



Safeguarding Policy

Created: Sept 2013
Last reviewed: April 18



All staff should have access to this policy and sign to the effect that they have read and understood its content.

School Policies on Related Safeguarding Issues
(to be read and followed alongside this document)

Behaviour Policy
Guidelines for the Use of Physical Intervention
Health and Safety Policy
Bullying Procedure
Racism / Anti-Racism Policy (Respect policy)
Safer Recruitment Policy
Whistle-Blowing Policy
Drugs and Alcohol Policy
Procedures for Assessing Risk (re school trips)
First Aid and Accident Policies

These documents can be found in the school office. (Policy file) They are also available on request to the school.

CONTACTS

Designated Child Protection Co-ordinator: **Rebecca Verallo-Graves**
(School Manager) 01277 899955

If involving School Manager

Emma Barr 07528 366989

Ayshea Praid 07972905999

Head office number 01279 505326

Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board: 0300 123 4043



INTRODUCTION:

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 and related guidance. This policy is framed by the Statutory guidance for schools and colleges 'Keeping children safe in Education' July 2015, Dealing with allegations against teachers and other staff (2011), the Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (2000) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013).

All staff are given individual copies of the abridged version of 'Keeping children safe in Education' (2015). This forms part of the new Staff handbook and Staff induction book. Also included in these is the Guidance on Mandatory reporting of Female genital mutilation, and reporting guidance on Children missing from Education.

The Prevent guidance informs ongoing Prevent awareness training, that all staff are included in.

Because of our close day to day contact with children, we recognise that; "Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children....School and college staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early, and provide help for children, to prevent concerns from escalating. Schools and colleges should work with social care, the police, health services and other services to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm." ('Keeping Children Safe in Education' July 2015)

The staff of White Trees Independent School take seriously our responsibility under Section 157 Education Act 2002 and the Children Act 2004 to safeguard and promote the welfare of our students, to minimise risk and to work together with other agencies to ensure adequate arrangements are in place within our school to identify, assess, and support those children who are suffering harm.

Our school is a community and all those directly connected (staff, all professionals working with our students, where applicable parents, and the students themselves) share in the safeguarding process. We welcome suggestions and comments contributing to this process.

Disclosure of abuse

During their time at White Trees School, students may suffer or disclose that they have suffered physical, sexual or emotional abuse either whilst at home, away from home or within the premises of White Trees School. It may be alleged that the abuse has been perpetrated by staff, other adults including



parents, other children in their locality, or by another person from previous school or placement.

Any student who discloses sexual abuse by any person/child must be treated with the utmost sensitivity. The child protection procedures must be activated without delay.

Note:

Staff should be aware that children who have been emotionally, physically or sexually abused often act in a bizarre manner in order to either gain attention or to act out the particular difficulty which they have had with the parents, friend or stranger. Therefore their disturbed or bizarre behaviour should be assessed and monitored closely, especially if it is not considered a norm for the child. Often this is a manifestation of a deeper rooted issue.

If it is suspected or alleged that a Student is the subject of abuse, either of a physical, sexual or emotional nature, the staff member concerned has a responsibility to report the matter immediately. It is essential that all staff working at White Trees School must, at all times, be aware of the well being of residents and of the possibility of abuse occurring. The abuse may be physical or sexual, perpetrated by the residents peer group, staff and/or other adults, including the Student's parents.

Initially this will be reported to the School Manager who will ensure that a regulatory notification is carried out to inform all parties, including, ofsted and the placing authority through the Student's social worker or the social worker's line manager; the Area Child Protection Team, and the the registered responsible individual.

If it is alleged or suspected that School Manager, the director or registered responsible individual is involved in the abuse, the individual member of staff has a responsibility to inform the child protection team.

It is our expectation that this information will initially, be given verbally, confirmed in writing within 24 hours.

Confidentiality

It is important not to make promises that you are unable to keep. Do not say that you will keep what the Student is about to tell you as confidential, before the Student has confided in you as you may have a duty to share it with



others. Facilitate and encourage but under no circumstances cross-question. You must strike a balance between gathering enough information to establish whether there is a real cause for concern.

All staff are required to pass on information regarding abuse. A full and accurate record of the disclosure must be made at the earliest opportunity.

Disclosure against Staff

All allegations against staff will be viewed seriously. The School Manager will take immediate action to ensure the safety of the young people concerned. Bearing in mind that:

- The Student's safety is of paramount importance.
- That any disclosure is dealt with sensitively.
- Any disclosure is dealt with in line with both White Trees School and the Local Authority Child protection procedures.

Depending on the nature of the disclosure this may mean that the staff member concerned could be sent home if they are on duty or may be suspended and unable to return to work until facts have been established and investigation has taken place. When the investigation and subsequent decisions are concluded, the staff member will be officially informed of any further action that may be taken to include disciplinary action where necessary.

Where the nature of the disclosure is of abuse against a member of the staff/management team then the member of staff that has received the disclosure must inform the School Manager immediately. If the allegation is against the School Manager then the staff member should go directly to the Director. Subsequent to this the staff member against whom the allegation is made will be suspended from duty pending urgent investigation.

Should the allegation be substantiated against the staff member this may result in police prosecution.

Disclosure against another student



An allegation may also be made against another student. If this occurs, the safety of the Student remains of paramount importance. The guidelines in these circumstances remain the same. However, it is important to differentiate between allegations of abuse and normal adolescent behaviour.

As soon as the reporting staff member becomes aware of alleged, or suspects another staff member/manager/director or consultant not involved, must accompany the abused student discreetly at all times. They must be supportive to the student(s) until members of the child protection team or police arrive and during any interviews that they are asked to attend with the Student's concerned.

The alleged abuser(s) must not be allowed contact with the Student disclosing or those who have been allegedly abused. This will need to be handled with discretion and sensitivity.

When an allegation of abuse has been made by a Student, against anybody, it is imperative that objective notes are taken, but information/questioning must not be sought or undertaken. Notes taken should be relevant to the disclosure, freely given and not as a result of questioning.

Protection Procedure

Once the child protection team and or police have been informed of the allegation, it is their responsibility to interview and/or take statements from those involved.

White Trees School is not equipped to operate a formal investigation into an allegation of abuse. This is the domain of the Social Services Department Child Protection Team. White Trees School will follow and co-operate with any Local Authority child protection investigation procedures.

Child Protection is a specialist field requiring training. Although staff at White Trees School receive training on the subject and issues surrounding child protection, this training does not on its own qualify any staff member to undertake a Child Protection investigation. Staff do have a role which centres on supporting the Student by making themselves available and listening to them.

The nature of the allegation will determine whether or not it is appropriate for a child to be removed, i.e. if the allegation is of child to child.

When any allegation of abuse is made the following chain of events may take place.



- The area child protection team will be notified and the name of the person you are reporting to will be logged.
- The Local Authority who has responsibility for the Student will be notified. The name of the social worker, Duty social worker or whoever you are reporting to, will be logged together with their job title.
- Notes made of the disclosure, persons involved events leading up to and Surecares' actions as a result.
- The School Manager/directors of the company will be notified if not already done so, regardless of time of day or night. This is to be logged.
- OFSTED will usually be notified by the School Manager.

Recognition of abuse

As child abuse is so widespread, all staff working at White Trees School must be alerted to the possibility of abuse and should know the procedures for reporting their suspicions (see appendix 1) An apparently minor injury or series of minor injuries or non-specific illness over a period of time may indicate a more serious situation and further investigation must be considered.

When a Student attempts or threatens suicide, or inflicts any form of self-harm by injury, refusal of food or self-neglect, the underlying cause must always be carefully investigated and the possibility of some form of abuse by another person should be borne in mind, even when there is not immediate evidence of this. Where abuse by another person is suspected it must be reported at once.

Some injuries will not be the result of abuse, however, action must be taken when the nature of the injury is not consistent with the account of how it occurred or where there is a definite knowledge or reasonable suspicion that the injury is inflicted (or knowingly not prevented) by any person having care of the Student.

Physical abuse

Most young people suffer accidents from time to time, which result in physical injury. This presents difficulty in diagnosing child abuse. We must also accept that some people believe children and young people must never be hit, whereas others feel physical chastisement is acceptable. The professional when faced with an injured Student must consider whether the injury is of an accidental origin or not. Some injuries may seem insignificant by themselves, but repeated injuries, even of a very minor nature, especially younger children, may be symptomatic of



child abuse, and if no action is taken, they may be injured more seriously. It must be emphasised that if child abuse is suspected thorough medical assessment must be taken without delay. Following the advice and support from other safeguarding professionals, like the LADO, social workers or police the course of action may be that the Student is taken to the accident and emergency department at the Local Hospital for treatment.

Physical Injury of young people can take many forms and may include:

- Bruises.
- Fractures.
- Scalds.
- Burns.
- Weal's and scars.
- Facial or head injury.
- Bites.
- Grip marks.

This list is not exhaustive.

Neglect

Neglect is often difficult to detect, as it is usually a slow ongoing process. Professionals may, out of familiarity start to unknowingly tolerate lessening standards of childcare, and each one of us has different parameters of what is acceptable and unacceptable. It is therefore essential that a regular, objective appraisal of the Student's presentation and condition is made.

In general, parents and care workers are responsible for giving emotional, physical care, protection and for providing adequate food, shelter, clothing, medical care, supervision and protection, education, social and moral guidance. If aspects of these components are missing it is likely a Student is being neglected.

Measuring neglect is always difficult and may require close co-operation between health and social service professionals. Standards and expectations of childcare vary greatly throughout society. Care must be taken not to impose personal standards of acceptability, and judgement will always be required in considering



the possibility of physical neglect. When in doubt professional advice, must be sought.

Neglect may occur in many ways. Clear examples may be:

- Injuries caused by lack of reasonable supervision and control.
- Failure to ensure the safety of young people in public places.
- Failure to provide a reasonable standard of care such as adequate clothing, food or seeking medical attention for illness.

Sexual

Sexual abuse is defined as the “involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children and adolescents in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend, to which they are unable to give informed consent, or that violate the social taboos of family roles” (Kempe and Kempe 1978).

Sexual abuse covers both sexual intercourse and other forms of sexual activity, including fondling, mutual masturbation and pornographic activity. It may be committed not only by an adult but also, in exceptional circumstances, by another child.

The suggestion of sexual abuse must **always** be **taken seriously and reported.**

Sexual abuse is now recognised as being widely prevalent. It occurs at all ages of childhood and in all economic and social groups. The way in which sexual abuse may become apparent will vary in accordance with the age and understanding of the Student. Sometimes there will be a clear and direct statement but some young people prefer to tell a friend or hint rather than describe the abuse. Some young people will be unable to express the abuse verbally but their behaviour will indicate inappropriate sexual knowledge or preoccupation with sexual matters. It is also possible that other behavioural changes or physical symptoms, which are not in themselves sexual, will be indicators of the need for further investigation. Sometimes youngsters may reveal sexual abuse without necessarily understanding or responding to its significance.

Sometimes there are psychological or behavioural signs or symptoms which may indicate sexual abuse these are:

- Sexualised behaviour.
- Sexualised drawings or play.
- Sudden decline in school performance.
- Regression e.g. soiling or wetting.
- Low self-esteem.
- Psychosomatic disorders.
- Suicidal acts or threats.
- Promiscuity or precocious behaviour.
- Eating disorders.
- Sleep disturbance and nightmares.
- Depression.
- Absconding or running away.
- Self harm

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse can exist on its own. Emotionally abused young people are not necessarily physically abused as well. It is found in young people where behaviour and emotional development have been severely affected.

Emotionally abused children find their needs met with indifference, hostility or in an inconsistent manner. This may include verbal hostility, ridicule, sarcasm, shaming, belittling, frightening, threatening or tantalising. This may lead to cruel treatment, like locking young people in their bedrooms or cupboards, or making unrealistic domestic demands on them. Sometimes basic needs like food, warmth or clothing are withheld as punishment. These conditions may lead to physical, emotional and intellectual developmental delay or stunting.

Sexual exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse. Children in exploitative situations and relationships receive something such as gifts,



money or affection as a result of performing sexual activities or others performing sexual activities on them.

Children or young people may be tricked into believing they're in a loving, consensual relationship. They might be invited to parties and given drugs and alcohol. They may also be groomed and exploited online.

Some children and young people are trafficked into or within the UK for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Sexual exploitation can also happen to young people in gangs.

Radicalisation

Radicalisation is defined as the process by which people come to support terrorism and extremism and, in some cases, go on to participate in terrorist groups.

“Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas” (HM Government Prevent Strategy 2011).

Following publication of the **Prevent Strategy**, there has been an increased awareness of the specific need to safeguard children, young people and families from violent extremism. Across the UK there have been attempts to radicalise vulnerable children and young people to develop extreme views including views justifying political, religious, sexist or racist violence, or to steer them into a rigid and narrow ideology that is intolerant of diversity and leaves them vulnerable to future radicalisation.

Keeping children safe from these risks is a safeguarding matter and should be approached in the same way as safeguarding children from other risks. Children need to be protected from messages of all violent extremism including, but not restricted to, those linked to Islamist ideology, or to Far Right / Neo Nazi / White Supremacist ideology, various paramilitary groups, and extremist Animal Rights movements.

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURE

Specific procedures for manager and staff in the event:

1. A Student tells you they have been abused



2. You are aware of or suspect that a Student has been abused
3. Someone other than the accused report abuse or is suspected of abuse of a Student.

1. A Student tells you they had been abused

Listen and observe carefully making an accurate record of what he/she said using the person's own words. This should not be in the form of an interrogation. It is to insure that students feel confident that they will be listened to and any allegation taken seriously. It is important to remember that police may require the statement at a later stage. You should advise the person making the allegation that you are required to report what they say to your line manager.

2. You are aware of or suspect that a Student has been abused

In the first instance you should report your suspicions verbally to your line manager at the first available opportunity. If the manager is not available or you suspect that they will not act appropriately then you should report your suspicions to the Director. You will then be required to write down your suspicions giving precise and detailed grounds on when your suspicions are based. It will be necessary to explain what you think has happened and give any other evidence you have to support your suspicion.

Someone other than the abused reports abuse or suspected abuse of the Student

You must write down exactly what the person says in their own words. All allegations of abuse must be taken seriously, regardless of the source of information. This includes those made anonymously.

Written records

All written records are strictly confidential and should not be disclosed except to others to whom a report of the allegation is made.

Reporting allegations

The reporting of the allegation of abuse should be done immediately following the disclosure, initial action should be to make sure the person is safe and at no further risk from the alleged perpetrator. Where an allegation or suspicion of abuse is in connection with a member of staff, then that person is to be suspended from duty without prejudice pending further investigation. If you have any doubts as to whether your manager will act appropriately then you should report the allegation or concern to the Director or a Director.



Further action

Following an allegation of abuse the directors of the company must be informed. *Regulatory Guidance states:* "a person registered shall notify the registration authority not later than 24 hours from that time of the occurrence, of any event in the home which affects the well being of any resident."

Inform the placing authority with a detailed account of the allegation along with any statements. The local social services department should also be informed, avoiding any unnecessary delay. Agreement to any further actions in accordance with the social services child protection policy should be clarified and recorded, clearly stating the individual actions, who is responsible and by when.

Informing the police and photographic evidence

Abuse of any person by another person is a criminal offence. The decision to consider involving the police immediately should be taken at this stage in collaboration with the social services department. All local authority social service departments operate an "out of hours" emergency duty service. Contact should be made through their service if reporting this outside of normal office hours.

If a decision is taken to photograph the injury i.e. bruises, Marks etc, this must be done with this service users full consent, knowledge and understanding. This relates to the purpose of taking photographs and context in which they are to be used. If there is any doubt as to the surface user's ability to be able to give informed consent, then their social worker or care manager and parents/relatives must be consulted prior to taking of any photographs. The preference is for the police to arrange the taking of any photographs required. Therefore they will meet to discuss this with the respective social worker and record the outcome/actions.

Recording

Clear, precise and accurate notes or reports should be made of all decisions taken outlining the reasons behind the decisions, and subsequent action. This must include Times, dates, person's present/ contacted and their job title. It should be signed as a true record of events.

Do's and don'ts

Do

- Believe the person.
- Stay calm.



- Listen patiently
- Reassure the person that they are doing at the right thing in telling you.
- Explained what you are going to do so, if necessary, you'll get emergency medical treatment, you will treat the information seriously, you will report to the appropriate manager and you and the manager will take steps to protect the individual.
- Report to the appropriate manager as soon as you can.
- Follow your own service guidelines concerning police involvement. In most circumstances, it is likely that a decision to call the police would rest with the manager, not a direct care worker. However, in an emergency and

when a manager cannot be contacted, you should inform the police if you suspect that the crime (eg. An assault or rape) has taken place.

- Write a **factual** account of the conversation you had with that the individual as soon as you can. Try as far as possible to write down the **Student's own words**. This report should be given to your manager; it may later be used as part of a legal action.

Don't

- Do not appear shocked, horrified, disgusted or angry.
- Do not press the individual for details (it is not your job to launch into an investigation).
- Do not make comments or judgments, other than to show sympathy and concern.
- Do not contaminate or remove possible forensic evidence. If the reported incident has happened very recently it may still be possible for the police to obtain forensic evidence. Do not give the person a wash, a bath, or food or drink until after the medical examination.
- Do not promise to keep secrets - you have a duty to pass on the information to the appropriate person.
- Do not give sweeping reassurances such as, " now you have told someone this will never happen to you again " - no one can give such a guarantee.



- Do not confront the alleged abuser

Staff Procedure for reporting Child Protection concerns, Allegations or Disclosures.

Child Protection Designated Person (level 3 trained)

Directors	Emma Barr Ayshea Praide	07840 892305 07972 905999
Sherards Cottage Manager		07972906190
Thornbury House Manager		07811 236558
Clifton House Manager		07949830620
Pathways Manager		07376 380593
White Trees Manager		07794 543411

Staff will report immediately to the School Manager any concerns or actual disclosures. ALL School Managers are Lead Designated Officers.

If the concern or allegation involves the School Manager or other senior management, staff will report immediately to the Director or Directors named above who are Designated Lead Officers.

****Surecare Child Protection Procedure will come into force at this point****

The Student will be listened to carefully and an accurate record made of the Student(s) events in their own words.



School Manager will liaise and inform other professionals verbally, immediately and in writing within 24 hours. (LADO)
Refer to Managing Allegations against Staff Guidance for interagency working practice.

Notification of significant information report will be sent to Ofsted within 48 hrs if relevant for notification.