

# Child Protection (Safeguarding)

## 1. Policy Statement

*Bournemouth Collegiate School (BCS) fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection and is committed to promoting the safeguarding of children. This policy complies with section 2.2 of the DCSF Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education; Statutory guidance, and has regard to DfE 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused'. It is also in accordance with locally agreed inter-agency procedures.*

*BCS operates safe recruitment procedures (including CRB checks and compliance with Independent School Standards Regulations) and requires its Principal and staff to undertake training in child protection on appointment and updated every three years. Designated Child Protection Officers are required to undertake training in child protection and inter-agency working on appointment and updated every two years. All staff including part-time, volunteers and college/university students receive child protection training as part of their induction. Any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements once noted will be remedied without delay.*

*Our policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the school. This policy is in accordance with the procedures set out by the Bournemouth and Poole Local Safeguarding Children Board and Inter-agency Committee Procedures. All information provided by Bournemouth and Poole Local Safeguarding Children Board can be found at: <http://www.bournemouth-poole-lscb.org.uk/home>.*

*BCS is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this Child Protection (Safeguarding) policy is non-discriminatory in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). Further details are available in the school's Equal Opportunity Policy document.*

*This policy is applicable to all pupils in both senior and prep schools, including those in boarding and EYFS and BCS seeks to implement this policy through adherence to the procedures set out in the rest of this document.*

*The school's LGB is required by the UCST board to undertake an annual review of the school's child protection (safeguarding) policy and procedures and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged.*

*In line with our Provision of Information policy, this document is available to all interested parties on our website and on request from the Senior school and Prep school offices and should be read in conjunction with the following documents: Behaviour, Missing Pupils, Physical Restraint, Internet and Email, Anti-Cyberbullying, Whistleblowing.*

*This document is reviewed annually by the Designated Child Protection Officers (see below) or as events or legislation change requires. The next scheduled date for review is August 2012.*

## **2. Table of Contents**

<b>1. Policy Statement</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Table of Contents</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3. Key Personnel</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>4. Procedures</b>	<b>4</b>
<u><b>4.1: Introduction</b></u>	<b>4</b>
<u><b>4.2: Safe Recruitment</b></u>	<b>4</b>
<u><b>4.3: The Role of the Designated Person</b></u>	<b>5</b>
<u><b>4.4: Staff Responsibilities</b></u>	<b>5</b>
<u><b>4.5: Support for Vulnerable Children</b></u>	<b>6</b>
<u><b>4.6: Boarding</b></u>	<b>7</b>
<b>5. Appendices</b>	<b>8</b>
<u><b>Appendix 1: Child Protection Procedures – Guidelines for Staff</b></u>	<b>8</b>
<u><b>Appendix 2: Aide Memoire for Staff – Child Abuse: the Warning Signs</b></u>	<b>12</b>
<u><b>Appendix 3: UCST Notes of Guidance for Staff-Student Relationships (2010)</b></u>	<b>13</b>
<u><b>Appendix 4: Childrens’ Act 1989</b></u>	<b>18</b>

## **3. Key Personnel**

**The Designated Child Protection Officer at the Senior site for Day and Boarding students is Alison Davies (Assistant Principal with responsibility for Pastoral)**

Contact: [alison.davies@bournemouthcollegiateschool.co.uk](mailto:alison.davies@bournemouthcollegiateschool.co.uk)

Tel. 01202 436557

Date of next update training: November 2012

**The Designated Deputy Child Protection Officer at the Senior Site is Stephen Duckitt (Principal)**

Contact: [stephen.duckitt@bournemouthcollegiateschool.co.uk](mailto:stephen.duckitt@bournemouthcollegiateschool.co.uk)

Tel: 01202 436555

Date of next training: October 2012

**The Designated Child Protection Officer with specific responsibility for EYFS at the Prep School is Kay Smith**

Contact [kay.smith@bournemouthcollegiateschool.co.uk](mailto:kay.smith@bournemouthcollegiateschool.co.uk)

Tel: 01202 714110

Date of next update training: October 2012

**The designated Deputy Child Protection Officer with specific responsibility for EYFS at the Prep School is Charlotte Hayes**

Tel: 01202 714110

Date of next update training is: June 2013

**The member of the LGB with nominated oversight of Child Protection is Nina Dunne.**

Date of next update safeguarding training: 2011 / safer recruitment updating in 2012

**The Principal** is Stephen Duckitt.

Contact: [stephen.duckitt@bournemouthcollegiateschool.co.uk](mailto:stephen.duckitt@bournemouthcollegiateschool.co.uk)

Tel. 01202 436550

Date of next update training: November 2013

The **Chair of the Local Governing Body** is Nina Dunne

**The Deputy Chief Executive of UCST** is Charlotte Rendle-Short who has responsibility for Child Protection across UCST schools and holds a strategic leadership role with regard to safeguarding.

Contact: [charlotte.rendle-short@church-schools.com](mailto:charlotte.rendle-short@church-schools.com)

Tel. 01832 730310

**Leading Officer for Safeguarding at Bournemouth Borough Council:**

Chris Harvey 01202 456179

**Bournemouth Borough Council:**

Duty and Assessment Team: 01202 458102

01202 657279 (out of hours)

**Poole Borough Council:**

Referrals and Assessment Team: 01202 735046

Local Police Child Protection: 01202 222777

999 (Emergency)

**NSPCC:** 0202 7825 200

0800 800 5000

[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

**Childline UK** 0800 1111

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

Any member of staff, pupil, parent or carer may report concerns or allegations about abuse at the school directly to **Ofsted** using the whistleblower hotline on 0300 123 3155 (Monday to Friday from 8.00am to 6.00pm) or via [whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk), or by writing to: WBHL, Ofsted, Royal Exchange Buildings, St Ann's Square, Manchester M2 7LA.

## 4. Procedures

### 4.1: Introduction

The five main elements of the procedures in our Child Protection Policy are:

- To ensure that we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children in compliance Independent Schools Standards Regulations
- To raise awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe
- To develop and implement procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse
- To support pupils who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan
- To establish a safe environment in which children can learn and develop

Guidelines about what to do when a suspected case of abuse occurs are contained in the BCS document: **Child Protection Procedures – Guidelines for Staff** (see Appendix 1).

Guidelines about the warning signs of child abuse are contained in the BCS document: **Aide Memoire for Staff – Child Abuse: the Warning Signs** (see Appendix 2).

Guidelines about how staff, members of the LGB, and volunteers must conduct themselves is contained in: **UCST Notes of Guidance for Staff-Student Relationships (2010)** (see Appendix 3). All Staff and voluntary are required to sign this on appointment and annually at the start of each school year.

### 4.2: Safe Recruitment

Bournemouth Collegiate School ensures safe recruitment in the following ways:

- All staff are CRB checked and any employment "gaps" being explained and verified
- Those senior staff involvement in recruitment are required to attend a safer recruitment course
- The school undertakes to report to the Independent Safeguarding Authority, within one month of leaving the school, any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) whose services are no longer used because he or she is considered unsuitable to work with children. Such reports would contain as much evidence as possible. The school recognises that failure to make a report constitutes an offence and that "compromise agreements" cannot apply in this connection.

For the purpose of CRB checks, inspectors are regarded as visitors to the school according to the school's policies, for example they will be asked to register on arrival and to wear a visitor's badge.

Assurance is obtained (in written form) that appropriate child protection checks and procedures are applied to any staff employed by another organisation and working with the school's pupils.

The Single Central Record (centralised appointments register) is kept up to date by the Business Manager. On a monthly basis a copy of the school's SCR is made and stored in a sealed envelope (signed and dated by the principal) so that a back up is available should it be required.

UCST Central Office is responsible for making appropriate checks and keeping a single central record for UCST Board members and members of the Central Office team. A print out of this is available from Vicky Todd at Central Office on request.

#### **4.3: The Role of the Designated Person**

Bournemouth Collegiate School ensures that there is a designated senior person for child protection who has received the appropriate training and support for this role. Currently this is **Alison Davies at the Senior School** and **Kay Smith for EYFS at the Preparatory School**. These persons will:

- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences. Where there is an allegation or suspicion of abuse, the school will always make a referral within 24 hours to the relevant local social services department in writing or with written confirmation of a telephoned referral.
- Keep written records of concerns about children even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately. If there is ANY doubt then the school will contact the relevant outside authorities.
- Ensure that all records are kept securely; separate from the main pupil file, and in locked locations within the Assistant Principal's (Pastoral) office at the Senior Site /Head of Prep's office at the Prep Site.
- Develop and then follow procedures set out in this document where an allegation is made against a member of staff.
- Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection by alerting them to this policy and publishing it on the website and from the Head's PA on request.
- Notify social services if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a pupil who is on the child protection register
- Ensure that BCS has a nominated member of the LGB who has particular oversight for child protection. Currently this is Nina Dunne (LGB Chair)

#### **4.4: Staff Responsibilities**

BCS also ensures that all staff understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibilities being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated senior person responsible for child protection through ensuring:

- All staff (including temporary, supply staff and volunteers) know the name of the designated child protection officer(s)
- All staff (teaching, boarding, administration, peripatetic, ancillary) sign the following documents: Children Act 1989, Code of Conduct, Whistle-blowing Policy. In addition staff are provided with the DfES booklet "Keeping Children Safe" and guidelines procedure (please see Child Protection Procedure document)
- All designated persons are provided with training in child protection and inter agency working on appointment and updated every two years.

- All staff are provided with training in child protection on appointment and every three years. Attendance is logged and any absences are followed up.
- It is a requirement that all staff wear their identity badges in school.
- Allegations against staff, volunteers or the designated person with responsibility for safeguarding must be reported to the Principal, or in the Principal's absence, The Deputy Chief Executive (UCST) and the Chair of the LGB by the person receiving the allegation.
- Allegations against the Principal must be reported directly to the Deputy Chief Executive (UCST) and the Chair of the LGB by the person receiving the allegation.
- Those who in good faith report their concerns that a child is at risk are supported appropriately.
- Confidentiality cannot be promised to a pupil giving evidence; staff must not ask leading questions or promise that things will get better. Staff are also reminded to ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place pupils or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a pupil.
- Where outside companies are used to facilitate extra curricular activities e.g. golf, horse riding, surfing, these companies are required to sign to acknowledge that staff in contact with pupils have been CRB checked.

Staff (including part time, peripatetic and voluntary) are made aware of the contents of this policy and procedure in a variety of ways including:

- Inclusion of this policy and procedure in the staff handbook
- Appropriate reminders and discussion opportunities at staff meetings.
- Issuing of the UCST Staff-Student Relationships letter each year, which explains how they should ensure that their behaviours and actions do not place children or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a child (for example, in one-to-one tuition, sports coaching or engaging in inappropriate electronic communication with a child).

### **Whistleblowing**

The School will make certain that staff will suffer no recrimination or victimisation as a result of raising a genuine concern about safeguarding issues.

### **Visitors**

School signs clearly indicate to visitors that they must report to reception whereupon they sign in and are given a visitor's badge.

### **4.5: Support for Vulnerable Children**

We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence many find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at school their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. The school will endeavour to support the pupil through:

- Supporting pupils who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed children protection plan
- Using the content of the school curriculum

- Honouring the school ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued
- Applying the school behaviour policy which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the school. The school will ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
- Liaising with the other agencies that support the pupil such as social services and the educational psychology service
- Ensuring that, where there is a pupil at risk, their information is transferred to the new school immediately and the children's social worker is informed.

Schools and other educational establishments have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Every member of staff can help to protect children by being alert to any possible signs of abuse whether from adult(s) or pupil(s), knowing what action to take and knowing the name of the Designated Senior Person responsible for child protection matters. The school recognises that because of the day to day contact with children, school staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. The school will therefore:

- Raise awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe. This includes opportunities in the PSHE curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse (e.g. visits from local community police officer)
- Establish a safe environment in which children can learn and develop
- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried

#### **4.6: Boarding**

With reference to boarding provision, BCS will ensure that:

- All boarding staff, adults and senior boarding pupils given positions of responsibility (e.g. Head of Boarders) over other pupils will be given copies of this policy document and will be advised on appropriate action to take should their receive any allegations of abuse
- Any boarder found to be missing will be dealt with according to the school's Missing Pupil Policy
- Concerns or allegations will be reported to Ofsted (see Appendix A: Child Protection Procedure) as applicable
- Any boarding member of staff suspended on account of an allegation will be offered alternative accommodation off-site

## 5. Appendices

### **Appendix 1: Child Protection Procedures – Guidelines for Staff**

*Please read the following together with the DfES booklet “What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused – Summary”* Available on the G Drive – Policy documents\_whloeschool\_current\form store and on the staffroom notice board.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

It is essential that all staff are aware of the ways in which children are abused and the action which needs to be taken to safeguard them. These guidelines are designed to provide clear advice and instructions to be followed when a suspected case of abuse occurs.

#### **ACTION SUMMARY**

All cases of suspected child abuse should be given the highest priority. The following course of action should be adhered to where you think there might be reasonable grounds for suspecting abuse:

**LISTEN** to what the child has to say, but remember that you must not ask leading questions or promise confidentiality.

**REPORT** all suspicions immediately to the member of staff in charge of child protection. This is **Alison Davies** (Senior) and **Kay Smith** (Prep) and in their absence **the Principal**(senior), **Charlotte Hayes** (Prep)

**RECORD** in detail the circumstances (including the nature and extent of injuries) and the action taken.

**REMEMBER** that speed is essential.

Above all **DON'T PANIC**

Child abuse occurs in families from all classes, cultures and religions.

#### **SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS**

Visible physical injury is the most obvious indication of child abuse. However, staff should also be vigilant to any sign of unusual or distressed behaviour. The following signs may be indications of abuse:

- Nervousness/watchfulness
- Sudden under achievement/lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Attention seeking behaviour
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away/stealing/lying

The Aide Memoir for staff: child abuse- the warning signs (see Appendix 2) provides further explanation.

Staff are in a particularly good position to detect child abuse and will need to be especially vigilant for:

- Injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries which have not received medical attention
- Instances where an injured child is kept away from school without reasonable information. (Attendance patterns may be of use)
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in PE or Games
- Any sign of neglect, such as under nourishment, untreated illnesses or abrasions, inadequate care
- Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse
- Age inappropriate sexual behaviour

There may be other factors relating to the family background which may add to the school's concern, e.g. poor relationships between parent and child, stress within the family, unrealistic parental expectations of the child.

### **ACTION BY THE SCHOOL**

1. A child may tell you that he/she has been abused or you may have good reason to suspect that abuse is taking place. Where a child feels able to disclose abuse to a teacher, it is generally a sign of a strong and trusting relationship. Such a disclosure may, however, come as a great shock to the teacher concerned, but it is, of course important not to let any sign of distress or repugnance become obvious to the pupil. Care will be needed to offer reassurance to the child and at the same time to explain the need to involve other adults. Confidentiality cannot be promised.
2. In both cases, the member of staff who has been approached should talk quietly with the child. The conversation should be held in a quiet area where there are not likely to be any interruptions and the staff should be aware of the importance of adopting a supportive and listening role. Staff must not ask leading questions, make any attempts at cross-questioning or, where physical abuse is concerned, at undressing the pupil. It is also important to remember that it is a difficult subject for children to discuss and, in addition, they may be afraid of the implication of "telling" or may even be under threats of reprisals.
3. The member of staff should then always discuss the matter immediately with the one of the Child Protection Officers listed at the front of this policy.
4. In cases of physical abuse the Child Protection Officer and the Principal will consult the school doctor and confer about approaching the relevant local agency e.g. the Social Services Department.

5. The Principal will inform the Deputy Chief Executive (UCST) and may at his discretion, inform the Chairman of the Local Governing Body of the referral of child abuse.
6. Allegations against staff, volunteers or the designated person with responsibility for safeguarding must be reported to the Principal, or in the Principal's absence, The Deputy Chief Executive (UCST) and the Chair of the LGB by the person receiving the allegation.
7. Allegations against the Principal must be reported directly to the Deputy Chief Executive (UCST) and the Chair of the LGB by the person receiving the allegation.
8. In cases of serious harm the police will be informed from the outset.
9. If the injury is so serious that immediate medical treatment is required, the child will be taken to hospital by an appropriate member of the school's staff. The parent(s) will be informed that this action has been taken.
10. It is important to record in detail all available information since legal proceedings may arise from the investigation which follows a referral. This should include the sequence and time of events, the personnel involved, sketches to show the position of any physical injuries and a description of the child's demeanour. Any comments made the child or parents/guardians should be noted accurately as soon as possible.
11. It is essential that children who are known to be at risk or about whom there has been concern in the past, are observed closely in school and that the appropriate Social Services Office is alerted immediately if there are any further concerns.
12. Information relating to individual cases is strictly confidential and child abuse records are therefore kept separately from the school records by the Assistant Principal (Pastoral) in their office in a locked drawer accessible only by the AP and the Principal.
13. When a child known to be at risk transfers to another school, the Principal will contact the new Head urgently to give details of the current situation and past concerns. All confidential records will be sent under separate cover.

## **CHILD ABUSE WITHIN THE SCHOOL**

### **Allegations of abuse against members of staff/volunteers/Head or Principal**

There may be rare instances of suspected abuse being reported where a member of the teaching or non-teaching staff is implicated as the abuser. Depending on the nature of the seriousness of the allegations, the member of staff concerned may be asked to leave the school on compulsory paid leave whilst further investigations are made. The member of staff concerned will always be

advised that there has been an allegation made against him/her and the child's parents will be consulted soon as possible. In cases where a member of boarding staff is suspended pending an investigation of a child protection nature, alternative accommodation away from children will be made available. Allegations against staff, volunteers or the designated person with responsibility for safeguarding must be reported to the Principal, or in the Principal's absence, The Deputy Chief Executive (UCST) and the Chair of the LGB by the person receiving the allegation. Allegations against the Principal must be reported directly to the Deputy Chief Executive(UCST) and the Chair of the LGB by the person receiving the allegation. In cases of serious harm the police will be informed.

Anyone whose services are no longer used by the school because he/she is considered unsuitable to work with children will be reported to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) within one month. The school recognises that failure to make such a report to the ISA constitutes an offence and the school may be removed from the DfE register of independent schools. Compromise Agreements cannot apply in this connection.

Ofsted will be informed as soon as is reasonably practicable - but at the latest within 14 days - of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working or looking after children at the school (whether that allegation relates to harm or abuse committed on the school premises or elsewhere) or any other abuse which is alleged to have taken place on the school premises, and of the action taken in respect of these allegations.

#### **Allegations of abuse by one or more pupils against another pupil**

It is essential that any allegation of abuse made by a pupil against another pupil/pupils in the school is dealt with fairly, quickly, and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection for all the children involved.

The allegation should be reported to the DCPO who will immediately inform the Head/Principal

The DCPO and/or Head/Principal will:

- Investigate if the incident is abuse, or an isolated instance of bullying or 'experimentation', in which case this will be handled in the normal framework for discipline.
- Determine the frequency, nature and severity of the incident
- Ascertain if the victim was coerced by physical force, fear or by a pupil or pupils significantly older than himself/herself or with power or authority over him
- Ascertain whether the incident involved a potentially criminal act

If it is established that an investigation is necessary the Head/Principal will inform the parents of all children involved and seek advice from Children's Services.

## **Appendix 2: Aide Memoire for Staff – Child Abuse: the Warning Signs**

No single symptom or sign is sufficient to confirm that abuse is taking place. A combination of symptoms over a period of time would be a significant pointer. The child is the person we wish to protect and we must recognise that more damage may be done to the child by premature action than by waiting.

### **Warning signs:**

Personality changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Child becomes nervous and withdrawn</li><li>• Unusually seeks attention and adult company</li></ul>
Persistently tired	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Child looks tired, cannot concentrate</li></ul>
Bruising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bruising on arms or legs – talk to PE staff who will be able to unobtrusively observe – make a diary note</li></ul>
Breakage of limbs, cuts etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Note if this is a one-off; enquire reasons</li></ul>
Emotional outbursts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If these recur, be available as a good listener; pass the information on</li></ul>
Rumour from peer group or from older girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Take note</li><li>• Assess and pass on if necessary</li></ul>
Fear of parents/guardians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If the child shows unusual fear of parents e.g. in a disciplinary, this may be an indication, but not on its own</li></ul>
Extremes of behaviour of parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• At parent/teacher interviews are parents aggressive or over-protective towards the child</li></ul>

### **Appendix 3: UCST Notes of Guidance for Staff-Student Relationships (2010)**

This guidance is not exhaustive and is designed to set out principles rather than to give detailed and specific advice. Clearly, the circumstances in which staff work vary (e.g. working with very young children, boarding staff, sports staff, etc.); this guidance is meant to give general principles only. Although this advice applies primarily to teachers and to other adults with educational roles, all adults working within schools relate to students/pupils during the course of their duties; again, the general principles apply equally to all who are involved in the school.

- 1** The relationship between staff and students/pupils is a professional one. It is fully expected – and, indeed, hoped – that staff in the school have a friendly and caring relationship with students/pupils; nevertheless, the basis of that relationship is professional not personal. It is suggested that a good test to apply is to reflect on whether the child's parents would be happy with the relationship if they were standing with you.
- 2** A personal relationship between staff and a student/pupil is inappropriate unless it is with the full knowledge and consent of the student's/pupil's parents or guardians. Circumstances in which such a personal relationship may arise might be when your own children are friends with those in the school or when you have a personal relationship with parents of children in the school. It is not normally appropriate for a member of staff to meet with a student/pupil out of school hours or off school premises except with the prior knowledge and consent of parents and the school.
- 3** In general, unnecessary physical contact with students/pupils must be avoided. In some circumstances, physical contact between a member of staff and a student/pupil is necessary and beneficial; it might be, for example, that a Reception teacher might need to pick up a 5 year old who has fallen over in the playground, a sports coach may need to demonstrate to a student/pupil how to hold a racket or a secondary teacher may give a student/pupil a gentle pat on the back as encouragement. In rare circumstances it may be appropriate for members of staff to use reasonable restraint in circumstances where a student is behaving in a manner which endangers him or herself or other people. In these situations, staff are advised to be very sensitive to the student's/pupil's likely reaction and to watch out for signs that the student/pupil is apprehensive or uncomfortable. We all have our own personal space that needs to be protected. Wherever possible when working with students/pupils, other people (adults, colleagues or students/pupils) should be present or the door should be open.
- 4** Over-familiar words and actions, displays of affection, discussion of one's personal life or the personal life of the student/pupil are almost always inappropriate. Sexual innuendo is wrong in all circumstances. Staff must avoid actions, words or expressions that could be interpreted as suggesting that they have an emotional relationship with any student/pupil. In the professional staff-student/pupil relationship it is not appropriate to single a student/pupil out for favours or to suggest to a student/pupil that he or she is a special friend.
- 5** Occasionally it is necessary for professional academic reasons for staff to communicate with students/pupils out of school. Except where absolutely necessary, personal email addresses,

home or mobile phone numbers must not be given, asked for or used. A staff mobile phone number might be given to students/pupils for use during an educational visit; where possible, the school's mobile phone (if there is one) should be used for this purpose. Pastoral matters should not normally be dealt with by personal email or using personal phone contacts. Only in the most exceptional circumstances, for instance, where there is well-founded concern for the unexplained whereabouts of a student, should pastoral matters be dealt with by personal email or using personal phone contact. In any event, records of all contacts must be kept on the student file so that if it is necessary to use email or personal contact, the reason why will be specified in the written record. It is very difficult to envisage circumstances under which individual texting is appropriate except through official school channels.

- 6** It is not normally appropriate for students/pupils to visit a member of staff in their own home. Such a visit might be more likely within a boarding context where staff live on site and so might invite a group of students/pupils – say, a tutorial group – to their house for a meeting or for a celebration. Where such a visit does take place it must be with the full knowledge and consent of either the School or parents or guardians. If possible, more than one adult should be present on such an occasion.
- 7** With older students/pupils, a gathering might be held as part of a celebration. Generally, it is advisable if that is held in school. It is essential that professional criteria (e.g. all the students/pupils in a particular teaching or tutorial group) rather than personal criteria (e.g. selected students/pupils only) are used for inviting students/pupils, that the event is held openly, and that senior colleagues are aware of it. Staff on such an occasion have a particular duty to ensure that the supply and consumption of alcohol is appropriate, is responsible and falls within the law and the school's guidelines on alcohol. As a rule, staff should not consume alcohol whilst in the company of children. This includes educational visits and celebratory functions. There will be occasional situations where alcohol is served either at a meal or school function and in these instances should be approved by the Head/Principal in advance.
- 8** Members of staff who in the course of their professional duties need to work on a one-to-one basis with a student/pupil (e.g. a piano lesson, a maths tutorial, etc.), in particular one of the opposite sex, must take care to ensure that the circumstances of the meeting or lesson are always entirely professional. Staff are advised to use a room which has vision panels in the door or keep the door open and ensure that colleagues know that the meeting or lesson is taking place. It is helpful if the meeting or lesson can be arranged during normal school hours or immediately before or after school when there are plenty of other people about.
- 9** Staff must avoid threatening words, raised voices and any aggressive contact such as holding, pushing, pulling or hitting, which could amount to or which could be interpreted as a criminal assault.
- 10** Members of staff do have the right to use reasonable physical force to restrain students/pupils in order to prevent them from committing a criminal offence, injuring others or themselves, damaging property or behaving in such a way as to compromise good order

and discipline. The revised guidance document which replaces DfES Circular 10/98 [“The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils”](#) sets out more detailed advice simply and clearly.

- 11 Social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, Bebo and Myspace, pose risks for all staff in terms of professional integrity and the welfare of pupils. Staff must not use these sites to contact or communicate with pupils or pupils who have recently left. Unfortunately some pupils post information on their social networking sites which is inappropriate in language or visuals. To view such pages may alter your judgement of pupils, to be known to be viewing them may alter a pupil’s view of you, and to comment to pupils about what you have seen is likely to have an impact on your professional reputation as well as possibly causing distress to pupils concerned. Should you become aware of material about yourself, the school, or a pupil which is inappropriate, the Senior Leadership Team must be informed and they will instruct a member of staff to check the allegations and inform the appropriate authorities. You must not check it out yourself.
- 12 If you are at all concerned about anything which has occurred or which has made you uncomfortable, you must discuss the matter with a senior colleague at the earliest opportunity even if it turns out that nothing untoward has happened. You must make a written record, dated and signed, of any such incident.
- 13 Where any allegation of abuse is made against a teacher, other member of staff or volunteer, the Group is committed to dealing with the allegation fairly, quickly and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection for the child and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.
- 14 Staff will also find information relevant to staff-student relationships in the policies and procedures in their school or academy which cover the following:
  - (a) Safeguarding (Child Protection);
  - (b) Behaviour and Discipline;
  - (c) Physical Restraint;
  - (d) Email and Internet Acceptable Use Policy.

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To all staff:

Every one of us working within schools and academies, whatever our role, is acutely aware that issues to do with the protection of children are of the highest possible importance. Trust underpins everything that we do in schools. The parents of our pupils entrust the care of their children to us and together we are all responsible for their well being. UCST and ULT also have a responsibility to ensure that those working in our schools and academies are themselves protected - against putting themselves in a vulnerable position and against the possibility of false accusation.

This letter has also been prompted by the isolated actions of a tiny handful of employees who have found themselves – or who have put themselves – in a vulnerable position. These instances have all led to disciplinary action including in the most serious cases dismissal for gross misconduct. The UCST and ULT Boards have asked me to write to every person employed directly by UCST and by ULT or working in our schools and academies to remind us all just how serious these matters are but also to offer some advice as to how to respond in potentially difficult situations.

Heads and Principals will discuss this issue with their staff at appropriate times during the school year. This letter reinforces those statements and ensures that no single person, either employed by or working within schools or academies belonging to or associated with UCST or ULT, is in any doubt that child abuse is an issue that must be treated with the utmost seriousness. Acts of child abuse may be blatant and incontrovertible. However, it must be understood that touching, physical contact, personal emails/text messages or contact through social and personal networking websites are almost always inappropriate within the professional context of schools and can easily be construed as child abuse in some circumstances.

Against this background, UCST and ULT have to ensure that no situation could arise involving any of us which is or could reasonably be construed as acting against the safety of each child. We all understand that it is not always an easy line to draw but crossing that line, or being in a position where it appears that the line has been crossed, is unacceptable. Some adults within the school undertake roles where the drawing of that line is even more important because of the ease with which the proper execution of their duties might be misinterpreted or because the vulnerability of the young people in their care might be more easily exploited. These might include those:

- working in boarding houses or residential situations, including, for example, school trips and excursions;
- whose work requires them to interact in a one to one situation, particularly when that work takes place behind closed doors as is often the case with peripatetic music lessons;
- whose work by its nature requires some physical contact with children, for example, those working with very young children and those involved in the coaching of sport or other practical subject where a correct technique may need to be demonstrated;
- who have high levels of access to ICT systems and, indeed, all who use the internet, email, text messaging and other forms of electronic communication;
- young employees and workers whose duties require them to work with older pupils (e.g. sixth formers) where the age differential is quite small.

Within each school and academy, Heads and Principals will issue both verbal and written guidance from time to time and will make available appropriate training to help everyone deal with this difficult issue. A statement of guidance follows this letter.

Finally, having said all this, it is still important for all of us to retain an appropriate balance. The UCST and ULT Boards greatly appreciate the devotion and commitment of those who work in our

schools and academies. Our work in education is most effective when we respect and care for children, when we enjoy their company and when we celebrate their achievements. The trust placed in us as we guide these young people through their formative years is huge. We all need to help each other shoulder this responsibility to the very best of our ability.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sir Ewan Harper', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Sir Ewan Harper  
Chief Executive

## **Appendix 4: Childrens’ Act 1989**

All staff working in independent boarding schools are bound by this legislation and need to be aware of its general contents which cover ALL students in the school.

*Please read the following and sign to show that you are aware of the implications of this legislation.*

- All staff share the responsibility to safeguard and promote children’s welfare. A professional relationship is essential in all matters.
- All staff should be “concerned with the health, happiness and proper physical, intellectual, emotional, social and behavioural development” of the children.
- Children need to be protected from the risk of suffering significant harm or neglect in every area of school life.
- The school has to carry out thorough checks on the suitability of all staff prior to appointment. These checks include criminal records checks, references being taken up, proof of qualifications if relevant, gaps in CVs and specific enquiries about the suitability of the person’s employment as there is access to children.
- Staff need to be aware of our Health and Safety policies and practices including action to be taken when the fire alarm sounds and our health promotion No Smoking Policy.
- All complaints are dealt with as set out in the school’s Complaints policy and procedures
- If a case of child abuse is alleged against a member of staff, immediate action will be taken to protect the child and any other children. A report of the alleged abuse will be sent to the appropriate authority for investigation.
- Should a member of staff have concerns about any matter relating to a child, he/she should report it immediately to a member of the Senior Management Team. All schools have a senior member of staff who is designated as having responsibility for liaising with social service departments and other relevant agencies over cases of child abuse. Our designated persons are the Assistant Principal, Pastoral Senior School (Alison Davies), Head of Prep (Kay Smith) who are happy to give advice on dealing with potential situations and correct relationships with children in our care.

Name ..... Position .....

Signed ..... Date .....

*Designated Child Protection Officer Senior School – Alison Davies*

*Designated Child Protection Officer Prep School- Kay Smith*