



Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

2011-12

This policy applies to Early Years Foundation Stage, Junior School and Senior School.

Policy Statement

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Hollygirt School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and believes that all pupils, regardless of age, special needs or disability, racial/cultural heritage, religious belief or sexual orientation have the right to be protected from all types of harm and abuse. This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy ("this Policy") forms a fundamental part of our approach to providing excellent pastoral care to *all* pupils.

Key documents with which this policy is in accordance:

- The Education Act 2002
- Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended)
- The Children Act 2004
- What to do if you are worried a Child is being Abused 2006
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006
- Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education 2007
- Information Sharing: Guidance for Practitioners and Managers 2008
- Independent Schools Inspectorate Handbook 2010 (and as amended).

Hollygirt School recognises and acts upon the legal duties set out in the above statutes, regulations and guidance, to protect its pupils (and staff) from harm, and to co-operate with other agencies in carrying out those duties and responding to abuse.

This policy is used in accordance with locally agreed inter-agency procedures, and specifically in accordance with Nottingham City Local Children's Safeguarding Board.

This policy is addressed to all members of staff and volunteers at the Hollygirt School. Adherence to this policy is mandatory for all staff and volunteers and its use is not subject to discretion. This policy applies whenever staff or volunteers are working with pupils including where this is away from the Hollygirt School, for example at another institution, school visits and trips, sporting and cultural activities.

This policy is available to all parents, staff and volunteers on Hollygirt School's website. A paper copy is also available to parents upon request from the school office.

Pupils are made aware of this policy through their Issues programme and other means of sharing information appropriate to their age and understanding i.e. assemblies/form time.

Creating a Culture of Safeguarding

Hollygirt School recognises that safeguarding covers much more than child protection and so this policy will operate in conjunction with other related policies and procedures, such as effective whole school policies on Anti-Bullying, Cyberbullying, School Rules, Drugs Policy, Racism Policy, Behaviour Policy and the ICT Policy.

Hollygirt School is committed to working in partnership with pupils, parents, Social Services departments and other relevant agencies to continuously develop and improve the safeguarding culture within our school and to ensure the risk of harm to children is minimised.

Hollygirt School has systems to:

- Prevent unsuitable people working with pupils;
- Identify pupils who are at risk of and/or are likely to suffer significant harm and take appropriate action with the aim of making sure they are safe;
- Ensure that staff do not, through their actions, place pupils at risk of harm, or themselves at risk from an allegation of harm (by providing guidance on areas such as 1-1 tuition or inappropriate electronic communication).

Aims

Our aims are to:

- create an environment in our school which is safe and secure for all pupils;
- encourage our pupils to establish satisfying relationships within their families, with peers and with other adults;
- encourage children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence;
- work with parents to build their understanding of and commitment to the welfare of all pupils.

In order to fulfil these aims the Headmistress will take the necessary steps to ensure that:

- all staff and volunteers receive training in safeguarding children as part of their induction;
- all staff, volunteers and the Headmistress receive updated safeguarding training every three years;
- we operate safe recruitment procedures, as specified by the Criminal Records Bureau and the Independent School Standards Regulations. This includes carrying out all required checks on the suitability of all staff and volunteers to work with children and young people in accordance with the guidance and regulations;
- we carry out the mandatory checks on the suitability of all people who serve as school Trustees in accordance with guidance and regulations;
- where we cease to use the services of any person (staff (including agency staff), peripatetic teacher, volunteer or any other person) because it is considered that the person is unsuitable to work with children, a report will be made to the Independent Safeguarding Authority promptly and in any event within 28 days;
- all school staff are alert to signs of abuse and neglect (appropriate to their role) and all staff should know to whom they should report concerns or suspicions;
- all school staff keep themselves updated on safeguarding issues and child protection procedures by accessing advice, guidance and training as appropriate to their role.

This policy is compatible with and meets all applicable requirements of our Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). The contact number for the Nottingham City Local Safeguarding Board is 0115 915 9311.

Identifying Abuse

Staff who have day to day contact with pupils are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse such as changes in behaviour or developmental concerns. A child protection concern may come to the attention of school staff or volunteers in a variety of ways, such as pupil disclosure, third party disclosure or staff suspicion. Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to Designated Senior Person (DSP) immediately. (Senior School: Mrs Brooksby (Deputy Head), Junior School: Mrs Allen, Early Years: Mrs Payne).

It is not the responsibility of Hollygirt School to investigate suspected or alleged abuse; this is the role of the police and Social Services.

What is Child Abuse?

The definitions in this policy are drawn from Working Together to Safeguard Children. Someone may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm in the following four categories:

- Physical abuse - may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, burning or scalding, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

- Emotional abuse - persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or unvalued. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on a child, or causing children to feel frightened or in danger.
- Sexual abuse - involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is fully aware of what is happening and whether or not such an act was consensual. It may involve physical contact and/or non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at or the production of pornographic material, watching sexual activity or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- Neglect - the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical, emotional and/or psychological needs. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- Who are the abusers? - abusers can be parents or carers, siblings or members of the extended family, neighbours, teachers, strangers or other pupils; in short, an abuser could be anyone.

Signs of Abuse

The following may help staff be aware of possible signs of abuse but these do not necessarily mean that the child has been abused:

Physical Abuse

- Unexplained injuries/ burns
- Untreated injuries
- Bruises/ abrasion around the face
- Bi-lateral injuries e.g. two bruised eyes
- Bite marks
- Bruising abrasions to lips, cheeks, outer ear

Emotional Abuse

- Excessive overreaction to mistakes
- Continual self-deprecation
- Excessive rocking, thumb sucking, hair twisting
- Extreme compliance/aggression
- Drug, alcohol and substance misuse
- Significant peer relationship difficulties

Sexual Abuse

- Sexual awareness inappropriate to child's age, including provocative sexual behaviour
- Self-harm
- Pregnancy
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Sudden changes in behaviour or school performance
- Fear of undressing for gym
- Depression/withdrawal
- Drug, alcohol, substance abuse

Neglect

- Constant hunger, tiredness and/or poor personal hygiene
- Untreated medical problems
- Destructive tendencies
- Social isolation
- Poor self-esteem and/or relationship with peers
- Excessive rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking

Designated Senior Person (DSP)

The school has appointed three Designated Senior Persons. The DSPs are Mrs Brooksby (Senior School), Mrs Allen (Junior School) and Mrs Payne (EYFS) who will:

- be responsible for ensuring that all cases of suspected or actual child protection concerns are investigated and managed in accordance with guidance and regulations;
- refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the local Social Services department as appropriate and in accordance with LSCB procedures;
- ensure that she is aware of the latest national and local guidance and requirements and will keep the Headmistress, staff and volunteers informed as appropriate;
- receive appropriate training in child protection matters and interagency working, to include both national and local bodies, at least every six months;
- ensure that the Headmistress, staff and volunteers have access to and understand their role as appropriate in the child protection procedures, including but not limited to part-time staff, supply staff, peripatetic staff, newly appointed staff, before/after school care staff, volunteers, catering staff, cleaning staff and caretakers
- act as a source of advice and support within the school and co-ordinate action regarding referrals in relation to both children and allegations against staff.

Responding to Disclosures of Abuse

Children are more likely to be abused by someone they know and trust than by a stranger. Staff and volunteers should make themselves available to listen and demonstrate to the pupil that what they are saying is being taken seriously and without criticism and should respond in a supportive, calm manner and avoid asking detailed questions. The role of the staff or volunteer is to listen, record and report; not to investigate. If a pupil reports abuse from another pupil or pupils, staff should follow the procedures in this section. The DSPs will liaise with local agencies in relation to handling any such cases which arise.

Immediate Response

If a disclosure is made, the member of staff or volunteer **should**:

- allow the pace of the conversation to be dictated by the pupil;
- ask neutral questions which encourage the pupil to talk such as “can you tell me what happened?”;
- accept what the pupil says and do not ask for further detail;
- acknowledge how hard it was for them to tell you;
- note carefully any clearly visible external signs of possible injury or neglect;
- reassure the pupil that they have done the right thing, explain whom you will have to tell (the DSP) and why;
- record conversation as soon as possible – in the pupil’s own words.

The member of staff or volunteer **should not**:

- burden the pupil with guilt by asking questions such as “why didn’t you tell me before?”;
- interrogate or pressure the pupil to provide information;
- ask any potentially leading questions such as those that start with the words, how, what, when, where and why;
- undress the child or examine clothed parts of the child’s body in an attempt to determine the nature of any such injuries/neglect;
- criticise the perpetrator, this may be someone they love;
- promise confidentiality;
- make promises that they cannot keep such as “I’ll stay with you all the time” or “it will be alright now”.

If a pupil confides in a member of staff or volunteer and requests that the information is kept secret, staff/volunteers **must not make promises about confidentiality**. Staff must tell the pupil sensitively that they have a responsibility to tell the DSP so that the child can be helped to stay safe and feel better.

In every case, the staff/volunteer should consider whether the pupil is able to provide consent for the information to be shared and if so, seek to obtain that consent. If the pupil does not consent, the staff/volunteer should explain that they need to share the information with the DSP and reassure them that the information will *only be disclosed* to other people who *need to know*.

Hollygirt School recognises that a child who is abused may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame themselves, and find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self-worth. We recognise that the school may provide the only stability in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm.

Hollygirt School will provide continuing support to a pupil who has disclosed abuse through promoting a caring and safe environment within the school and encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness through the curriculum and through relationships. In doing so, the school will act in accordance with guidance from the relevant authorities to ensure that, for example, legal proceedings are not compromised.

Recording Information

Staff/volunteers should:

- make brief notes at the time or immediately afterwards as far as possible in the child's own words, which record the date, time, place and context of the disclosure or concern, and what has actually been said, not assumption or interpretation. Notes must be signed and dated;
- complete the 'Notification about a Safeguarding Concern' form (Appendix 4);
- clearly distinguish between fact, observation, allegation and opinion;
- record observed injuries and bruises on a body map;
- note the non-verbal behaviour and the key words in the language used by the pupil (do not translate into "proper terms");
- pass notes to the DSP immediately;
- appreciate that their records may be used in criminal proceedings or disciplinary investigations.

Reporting to the DSP

Any concerns about pupils must be discussed with the DSP as soon as possible and at latest by the end of the school day. Where the disclosure relates to actual abuse or the suspicion of abuse, the DSP will report the disclosure to the local Social Services department within 24 hours and inform parents that this will be done.

Guidance for Staff

Staff should ensure that their behaviour or actions do not place pupils or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a pupil. For this reason staff are advised that:

- One to one tuition should happen in a public place or with a door open;
- Staff should not engage in inappropriate electronic communications, have pupils as friends on social networking sites, or issue their private/mobile phone numbers to pupils.
- They should not offer lifts to pupils in private cars unless for a designated school activity and with permission;
- They should be aware of increased risk during sports coaching.

Allegations against staff

Where a child protection related allegation or cause for concern is made against any member of staff or volunteer, the matter should be reported immediately to the DSP. Where a child protection related allegation or cause for concern is made against the DSP, the matter should be reported immediately to the Headmistress.

A decision whether or not to suspend a member of staff or volunteer will be taken by the Headmistress. Suspension is not an automatic response and the decision will be taken according to the circumstances of each particular case.

Where we cease to use the services of any person (staff member (including agency staff), peripatetic teacher, volunteer or any other person) because it is considered that the person is unsuitable to work with children, a report will be made to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) promptly and in any event within 28 days.

Referring Pupils to Social Services

The decision to make a referral which could activate a child protection investigation, and the issue of gaining parental consent, are serious matters and require careful judgement. These decisions must only be taken by the Headmistress or by the DSP, who will liaise with the Headmistress as appropriate, following consultation as appropriate with the local Social Services Department and Education.

Parents should be informed before making a formal referral, unless to do so could place the child at risk of significant harm.

Where the disclosure relates to actual abuse or the suspicion of abuse, the DSP will report the disclosure to the local Social Services as soon as possible and follow up in writing within 24 hours.

The DSP should ask to be kept informed of the timing of the strategy discussion between Social Services and the police, which will decide whether and how to investigate. The DSP should be prepared to contribute to the strategy discussion.

Social Services are required to acknowledge written referrals within one working day. If school has not heard from Social Services after three working days we will contact Social Services again. A record of each contact with Social Services, including the name of the officer with whom school has spoken should be kept.

Whistle-blowing

Hollygirt School recognises that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so. Where staff or volunteers reasonably believe that safeguarding concerns exist, or where they have concerns regarding the management of safeguarding issues, it is their duty to raise concerns. The member of staff or volunteer should bring their concerns to the attention of the DSP. In a case where the concerns relate to the actions or inaction of the DSP the Headmistress should be informed. In a case where concerns relate to the Headmistress, the safeguarding Trustee (Reverend Stephen Hippisley-Cox) should be informed via the school.

Monitoring and Review

The working of this policy will be monitored by the DSPs in the school and will report as required to the Headmistress.


The Headmistress, DSPs and Trustees will undertake an annual review of the school's safeguarding policies and procedures together with a review of the safeguarding incidents that have arisen and how they were managed. This policy will also be reviewed as necessary to reflect changes in legislation, guidance and practice.

Equal Opportunities

All staff, volunteers and governors with responsibilities under this policy must take into account the Equal Opportunities Policy when discharging their duties.

*Updated July 2010
Amended February 2011*

Approval by the Trustees:

Signed:	
Name:	Mr R A Heason
Position:	Chairman of the Trustees
Date:	8 th February 2011