

LAXTON JUNIOR SCHOOL

Safeguarding Policy



Opening Statement

Laxton Junior School is dedicated to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of its pupils. It is the duty of all members of staff, both teaching and non-teaching, to play an active roll in ensuring this. All members of staff are expected to be aware of and follow the Safeguarding procedures. In particular they need to be aware of their duty to report concerns, the guidance for identifying child abuse, what to do if a child makes an allegation of child abuse and issues about confidentiality.

Key Points

- Each member of staff is issued with guidelines (Annexe 2), has training and receives refresher training at least once every three years.
- Members of the School do not investigate serious allegations of Child abuse themselves as serious allegations will be reported to Social Services and, if necessary, the Police.
- When a serious allegation is made against a member of staff then the School will report it and any findings following investigation, to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, even if the School has ceased to use that person's services.
- The following people have specific responsibility for Safeguarding matters at LJS, including the EYFS: one Designated Staff (Mrs Ann Wallace/Senior Mistress), the Headmaster (Mr Mark Potter) and, from the Governing Body, Mr Peter Bostelmann. (See Annexe 1 for a description of their roles).
- Safeguarding is integrated into the School ethos. The School operates Safer Recruitment procedures (Annexe 3) and has a well established anti-bullying policy.

Duty to Report

Any member of staff who either knows of, is told of, or strongly suspects any incident of physical, emotional or sexual abuse occurring in the School, or to a pupil of the School at home or outside the School must report the information the same day to the Designated Staff, unless it involves an allegation against a member of staff in which case it should be reported directly to the Headmaster.

In the absence of the Designated Staff, the immediate report should be made to the Deputy Head.

If the allegation or suspicion is about the Headmaster, the report should be made either to the Headmaster of Oundle School or the Governor with specific responsibility for Safeguarding.

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Child abuse to be reported includes abuse of a pupil by a staff member or other adult, abuse at home which a pupil reports to staff, abuse by a stranger outside school, and abuse of one pupil by another pupil. In this case of abuse by a pupil, or group of pupils, the key issues identifying the problems as abuse (rather than an isolated instance of bullying which might be considered within normal bounds in the school community) are:

The frequency, nature and severity of the incident(s),

Whether the incident involved a potentially criminal act, and whether if the same incident (or injury) had occurred to a member of staff or other adult, it would have been regarded as assault or otherwise actionable.

Whether the victim was coerced by physical force, fear or by a pupil or group of pupils significantly older than him or her, or having power or authority over him or her.

Investigations into Child Abuse are Always Externally Managed

Members of the School do not investigate reports of physical, emotional or sexual abuse themselves.

Alleged victims, perpetrators, those reporting abuse and others involved will not be interviewed by members of staff beyond the point at which it is clear that there is an allegation of abuse. The interviewing of children and adults will be carried out by specially trained staff only, following procedures in line with government requirements and in the light of the recommendations of past inquiries into the handling of child abuse issues.

The School acknowledges that its policy will inevitably lead to some investigations being triggered which do not substantiate the allegations made, as well as those that do. It is a basic assumption that it is better to endure some 'false alarms' than to fail to initiate specialist investigation of instances of real abuse.

Confidentiality

Adults at the School should never give absolute guarantees of confidentiality to pupils or adults wishing to tell them about something serious. They should however guarantee that they will only pass on information to the minimum number of people who must be told in order to ensure that the proper action is taken to sort the problem out, that they will never tell anyone who does not have a clear 'need to know', and that they will personally take whatever steps that they can to protect the informing pupil or adult from any retaliation or unnecessary stress that might be feared after a disclosure of alleged abuse has been made.

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When an allegation of Physical or Sexual Abuse is made

Any staff member to whom an allegation of physical or sexual abuse is made should:

Limit any questioning to the minimum necessary to seek clarification only, strictly avoiding 'leading' the pupil or adult who has approached them by making suggestions or asking questions that introduce their own ideas about what may have happened. (Do NOT ask questions like 'Did he do x to you?' using instead a minimum number of questions of the 'Tell me what happened' type).

Stop asking any more questions as soon as the pupil or adult has disclosed that he or she believes that something abusive has happened to him or her, or to someone else.

Tell the informing pupil or adult that the staff member will now make sure that the appropriate people are brought in to follow the problem up (these will include the specialist social worker, and that worker may need to involve the police).

Ask the informing pupil or adult what steps they would like to be taken to protect them now that they have made an allegation, and assure them that the school will try to follow their wishes.

Refer the matter the same day, with all relevant details, to the Designated Staff, the Headmaster or the Governor with specific responsibility for Safeguarding, as above. If this cannot be done, the staff member should contact the Social Services Team Manager. (Kettering Children and Young People's Service 0153613000)

Make a handwritten record as soon as possible of what they have been told, and make a copy of this available to the designated staff member or Headmaster.

When an Allegation is passed on

On receiving an allegation of physical, emotional or sexual abuse, the Designated Staff, the Headmaster or the Governor with specific responsibility for Safeguarding, should:

1. Take steps needed to protect any pupil involved from risk of immediate harm.

(This may involve allocating an appropriate member of staff, as far as possible a person chosen by the pupil him/herself, to stay with him or her. Similarly an inspector receiving an allegation of abuse at the school may stay with the pupil concerned until suitable arrangements for his/her protection are made.)

2. Not interview or investigate the allegation further, but refer the matter the same day to the Local Social Services department. The Designated Person reporting the matter should speak personally to the Social Services officer and not rely on leaving a message.

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3. Consult the Social Services Team Manager and follow his/her advice about contacting parents, other staff, police, doctor or alleged perpetrator or witnesses direct. Agree with the Team Manager any necessary next steps in relation to:
 - a. Informing a pupil's parents (there are circumstances where it would be inappropriate to inform parents immediately an allegation has been made).
 - b. Medical examination or treatment for the pupil (again, there are circumstances where medical evidence will be needed). Immediate protection that may be needed for a pupil who has been the victim of abuse.
 - c. The pupil who has given information about abuse, and a pupil against whom an allegation has been made (each of these may now be at risk).
 - d. Informing other people at the school (including any other member of staff) of the allegation and its investigation. (Experience has shown that knowledge of an allegation or impending investigation can lead to a serious risk to the informant from the alleged perpetrator, or 'covering up' of evidence that may be sought by police such as collections of child pornographic photographs), or to pressure being applied to others to remain silent.
4. Inform the pupil or adult who made the initial allegation of what the next steps are to be, having agreed these with the Team Manger.
5. Inform the Headmaster (unless he is the subject of the allegations or suspicions) of the allegations and the action taken as above, and agree necessary further action in line with these standards.
6. The Headmaster makes the decision whether to suspend from duty, pending investigation, any staff member who is alleged to have abused a pupil or pupils.
7. Take any steps for the longer term protection and support of each pupil who has made allegations abuse, or is alleged to have suffered from abuse, taking his or her wishes into account.
8. Take any necessary steps to protect and support a pupil who is alleged to have abused another.

Disciplinary Action

The School should consider taking, and as necessary should take, disciplinary action against any member of staff or agent of the school, where it believes pupils are at risk of abuse from that member of staff, or even in cases where there is to be no criminal prosecution.

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Low Level' Concerns

Where the School has 'low level' concerns that do not amount to allegations or suspicions of specific abuse, but which may indicate the possibility of abuse occurring, the Headmaster or designated staff member should discuss these with the Lead Inspector.

There may be times when staff, in the course of their duty, use physical intervention to restrain children, either to stop them from harming themselves or others. Should this occur the Headmaster requires the member of staff involved in any such incident to report it to him (or in his absence the Deputy). The Headmaster will make a record of the incident, in case the action is later questioned.

Annexe 1: People with Specific Responsibility for Child Protection and their Roles.

The School has Designated Staff, who take specific responsibility for child protection matters in the school, the Headmaster, Mark Potter & Senior Mistress, Ann Wallace (Child Protection Officer for LJS, including the EYFS). Mr Peter Bostelmann has specific responsibility for Safeguarding as a member of the School's Governing Body.

The Designated Staff are responsible for:

- Procedure
- Holding and being conversant with current local and national child protection procedures.
- Keeping up to date through training. It is a requirement that this takes place at least every two years.
- Reviewing and updating the School's Safeguarding Policy. Any deficiencies or weaknesses in the policy and procedures must be remedied without delay.
- Liaison over safeguarding matters with the local Social Services Department.
- Raising Awareness
- Briefing and guiding teaching and non-teaching staff on Safeguarding matters. This includes the briefing of new staff as part of their induction, as well as part-time, visiting and voluntary staff. Staff must receive Safeguarding training at least every three years.
- Keeping close contact and maintaining Safeguarding awareness with all Staff. There are forms in the Common room for Staff to use if they have any concerns to pass onto the Child Protection Officer.

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- Ensuring that the Safeguarding procedures are followed within the school, that each member of Staff has access to the procedures and an understanding of them.
- The Safeguarding procedures must also be available on the Laxton Junior School website.

Referrals

Receiving reports of alleged or suspected child abuse within the school, or reported by a pupil relating to incidents at home or outside the school, contacting the Social Services Department and taking any other action in response, as set out below.

- Keeping records
- Passing on information to a new establishment when a child leaves the school
- Liaising with the Staff
- Liaising with the Designated Governor

The Governor with specific responsibility for Safeguarding matters is responsible for:

- Undertaking an annual review of the school's Safeguarding policy and procedures and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged.

Policy reviewed and updated by the Governing Committee of Laxton Junior School on Tuesday 19th January 2010

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Annexe 2: Guidelines

The School issues guidelines to all staff on the prevention of abuse covering

- staff supervision of high risk situations
- avoidance of inappropriate physical contact between staff and pupils
- avoidance of inappropriately spending time alone with individual pupils
- the need for all staff to be vigilant in spotting and reporting clear suspicions that abuse may be occurring.

Laxton Junior School Information Sheet for Staff

All staff should be aware of the basic procedures to be followed should a situation arise in which a pupil wished to confide in them.

Please read the following carefully.

The Four Categories of Significant Harm

Neglect

Failure to meet a child's basic physical/psychological needs, including food, shelter, clothing, emotional support, medical care and protective environment safe from physical harm.

Physical Abuse

This includes hitting or shaking a child, or grabbing a child by an article of clothing.

Sexual Abuse

This includes physical contact, making children look at pornography or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Emotional Abuse

Persistent ill-treatment of a child, which may involve conveying that the child is worthless, unloved, or inadequate. It may also involve the imposition of inappropriate expectations.

What to do when a pupil wants to tell you about something that has happened

- Listen very carefully.
- Do not promise confidentiality.
- Ask 'open' questions like 'tell me what has happened', and avoid any leading questions like 'Did he/she do *!?!*! to you?'
- Make written notes as soon as possible, including anything that you have said.
- Do not take it upon yourself to investigate what the pupil has told you.
- Do not tell the person about whom the pupil has complained.
- If you think that a child is at risk contact either the Headmaster (Mark Potter) or Designated Child Protection Officer (Ann Wallace)

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Writing a report on what you have been told

- Note the date, time and your name.
- Note the who/what/where/when of the accusation.
- Note your own opinion if it is relevant, preferably with justification.
- Reflect on why you have logged the incident.
- Hand the report to the Child Protection Officer.

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Annexe 3

Recruitment Procedure

Laxton Junior School regularly reviews its recruitment procedure to ensure the safety of its pupils by preventing as far as possible, unsuitable people from working here. The following nine elements are part of the routine recruitment procedure for all teaching and non-teaching staff (including ancillary staff) who may have substantial unsupervised access to pupils. The Headmaster has completed training in Safer Recruitment, meeting the requirements of DCFS, OFSTED and ISI. At least one member of an interview panel, or an individual at the School, must have completed safer recruitment training.

Criminal Records Checks

The Enhanced Disclosure is required for anyone whose duties include regularly caring for, training, supervising, or being in sole charge of children under 18 years of age. Anyone else who works at the school requires a Standard Disclosure from the CRB on appointment.

Pre-employment checks are required for all staff at the School and for people working on behalf of the School such as the School's volunteers, the self-employed, contractors and agency staff. They include the successful completion of a Disclosure from the Criminal Records Bureau at an Enhanced level, a List 99 check and the Protection of Children List as appropriate.

Identity

Check the identity against an official document such as a passport or birth certificate.

References

At least two written references, including the most recent employer, with a reference request letter that specifically asks all referees to state any known reason why the person should not be employed to work with children and that there should be no material misstatement or omission relevant to the suitability of the applicant.

Veracity of References

Direct contact by the School with each referee to verify the reference.

Interview

A personal interview, with a written record of issues covered and the assessment by the interviewer(s).

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Veracity of Qualifications

Verification of any qualification offered by the candidate, with a written record of those verified.

Full Employment History

Requirement that applicants supply a full employment history, stating that any previous employer may be approached by the school.

Exploration of Reasons for Termination of Previous Employment

Contact by the School, where feasible, with each previous employer involving work with children or vulnerable adults to check the reasons the employment ended.

Explanation of Gaps in CV

Explanation of any gaps in the CV, with a written record by the school explaining the reasons for any gaps and that the reasons have been sought and are satisfactory.

Where staff are recruited from abroad, or have resided overseas within the last five years, the School will try to obtain a 'certificate of good conduct' or equivalent from the relevant authorities of the applicant's home country where such facilities are available. This is in addition to the checks outlined in this document for all staff.

Where the School has not received the full CRB disclosure information before a member of staff arrives, as a result of a failure of CRB to respond to a disclosure application, the member of staff may work but only under special supervision with no unsupervised access to pupils.

If the School discovers that an applicant has made a false statement in attempting to gain employment at the School, this will be reported to DCFS for them to consider misconduct action against the applicant.

Verification of Medical Fitness

The School verifies the medical fitness of staff to work with children in accordance with the Department for Children, Families and Schools and the School's guidelines.

Note on Assessing CRB Disclosures

If a CRB Disclosure shows that a person is disqualified from working with children by virtue of Section 35 of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000, the school should immediately take steps to remove the person from the premises, if he or she is already at the school, and should contact the CRB to ensure that the Bureau has reported the matter

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to the police to investigate whether the person has committed an offence by applying for, or undertaking work with children while disqualified.

Similarly if a Disclosure reveals that a person is barred by DCFS and is on List 99, the school should immediately contact the DCFS Teacher Misconduct Team (Telephone 01325 392162) to confirm the position and obtain further advice. In the meantime the person should be suspended from contact with pupils.