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# Midhurst Rother College

## Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

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**Date:** November 2009

**Reviewed:** 03 November 2010

**Revised:** 02 November 2011

**Approved by LGB:** 23.11.2009

**Displayed:** College VLE

**Review cycle:** Annual



The aim of this policy is to set out the principles and processes for identifying and supporting students at risk of abuse. Midhurst Rother College uses and follows the DCSF statutory guidance, Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education as our primary source of guidance and advice in relation to safeguarding and child protection.

#### **KEY ELEMENTS OF THIS POLICY**

- to publish our internal organisational arrangements and the local arrangements for managing child protection.
- to recognise the importance of the Department of Education guidelines on safeguarding and child protection including appropriate liaison with the Local Safeguarding Board and other agencies
- to identify Mrs Christine Denne, Vice-Principal, as our Child Protection Manager (CPM) and Lt Col Tex Pemberton of the LGB as our Child Protection Governor (CPG)
- to ensure that our Single Central Record stored within the HR database, is fully compliant and up-to-date
- to ensure that all members of staff and governors are trained appropriately and have an understanding of child abuse and its main indicators, and are alert to their reporting and confidentiality responsibilities
- to monitor the implementation of the Child Protection Policy and review its effectiveness. The findings must be reported to the LGB on a regular basis.
- to confirm in writing that the staff student relationships letter and guidance has been received by every member of staff

#### **1 Scope**

1.1 The Safeguarding and Child Protection policy covers a range of matters, all of which focus at their heart on the need to ensure that students are safe, feel safe and are fully supported by the College. The key areas are:

- (a) Ensuring that the relationships between the adults in the school and students are entirely professional and appropriate;

- (b) Where there are signals which suggest that there might be safeguarding issues for a child out of College either in their home environment or in some other context, being aware of these signals and knowing what steps must be taken to deal with the issues;
- (c) Ensuring that recruitment and employment processes are safe and legal and accurate records are maintained.

## 2 **Guidance and Requirements**

- 2.1 Midhurst Rother College uses the statutory guidance, [Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education](#) (as updated from time to time) as our primary source of guidance and advice in relation to safeguarding and child protection.
- 2.2 Ms Rosemary Terry is the Local Authority Children’s Safeguarding Manager (Safeguarding in Education and Allegations) with Mr Neil Holden the Business Manager (West Sussex Local Safeguarding Children Board Business Manager). They provide valuable local support and guidance and training.
- 2.3 Mrs Christine Denne is our Child Protection Manager (CPM) based on the Midhurst site. If the CPM is away from College, Mrs Sarah Pringle Vice-Principal, will provide cover.
- 2.4 All staff and governors need appropriate child protection training. We need to ensure that we fulfil the legal requirement for staff to receive this training every three years, with a record being kept for each person. As part of the induction procedures for all new staff, knowledge and awareness of the College safeguarding children policy is a compulsory element of this.
- 2.5 We must ensure that our monitoring processes are regular, frequent and thorough and that they address each element of the child protection policy. The Local Governing Body led by the CPG has an important role to ensure that the monitoring processes are effective and that the LGB receives regular reports on child protection matters. The LGB through its sub-committee structure will take a particular responsibility in this area with child protection as a standing agenda item. The LGB may also choose to include child protection as a standing item on their agenda.
- 2.6 Midhurst Rother College must ensure accurate and up-to-date records are maintained to cover the relevant child protection matters. Care must be taken to ensure sensitive records are kept confidential.
- 2.7 The School Business Manager Mrs Kath Chard maintains an up-to-date and accurate Single Central Record which is kept within the HR database.
- 2.8 Staff are expected to adhere to the ULT's Confidentiality Policy Statement (Appendix 1)

## 3 **Curriculum Implications**

- 3.1 The curriculum should include teaching to help all students understand and respond positively to their right to be safe. Children should know how to protect themselves and others. This is included in the PSE Programme of Study, and will be supported in other curriculum areas for example in Drama. Opportunities will be taken to develop positive attitudes to parenthood and childcare and to other responsibilities of mature adult life.
- 3.2 Students with Additional Educational Needs which may make them especially vulnerable to abuse should be provided with appropriate support so that they can communicate any concerns effectively to staff.

#### **4 Pastoral Implications**

- 4.1 It is a major priority within the pastoral strategy of the College that an environment is created in which students know, and are confident about, the adults whom they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty. The Learning Mentor and identified Support Mentor have regular contact with students on a day to day basis. Non-teaching Pastoral Leaders monitor and support their tutor team and are able to give the time needed to support vulnerable students. Each Pastoral Leader is in turn monitored and supported by the Key Stage Co-ordinator/Director. Each Key Stage is led by a Vice Principal and Assistant Principal. Within the College, we have a full time Counsellor who reports directly within College to the CPM when potential CP issues arise.
- 4.2 Designated staff through the CPM, are expected to establish and maintain effective working relationships with welfare colleagues from other agencies such as Police Liaison Officers and Social Workers.

#### **5 Roles and Responsibilities**

- 5.1 The CPM is responsible for:
  - (a) Being the first point-of-call for students and staff
  - (b) Leading/contributing to training
  - (c) Co-ordinating action within the College
  - (d) Liaising with other agencies on suspected cases of abuse, taking advice where necessary from the Local Safeguarding Board and other agencies.
  - (e) Advising the Principal about cases in hand according to the agreements already established about confidentiality
  - (f) Identifying, establishing and monitoring the 'Vulnerable Register' of students who have been identified as being 'at risk'.

- (g) Keeping securely, clear, accurate and confidential records of students' progress, providing information to other professionals, reports for case conferences, and participating in case conferences.

5.2 All staff are responsible for protecting children from abuse and from inappropriate and inadequate care, and have a responsibility to report suspicions and concerns to the CPM immediately.

## 6 **Implementation and Procedures**

The CPM must follow the procedures as laid down within this policy, taking actions in accord with the guidelines of the local authority.

## 7 **Recording and Record Keeping**

7.1 Records and reports should be objective and based on evidence. They should distinguish between fact, observation, allegation and opinion. Staff should guard against myths and stereotypes - both positive and negative.

7.2 Records should be securely archived for ten years and must ensure full confidentiality is maintained.

## 8 **School Transfer**

In the event of the transfer to another school/academy of a student about whom there are concerns, the school/academy should:

- (a) Find out the name of the receiving school/academy
- (b) Contact the relevant member of staff at that school/academy to discuss the transfer
- (c) Send all information relating to the student to the school/academy
- (d) Check with the school/academy that the student has actually arrived on the expected day
- (e) Inform all relevant agencies of the transfer.

## 9 **Links to other policies**

In establishing their policies on Child Protection, Midhurst Rother College will be mindful of the links it will have with other UCST/ULT policies. In particular there will be connections with the policies on *Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and other Staff*, *The Use of Physical Restraint*, *Sex and Relationships*, *SEN and Inclusion*, and *Access to Student Records*.

## **Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually.

## **Appendix 1: Confidentiality Policy**

- 1.1 Staff will be required to adhere to the policy on confidentiality between themselves and students as set out within this section.
- 1.2 However, staff cannot and should not offer or guarantee absolute confidentiality. If confidentiality has to be broken the student should, if at all possible, be informed first and then supported, as appropriate.
- 1.3 It is only in the most exceptional circumstances that the College should be in the position of having to manage information without parental knowledge.
- 1.4 Students should be encouraged to talk to their parents and given support to do so. If there is evidence of abuse, child protection procedures should be adhered to, ensuring that students are informed of sources of confidential help, for example, the College counsellor, school nurse , GP or local young person's advice service.
- 1.5 Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of any sex education provided, but not from teaching the biological aspects of human growth and reproduction necessary under National Curriculum Science. The views of parents need to be borne in mind when implementing a sex and relationship education policy and parents will be invited to comment on the extent to which this policy reflects their wishes and culture.

## **Appendix 2: ULT Letter to all members of staff and Notes of Guidance for Staff-Student Relationships**

Every one of us working within academies, whatever our role, is acutely aware that issues to do with the protection of children are of the highest possible importance. Trust underpins everything that we do in schools. The parents of our pupils entrust the care of their children to us and together we are all responsible for their well being. ULT also has a responsibility to ensure that those working in our schools and academies are themselves protected - against putting themselves in a vulnerable position and against the possibility of false accusation.

This letter has also been prompted by the isolated actions of a tiny handful of employees who have found themselves – or who have put themselves – in a vulnerable position. These instances have all led to disciplinary action including in the most serious cases dismissal for gross misconduct. The ULT Board have asked me to write to every person employed directly by ULT or working in our academies to remind us all just how serious these matters are but also to offer some advice as to how to respond in potentially difficult situations.

Principals will discuss this issue with their staff at appropriate times during the school year. This letter reinforces those statements and ensures that no single person, either employed by or working within academies belonging to or associated with ULT, is in any doubt that child abuse is an issue that must be treated with the utmost seriousness. Acts of child abuse may be blatant and incontrovertible. However, it must be understood that touching, physical contact, personal emails/text messages or contact through social and personal networking websites are almost always inappropriate within the professional context of schools and can easily be construed as child abuse in some circumstances.

Against this background, ULT has to ensure that no situation could arise involving any of us which is or could reasonably be construed as acting against the safety of each child. We all understand that it is not always an easy line to draw but crossing that line, or being in a position where it appears that the line has been crossed, is unacceptable. Some adults within the academy undertake roles where the drawing of that line is even more important because of the ease with which the proper execution of their duties might be misinterpreted or because the vulnerability of the young people in their care might be more easily exploited. These might include those:

- working in boarding houses or residential situations, including, for example, school trips and excursions;
- whose work requires them to interact in a one to one situation, particularly when that work takes place behind closed doors as is often the case with peripatetic music lessons;
- whose work by its nature requires some physical contact with children, for example, those working with very young children and those involved in the coaching of sport or other practical subject where a correct technique may need to be demonstrated;
- who have high levels of access to ICT systems and, indeed, all who use the internet, email, text messaging and other forms of electronic communication;

- young employees and workers whose duties require them to work with older pupils (e.g. sixth formers) where the age differential is quite small;
- who work with especially vulnerable children for example those with special educational needs, disabilities, mental illness.

Within each academy, Principals will issue both verbal and written guidance from time to time and will make available appropriate training to help everyone deal with this difficult issue. A statement of guidance follows this letter.

Finally, having said all this, it is still important for all of us to retain an appropriate balance. The ULT Board greatly appreciate the devotion and commitment of those who work in our schools and academies. Our work in education is most effective when we respect and care for children, when we enjoy their company and when we celebrate their achievements. The trust placed in us as we guide these young people through their formative years is huge. We all need to help each other shoulder this responsibility to the very best of our ability.

#### **ULT NOTES OF GUIDANCE FOR STAFF-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS**

This guidance is not exhaustive and is designed to set out principles rather than to give detailed and specific advice. Clearly, the circumstances in which staff work vary (e.g. working with very young children, boarding staff, sports staff, etc.); this guidance is meant to give general principles only. Although this advice applies primarily to teachers and to other adults with educational roles, all adults working within schools relate to students/pupils during the course of their duties; again, the general principles apply equally to all who are involved in the school.

- 1 The relationship between staff and students/pupils is a professional one. It is fully expected – and, indeed, hoped – that staff in the school have a friendly and caring relationship with students/pupils; nevertheless, the basis of that relationship is professional not personal. It is suggested that a good test to apply is to reflect on whether the child’s parents would be happy with the relationship if they were standing with you.
- 2 A personal relationship between staff and a student/pupil is inappropriate unless it is with the full knowledge and consent of the student’s/pupil’s parents or guardians. Circumstances in which such a personal relationship may arise might be when your own children are friends with those in the school or when you have a personal relationship with parents of children in the school. It is not normally appropriate for a member of staff to meet with a student/pupil out of school hours or off school premises except with the prior knowledge and consent of parents and the school.
- 3 In general, unnecessary physical contact with students/pupils must be avoided. In some circumstances, physical contact between a member of staff and a student/pupil is necessary and beneficial; it might be, for example, that a Reception teacher might need to pick up a 5 year old who

has fallen over in the playground, a sports coach may need to demonstrate to a student/pupil how to hold a racket or a secondary teacher may give a student/pupil a gentle pat on the back as encouragement. In rare circumstances it may be appropriate for members of staff to use reasonable restraint in circumstances where a student is behaving in a manner which endangers him or herself or other people. In these situations, staff are advised to be very sensitive to the student's/pupil's likely reaction and to watch out for signs that the student/pupil is apprehensive or uncomfortable. We all have our own personal space that needs to be protected. Wherever possible when working with students/pupils, other people (adults, colleagues or students/pupils) should be present or the door should be open.

- 4 Over-familiar words and actions, displays of affection, discussion of one's personal life or the personal life of the student/pupil are almost always inappropriate. Sexual innuendo is wrong in all circumstances. Staff must avoid actions, words or expressions that could be interpreted as suggesting that they have an emotional relationship with any student/pupil. In the professional staff-student/pupil relationship it is not appropriate to single a student/pupil out for favours or to suggest to a student/pupil that he or she is a special friend.
- 5 Occasionally it is necessary for professional academic reasons for staff to communicate with students/pupils out of school. Except where absolutely necessary, personal email addresses, home or mobile phone numbers must not be given, asked for or used. A staff mobile phone number might be given to students/pupils for use during an educational visit; where possible, the school's mobile phone (if there is one) should be used for this purpose. Pastoral matters should not normally be dealt with by personal email or using personal phone contacts. Only in the most exceptional circumstances, for instance, where there is well-founded concern for the unexplained whereabouts of a student, should pastoral matters be dealt with by personal email or using personal phone contact. In any event, records of all contacts must be kept on the student file so that if it is necessary to use email or personal contact, the reason why will be specified in the written record. It is very difficult to envisage circumstances under which individual texting is appropriate except through official school channels.
- 6 It is not normally appropriate for students/pupils to visit a member of staff in their own home. Such a visit might be more likely within a boarding context where staff live on site and so might invite a group of students/pupils – say, a tutorial group – to their house for a meeting or for a celebration. Where such a visit does take place it must be with the full knowledge and consent of either the School or parents or guardians. If possible, more than one adult should be present on such an occasion.
- 7 With older students/pupils, a gathering might be held as part of a celebration. Generally, it is advisable if that is held in school. It is essential that professional criteria (e.g. all the students/pupils in a particular teaching or tutorial group) rather than personal criteria (e.g. selected students/pupils only) are used for inviting students/pupils, that the event is held openly, and that senior colleagues are aware of it. Staff on such an occasion have a particular duty to ensure that the supply and consumption of alcohol is appropriate, is responsible and falls within the law and the school's

guidelines on alcohol. As a rule, staff should not consume alcohol whilst in the company of children. This includes educational visits and celebratory functions. There will be occasional situations where alcohol is served either at a meal or school function and in these instances should be approved by the Head/Principal in advance.

- 8 Members of staff who in the course of their professional duties need to work on a one-to-one basis with a student/pupil (e.g. a piano lesson, a maths tutorial, etc.), in particular one of the opposite sex, must take care to ensure that the circumstances of the meeting or lesson are always entirely professional. Staff are advised to use a room which has vision panels in the door or keep the door open and ensure that colleagues know that the meeting or lesson is taking place. It is helpful if the meeting or lesson can be arranged during normal school hours or immediately before or after school when there are plenty of other people about.
- 9 Staff must avoid threatening words, raised voices and any aggressive contact such as holding, pushing, pulling or hitting, which could amount to or which could be interpreted as a criminal assault.
- 10 Members of staff do have the right to use reasonable physical force to restrain students/pupils in order to prevent them from committing a criminal offence, injuring others or themselves, damaging property or behaving in such a way as to compromise good order and discipline. Current DfE guidance is contained in 'Using Reasonable Force: Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies' which can be found on BiECloud. Members of staff must also ensure they are familiar with the academies physical restraint policy and procedures document.
- 11 Social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, and other social media, pose risks for all staff in terms of professional integrity and the welfare of pupils. Staff must not use these sites to contact or communicate with pupils or pupils who have recently left. Unfortunately some pupils post information on their social networking sites which is inappropriate in language or visuals. To view such pages may alter your judgement of pupils, to be known to be viewing them may alter a pupil's view of you, and to comment to pupils about what you have seen is likely to have an impact on your professional reputation as well as possibly causing distress to pupils concerned. Should you become aware of material about yourself, the school, or a pupil which is inappropriate, the Senior Leadership Team must be informed and they will instruct a member of staff to check the allegations and inform the appropriate authorities. You must not check it out yourself.
- 12 If you are at all concerned about anything which has occurred or which has made you uncomfortable, you must discuss the matter with a senior colleague at the earliest opportunity even if it turns out that nothing untoward has happened. You must make a written record, dated and signed, of any such incident.
- 13 Where any allegation of abuse is made against a teacher, other member of staff or volunteer, the Group is committed to dealing with the allegation fairly, quickly and consistently, in a way that provides effective protection for the child and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation.

- 14 Staff will also find information relevant to staff-student relationships in the policies and procedures in their school or academy which cover the following:
- (a) Behaviour and Discipline;
  - (b) Physical Restraint;
  - (c) Email and Internet Acceptable Use Policy.