



Safeguarding - Statement on Child Protection

STATEMENT OF INTENT

The safety and well being of all our pupils at Hurst Lodge school is our highest priority. Our business is to know everyone as an individual and to provide a secure and caring environment, so that every pupil can learn in safety. We expect respect, good manners and fair play to be shown by everyone so that every pupil can develop his/her full potential and feel positive about him/herself as an individual. All pupils should care for and support each other.

WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

The NSPCC defines child abuse as:

“Child abuse is the term used when an adult harms a child or a young person under the age of 18.....Child abuse can take four forms, all of which can cause long term damage to a child: physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and child sexual abuse. Bullying and domestic violence are also forms of child abuse.

“A child may be experiencing abuse if he or she is:

- *Frequently dirty, hungry or inadequately dressed*
- *Left in unsafe situations, or without medical attention*
- *Constantly “put down,” insulted, sworn at or humiliated*
- *Seems afraid of parents or carers*
- *Severely bruised or injured*
- *Displays sexual behaviour which doesn’t seem appropriate for their age*
- *Growing up in a home where there is domestic violence*
- *Living with parents or carers involved in serious drug or alcohol abuse*

The list does not cover every child abuse possibility. You may have seen other things in the child’s behaviour or circumstances that worry you.

“Abuse is always wrong and it is never the young person’s fault.”

SYMPTOMS

The NSPCC lists some of the signs and behaviours which may indicate that a child is being abused:

- repeated minor injuries
- children who are dirty, smelly, poorly clothed or who appear underfed
- children who have lingering illnesses which are not attended to, deterioration in school work, or significant changes in behaviour, aggressive behaviour, severe tantrums
- an air of 'detachment' or 'don't care' attitude
- overly compliant behaviour
- a 'watchful attitude'
- sexually explicit behaviour (e.g. playing games and showing awareness which is inappropriate for the child's age), continual open masturbation, aggressive and inappropriate sex play
- a child who is reluctant to go home, or is kept away from school for no apparent reason
- does not trust adults, particularly those who are close
- 'tummy pains' with no medical reason
- eating problems, including over-eating, loss of appetite
- disturbed sleep, nightmares, bed wetting
- running away from home, suicide attempts
- self inflicted wounds
- reverting to younger behaviour
- depression, withdrawal
- relationships between child and adults which are secretive and exclude others
- pregnancy

These signs are not evidence themselves; but may be a warning, particularly if a child exhibits several of them or a pattern emerges. It is important to remember that there may be other explanations for a child showing such signs. Abuse is not easy to diagnose, even for experts.

TRANSPARENCY

Hurst Lodge school prides itself on its ethos of respect for all and mutual tolerance. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting the school. Copies of this policy, together with our other policies relating to issues of child protection are on our web site, but hard copies may be had from the school office on request. We hope that parents and guardians will always feel able to take up any issues or worries that they may have with the school. We will never ignore an allegation of child abuse and will always investigate any concerns thoroughly. Open communications are essential.

SAFER EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

Hurst Lodge follows the Government's recommendations for the safer recruitment and employment of staff who work with children. All members of the teaching and non-teaching staff at the school, including part-time staff, temporary and supply staff, and visiting staff, such as musicians and sports coaches, are checked with the Criminal Records Bureau. All Directors, volunteer helpers, contractors working regularly during

term-time, such as contract catering staff, and adult members of the families of members of staff who live on site are also vetted. Our policies are reviewed by the Directors annually. More detail is set out in our policy on Checking Employees, Temporary Workers, Proprietors, Volunteers and Contractors (which is on the web site).

RAISING AWARENESS

Miss Victoria Smit our Principal is the Liaison with the Directors for Child Protection issues. The Directors formally consider child protection issues once a year, with day to day issues being delegated to the Senior Leadership Team, the meetings of which both Child Protection Officers attend. That Senior Leadership Team is responsible for:

- Reviewing the procedures for and the efficiency with which the child protection duties have been discharged.
- Ensuring that any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements are remedied without delay.
- Approving amendments to child protection arrangements in the light of changing Regulations or recommended best practice.

CHILD PROTECTION OFFICER

Miss Victoria Smit our Principal and Mrs Jane Cadby our Early Years Supervisor, are our Child Protection Officers. They have been fully trained for the demands of this role in child protection and inter-Agency working. They regularly attend courses with other child support agencies to ensure that they remain conversant with best practice. They undergo refresher training every two years. They maintain close links with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) for Windsor and Maidenhead and report at least once a year to the Directors' and Senior Leadership Team on the child protection issues outlined above. The CPO's organise Child Protection training for all staff.

The school's records on child protection are kept locked in the Principal's office, and on occasion in the Bursar's safe and are separated from routine pupil records. Access is restricted to the CPO's and the Deputy Principal.

INDUCTION AND TRAINING

Staff, including part-timers, temporary, visiting and contract staff working in school, receive basic training on their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and bullying and on the procedures for recording and referring any concerns to the Child Protection Officer's or the Senior Leadership Team. Everyone attends refresher training at least every three years. Training in child protection is an important part of the induction process. More detail is set out in our policy on Induction of New Staff, and Volunteers in Child Protection

INTERACTION WITH PUPILS: MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STAFF

Staff, Directors and volunteers are given copies of the school's policy on Interaction with Pupils: Model Code of Conduct for Staff. Discussion of the procedures set out in that document forms a part of our induction and training procedures. The model code of conduct provides guidance for teachers and other members of staff when faced with

handling any issue relating to child abuse. It is not intended to be a substitute for proper training.

Miss Victoria Smit and Mrs Jane Cadby our designated Child Protection Officers, who have received specialist training in this topic, should always be informed if a member of staff has any concerns.

The code is placed on the agenda of a staff meeting once a year, so that it can be reviewed and updated by the staff themselves, before being approved.

RAISING AWARENESS WITH PUPILS

Hurst Lodge prides itself on its culture of open and effective communication between staff and pupils, and on its good pastoral support structures. We prepare all of our pupils to make reasoned, informed choices, judgments and decisions. Time is allocated in PSHE, form time, personal tutor meetings, school council, assemblies, house and boarding house meeting time for discussion of interpersonal relationships, child abuse and in developing in pupils the confidence which they require to recognise abuse and to stay safe.

All pupils know that there are adults to whom they can turn to if they are worried, In particular:

- All pupils have access to a telephone helpline, enabling them to call for support in private.
- Every child has access to a copy of the guidance on where to turn for advice, including confidential help lines and web addresses for external specialists such as Child Line, Kid scape, Get Connected and the Samaritans. A copy of guidance is placed in the locker rooms, the boarding house and on the web site.
- Our boarding house displays advice on where pupils can seek help.
- We operate a peer counselling scheme, whereby older pupils are encouraged to offer advice and support to younger pupils.
- We provide leadership training to our Head and Deputy Head Girls and their team of prefects which specifically covers the importance of offering support and assistance to younger and to vulnerable pupils.
- Our policy for Pupils on Confidentiality, which deals with the issue in more depth, was prepared by the whole school community.

PROMOTION OF WELFARE

The ethos of Hurst Lodge is to promote social and moral well-being, to teach pupils to take care of and to value themselves, and to think in terms of making a positive contribution to society as adults. All our pupils take part in a large number of charitable activities. Many of our older pupils are involved in helping younger pupils. We see this as making an important contribution towards the development of the whole person, who grows up to value society and to expect to make a personal contribution towards society in general.

EQUAL TREATMENT

Hurst Lodge is committed to equal treatment for all, regardless of an individual's race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or social background.

We aim to create a friendly, caring and perceptive environment in which every individual is valued. We endeavour to contribute positively towards the growing autonomy, self-esteem and safety of each student.

BULLYING

Bullying, harassment and victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the school. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable.

COMPLAINTS

We hope that you and your child do not have any complaints about our school; but copies of the School's complaints procedure can be sent to you on request.