

## WOLVERHAMPTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL

### 702 Child Protection Policy

The Children Act stresses the duty of all citizens to be alert for signs of child abuse and to take action when they see or suspect it. In all such matters the protection of the child is paramount. Schools have a particular responsibility for child protection. WGS will take action in cases of suspected abuse and seeks the support of parents in the protection of children.

All members of staff are asked to be alert to signs of abuse and know that they should report any concerns or suspicions to the Head and the school's designated teacher responsible for child protection. The school follows the guidance provided by the Wolverhampton City Council Children's And Young People's Services *Safeguarding And Protecting Children: Guidance For Schools And Education Services* which is stored electronically in the teaching staff handbook.

Mr Hills, Deputy Head, is the school's designated teacher responsible for Child Protection. Mrs Fogarty is Deputy Child Protection Officer. Mr Hills and Mrs Fogarty undertake training every two years in Child Protection and inter-agency work, whilst all staff are trained every 3 years through inset training days. Part-time and voluntary staff are made aware of the schools Child Protection procedures through the Staff Survival Guide. During recruitment interviews include specific questions on child protection issues.

The school operates safe recruitment procedures including CRB checks and compliance with the ISI Regulations.

The school undertakes an annual review of child protection policies working closely with Jackie Orledge, the Governor with specific responsibility for child protection. We review policies and procedures looking at the work done in this area over the previous 12 months. A report is then prepared for the full Governors meeting in February.

Everyone should be aware that children who are suffering abuse may be too frightened to tell anyone: they need encouragement and sympathy if they start to talk about their problems.

Abuse may take a number of forms:

- neglect
- physical injury
- sexual abuse
- emotional abuse

Any allegation or suspicion of abuse by a member of staff should be reported direct to the Head or, in his absence, any other senior member of staff, such as a Deputy Head or Head of Year. Any allegation or suspicion of abuse by the Head should be reported to Mr Hills who will immediately inform the Chairman of Governors. (There is more information for teachers in the Teaching Staff Handbook).

**For students** If you are worried about possible child abuse - in connection with yourself or with someone else – you should talk to a member of staff. WGS encourages an open atmosphere in which you can talk to anyone with whom you feel comfortable.

**We will treat any information you give us with complete discretion and will not share it indiscriminately. We may have to share information, only on a 'need to know' basis, to enable other professionals to take appropriate action.**

**SAFEGUARDING OUR STUDENTS:  
GUIDANCE FOR TEACHERS AND OTHER MEMBERS OF STAFF**

**You should**

- be aware of the signs of possible abuse: a list is appended.
- be aware of your duty to make your concerns known. Seek the advice of a (usually senior) colleague who will normally involve the form tutor.
- be prepared to listen if a child approaches you with a concern about (possible) abuse.
- always explain the limits of confidentiality: you cannot promise not to tell anyone. Information given to a teacher will be treated with complete privacy and will not be shared indiscriminately. Information may be shared, only on a 'need to know' basis, to enable action to be taken by other professionals.
- listen to the child rather than directly question him or her.
- make an accurate note of the discussion, taking care to record the timing, setting and people present as well as what was said by everyone, preferably verbatim.
- thank the child for telling you.
- after receiving a confidence from a child, immediately seek advice, either from the Head of Year or direct from the Deputy Head. The Deputy Head, Peter Hills, as designated teacher, has to decide (in consultation with you and any other colleague involved) whether the matter needs to be referred to the Area Child Protection Committee or Social Services.

**You should not**

- stop a child who is freely recalling significant events.
- look shocked or upset by what the child has told you.
- make promises.
- ask leading or probing questions or make judgemental statements (but you may need to ask for clarification).
- try to investigate: that is not the school's role and must be reserved for the proper agencies. If it becomes a legal case, amateur(ish) investigation can render evidence or statements worthless.

A copy of DFEE Circular 10/95 is kept with the Teaching Staff Handbook, as is a list of local and national helplines.

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE: A CHECKLIST

### **Signs of Physical Abuse:**

- Unexplained injuries or burns, particularly if they are recurrent
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Untreated injuries
- Admission of punishment which appears excessive
- Bald patches
- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather (exclude cultural dress)
- Fear of returning home
- Fear of medical help
- Self-destructive tendency
- Aggression towards others
- Running away

### **Signs of neglect:**

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Poor state of clothing
- Emaciation
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance
- Untreated medical problems
- Destructive tendency
- Low self-esteem
- Neurotic behaviours
- No social relationships
- Running away
- Compulsive stealing or scavenging

### **Signs of emotional abuse:**

- Physical, mental or emotional development lag
- Admission of punishment which appears excessive
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Continual self-deprecation
- Sudden speech disorders
- Fear of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- Neurotic behaviours
- Self-mutilation
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Drug/solvent abuse
- Running away
- Compulsive stealing, scavenging

### **Signs of sexual abuse:**

- Sudden changes in behaviour or school performance
- Displays of affection in a sexual way which is inappropriate to age
- Tendency to cry easily
- Regression to younger behaviour such as thumb-sucking, playing with discarded toys, acting like a baby
- Tendency to cling or need reassurance
- Complains of genital itching or pain
- Distrust of familiar adult, or anxiety about being left with a relative, baby-sitter, lodger etc
- Unexplained gifts of money
- Depression and withdrawal
- Apparent secrecy
- Wetting or soiling, day and night
- Sleep disturbances or nightmares
- Chronic illness, especially throat infections and sexually transmitted diseases
- Anorexia or bulimia
- Unexplained pregnancy
- Fear of undressing e.g for sport
- Phobias or panic attacks
- Arson