

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Goal

To ensure the physical and emotional safety of all our students.

Introduction

It is a school's moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all its students. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where students are respected and valued. We must be alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that students receive effective support, protection and justice.

In all the work that we do at MNS-R we see the rights, safety and welfare of students as paramount. We prepare students to become critical thinkers in order for them to make informed decisions and become responsible members of the community. We take seriously our responsibilities to protect and safeguard the welfare of the students entrusted in our care.

All staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm in accordance with this policy

Aims

- To ensure the emotional and physical safety of our students.
- To safeguard and promote the welfare of students
- To maintain the privacy and confidentiality of our families.
- To ensure that the welfare of students is given paramount consideration when developing and delivering all school activities
- To ensure that all students, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection.
- All students and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support from the SLT who will follow this policy in doing so.
- To provide all staff with the necessary information to enable them to meet their statutory responsibilities to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of students

1. Key personnel in school –

CPO-Child Protection Officer. The designated child protection officers are (Counsellor), Susan Barratt (Pre-School & Primary School Assistant Principal), and Ann Philip (High School Assistant Principal). The key elements of the role of the designated officers of child protection are:

Roles and responsibilities

The school has ensured that the CPO:

- is appropriately trained
- acts as a source of support and expertise to the school community
- has an understanding of relevant procedures and coordinates action on child abuse within the school, ensuring that all staff/volunteers are aware of their responsibilities in relation to child protection.
- refers individual cases of suspected abuse to the Executive Principal on issues relating to child protection.
- keeps written records of all concerns when noted and reported by staff or when disclosed by a child, ensuring that such records are stored securely and reported onward in accordance with this policy guidance, but kept separately from the child's general file
- refers cases of suspected neglect and/or abuse to the principals.
- ensures that when a child with a child protection plan leaves the school, their information where possible is passed to their new school's CPO
- ensures that the child protection policy is updated biannually
- liaises with the other CPO's and Executive Principal as appropriate
- keeps a record of staff attendance at child protection training

The Principal is to :

- ensure that the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures are implemented and followed by all staff
- allocate sufficient time and resources to enable them to carry out their roles effectively, including the assessment of students and attendance at strategy discussions and other necessary meetings
- ensure that all staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively
- ensure that child's safety and welfare is addressed through the curriculum.

1. Good practice guidelines

To meet and maintain our responsibilities towards students, the school community agrees to the following standards of good practice;

- treating all students with respect
- setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately
- involving students in decision-making which affects them
- encouraging positive and safe behaviour among students
- being a good listener
- being alert to changes in child's behaviour
- recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse
- reading and understanding all of the school's safeguarding and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues, for example bullying, physical contact, e-safety plans and information-sharing
- asking the child's permission before doing anything for them which is of a physical nature, such as assisting with dressing, physical support during PE or administering first aid
- maintaining appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between students and avoiding the use of sexualised or derogatory language
- being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some students lead to an increased risk of neglect and or abuse.

1. Students who may be particularly vulnerable

Some students may be at an increased risk of neglect and or abuse. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse happens, or who have a high level of tolerance in respect of neglect. To ensure that all of our students receive equal protection, we will give special consideration and attention to students who are:

- disabled or have special educational needs
- living in a known domestic abuse situation
- vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying
- living in chaotic, neglectful and unsupportive home situations
- vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion or sexuality

1. **Support for those involved in a child protection issue**

Child neglect and abuse is devastating for the child and can also result in distress and anxiety for staff who become involved. We will support the students and their families and staff by:

- taking all suspicions and disclosures seriously
- nominating a link person who will keep all parties informed and be the central point of contact. Where a member of staff is the subject of an allegation made by a child, a separate link person will be nominated to avoid any conflict of interest
- responding sympathetically to any request from a child or member of staff for time out to deal with distress or anxiety
- maintaining confidentiality and sharing information on a need-to-know basis only with relevant individuals and agencies
- storing records securely
- offering details of counselling or other avenues of external support
- following the procedures laid down in our complaints and disciplinary procedures

Informing Parents

In the event that it is confirmed with supporting evidence that the parent may be the perpetrator, all measures to protect should be carried including the type of information shared with the parent[.

Supporting students and their families

There is a need for great support for any child undergoing a child protection referral and investigation and often the support is limited to what we as a school can offer. We aim at least to provide a secure school environment in which the child feels valued and protected. The welfare of the child remains paramount and all staff/volunteers must remember the limits of confidentiality and the requirements of the law of the land.

Complaints procedure in respect of poor practice behaviour

Our complaints procedure will be followed where a child or parent raises a concern about poor practice towards a child that initially does not reach the threshold for child protection action. Poor practice examples include unfairly singling out a child, using sarcasm or humiliation as a form of control, bullying or belittling a child or discriminating against them in some way. Complaints are managed by senior staff. Complaints from staff are dealt with under the school's Complaints Policy.

If you have concerns about a colleague

Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague towards a child are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. They may worry that they have misunderstood the situation and they will wonder whether a report could jeopardise their colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount.

The school's Complaints Policy enables staff to raise concerns or allegations in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place. All concerns of poor practice or concerns about a child's welfare brought about by the behaviour of colleagues should be reported to the Principal. Complaints about the Principal should be reported to the Executive Principal..

Staff who are the subject of an allegation

When dealing with an allegation against a member of staff/volunteer, it is vital to keep the welfare of the child as the central concern, as with standard child protection procedures. A balance needs to be struck between supporting and protecting the child and keeping the effects of a possible false allegation to a minimum.

In dealing with any allegation the school needs to balance:

- the seriousness of the allegation
- the risk of harm to students
- possible contamination of evidence
- the welfare of the person concerned

It is important for staff to avoid allegations of incautious behaviour with students. For example, one-to-one tuition, sports coaching, conveying a student by car, or engaging in inappropriate cyber/mobile telephone communication with a student. It is unrealistic to suggest that staff should never touch students.

We recognise that at times of distress touch is one way of offering reassurance and comfort. However, touch is a sensitive issue. Touching may be misconstrued and can feel invasive. It is advisable that permission is sought from the student if he or she would be comfortable with a gentle touch. In Saudi Arabia where there are very strong cultural norms regarding touch the school advises that male teachers do not touch female students who are over the age of 12 years, and vice versa for female teachers.

When an allegation is made against a member of staff, set procedures must be followed. It is rare for a child to make an entirely false or malicious allegation, although misunderstandings and misinterpretations of events can and do happen. A child may also make an allegation against an innocent party because they are too afraid to name the real perpetrator. Even so, we must accept that some adults do pose a serious risk to student's welfare and safety and we must act on every allegation made.

Staff who are the subject of an allegation have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress. Suspension is not mandatory, nor is it automatic but, in some cases, staff may be suspended where this is deemed to be the best way to ensure that students are protected. If a member of staff has any suspicions as a result of something that a child has said or that they have noticed they should report their concerns to a CPO.

Staff training

It is important that all staff have training to enable them to recognise the possible signs of abuse and neglect and to know what to do if they have a concern. Staff will receive child protection training once every three years. One of the CPO's will receive refresher training every three-years.

All staff (including part-time staff and volunteers) will receive training from the trained child protection officer.

Safe Recruiting

The school follows a policy of safe recruiting. Checks are required for all adults that come in contact with students. Where possible the school will check the teacher registration register to ensure there are no red flags.

Record Keeping

Any member of staff/volunteer receiving a disclosure of abuse from a child or noticing signs or symptoms of possible abuse in a child must make notes as soon as possible, writing down as exactly as possible what was said or seen, putting the scene into context and giving the time and location. Dates and times of events should be recorded as accurately as possible, together with a note of when the record was made.

All records of a child protection nature should be handed to the CPO and will be kept securely by him/her. Access to those records is on a need to know basis and decisions about access will be made by them.

A vital part in detecting abuse is effectively monitoring and recording of student's progress and behaviour in school. This is particularly important where a child is giving cause for concern but there has been no disclosure or physical evidence of abuse, or if the child had communication difficulties or is too young to give much verbal information.

Records need to be as accurate and objective as possible. Signs of physical injury, instances of behavioural disturbance or disclosures should be recorded as precisely and as soon as possible. Explanation of injuries given by the child or an adult need to be recorded accurately.

E-Safety

Most of our students will use mobile phones and computers at some time. The school's e-safety policy explains how we try to keep students safe in school. Cyber-bullying by students, via texts and emails, will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures. Chat rooms and social networking sites are the more obvious sources of inappropriate and harmful behaviour and students are not allowed to access these sites whilst in school.

To protect students MNS will:

- seek their consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications)
- seek parental consent
- not use students' names with images online.
- use only the students' first names with an image
- ensure that students are appropriately dressed
- encourage students to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them
- ensure the list on Engage of students where permission has not been granted for photographs is updated regularly

Confidentiality

Staff must make it clear to a student who is making a disclosure that they cannot keep the information confidential. We need to keep a delicate balance between how much information to divulge and to whom, about a student, who has/may have been abused.

All staff need to understand that information should only be shared on a need to know basis.

The Curriculum

Staff will use many different elements of the school's curriculum to raise students' awareness and build their confidence so that they have a range of contacts and strategies to ensure their own protection and that they understand the importance of protecting others.

Responsibility for the Policy and Procedures

The School Principals are responsible for this School Policy