

CHILD PROTECTION (SAFEGUARDING) POLICY

This Policy applies to Pupils throughout the Kingswood Foundation, including the Senior School, Prep School and Pre-Prep (including EYFS: Nursery and Reception).

As the school is a boarding school, and in accordance with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools, this policy is also for staff and adults working at the school, and older boarders in positions of responsibility.

1. Introduction

- a. Kingswood School is committed to the safeguarding of all children in its care.
- b. The School complies with the requirements of 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education' and adopts procedures which are in accordance with the Bath and North East Somerset inter-agency procedures.
- c. Kingswood fully recognises the importance of taking all possible steps to ensure the effectiveness of the three main elements to our policy:
 - i. Prevention of abuse through the teaching and pastoral support offered to pupils
 - ii. Procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse
 - iii. Support to pupils who may have been abused. Abuse comprises "neglect, physical injury, sexual abuse, and emotional abuse".

2. Prevention

- a. Kingswood recognises that high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and good lines of communication with a trusted adult help prevention, and that teachers have a crucial role to play in noticing indicators of possible abuse or neglect. The school will therefore:
 - i. seek to maintain an ethos where children feel secure, in a positive, supportive and safe environment, have a sense of being valued, and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
 - ii. ensure children know there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.
 - iii. help children to understand what is and is not acceptable behaviour towards them, teaching them about staying safe from harm, and how to speak up if they have worries or concerns. We aim to deliver advice on this through our PSHE programme and throughout the curriculum where appropriate.
 - iv. provide appropriate INSET for staff
 - v. publicise appropriate channels to whom pupils can turn for assistance, both within and outside the school.
- b. We recognise the need to establish suitable safeguards with regard to staff at the school. The following measures and guidelines are offered to protect both staff and pupils.
 - i. All staff are subject to Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks on appointment and safe recruitment procedures are followed as required by Independent Schools Standard Regulations. Assurance must also be obtained that appropriate child protection checks and procedures are made by organisations which work with pupils from the School on other sites (eg at field study centres).

- ii. Staff will be made aware of the duty of care and the trust inherent in their role.
- iii. Staff must never use confidential material for their own or others' advantage or to intimidate, humiliate or embarrass a pupil.
- iv. High standards of personal conduct must be maintained at all times.
- v. Staff should dress appropriately for their profession.
- vi. No gift that could be construed as a bribe should be accepted. Small tokens of thanks, perhaps received at Christmas, are acceptable, but taking regular gifts should be avoided. Similarly, the giving of personal gifts to pupils should also be avoided.
- vii. Staff should be aware of the possibility of infatuation developing amongst pupils and the need to handle such situations with sensitivity.
- viii. Staff should not seek to create regular social contact with pupils for the purpose of strengthening personal friendships: neither should they give out personal phone numbers or email addresses unless by agreement with senior management.
- ix. Physical contact with pupils can be appropriate in some circumstances, such as giving comfort and reassurance, and restraining children in an emergency. However, staff must be aware that innocent actions can be misconstrued and should always seek advice when in doubt. Physical contact through sport or music tuition is often necessary but the principle of 'limited touch' should apply. Physical contact with pupils should never be secretive.
- x. Supervision for showering should be appropriate to the ages of the pupils involved.
- xi. The use of sarcasm, demeaning or insensitive comments towards pupils is not acceptable.
- xii. Staff should avoid conferring special attention or favour on a pupil lest it be construed as 'grooming'.
- xiii. Staff should not make arrangements to meet with individual pupils in private rooms on a regular basis. The management of any one to one meeting needs careful thought.
- xiv. Staff should take special care in their relationships with pupils when in the more relaxed atmosphere of trips away from school.
- xv. Where non-medical staff administer first aid, they should try to ensure that another member of staff is present.
- xvi. Where staff use resource material with sexual content within the curriculum, care must be taken that it clearly relates to learning outcomes.
- xvii. Care should be exercised in circumstances where visual images of children are recorded. See the School's policy on photography.
- xviii. Under no circumstances should staff access inappropriate images on the internet.
- xix. Staff, including cleaning and maintenance staff, should be sensitive to pupils' privacy when entering boarding accommodation. Staff of the opposite sex should be accompanied by an appropriate prefect or another member of staff when entering dormitory areas.
- xx. Form teachers and Houseparents in the Prep School and Senior Housestaff in the Senior School are responsible for ensuring that pupils

are aware of procedures for getting help when necessary and know the school's complaints procedure.

- xxi. Pupils must have access to private telephones and their mail must be considered as private. However, e-mails are subject to the normal checks that apply to prevent pornographic and other inappropriate material being received. New style 3G mobile technology poses similar problems to the internet in relation to the ability to download unsuitable images likely to cause harm to a child. The school advises parents preferably not to purchase these types of phone but, if they do, to look at issues of content control with the phone supplier.
- xxii. In the Prep School, form teachers and in the Senior School Housestaff must keep records of any disciplinary matters, health and safety issues and accident reports, and any complaints relating to the emotional or developmental welfare of pupils.
- xxiii. If staff have concerns about the behaviour of a colleague, they should bring matters to the attention of senior management who will endeavour to ensure that there are no repercussions for the person informing them. The School is committed to immunity from retribution or disciplinary action for whistle blowing in good faith.
- xxiv. Senior pupils in positions of responsibility over other pupils are briefed by senior staff on the actions they should take should they receive allegations of abuse.
- xxv. The school has a Missing Pupil(s) Policy, available in the Staff Handbook, for searching and, if necessary, reporting any boarder missing from the school.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

- a. Given their daily contact with children in a variety of situations, including the wider caring role, staff are vulnerable to accusations of abuse. Their relationships with pupils may lead to allegations against them being made by pupils or parents. Those allegations may be false, malicious or misplaced and may be either deliberate or innocent of such intent. Regardless of the motives underlying any allegations, they may also be well-founded. Like all schools and colleges therefore, Kingswood needs policies and procedures on the management of situations where there are allegations of abuse.
- b. The **main** 'designated person' with specific responsibility for co-ordinating action within the Foundation and for liaising with Social Services departments and other agencies over suspected child abuse is Mr Simon Morris in his role as Principal of the Kingswood Foundation. Cases involving the Senior School or both the Senior School and the Prep School would go in the first instance to him. However, issues involving the prep school alone would normally go in the first instance to a second 'designated person': Mrs Anna Parry-Hearn, Head of Pre-prep at KPS. Mrs Parry-Hearn is responsible for the safeguarding of children within the EYFS setting. She would liaise with Mr Morris and with Social Services departments and other agencies over suspected child abuse. The designated person is required to undertake training, updated every two years, in child protection and inter-agency working. All staff are required to undertake child protection training, provided by the school, updated every three years. Part time and voluntary workers should be made aware of these arrangements.

- c. In schools it is regarded as good practice for another senior teacher to be named as the alternative to the head teacher if he is the designated teacher. The alternative designated teacher at the senior school is Mrs Sarah Dawson, the Deputy Head (Academic). Mr Morris fulfils this role in the Prep School.
- d. The nominated governor responsible for liaising with the Headmasters over matters regarding child protection issues is the Chair of the Pastoral and Education Committee. It is his/her role to:
 - i. ensure the school has a child protection policy and procedures in place, which are consistent with ACPC (Area Child Protection Committee) Procedures;
 - ii. ensure that an annual item is placed on the governors' agenda to report on changes to child protection policy/procedures, training undertaken by the designated teacher, other staff and governors, the number of incidents/cases (without details or names), the place of child protection issues in the school curriculum and review the efficiency with which child protection duties have been discharged;
 - iii. liaise (with due regard to issues of confidentiality) with the Headmaster re allegations of child abuse;
 - iv. be responsible for the oversight of procedures relating to liaison with the Social Services Departments and the Police in relation to any allegations of child abuse made against the Headmaster, including possible involvement in multi-agency strategy discussions;
 - v. be familiar with the provisions of "Working Together to Safeguard Children" and local child protection procedures.
- e. See Appendix 1 for information on signs, definitions, and symptoms of child abuse.

4. Listening to Children

- a. Children who report to a teacher (or other member of staff) that a member of staff has abused them must be listened to and heard, whatever form their attempts to communicate their worries take.
- b. The following points give guidance on how to deal with a child who makes an allegation:
 - i. The child should be listened to but not interviewed or asked to repeat the account. If possible avoid questions, particularly leading questions.
 - ii. The child should not be interrupted when recalling significant events.
 - iii. All information should be noted carefully, including details such as timing, setting, who was present and what was said, in the child's own words. The account should be obtained verbatim or as near as possible.
 - iv. Care should be taken not to make assumptions about what the child is saying or to make interpretations.
 - v. "Listened to" means just that; on no account should suggestions be made to children as to alternative explanations for their worries.
 - vi. A written record of the allegations should be signed and dated by the person who received them as soon as practicable.
 - vii. All actions subsequently taken should be recorded.
- c. In responding to a child who makes disclosures, account should be taken of the age and understanding of the child and whether the child or others may be at risk of significant harm.

- d. While acknowledging the need to create an environment conducive to speaking freely, no member of staff should promise confidentiality to a pupil who makes an allegation. The member of staff should make it clear to a pupil who approaches him/her asking for confidentiality that, he/she will need to pass on what has been told so as to ensure the protection of the child(ren), in accordance with the local procedures agreed by the ACPC. Within that context, the child should then be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it.

5. Action to be taken by staff who hear an allegation

- a. If the disclosure by a pupil takes place at an inappropriate time or place, the member of staff should seek to talk to the pupil again individually before the end of the day. Meanwhile he or she may be able to discuss the issue with the relevant Headmaster.
- b. The member of staff receiving the allegation of abuse against another member of staff should report this immediately to the relevant Headmaster, unless the Headmaster is the person against whom the allegation is made. An allegation against the Headmaster should be reported directly to the Chairman of Governors. If the allegation is against the Headmaster of the Prep. School, the matter should be referred to the Headmaster of the Senior School in his capacity as both the main “designated teacher” and Principal of the Foundation, and he should straightaway inform the Chairman of Governors.
- c. Immediately an allegation is made, the relevant Headmaster (or, in cases where the allegation is against the senior school Headmaster, the Chairman) will:
 - i. immediately inform the Social Services Department to ascertain their advice
 - ii. obtain written details of the allegation, signed and dated from the person who received the allegation (not from the child who made and/or was the subject of the allegation)
 - iii. record any information about times, dates, locations and names of potential witnesses.

6. Urgent Initial Assessment

- a. Where an allegation (anonymous or otherwise) is made against a member of staff, a parent, volunteer or other party, there should be urgent consultation between the main designated teacher (the Headmaster of the Senior School or the Headmaster of the Prep School) and the Chairman of Governors as to how to take the matter forward.
- b. If a child makes an allegation that is considered to be a potential criminal act, or indicates that he or she has suffered, is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, then there will be an immediate referral in accordance with the local child protection procedures established by the ACPC.
- c. There will be instances where allegations made do not require referral under local child protection procedures detailed above. Those instances are as follows:
 - i. Where the allegation relates to the use of reasonable force to restrain a pupil, in accordance with s.550A of the Education Act 1996 and DfEE Circular 10/98 and Welsh Office Circular 37/98, it will be appropriate for the Headmaster to deal with the matter at school level. An

- allegation of assault beyond the use of reasonable force would however need to be dealt with in accordance with the local child protection procedures as detailed above.
- ii. Where, following initial consideration, it is absolutely clear to the relevant Headmaster (or where the allegation involved the Headmaster, the Chairman) that the allegation is demonstrably false by virtue of the fact that the immediate circumstances of the allegation show that it would not be possible for the allegation to be true.
 - iii. The allegation may represent inappropriate behaviour or poor practice by a member of staff, which needs to be considered under local disciplinary procedures.
- d. Therefore, when such allegations are made, there are four possible outcomes of the initial assessment:
- i. Where the pupil has suffered, is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, there will be an immediate referral under local child protection procedures established by the ACPC.
 - ii. Where the child has alleged that a criminal offence has been committed, then again this will be referred under local child protection procedures and the police may carry out a criminal investigation.
 - iii. The allegation may represent inappropriate behaviour or poor practice by a member of staff (which does not fall within the above categories) but the issue would need to be considered under school disciplinary procedures.
 - iv. The allegation is judged to be without foundation.
- e. Where it is judged by the designated person that a referral is necessary, this must be done within 24 hours of the disclosure or suspicion of abuse. The contact details for making a referral are as follows: Social Services, Referral and Assessment team, Lewis House, Bath BA1 1JG, Tel no 01225 396313/4, Fax 01225 396294. Outside office hours: Emergency Duty Team Tel no: 01454 615165.
- f. When deciding whether to make a referral, following an allegation or suspicion of abuse, the Head and/or designated person should not make their own decision over what appear to be borderline cases but discuss them with the Local Authority Designated Officer.

7. The Referral Process

- a. The immediate priority must be to determine whether a child has suffered or is at risk of significant harm and/or in need of protection. If this appears to be the case there will be an immediate referral to local child protection agencies in accordance with the agreed procedures established by the ACPC.
- b. Where allegations of abuse are referred to the Social Service Department or the police, subsequent action will be in accordance with the local child protection procedures. It will be the aim that early action to establish the nature of the allegation and consideration of whether it should be investigated will be undertaken in such a way that it does not prejudice any subsequent action. Every effort will be made to ensure there is no interference with evidence (e.g. teachers or governors should not attempt to interview children about these matters). The school will do its utmost to support the needs of the child during the investigation.

- c. In cases where it is not immediately obvious that the child has suffered significant harm it is still important to act quickly. It is also important to recognise that establishing whether an allegation warrants further investigation is not the same thing as deciding whether an allegation is well founded. It is expected of the Headmasters that they should not investigate the allegation, or interview pupils, or discuss the allegation with the member of staff, but should consider whether the allegation requires further investigation and if so, by whom.
- d. Only if the allegation is trivial or demonstrably false, will further investigations not be warranted.

8. Enquiries and Investigations

- a. There are three possible types of investigation:
 - i. enquiries by social services under local child protection procedures
 - ii. related police investigations into possible criminal offences
 - iii. the school's disciplinary procedures.
- b. Any disciplinary process has to be clearly separated from child protection enquiries and criminal investigations. Whilst the disciplinary process may be informed by child protection enquiries and criminal investigations, and in some circumstances the child protection agencies might decide to make a recommendation about suspension or other protective action as a result of the strategy discussion, the child protection and criminal processes have different objectives from the disciplinary procedure and they should not be confused.
- c. Decisions as to suspensions and/or disciplinary action are for the Headmasters/Governing Body.
- d. Any investigation by the police or child protection agencies will take priority over an internal disciplinary investigation by the school. An internal investigation related to the same or similar allegations running alongside a criminal investigation or child protection enquiry is not likely to be good practice and will be held in abeyance pending the completion of the external enquiries and investigation.

9. Action after Referral to Child Protection Agencies

- a. When an allegation has been referred through the ACPC procedures to the appropriate child protection agency any subsequent enquiries will be informed by the guidance in "Working Together to Safeguard Children". This guidance recommends that there should be a strategy discussion to plan the conduct of enquiries under child protection procedures and it is essential that either the Senior School Headmaster or the Prep School Headmaster (as applicable) should be involved in and contribute to such strategy discussions (or the Chairman where the allegation is against the Senior School Headmaster).
- b. The strategy discussion will also consider whether any other children are likely to have been at risk in the light of the allegation, and whether it may be necessary to review any previous allegations made against the member of staff, or to consider interviewing any other children, including ex-pupils of the school or any other schools.
- c. In this process the Headmaster has to balance the welfare of the accused member of staff and the interests of the investigation, taking account of the need to minimise the stress to anyone who may be wrongly accused.

- d. Staff who are the subject of allegations are advised at the earliest opportunity to contact their trade union.

10. Police Involvement

- a. In some cases the police might wish to interview the member of staff against whom the allegation is made before any approach is made by the Headmaster. The police may act independently, particularly where the alleged offence does not arise from the individual's professional duties in the school. Police officers will be given every assistance with their enquiries but it will be the aim to maintain confidentiality about the enquiries in the individual's interests.
- b. When the police are involved, it would not normally be expected that police interviews would be undertaken on school premises and it would be expected that appointments would normally be made at reasonable times.

11. Notification of Interested Parties

- a. The police (or a view taken at the strategy discussion stage) may decide that the investigation would be hindered by an approach to parties at an early stage. The relevant Headmaster must ensure there is no objection by the police before contacting any parties. Subject to there being no objection, the relevant Headmaster (or Chairman in cases involving allegations against the senior school Headmaster) will:
 - i. explain the likely course of action to the child, children or parent making the allegation;
 - ii. ensure the parents of the child who is the alleged victim have been informed of the allegation and of the likely course of action;
 - iii. inform the member of staff against whom the allegation is made and explain the likely course of action;
 - iv. inform the Chairman of Governors.
- b. Where the police object to the action outlined above, the relevant Headmaster should be informed accordingly and arrangements made to keep him informed as to when these notifications may take place or have taken place.
- c. It is expected that a written record of the action taken under this section should be made by the Headmaster (or Chairman of Governors).

12. Unfounded Allegations

- a. Where the allegation is demonstrably false, then the relevant Headmaster (or, where the allegation involves the Prep School Headmaster, the Principal, and, where the allegation involves the Senior School Headmaster, the Chairman) will:
 - i. inform the member of staff orally and in writing of the allegation and the fact that no further action is to be taken under disciplinary or child protection procedures. The member of staff may be accompanied by a trade union representative or friend;
 - ii. consider whether counselling and/or informal professional advice to the member of staff is appropriate and the form either might take;
 - iii. communicate with the parents of the child or children of the allegation and the outcome;
 - iv. consider appropriate counselling and support for the child or children who made the allegation(s) and, where appropriate, their parents; in particular, consider what follow-up action should be taken with regard

to a person or child who has made an allegation that is shown to be false or unfounded, especially if it is shown to have been made maliciously. The school is expected to take into account that if a child has made an obviously false allegation of abuse, this may well be a strong indicator of problems of abuse elsewhere, which may require further exploration. The best way for this to be achieved is through an inter-agency referral in order that any underlying causes can be teased out. Where the allegation has been made by a person other than the alleged child victim themselves, consideration should be given to informing the parents and child of the fact of the unfounded allegation and providing support as necessary;

- v. prepare a report, giving reasons for the conclusion that the allegation is without foundation.

13. Considering whether suspension is appropriate

- a. Suspension may be considered at any stage of an investigation. Suspension is a neutral act, not a disciplinary sanction, and will be on full pay. Paid leave of absence, mutual agreement to refrain from work, alternative duties/locations, or removal from contact with pupil may also be used as an alternative to suspension.
- b. Suspension will not be undertaken without good reason. Though a neutral act, it can be misinterpreted and cause damage to a person's reputation with colleagues, parents, children and the wider community. Circumstances in which suspension properly occurs include:
 - i. where a child or children is/are at risk;
 - ii. where the allegations are so serious that dismissal for gross misconduct is possible;
 - iii. where a suspension is necessary to allow the conduct of the investigation to proceed unimpeded.
- c. In all cases where suspension is being considered, the Headmaster will advise the individual to seek assistance from his or her trade union.

14. Suspension Interview

- a. Where suspension is being considered, an interview will be arranged. Ideally, the interview will be undertaken outside pupil contact time.
- b. Where the police are involved in a criminal investigation, any interview arranged, where suspension is considered, will not be conducted without prior consultation with the officer in charge of the case.
- c. Where there is no police involvement, an interview will be arranged in accordance with the following procedures:
 - i. When called to an interview where suspension is a possible outcome the member of staff will be advised to seek the advice and assistance of his or her trade union. At the interview, the member of staff may be accompanied by a trade union representative or by a friend. He/she, where accompanied, will be offered the opportunity of a brief meeting with the representative or friend before the interview.
 - ii. Where the person accused is a trade union or safety representative, the interview will not be arranged without prior discussion with the relevant branch secretary or a full-time official of the trade union

- concerned. The school is legally expected to establish that the action being taken is not an attack on the functions of a trade union.
- iii. The member of staff will be informed at the outset of the interview that an allegation has been made and that, at the conclusion of the interview, suspension might occur. It will be made clear, however, that the interview is not a formal disciplinary hearing but is for the purpose of raising a serious matter which may lead to suspension and further investigation.
 - iv. The member of staff will be given as much information, including reasons for any proposed suspension, as is consistent with not interfering with an investigation about the allegation. This meeting is not concerned with examination of the evidence but is an opportunity for the member of staff to make representations concerning any possible suspension. The member of staff will be given an opportunity to make such representations after the information has been given and the reasons for any proposed suspension made out.
 - v. A brief adjournment will be offered to the member of staff prior to a response.
 - vi. If, as a result of the interview, it is considered that suspension is necessary along with a full investigation of the allegation, the individual will be advised that he or she is suspended from duty.
 - vii. Written confirmation of the suspension will be sent within one working day, giving reasons for the suspension.

15. Action after a Decision to Suspend pending Investigation

- a. Where a member of staff has been suspended, the Chairman of Governors will be informed of the suspension formally, in writing. In all cases a report will be made to the Governing Body that a member of staff has been suspended pending investigation. It is inadvisable to provide more than the minimum information necessary to the Governing Body, as more than this would prejudice governors' impartiality in any subsequent hearing or appeal in disciplinary proceedings. If the case involves the suspension of a Headmaster, the implications for the management of the school will need to be considered, including the arrangements for an Acting Head Teacher (this would normally be the Senior Deputy Head in the Senior School and the Deputy Head in the Prep School).
- b. The pupil or parent making the allegation will be confidentially informed of the suspension. Where the pupil is under 18, his or her parents will normally be informed, in confidence in so far as to do so is consistent with wider child protection considerations.
- c. Senior management in the school who need to know of the reason for the suspension will be informed so far as is necessary in the particular circumstances. The Headmaster/Acting Head Teacher will take a decision on informing other staff colleagues in the school of the suspension.
- d. The Headmaster(s)/Acting Head Teacher will discuss with the Chairman the extent to which it is necessary to make a statement to parents of children in the school, having considered the need to avoid unwelcome publicity.
- e. In certain circumstances, it may be necessary to provide immediate reassurance to parents and children in the school and there may be a need for information to continue to be provided during the course of an investigation to

parents, children and other colleagues. Appropriate guidance will be sought from social services or the police.

- f. The Headmaster(s)/Acting Head Teacher in consultation with the Chairman of Governors will consider carefully, and keep under review, decisions as to who is informed of the suspension and investigation and to what extent confidentiality can or should be maintained, according to the circumstances of a particular case. In a situation where a matter becomes common knowledge or the subject of general gossip, it may be desirable to provide an accurate statement for public information.

16. Support for Staff during Suspension

- a. The suspended member of staff will be given the name of an information contact. The main role of the contact person is to provide information as to the progress of the investigation. Social contact with colleagues and friends at the school will not be precluded except where it is likely to be prejudicial to child protection enquiries, criminal investigations or disciplinary processes.
- b. Although it is the aim that all investigations should be conducted as speedily as possible, consistent with establishing the full facts, arrangements will be made for the individual, or his or her representative, to be contacted regularly with information on progress and developments on the case. These arrangements do not preclude him/her, or his or her representative, contacting those conducting the investigation at any time.
- c. According to the needs and wishes of the member of staff to be kept informed, a colleague contact should also be in a position to provide information about developments at the school in general.
- d. In some cases, it may be appropriate to ask whether welfare counselling or the support of the school's Chaplain or Medical Adviser would be helpful, or to respond to a request for other support.

17. Support for Others Involved

- a. Support will be needed for the child or children making the allegations and their parents. Consideration will be given to the form such support should take. Consideration will also be given to what support may be needed for others at the school, both staff and pupils, according to the circumstances of the alleged abuse. In some cases, therapeutic counselling from expert sources may be necessary.
- b. We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world as benevolent or meaningful. They may feel helplessness, humiliation, and some sense of blame. The school will endeavour to support the pupil through:
 - i. the content of the curriculum to encourage self-esteem and self-motivation
 - ii. the school ethos which seeks to promote a positive, supportive and secure environment and to give pupils a sense of being valued
 - iii. staff dealing sensitively with any resulting bad behaviour by the child so the child understands that, whilst bad behaviour will not be tolerated, he or she is still valued as a person
 - iv. liaison with other agencies which offer support
 - v. keeping records and notifying Social Services as soon as there is any recurrence of any concern.

18. Action where the Decision is not to Suspend

- a. The Headmaster(s) (or Chairman in cases where the allegation is against the Senior School Headmaster) will explain the circumstances which led to consideration of suspension and further explain any follow-up action which it is proposed to take. The member of staff may be accompanied by a trade union representative or friend. According to the circumstances of the case, appropriate assistance or advice may be offered. The Headmaster(s)/Chairman will seek to establish what support, if any, is required. According to circumstances, appropriate counselling services may be considered.
- b. If a member of staff has not been suspended, but there are concerns about aspects of his/her conduct, a full investigation will be undertaken before making a decision about further action under disciplinary procedures.

19. Outcome of Disciplinary Investigation

- a. At the end of the investigation, a meeting will be arranged to inform the member of staff of the next steps. He/she may be accompanied or represented by a trade union representative or friend.
- b. If the outcome is a disciplinary charge, further action will be in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedures and will happen after child protection enquiries have been completed.
- c. If the individual has been suspended and it is later decided not to proceed with any form of disciplinary action or to dismiss, the suspension will be lifted immediately. The Headmaster will meet the member of staff to discuss the arrangements for their return to work.
- d. On the conclusion of any investigation and any related disciplinary proceedings, the child or children who made the allegations and their parents will be informed of the outcome of the proceedings. This will be prior to the person's return to school if he or she has been suspended.
- e. In some circumstances, consideration will be given to the broader disclosure of details of the outcome, together with reasons, for example, where the issues are of general importance, have become common knowledge or have been the subject of general gossip and there is a need to provide accurate details for public information.

20. Records

- a. Documents relating to an investigation must be retained, in a secure place by the school, together with a written record of the outcome of the investigation and, where disciplinary action has been taken, retained on the member of staff's personal and confidential file in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedures.
- b. If the member of staff is dismissed, or resigns before a disciplinary process is completed, it is the employer's statutory duty to report the case to the Department for Education and Skills Teachers' Misconduct Section, for consideration for their debarring from further employment. It is also a requirement to report to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA), within one month of leaving the school, any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) whose services are no longer used because her or she is

considered unsuitable to work with children. The address for referrals is PO Box 181, Darlington, DL1 9FA (telephone 03001231111).

- c. Where a pupil has made an allegation, a copy of the statement or the record made of it will be kept on the section of a pupil's personal file which is not open to disclosure, together with a written record of the outcome of the investigation. If there are related criminal or civil proceedings, records may be subject to disclosure; and, therefore, no assurances can be given of confidentiality.
- d. If any pupil on a child protection register leaves, the school will transfer information to the new school and inform the Social Services.

21. Other Child Protection Issues

- a. **Bullying:** The School's Policy on protecting children from bullying is set out in a separate document.
- b. **Complaints and Concerns Procedure:** The School's Policy on raising concerns is set out in a separate document.
- c. **Racial Equality:** The School's Policy is set out in a separate document.
- d. **Gender Equality:** The School's Policy is set out in a separate document.
- e. **Children with Statements of Special Educational Needs:** We recognise that statistically children with behavioural difficulties and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse. If the school decides to admit children with profound and/or multiple disabilities, cerebral palsy, sensory impairment, and/or emotional behavioural problems, it will ensure that school staff who come into contact with such children are particularly sensitive to signs of abuse. **See also the School's Disability Policy.**

- 22. Where any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements are discovered, whether following an allegation or not, the School undertakes to remedy these without delay.