

Felsted School Child Protection Policy

Introduction

The aim of this policy is to safeguard our pupils' welfare, by fostering an honest, open, caring and supportive climate. Felsted School fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect and support the pupils in school. There are three main elements to our Child Protection policy:

Encouraging and maintaining a positive and caring school atmosphere with strong teaching and pastoral support to pupils so that all pupils feel valued and nurtured.

Ensuring that all staff are appropriately recruited, trained and supported to respond sensitively and appropriately to Child Protection concerns.

Supporting pupils who may have been abused and the staff who deal with them.

This policy applies to all staff at Felsted School, paid and volunteers, and failure to comply could have serious disciplinary consequences. The procedures outlined below are in accordance to the *Joint Child Protection Procedures (2006)* and "*What To Do If You're Worried a Child Is Being Abused*". These publications are all held in the CPO's office and can be viewed on request.

This policy is reviewed annually by the Child Protection Officer and all members of Common Room are required to read this document and sign a declaration that they have done so.

School Commitment

Felsted School recognises that high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and clear lines of communication with a trusted adult help all children, and especially those at risk of, or suffering from, abuse.

Our school will therefore:

- 1) Establish and maintain an ethos where the pupils feel secure and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to. All pupils are given a copy of the Pupil Handbook which includes sections on Pupil Grievance Procedure, the Anti-Bullying Policy and the School Rules. These issues and others may be discussed in PSHE lessons and informally in the houses with members of the house staff when appropriate.
- 2) Ensure that pupils know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty. This may be, for example, the pupil's HM, tutor, the Chaplain or a member of the Medical Centre staff. Relevant telephone numbers of outside agencies such as Childline are displayed on notice boards around the school, including in the houses and in the Pupil Handbook.
- 3) Ensure that every effort will be made to establish effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from other agencies.

Roles and Responsibilities

All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. However, there are key people within Felsted School who have specific responsibilities under Child Protection procedures. These are:

1) The Child Protection Officer: Mrs Karen A Megahey, Pastoral Deputy, 01371 822673, kam@felsted.org

Has specific responsibility for the coordination of Child Protection procedures within the school and for liaison with Social Services and other agencies. The CPO must be informed in the first instance of suspected abuse. The CPO must

Know how to identify signs of abuse and when to make a referral

Know the procedures and ensure the correct action is taken

Know the role and responsibilities of the investigating agencies and how to liaise with them

Know the requirements of record keeping and ensure that the Child protection register is kept up to date

Inform Social Services when a child on the Child protection register leaves the school

2) The Headmaster: Dr Michael Walker, 01371 822600, mjw@felsted.org

Will always be informed of any Child Protection issues by the CPO and will also act in place of the CPO if she is unavailable.

3) The Governor with Specific Responsibility for Child protection: Margaret Chalmers. Contact details are held in the Headmaster's office.

Although no member of the governing body will be routinely informed of details of specific Child Protection situations the Governor with specific responsibility for Child Protection will ensure that an appropriate Child Protection Policy is in place and being followed and that procedures are known to all members of staff.

Procedures

1) Where it is believed that a child is suffering from, or is at risk of, significant harm the following procedures must be followed:

i) The CPO must be informed immediately in writing or, if an allegation is being made against the CPO, the Headmaster must be informed. It would be normal practice at Felsted for the HM to be informed at this stage also, unless deemed inappropriate.

ii) The written report should contain

1) what the member of staff has seen or heard

2) the date and time

3) a description of the emotional state of the child

iii) The member of staff must not ask the child questions (apart from clarification) and if there is any injury to the child, he or she must be accompanied to the Medical Centre at once to be assessed by the medical staff. The CPO will then meet with the Headmaster and the HM (and the school doctor, if necessary) to decide upon appropriate action. If the matter is sufficiently serious or the child is considered to be at risk the CPO will make a referral to Social Services by telephone using the "Contact Essex" telephone number (0845 603 7630) and follow this up in writing. The interagency referral form may be used at this point if it is considered that immediate

protective action is required. It is not automatic that any other members of staff will be informed of the situation in order to protect the privacy of the child, unless it is felt to be in the child's best interests.

It should be noted that Bullying and Self-Harm are Child – Protection issues and the CPO and HM should be informed at once if members of staff become aware of cases of either of these. In the case of bullying, any incident must be entered in the bullying log (found in the Common Room Pigeon Hole Room) and the Anti – Bullying Procedure consulted. In the case of Self-Harm, the pupil will be referred to the Medical Centre where staff will decide on the appropriate action to be taken. These procedures should be followed as far as possible if concerns are raised during a trip away from school, with the CPO or Headmaster being contacted as soon as is possible.

2) If a member of staff is accused or suspected of any form of abuse, then normally they will be suspended from duty and told that serious allegations have been made and the disciplinary procedure of the teachers' contract implemented. If the allegation is sufficiently serious Social Services will be contacted at once and also the police if a criminal act is alleged. In the event of the allegations not being sufficiently serious to warrant the suspension of a member of staff, decisions will be taken to ensure the complaint is fully investigated and resolved in a way that is in the child's best interests, consistent with fairness to the member of staff.

Staffing and Training

According to the guidance in *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education*, the school will carry out all the required checks when recruiting new staff and in addition to the CRB check a full employment history is required by all applicants to new posts. Also, a member of staff with child protection training will be part of the selection process.

All staff working with children must undertake training in welfare and child protection and update it every three years. The school will provide this and a record of attendance placed in personnel folders.

Staff Code of Conduct

There are many occasions when members of staff will have to act "in loco parentis". Therefore it is of paramount importance that the relationships between pupils and the staff who are responsible for them, should be based on trust and respect. All relationships between pupils and staff should be appropriate and professional. Staff must not spend long periods of time alone with any pupil and must not conduct one to one conversations in total privacy but, for example, use offices and classrooms that have glass panels in the door, or leave the door open. Tutorials should take place in a designated room in houses or in a classroom/office in the main school. In the boarding house if it is necessary to enter bedrooms or single-man studies (for example to check that the pupil is present and working on prep), then the visit should be brief and the door should be propped open. Private mobile telephone numbers should only be given out when necessary (eg when accompanying a school trip) and individual communication by text or mobile phone is to be discouraged unless in the case of the better discharge of duties (eg such as finding out where a pupil is).

Informal and personal e-mail messages must be avoided and only the school e-mail system must be used.

If a member of Common Room visits a pupil in their own home, or organises a recreational outing or treat of any kind, at any time (including holidays) the HM must be informed. The only exceptions to this would be if the Member of Common Room has connections with the pupil, either because they are friends of their parents or if the pupil is a friend of the Member of Common Room's own child and in these cases it is expected that the HM would be aware of this.

The question of if and when it is permissible to touch a pupil is a difficult one and it would not be in pupils' best interests to forbid touching in all circumstances, especially when a pupil is in some distress or an accident to be avoided. So, it may be necessary for members of staff to touch pupils (eg when a pupil has been injured and first aid has to be given) but this must always be appropriate and justifiable. If the nature of the relationship between an individual pupil and a staff member causes any concern the advice of the child's HM and/or the CPO must be sought **at once**.

Recording and Monitoring

All records of Child Protection issues are held by the CPO. These are in a locked cabinet and are not routinely available to other members of staff. Ongoing issues are monitored also by the CPO.

Supporting Pupils at Risk

Felsted School recognises that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop self worth and to view the world in a positive way. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of such children. It is also recognised that some children who have experienced abuse may in turn abuse others. This requires a considered, sensitive approach in order that the child can receive appropriate help and support.

The school will endeavour to support pupils through

- 1) The curriculum, to encourage self-esteem and self-motivation.
- 2) The school ethos, which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and which gives all pupils and adults a sense of being respected and valued.
- 3) A consistent approach, which recognises and separates the cause of behaviour from that which the child displays.
- 4) A commitment to develop productive, supportive relationships with parents whenever it is in the child's interests to do so.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other related policies in school. These include

- Health and Safety
- Security
- The Sex and Relationships policy

Anti-bullying policy
Medical Special list
Pastoral care plan
Pupil Grievance procedure
The Tutor's handbook.

KAM, June 2009