

Child Protection Policy

1 June 2017 Version Number:1

Review Date: Summer Term 2018

Northern
House
School



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Child Protection Policy

1 June 2017 Version Number:1

Review Date: Summer Term 2018

Northern
House
School



Designated Child Protection Lead: Andy Fisk, Head of Care & Guidance 01189 771293
Deputy Child Protection Leads: Rebecca Archer, Vocational Co-ordinator
Fran Pass, Headteacher
The Chair of Governors (please contact the School Business Manager for contact details)

Notes:

- The policy will be available to parents on the school website and by request from the Head of Care & Guidance, the Child Protection Lead at Northern House School (Wokingham) or in his absence the Headteacher. See www.northernhouse.org.uk
- The policy will be reviewed annually by the Safeguarding Committee.
- Implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the policy and procedures are the responsibility of the CP Lead and the members of the Safeguarding Committee. Staff training related to the policy will take place annually.

INTRODUCTION

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)* places a general duty on schools to co-operate with other agencies in the protection of children. It also requires that schools have in place policies and procedures, which should be shared with parents, to address concerns about the safety and protection of children. These requirements echo the guidance for schools contained in Safeguarding Children in Education 2004.

Northern House School (Wokingham) is concerned that all pupils remain safe and free from harm and is committed to playing a full and active part in the multi-agency response to child protection concerns. This document sets out Northern House School (Wokingham)'s position in relation to all aspects of the child protection process.

INFORMING PRINCIPLES

All children have an **absolute right** to a childhood free from abuse, neglect or exploitation.

All children in whatever setting have an **equal right** to protection from abuse, neglect or exploitation.

All staff involved with children (teaching and non-teaching) have a **responsibility** to be mindful of issues related to children's safety and welfare and a **duty** to report and refer any concerns.

Parents have a **right** to be informed about any concerns about a child's welfare or any action taken to safeguard and promote a child's welfare, providing this does not compromise the child's safety.

Children are best protected when professionals work effectively together and share responsibility for protective action.



There is not necessarily a conflict between a Northern House School (Wokingham) 's need to discharge its child protection responsibilities and its wish to work in partnership with parents.

Where there are possible concerns about a child's safety, unconditional confidentiality cannot be guaranteed and should not be offered. When a child is on a Child Protection Plan information about the child and his/her circumstances should only be shared on a "need to know" basis.

Northern House School (Wokingham) should be proactive and take positive steps to inform children of their **rights** to safety and protection and the options available to express their fears or concerns.

Children (regrettably) are sometimes abused and exploited by school staff. Northern House School (Wokingham) should have in place systems that deter possible abusers and manage effectively any allegations or concerns about abuse when they arise. Where concerns are expressed about a member of Staff, then as a neutral act, that member of Staff may be suspended in order for an investigation to be undertaken.

When children make allegations about abuse or neglect they should always be listened to, have their comments taken seriously and, where appropriate, thoroughly investigated by the appropriate services. If a member of staff receives an allegation of abuse they must not ask leading questions.

PARTNERSHIP

Northern House School (Wokingham) believes that the best outcomes for children generally are achieved when professionals can work effectively in partnership with parents/carers. This belief holds equally in relation to child protection concerns. Northern House School (Wokingham) believes in open and honest communication and will always share with parents/carers any information or concerns that they have about their children at the earliest opportunity. The only exception to this would be where it was felt that such communication might compromise the child's safety.

If a child is felt to be in need of protection and becomes the subject of a child protection plan, parents/carers should regard Northern House School (Wokingham) as a source of help and support.



PREVENTION

Northern House School (Wokingham) takes seriously its duty of pastoral care and will be proactive in seeking to prevent children becoming the victims of abuse or neglect. It will do this in a number of ways:

Through the creation of an open culture which respects all individuals' rights and discourages bullying and discrimination of all kinds.

By identifying a member of staff (Andy Fisk) who has overall responsibility for child protection matters. He has received specialist training in this field and acts as a source of advice and support to other School staff.

By informing children of their rights to be free from harm and encouraging them to talk to School staff if they have any concerns.

Through PSHE and an ongoing programme of support, at an age appropriate level, which promotes self-esteem and social inclusion and address the issue of child protection in the wider context of child safety in general.

By liaising regularly with the local social service department and the police regarding the current local scene in relation to child protection. This will include the reporting of any evidence of children becoming involved in prostitution, or of the unauthorised contact of any persons outside the school. The school will monitor and record any pattern of absence or absconding and will only allow close family to communicate with pupils in an arranged and organised way.

RESPONDING TO CONCERNS

All staff have a clear responsibility to report actual or reasonably suspected physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect of any child at the school to the school's Safeguarding Lead or in his absence, the Deputy Safeguarding Lead, Rebecca Archer. In their absence, Deputy to the Principal, Fran Pass or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action being taken. Department of Health Summary 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' is issued to all staff.

Staff that report child protection issues in good faith should not face any prejudice in either their current position or any future position within the school. Northern House School (Wokingham)'s Whistle Blowing Policy is in place to protect staff that have passed on suspicions of abuse in good faith. If Northern House School (Wokingham) receives information about a child, which suggests that they have been actually abused or neglected or that this is likely, it has a **duty to refer** these concerns to the Children's Services Department or Police in writing within 24 hours and records of the allegations and any action taken will be kept. The school has no discretion in this matter. Where Staff ignore these issues this could be seen as neglect and Staff would be subject to a disciplinary investigation. In these circumstances the Children's Services Department's child abuse investigation procedures apply.



In the course of an investigation the Children's Services Department or Police might wish to speak to a child, without parental knowledge or consent. The Headteacher, acting 'in loco parentis' has discretion to agree this to allow the authorities to explore concerns and determine whether there are grounds for further action. In these cases, the Head Teacher will ensure that the child's welfare is secured and they have access to a trusted adult.

The Headteacher will **not** allow a child to be removed from Northern House School (Wokingham) premises without either:

- parental consent
- an order of the Court or a Police Protection Order
- the child's own consent (providing the child is of an age and understanding to give informed consent - Gillick competent)

If Northern House School (Wokingham) receives information, which suggests a child, **may** have been abused or neglected or abuse or neglect **may** be likely, then it will **consult** with the Children's Services Department within 24 hours, rather than investigation by the school.

In these circumstances the Children's Services Department may decide to begin a child protection investigation in which case its procedures will apply. However, the school will jointly work with the local Children's Services department on subsequent actions and how and when other involved parties are informed.

In either case parents will be informed of what has happened at the earliest opportunity consistent with the child's best interests.

NB

It is important to remember that a referral or consultation with Children's Services is an **expression of concern** about a child's welfare. It is not an accusation or a presumption of responsibility about a parent/carer.

To avoid any misunderstandings parents of children who sustain accidental injuries which result in cuts/bruises/fractures should inform Northern House School (Wokingham) on the next working day.

If Northern House School (Wokingham) has general concerns about a child's welfare these will be raised with parents/carers at an early stage in an attempt to work together to remedy the situation. If concerns persist over a period of time, Northern House School (Wokingham) may consult with the Children's Services Department to discuss a way forward. In all of the above circumstances Northern House School (Wokingham) will keep a confidential record of its concerns and actions (see later).



CHILD ABUSE

In the event of physical or emotional abuse of one child by another, this will be taken seriously and dealt with through the school's anti-bullying policy.

If it emerges that a child is being bullied by a sibling who may not be a pupil, then Northern House School (Wokingham) in the first instance will inform the children's parents of its concerns. If the problem persists and the pupil continues to be the victim of abuse, then Northern House School (Wokingham) will refer its concerns to the Children's Services Department.

In all matters of suspected sexual abuse, either victimisation or perpetration, Northern House School (Wokingham) will refer its concerns to the Children's Services Department.

CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCES

If pupils become the subject of child protection conferences, then Northern House School (Wokingham) will be represented and will provide information about the child and his/her family. Usually this will be in the form of a written report, the contents of which will be shared with parents/carers prior to the meeting. Where Northern House School (Wokingham) provides a verbal report, again parents/carers will be informed what is to be said prior to the conference.

Occasionally Northern House School (Wokingham) may have information which is confidential and which will be shared in a closed section of the conference. If this is necessary, the Chair of the Conference will discuss the matter with parents/carers.

When any child becomes the subject of a conference, local procedures require all the other children of the family are considered. It may well be therefore that Northern House School (Wokingham) will be required to provide information on children about whom there appear to be no direct concerns. In these situations, the same procedure on prior disclosure of information will apply.

Northern House School (Wokingham) will contribute to the process of risk assessment and the decision about registration of children.

CHILD PROTECTION REGISTRATION

When a pupil is in need of a protection plan the school will be represented on the core group and will play an active part in the creation and implementation of the child protection plan.

For as long as a child requires a protection plan they will be supported by the school and their progress will be monitored. The school will keep a confidential record of the child's progress and any further concerns (should they arise) and share this information with other members of the core group in order to evaluate the progress of the child protection plan.

If Northern House School (Wokingham) receives information that a child who is already subject to a protection plan has suffered further abuse or neglect, this will be referred immediately to the child's social worker or the Independent Chair for that LEA.

CONFIDENTIALITY

If Northern House School (Wokingham) receives information from any source that a child has suffered abuse or neglect or may suffer in this way, whether the child is a pupil or otherwise, it has a duty to pass this information to the Children's Services Department.

If parents/carers wish to share such information with Northern House School (Wokingham) they must be aware that it will not be possible to guarantee confidentiality. Northern House School (Wokingham) can reassure parents/carers however that if they wish, the source of the information can remain anonymous.

When a pupil's name is added to a Child Protection Plan this information will be shared on a 'need to know' basis with the minimum number of staff necessary to ensure the child's safety and welfare. These people will receive the minimum amount of information they need to enable them to implement the child protection plan. They will not have access to all the information shared at the initial child protection conference.

Northern House School (Wokingham) will ensure that the confidentiality of information is maintained by keeping records in a safe and secure place with access strictly limited. All records of a child's progress while the subject of registration will be kept similarly secure.

TRANSFER OF RECORDS

If a child whose name appears on a Child Protection Plan transfers to another school, then the social worker will be notified of this change and Northern House School (Wokingham) will arrange for the transfer of the child's records including information about the plan. The Social worker or Designated Child Protection Lead will then notify the new school of the next core group meeting so that the responsibility for monitoring the child's progress can be officially transferred.

If a child who has been subject to a protection plan in the past, but is no longer, transfers to another school then information about past registration will **not** be transferred. The information relating to this child will be retained in line with the policy on retaining records.

If a child no longer requires a protection plan and becomes a Child in Need (CIN), Northern House School (Wokingham) will be represented at these meetings and will play an active part in the process of risk re-evaluation.

In line with the policy above, Northern House School (Wokingham) will share with parents prior to any review the information they intend to present.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF

All allegations against any member of staff which have implications for the safety and welfare of children will be taken seriously and investigated.

When concerns come to the attention of Northern House School (Wokingham) staff they should refer to the procedures on how to progress these.

Members of the public who have concerns should speak to the Headteacher or CEO of Northern House School Academy Trust (Ian Barker) if it is the Headteacher who is the cause for concern.