuse;
- take immediate action in the pupil's best interest by reporting any evidence of abuse;
- know the role of the Designated Person and School procedures;
- enquire about the progress of individual cases in which they are/have been involved and thereafter accept their restricted role as the case becomes the province of other agencies;
- record accurately in writing information that may be required in Child Protection procedures. Notes should include the time, date, place and people who were present as well as what was said.

Dealing with disclosures

Remember that the priority is to protect the pupil. The matter should be taken seriously. Listen but do not judge and reassure the pupil that s/he has done the right thing in speaking to an adult. As soon as it appears that a pupil is likely to be informing you about abuse of any type, make it quite clear to the pupil that you cannot offer confidentiality. Inform them that you have to tell others. Only inform those with a need to know. If the child comes back to talk at a later stage s/he should be advised that you cannot comment or advise but you can listen.

Do not

- **contact the parents yourself;**
- **interrogate the pupil;**
- **speak to anyone about whom allegations are made, including colleagues;**
- **Promise confidentiality;**
- **ask a pupil outright if s/he or others have suffered abuse;**
- **ask leading questions (eg “ Did s/he do X to you?”). Use phrases such as “Is there anything else you want to tell me?” or “What do you want to tell me?”**

- **Never attempt to carry out an investigation of suspected or alleged abuse yourself**
- **Never think abuse is impossible in the School, or that an accusation against someone you know well and trust is bound to be wrong.**

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST MEMBERS OF STAFF

Teachers and other Members of Staff must protect themselves and Staff should bear in mind that even innocent actions or comments can sometimes be misconstrued. Children may find being touched uncomfortable or distressing for a variety of reasons. It is also important not to touch pupils, however casually, in ways or on parts of the body that may be considered indecent. In circumstances which involve a Member of Staff the responsibility for dealing with the matter lies with the Headmaster.

Teachers and other Members of Staff who hear an allegation of abuse against another member of staff should immediately report the matter to the Headmaster, unless the Headmaster is the person against whom the allegation is made. Immediate suspension of the Member of Staff is only one of a number of options which will be considered.

In the event of an allegation being made against a Member of Staff, the Headmaster will consider immediately whether there is sufficient evidence in the allegation to warrant an investigation. If there is reason to suppose abuse could have occurred, he will refer the matter to the local ACPC. Only if the allegation were trivial or demonstrably false would a further investigation not be warranted.

If the Headmaster is wholly satisfied that the pupil or pupils is/are not at risk of significant harm and that a reportable offence has not been committed he will consider the separate need for disciplinary action. In that case an investigation at school level would be necessary.

Occasionally false allegations of abuse are made. Staff should be guided by the following advice in an attempt to avoid false allegations and situations which may give rise to misinterpretation:

- Avoid whenever possible unobserved situations of one-to-one contact with a child. If they are unavoidable, always keep a door open and try to ensure that you are within the hearing of others.

- Do not offer to transport children alone in your car without telling another colleague that this is what you propose to do.
- Do not engage in or allow any sexually provocative games whether based on talking or touching or engage in “horseplay” involving pupils.
- Never make suggestive or discriminatory comments to a pupil
- Never enter a pupil’s room where a pupil may be changing his/her clothes without getting his/her consent to enter.
- Avoid “favouritism” and singling out “troublemakers”.
- Never trivialise child abuse.

Members of staff visiting boarding houses, particularly those housing members of the opposite sex, must exercise discretion and common sense. Members of Staff living alone are strongly advised that they should not let individual pupils, particularly of the opposite sex, into their homes, and should try to avoid seeing pupils there even in pairs. Other Staff should also be cautious and try to arrange for partners to be in the house or flat if pupils are ever present alone.

If you wish to contact Ofsted direct on a Child Protection matter please ring:

08456 404040

WHISTLEBLOWING

Staff have a duty to report concerns that a pupil is at risk of abuse, being abused or has been abused to the Designated Senior Member of Staff as the interests of the pupil is paramount. However, fear of reprisal is an issue for Staff in reporting abuse by colleagues. The Public Interest Disclosure Act (1998) provides protection against victimisation for persons, acting in good faith, who raise concerns about a wide variety of malpractices in the public interest.

When establishing the validity of any cause for concern, care will be taken by the School to:

- protect the identity of the whistleblower;
- avoid alerting anyone about whom a concern has been raised;
- avoid alerting other colleagues who may warn the subject of the concern;
- record all the information;
- keep all records secure and confidential.

CEG

Previous amendment: September 2010

Reviewed and amended: September 2011

Next Review: Michaelmas Term 2012