



St. Piran's School Welfare Policy Including Child Protection Policy

Introduction

St. Piran's School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the safety and welfare of every child at the school. The school aims to provide an environment in which children feel secure, their viewpoints are valued, where they are encouraged to talk and are listened to.

All children have a right to be protected. Child abuse is no respecter of class or wealth. People who abuse children can be from any section of society, often appearing quite ordinary, respectable and caring. This makes it very difficult for the children they abuse to be believed. Within a professional, close society like St. Piran's, where people dedicate their lives to caring for and educating children, it can be difficult to appreciate that some people neglect or seek to harm children, even their own, or to use them for their own sexual gratification. Teachers and other school staff are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour and failure to develop because they have daily contact with the children. The school recognises its important roles in the early recognition of the signs and symptoms of abuse or neglect and the appropriate referral process.

This policy serves to minimise harm, or risk of harm, and to specify action in clear procedures of which all staff are made fully aware. All members of staff have a responsibility to ensure that children in their care are not harmed. There is no legal duty to report suspicions of abuse. However, there is a professional obligation to do so, and in extreme cases a lack of action could constitute criminal neglect. The following policy follows BSA, DfES, IAPS and Social Services guidelines.

The purpose of this policy is:

- To inform all staff, parents and governors about the school's responsibilities.
- To enable everyone to have a clear understanding of how these responsibilities should be carried out.

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- To follow the procedures contained in the Berkshire Child Protection Procedures, a copy of which is kept in Matron's room.

The Policy is reviewed regularly and updated and amended as necessary.

The Policy covers all types of abuse: physical injury, physical neglect, emotional and sexual abuse. There is a separate policy regarding bullying.

The Policy extends to accommodation the school arranges off site i.e. activity weekends.

Designated Teacher for Child Welfare and Protection

The school has designated the Head to take specific responsibility for child protection matters in the school. All matters related to Child Welfare and Protection should be discussed with the Head, the Deputy Head or Matron. Under no circumstances should staff discuss these issues with any other adult or child. The Head is responsible for:

- Holding the school's copy of the current Berkshire Area Child Protection Procedures.
- Briefing all the school staff on the relevant contents of the guidance and procedures the school should follow as specified in this document – including the briefing of new staff as part of their induction at the school.
- Ensuring the procedures are followed at the school.
- Ensuring that appropriate training and support are given to all staff.
- Developing effective working relationships with other agencies and services.
- Receiving reports of alleged or suspected abuse within the school, or reported by a pupil relating to incidents at home or outside the school.
- Decide whether to take further action about specific concerns (e.g. refer to Social Services).
- Liaising with Social Services department.
- Ensuring that accurate records relating to individuals are kept in a secure place and marked "Strictly Confidential".
- Submitting reports to and attending Child Protection conferences.
- Ensuring the school effectively monitors children who have been identified as "at risk".
- Providing guidance to parents, children and staff about obtaining suitable help.

The Deputy Head and / or Matron will deputise in The Head's absence.

Minimising Risk

Staff

All staff should be aware of the risks of abuse (by adults and other young people) and should take steps to reduce those risks.

- Never think that abuse is impossible in your school, or that an accusation against someone you know well and trust is bound to be wrong.
- Never blur the line between professional and personal life. This needs special attention in a boarding school where we live together and spend large amounts of time together.
- All staff will have a Criminal Records Bureau check (at the enhanced level for teaching staff)

Staff need to be aware of how they interact with pupils. The current climate of suspicion with regard to child abuse poses dilemmas for caring adults. This is particularly true in schools like St. Piran's, where a pride is taken in fostering a family atmosphere. In order to protect children from abuse, and staff from suspicions of abuse, the natural inclination to comfort and reassure children through physical contact has to be restrained by a considered assessment of the situation.

This does not mean that physical contact is never permissible but there must be limits, and contact outside these limits must be justified if necessary. Limits will vary according to the age of the child and the role of the member of staff.

The following guidance is offered as a starting point for further development through staff training:

- Try as far as possible to avoid being alone in a room with a child.
- Where one to one teaching/counselling needs to occur, try to leave the door open or arrange to be within earshot or vision of others.
- Excursions out of the school, especially residential excursions should have a sufficient number of adults to provide proper supervision.
- Restraint should only be used where necessary to prevent children at imminent risk of harming themselves or others or inflicting damage to property. Colleagues should be summoned where possible to be present to witness or assist. (See Policy on the use of Force to Control or Restrain pupils).
- Demeaning or salacious remarks should never be made to or in the presence of children. Remarks about a child's physical characteristics or development could fall into this category.
- Share any concerns with the Head, Deputy Head or Matron, if you suspect that a child is becoming inappropriately attached to you or to another member of staff or voluntary helper.

Pupils

Children and young adults often tell other people, rather than staff and adults, about abuse. Prefects are to be made aware of how to respond if they are told of abuse or suspected abuse.

- All children are given a leaflet outlining that St. Piran's expectations with regard to behaviour. Children know what to do and who they can talk to if they have a problem.
- All pupils should know the school policy on bullying.
- PSHCE is used to help cover these issues.

School Procedures

- If any member of staff is concerned about a child s/he must inform the Head, Deputy Head or Matron.
- The member of staff must record information regarding concerns on the same day
- The Head will decide the appropriate action, including whether the concerns should be referred to the Commission for Social Care Inspection. If it is decided to make a referral to Social Services, this will be done without prior discussion with the parents and within 24 hours of the allegations.
- If a referral is made to Social Services, the Head will submit a written report of the concerns to the social worker within 48 hours.
- Particular attention will be paid to the attendance and development of any child who has been identified as “at risk” or who has been placed on the Child Protection Register.
- If a pupil who is known to be on the Child Protection Register changes school, the Head will inform the social worker responsible for the case and transfer the appropriate records to the receiving school.
- If a member of staff wishes s/he can report any concern or allegation about school practices or the behaviour of colleagues which are likely to put children at risk or other serious harm directly to Commission for Social Care Inspection or to the local authority.

Allegations involving School Staff

If a child or parent makes a complaint about a member of staff, the person receiving the information must take it seriously and immediately inform the Head.

Any member of staff who has reason to suspect that a pupil may have been abused by another member of staff, either at school or elsewhere, must immediately inform the Headteacher. He or she should also make a record of the concerns including a note of anyone else who witnessed the incident or allegation.

(If the concerns are about the Headteacher, the Head of Education Welfare Service must be contacted by the Deputy Head).

The Head will not investigate the allegation itself, or take written or detailed statements, but s/he will assess whether it is necessary to refer to the local Social Services team in accordance with the Child Protection Education Welfare Officer, Head of Education Welfare Service or a Senior Officer from Social Services.

If the Head decides that the allegation warrants further action through Child Protection Procedures, s/he must make a referral direct to the local Social Services team. If the

allegation constitutes a serious criminal offence it will be necessary to contact Social Services before informing the member of staff.

If it is decided that it is not necessary to refer to Social Services, the Headteacher will consider whether there needs to be an internal investigation.

THE FULL VERSION OF THE POLICY IS AVAILABLE FROM THE
HEADMASTER, DEPUTY HEADMASTER OR MATRON.