



## **CHILD PROTECTION AT HALLIFORD**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. The School has a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of each and every pupil. Amongst the many welfare requirements placed upon the School the most important relate to child protection. It is the duty of all staff at Halliford to be alert to the possibility of abuse - sexual, physical, and emotional or neglect - to the pupils entrusted into the care of the School.

2. **Child Protection Officers.** The Headmaster is the nominated Child Protection Liaison Officer (CPLO) for Halliford School. The Deputy Headmaster and the Senior Tutor are the nominated Deputy CPLOs. **The following staff have also undertaken child protection training: the School Counsellor and Matron.** In addition, a member of the Board of Governors has received child protection training and has a particular responsibility for child protection matters.

3. **Contact with Outside Agencies.** The details for contacting outside agencies are held by the Headmaster's Secretary. It is School policy that the Headmaster or his nominated deputies will undertake such contact.

4. **Definition.** The term 'staff' used in this policy covers all staff employed by the School whether academic or support staff.

### **ESSENTIAL ACTIONS TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY STAFF**

5. It is essential that **every** member of staff makes sure that they are fully conversant with Halliford School's Child Protection Policy.

6. It is essential, when a member of staff becomes concerned about the welfare of any pupil, that he/she makes his/her concerns known to the Headmaster, or in his absence either the Deputy Head or the Senior Tutor.

7. It is essential that the Headmaster, or in his absence the Deputy Head or Senior Tutor, informs outside agencies within 24 hours of a disclosure or suspicion of abuse, as required by the Surrey County Child Protection Procedures Guide.

**A member of staff with any concerns about possible abuse or receiving information about possible abuse MUST inform the CPLO or a Deputy CPLO immediately.**

### **PREVENTATIVE ACTIONS BY THE SCHOOL**

8. **Staff Recruitment.** The Halliford School staff recruitment policy (see **Part G Section 5** of this handbook) aims to ensure that only people suitable to work with children are employed. The School takes the following steps to ensure the policy is as effective as possible in practice: the Headmaster and Bursar receive specialist training in safe recruitment; the staff recruitment policy is reviewed annually; all staff recruited to the School are required to undergo a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check; all staff recruited have to have an

unequivocal declaration from their previous employer or training establishment that they do not know of any reason why they should not work with children.

**9. Staff Training.** All staff will receive regular training via the mechanism of whole staff INSET on child protection issues. There will be a formal such INSET every three years. New staff will have Child Protection included within their induction programmes. Those staff holding posts with formal child protection responsibilities (e.g. CPLO, Deputy CPLO) will receive formal external training.

**10. Pupil Awareness.** Pupils are to be made aware of the child protection measures in place at Halliford during PSHE. In particular, they are to be made aware of the importance of talking to someone if they feel under threat of abuse or have actually been or are being abused. The PSHE programme at Halliford includes assertiveness training focused on helping children learn how to say no.

**11. Policy Review.** A nominated governor undertakes an annual review of all child protection and related policies.

### **GENERAL GUIDANCE FOR STAFF**

#### **The welfare of the pupil is paramount and takes precedence over every other consideration.**

**12.** All staff should be aware that pupils may suffer from sexual, physical, emotional abuse and neglect while at School, at home or elsewhere and that the abuse may be perpetrated by staff, other adults including parents and other children. Children can suffer both sexual and physical abuse at the hands of other children. Such cases must be taken as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult and will be subject to the same child protection procedures. **Annex A** to this Section includes symptoms of abuse in order to help staff in identifying when abuse might be taking place.

**13.** All staff must be aware that should a pupil disclose information of abuse **there could never be an absolute guarantee of confidentiality.** There is a clear legal duty to pass on information about abuse or suspected abuse. Not to do so could place the member of staff concerned in the untenable position of failing to report a crime to the police. Far worse, it might mean that a child continued to suffer abuse.

**14.** Distinctions between child abuse and, for example, isolated instances of bullying or 'adolescent experimentation' are not easily made. If a member of staff is in any doubt about identifying a problem as one of child abuse, he or she should always report those concerns to the School's designated officers for Child Protection.

**Do not try to investigate or diagnose abuse yourself. To do so may prejudice subsequent enquiries. The responsibility of the School is to ensure that the proper authorities investigate any symptoms of suspected abuse.**

### **ACTION IN THE EVENT OF DISCLOSURE OR SUSPICION OF ABUSE**

**15.** Staff who have even the slightest cause for concern in any matter relating to the safety and well being of a pupil **MUST** report the matter immediately to the Headmaster, or in his absence, the Deputy Head. **The welfare of the pupil is paramount and takes precedence over every other** consideration (parents, staff, School and so on). The Headmaster carries the

legal duty as 'designated person' for all Child Protection matters. He will assume responsibility for taking the appropriate action. A written record of the report made to the CPLO must be kept.

**16.** The Headmaster will convene an immediate meeting of relevant parties to review the evidence and decide the next step. A written record is to be kept of the meeting. It is not the task of the School either to diagnose or investigate abuse. That is the duty of the Social Services, the Police and the Medical Profession. One or other of the two following course of action will be taken:

**a.** If immediate action is deemed necessary the Headmaster will make an instant referral to the Surrey County Social Services Emergency Team.

**b.** If it is felt that advice is needed then the Headmaster will telephone the Surrey County Social Services Duty Manager before taking further action.

**17.** In the unlikely event of a disagreement between the CPLO/Deputy CPLO and the member of staff reporting a concern as to whether a referral should be made to the proper authorities the following procedure will be followed:

**a.** The Headmaster will summon an immediate meeting of the Deputy CPLO, the School Counsellor and the School Matron to discuss the situation with the member of staff concerned. The purpose of the meeting will be to try and come to an agreement as to the appropriate action to take. A written record of the meeting is to be taken.

**b.** If there is a meeting of minds then the Headmaster, in his capacity as CPLO, will take whatever action has been deemed necessary.

**c.** In the event that there is no meeting of minds, and the CPLO believes that a referral should be made to the appropriate authorities, he will have the right to make that report, regardless of the disagreement of the member of staff making the initial report.

**d.** If the CPLO does not believe that the matter should be made the subject of a referral, but the member of staff who raised the concern still does believe that a referral should be made, then that member of staff has the right to make a referral themselves.

**e.** The member of staff making such a referral must inform the CPLO whom he/she spoke to and what they said. It is then up to the CPLO to make contact with the authorities to let them know why it was felt that a referral was an inappropriate response.

**18.** Whatever action is decided, whether it is for an immediate referral or for advice, it must be taken within 24 hours of the disclosure or suspicion of abuse being brought to the attention of the School.

**19.** Once Social Services accept a referral the School is not required to take further action.

**a.** All information on Child Protection matters is confidential and **records will be stored separately** by the Headmaster and will not be accessible from the pupil's School file.

**b.** The Headmaster will inform the Chairman of Governors at the earliest opportunity that there has been a referral.

## **DISCLOSURE AND THE PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED**

**20.** Children who disclose information about abuse usually do so with considerable difficulty and with much anxiety about the possible repercussions on themselves and others. In the event that a pupil decides to make a disclosure to a member of staff the key principles in handling the situation are as follows:

- On no account promise absolute confidentiality.
- Try to reassure the pupil that they have done the right thing to disclose.
- Try to reassure them that the School will do all it can to help.
- Let them know it will be the Head who will have to decide 'who needs to know'.
- Do not push or probe for explanation and do not ask leading questions.
- Limit any questions to the minimum necessary for clarification only.
- Ask the pupil what steps they would like taken to protect them.
- Avoid the child having to repeat the disclosure several times.
- Produce a signed and dated record of what the pupil said and what you observed.
- Report the matter to the Head or in his absence, the Deputy CPOs immediately.

**Remember - under no circumstances try to carry out your own investigation or diagnosis. Just report your concerns and the information that you have been given.**

### **ABUSE BY ONE OR MORE PUPILS AGAINST ANOTHER PUPIL**

**21.** In the event of a disclosure or suspicion of abuse by one or more pupils against another pupil the same procedures will be followed, in principle and as far as possible, for any disclosure or suspicion of abuse i.e. the welfare of the child is paramount and it is not the task of any member of the School to investigate. That said, the following additional procedures will be followed in order to ensure the safety of the victim and the integrity of any investigation:

**a.** The first action taken by the School will be to ensure the safety of the pupil making the disclosure. The precise arrangements will depend on the circumstances of the disclosure.

**b.** The School will then contact the Social Services immediately to inform them of the disclosure and to request advice as to what further action to take and in particular re the following:

- When and what to tell the parents of the victim.
- Whether, and if so, when to suspend the alleged perpetrators.
- Whether, and if so, when and what to tell the parents of the alleged perpetrators.
- What, if anything the School can be told.

**c.** The School will then take the action agreed with the Social Services and, if involved, with the Police. Any further follow up action involving the families concerned will also be taken after consultation.

### **AN ALLEGATION OF ABUSE BY A MEMBER OF STAFF**

**22.** It is important that all staff ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place them at risk of allegations of harm to pupil e.g. in one-to-one tuition, sports coaching, conveying a pupil by car, engaging in inappropriate electronic communication with a pupil and so on). Detailed advice for the protection of staff is to be found at **Annex A of Section I of Part G** of this handbook.

**23.** Any allegation of abuse, or suspicion of abuse, by a member of staff (teaching or non-teaching), whether at school or elsewhere, **must be reported immediately to the Headmaster**, who is legally bound to report the matter to the appropriate authorities for investigation. In the event that it is the Head who is suspected of possible abuse, the member of staff concerned should report the matter without delay to the Chairman of Governors. Under disciplinary procedures, the allegation or suspicion of abuse by a member of staff is likely to merit suspension on full pay pending further investigation.

**24.** The School will report to the Secretary of State, via the DCSF in Darlington, within one month of their leaving the School, any member of staff who has been dismissed or whose services are no longer used because he/she is considered unsuitable to work with children.

### **SOME CONCLUDING POINTS**

**25.** All staff must ensure that they are conversant with the contents of this policy and have familiarised themselves with the symptoms of possible abuse given in the attached annex. The following points are the essential ones to remember