



Statement of intent

Claire's Court School wants to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school, or in attendance at our various holiday club activities, which complies with the Department for Education (DfE) Guidance *Safeguarding Children and the Safer Recruitment in Education*. To this end we cause, at least two times a year, independent external scrutiny of our work in Child Protection, and that scrutiny includes compilation of an annual report to the Principals and also reports on the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged. Any deficiencies or weakness in child protection arrangements as identified by this report (or for any other reason) are remedied without delay.

This policy includes guidance on procedures when a member of staff, volunteer, designated person for child protection or Head faces allegations of abuse.

Aims

Our aims are to:

- create an environment in the School which encourages children to develop a positive self image, regardless of race, language, religion, culture or home background;
- help children to establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their families, with peers, and with other adults;
- encourage children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence;
- enable children to have the self confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches; and
- work with parents to build their understanding of, and commitment to, the welfare of all our children.

Liaison with other bodies

- We have procedures for contacting the local authority on child protection issues, to ensure that it is easy, in any emergency, for the School and local statutory children's agencies, including social services, to work well together.
- We work within the RBWM/Berkshire Local Child Safeguarding Board (LCSB) guidelines which confirm locally agreed inter-agency procedures, now based on line for our use on demand, and recognise our point of contact within RBWM to be the local authority designated officer (LADO). We will report through the LADO the actions we take in respect of allegations of abuse.
- Our procedures and processes are inspected by The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), and it is to ISI in addition to LCSB that we will report the actions we have taken in respect of allegations of abuse, usually on the day of first report and no later than 13 days. ISI is the body approved for the purpose of inspection under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, and reports to the DfE on the extent to which the group within Claire's Court Schools meets statutory requirements, as we are in membership of the Associations of the Independent Schools Council (ISC). ISI inspections of independent schools are required to report to the DfE the extent to which ISC schools comply with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 and later amendments (referred to as the 'regulatory requirements') and where applicable, report to OfSTED on compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS);
- In addition, we notify OfSTED via ISI of any incident or accident and any changes in our arrangements which affect the wellbeing of children within the EYFS usually on the day of first report and no later than 13 days. Additionally within EYFS, we must notify OfSTED via ISI of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working or looking after children within our premises (whether that allegation related to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere), or any other abuse which is alleged to have taken place on the premises and of the action

taken with respect of these allegations, again usually on the day of first report and no later than 13 days.

- If a report is to be made to the authorities, we act within the RBWM/Berkshire Local Safeguarding Board guidance in deciding whether we must inform the child's parents at the same time.

Methods

Staffing and volunteering

- Our Designated lead person with responsibility for safeguarding children is Mr James T Wilding, Academic Principal of Claires Court Schools. Mr Wilding takes explicit responsibility for matters relating to after-school care and holiday club, where such activities are out of school term time and in his absence, those with day to day responsibility will know to whom his role as CPO has been delegated. In term-time, our designated persons for responsibility for safeguarding children on each of our teaching sites are as follows:

The College	Mr Paul Bevis	Head
	Mrs Pauline Murphy	Head of Pre and Junior Prep (with specific lead responsibility within EYFS)
Ridgeway	Mr Jeff Watkins	Head
	Mrs Susan Payne	Deputy Head (with specific lead responsibility within EYFS)
	Mr Justin Spanswick	Assistant Head
Claires Court	Mr John Rayer	Head
	Mr Tony Blakeley	Deputy Head

- We provide adequate and appropriate staffing resources to meet the needs of children.
- We operate safe recruitment procedures (to include enhanced CRB checks for all posts within the school and compliance with Independent Schools Standards Regulations)
- Applicants for posts within the School are clearly informed that the positions are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Candidates are informed of the need to carry out checks before posts can be confirmed. Where applications are rejected because of information that has been disclosed, applicants have the right to know and to challenge incorrect information.
- We abide by the OfSTED requirement - in respect of references and Police checks for staff and volunteers - to ensure that no disqualified or unfit person works in The School or has access to the children.
- Volunteers do not work unsupervised.
- We abide by the Protection of Children Act requirements in respect of any person who is dismissed from our employment, or resigns in circumstances that would otherwise have led to dismissal for reasons of child protection concern.
- We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the School.
- We take security steps to ensure that we have control over who comes into the School so that no unauthorised person has unsupervised access to the children.

Arrangements

Allegations of abuse against members of staff, volunteers or the Head

Allegations against staff, volunteers or the designated person with responsibility for safeguarding should

be reported to the Head straight away. Such allegations will be of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working or looking after children in our schools (whether that allegation relates to harm or abuse committed on our premises or elsewhere) or of any other abuse which is alleged to have taken place on the premises or elsewhere. If the Head is absent, the allegation should be passed to the Academic Principal. If the allegation concerns the Head, the person receiving the allegation should immediately inform the Academic Principal without notifying the Head first.

In the first instance the School will contact the LADO at RBWM for further professional advice and discussion (contact on Tel: 01628 683193 or 01628 683202). In the case of serious harm, the Police should be informed from the outset.

The School will adhere to the statutory guidance on dealing with allegations of abuse in force at the time; the following key principles apply:-

- We will consider and thoroughly investigate any allegation expeditiously, fairly and consistently, avoiding all unnecessary delays. The aim will always be to ensure a quick resolution to the benefit of all concerned; the nature, seriousness and complexity of the allegation will have a bearing on timescales.
- The person who is subject of an allegation will be notified as soon as is practicable and will be provided with as much information as possible at that time (NB: in some instances the School may not be permitted to disclose full details).
- Suspension will never be a default option. As Lead Person for matters of Child Protection, the Academic Principal will always have the final decision on suspension. The individual will be notified of the reasons and justification for suspension and provided with a named contact within one working day.
- Allegations that are found to have been malicious will be removed from Personnel records. We will not refer to any unsubstantiated, unfounded or malicious allegations in employer references. (Pupils making malicious allegations will be dealt with under the School's behavior policy.)
- Whilst care will be taken to ensure the effective protection of the child making the allegation, we will always provide appropriate support to the person who is the subject of the allegation. The School will take all reasonable steps to ensure that confidentiality is maintained and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated.
- If the subject of an allegation chooses to resign their employ, the School will continue with its investigation and will make every effort to reach a conclusion regardless of whether the individual chooses to assist the investigation.

Induction Training of New Staff and Volunteers in Child Protection

- Our Child Protection Handbook and training in its contents and procedures provides a key focal point in preparing our new staff and volunteers to work with children within Claires Court Schools.
- We seek out training opportunities for all adults involved in the School to ensure that they are able to recognise the signs and symptoms of possible physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect and so that they are aware of the local authority guidelines for making referrals.
- We ensure that all staff know the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns in the School. For those members of staff not directly working with children (such as Domestic staff), their induction covers basic awareness.
- A record of the staff training in Child protection (which usually takes place within the first few weeks of employment) is kept on a central record by the Personnel Officer.

On-going training arrangements

All Child Protection Officers receive refresher training every two years, in conjunction with the arrangements made by the RBWM. All other staff within Claires Court Schools have their training updated at least once every three years.

Planning

The layout of the School allows for constant supervision. Where children need to spend time away from the rest of the group, we are clear where they should study. The Library is often the most suitable space to recommend, but staff should be aware that the Librarian needs to plan her work too, and the space may already be occupied. A regular walk-around the site is conducted by the designated persons and this is identified with the School Secretary in the school diary. Particular care is taken to review those areas where staff and pupils work on a one-to-one basis.

Curriculum

- We introduce key elements of child protection into our PSHE courses, so that children can develop understanding of why and how to keep safe. Secondary School prefects are given awareness training in matters of child protection and safeguarding.
- We create within the School a culture of value and respect for the individual.
- We ensure that this is carried out in a way that is appropriate for the ages and stages of our children.

Complaints

- We ensure that all parents know how to complain about staff or volunteer action within the School, which may include an allegation of abuse – our full documentation is made available on the school website.
- We follow the procedures as directed by the guidance of the RBWM/Berkshire Local Safeguarding Board when investigating any complaint that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child.
- We follow all the disclosure and recording procedures when investigating an allegation that a member of staff or volunteer has abused a child as if it were an allegation of abuse by any other person.
- We do not make our own decision on matters of referral in what may appear to be borderline cases, and ensure that such doubts and concerns are discussed with the LADO of RBWM.
- The school will do nothing that may jeopardise a Police investigation, such as asking a child leading questions, attempting to investigate the allegations of abuse, or give publicity to an investigation (unless explicitly given permission to do so by the authorities).

Responding to suspicions of abuse

- We acknowledge that abuse of children can take different forms - physical, emotional, sexual and neglect.
- When children are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, this may be demonstrated through changes in their behaviour, or in their play.
- Where such changes in behaviour occur, or where children's play gives cause for concern, the School investigates.
- We allow investigation to be carried out with sensitivity. Staff in the School take care not to influence the outcome either through the way they speak to children or ask questions of children.
- Where a child shows signs and symptoms of neglect or of a "failure to thrive", we make appropriate

referrals.

Disclosures

Where a child makes a disclosure to a member of staff, that member of staff:

- offers reassurance to the child;
- listens to the child; and
- gives reassurance that she or he will take action.
- The member of staff does not question the child

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

Using the Pupil Concern Sheet, staff make a written record of:

- The child's name;
- The child's address;
- The age of the child;
- The date and time of the observation or the disclosure;
- An objective record of the observation or disclosure;
- The exact words spoken by the child;
- The name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date and time; and
- The names of any other person present at the time.

These communication records are signed and dated and kept in a separate confidential file under the direction of the Head. All members of staff are trained in the procedures for recording and reporting by written record, making use of the general communication notes form as well as the specific Pupil Concern sheet.

Informing Parents

Parents are normally the first point of contact, but special care must be exercised in situations involving allegations (or worse) of abuse. The duty for communication to the parents would be exercised by the Head, or by a suitably trained deputy. . If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of the LADO does not allow this. This will usually be the case where the parent is the likely abuser. In these cases the investigating officers of RBWM/Police will inform parents.

Confidentiality

All suspicions and investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the LCSB.

Use of ICT, Mobile Phones and Other Electronic devices

Taking, Storing and Using Images of Children

We will not tolerate any illegal material, and will always report illegal activity to the Police and/or the Local Child Safeguarding Board (LCSB). If we discover that a child or young person is at risk as a consequence of online activity, we may seek additional assistance from the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Unit (CEOP). We will impose a range of sanctions on any pupil who misuses technology to

bully, harass or abuse another pupil in line with our anti-bullying policy.

Support to families

- The School takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff and volunteers in the group.
- The School continues to welcome the child and the family whilst investigations are being made in relation to abuse in the home situation.
- Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child only if appropriate under the guidance of the Berkshire Local Safeguarding Board.
- With the proviso that the care and safety of the child is paramount, we do all in our power to support and work with the child's family.

For the purposes of clarity, this document refers to OfSTED – for inspection purposes of the main school, OfSTED delegate the responsibility to ISI, the Independent Schools Inspectorate. For pupils within EYFS, the requirement to notify OfSTED directly remains only as an additional requirement to notification to ISI for schools that are registered settings (under 3s). Claires Court Schools is not a registered setting.

The working protocols in use since the introduction of the training programme for Child Protection Officers by the Royal Borough in Spring 2007.

James Wilding
Academic Principal

This policy was reviewed in October 2011, and incorporates the latest guidance from ISI (29 September 2010) and the Department for Education (30 September 2011).