

Child Protection at Haileybury

Haileybury is committed to being a welcoming, friendly school, where harsh attitudes and over assertive behaviour have no place. We aspire that all our pupils should be able to develop their skills and abilities to the full and that their achievements and successes ought to be recognised and valued appropriately. Pupils should be able to develop and achieve in a secure and positive environment, free from fear or intimidation.

Pupils can gain support from a range of individuals within the school community, such as the School Counsellor, the School Doctor, The Chaplain, their HM and their tutor. In addition they can raise a concern with any member of staff whom they trust.

At Haileybury the designated senior person with responsibility for Child Protection is The Second Master who undertakes appropriate training every two years.

Haileybury will follow the procedures as laid down by the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB). The school will co-operate with the HSCB and such other agencies as may need to take part in any child protection investigation.

Haileybury has been inspected regularly by the Hertfordshire Social Services Inspection Unit, more lately by the NCSC and then by CSCI. CSCI has now been replaced for such inspections by Ofsted.

All staff are well placed to observe signs of abuse, changes in behaviour or a failure to thrive. Past experience suggests that one of the main priorities is the need for staff to report anything of concern. Individuals may all be noticing various symptoms, but it is possible that no one feels it important enough to pass on this information; it is rather like a jigsaw that needs fitting together. All staff have a responsibility to be vigilant and to recognise that the school has an important role in the early recognition of signs and symptoms of abuse.

Don't think "What if I am wrong?" Think "What if I am right?"

All staff must be aware of the guidance offered by the DCSF in its publication 'Working Together To Safeguard Children' which takes account of the provisions of The Children Act 1989, the subsequent Children Act (2004) and the Education Act (2002) and developing inter-agency practice. This reminds us that schools have a duty to safeguard the welfare of their pupils and to provide a safe learning environment as well as to identify and take action about child welfare concerns (Chapter 2 Section 121). It also states that "Educators have a crucial role to play in helping identify welfare concerns and indicators of possible abuse at an early stage. They should refer those concerns to the appropriate organization, normally the Local Authority children's social care..." (Chapter 2 Section 123)

At Haileybury all communication concerning Child Protection should be directed to the Designated Senior Person, who is the Second Master who will report to The Master. Should an allegation be made against the Master or the Second Master, that allegation should be reported to the School Doctor.

All staff should be aware of signs and types of behaviour which may indicate all is not well. The Staff training programme includes regular three yearly updates on Child Protection Issues and the induction programme for new staff also covers these issues. It is vital that anything of a worrying nature is conveyed through Housemasters/Housemistresses, Heads of Department, the Doctor, the Chaplain, and

the Second Master to the Master. The opportunity to raise these issues should be regularly provided for staff at all House and Department meetings.

Definitions of Abuse

- Neglect: The persistent or severe neglect of a child (for example by exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation) which results in serious impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive. Neglect may also occur when someone fails to act to prevent harm
- Physical Abuse: Physical injury to a child, including deliberate hitting, shaking, burning or poisoning, where there is definite knowledge, or a reasonable suspicion, that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented. Children can also suffer harm from physical abuse which takes place within a wider context of conflict or aggression inside a family or an institution.
- Sexual Abuse: Direct sexual abuse is the involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children and adolescents in sexual activities where physical contact occurs and which they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give consent, or that violate the social taboos of family roles. Indirect sexual abuse involves non-contact activities such as looking at/production of images, watching sexual activity or encouragement of children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Children below the age of 13 should never be regarded as being capable of sufficiently comprehending or of giving any consent.
- Emotional Abuse: The persistent emotional ill-treatment or rejection of a child which causes severe adverse effects on the behaviour and development of the child. All abuse involves some emotional ill-treatment. This category should be used where it is the main or sole form of abuse.

Identifying Abuse

Children may indicate that they are being abused in many different ways.

- Unhappiness and distress can almost always be seen in the behaviour of a young child.
- Older children may show their distress, but may also be very skilled at hiding it.

Clusters or signs of behaviour patterns emerging over time or inconsistent explanations may alert you to the possibility of abuse.

Staff should be concerned about a child if he/she:

- Has any injury which is not typical of the bumps and scrapes normally associated with accidental injury.
- Regularly has unexplained injuries.
- Frequently has injuries (even when apparently reasonable explanations are given).
- Gives confused or conflicting explanations of how injuries were sustained.
- Exhibits significant changes in behaviour, performance or attitude.
- Indulges in sexual behaviour which is unusually explicit and/or inappropriate to his/her age and stage of development.
- Discloses an incident in which he/she may have been seriously harmed.

Or if there is any other cause to believe that a child may be suffering harm.

Listening and talking to a child who tells you he/she is being abused

Any staff member to whom an allegation of abuse is made should:

- Find a quiet place and make time to listen.
- Stay calm - over-reacting can frighten the child and compound feelings of guilt.
- Not promise confidentiality. Issues relating to child protection must be passed on. Reassure the child that you will only tell those people who need to know.
- Take what the child says seriously and listen carefully to what you are being told.
- Limit any questioning to the minimum necessary to seek clarification, strictly avoiding 'leading' the child by making suggestions or asking questions that introduce ideas about what may have happened. (Do not ask questions like "Did he do x to you?" using instead a minimum number of questions of the "Tell me what has happened" type.)
- Tell the child he/she is not to blame - it is all too easy for the victim of abuse to be blamed and to feel guilty.
- Check out your understanding of what has happened if you are not clear.
- Use the child's own words. If you are reluctant to repeat these words, the child may stop talking to you.
- Reassure the child he/she was right to tell you and you are glad he/she has done so.
- Avoid criticising the alleged perpetrator
- Stop asking any more questions as soon as the child has disclosed that he or she believes that something abusive has happened to him or her, or to someone else.
- Tell the child that the staff member will now make sure that the appropriate people are brought in to follow up the problems (these will include the specialist social worker, and that worker may need to involve the police).
- Ask the child what steps they would like taken to protect them now that they have made an allegation, and assure them that the school will try to follow their wishes.
- Refer the matter, the same day, with all relevant details, to the Designated Senior Person, or, if the allegation is made against a member of staff, to the Master. In the unlikely event that these procedures cannot be carried out, the member of staff him/herself should contact the children's social services department.
- Make a handwritten record as soon as possible of what they have been told and how the child behaved. Include in this written record any non-verbal signs and indications - e.g. the child was visibly distressed/shaking. Make a copy of this available to the Designated Senior Person or the Master, as appropriate. This could be used in any subsequent legal proceedings.
- Check your guidelines.
- Get some support for yourself - you will need it. Listening to children's accounts of abuse can be very distressing. You may not be able to help the

child if you are not well supported. You can discuss this with the Designated Senior Person.

Record Keeping

- When a child has made a disclosure, staff should:
- Make brief notes as soon as possible after the conversation. Include a diagram showing the position of any bruising or other injury. Use the words of the child in these notes.
- Record statements and observations rather than interpretations or assumptions.
- Retain these notes carefully in case they are needed in the later stages of any investigation.
- Record the date, time and place of the conversation.
- Hand the notes promptly to the Designated Senior Person. Copies should not be retained by the member of staff who received the allegation.

What will happen next?

The Designated Senior Person is responsible for the next steps. Exactly what these are will depend on what other information the school has, but are likely to involve some of the following:

- A "What-if" enquiry to Hertfordshire Children Schools and Families (HCSF)
- A similar discussion with the Child Protection Schools Liaison Officer for the county
- A referral to HCSF to obtain support or protection for the child
- Close monitoring by the school.

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