



## Thorpe House School

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# Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy in accordance with Norfolk Policy

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### 1 Introduction

Thorpe House School is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for children staff and visitors, and promoting a climate where children and adults feel confident about sharing any concerns which they may have about their own safety or the well-being of others.

The school's Child Protection Policy is based on the principles of 'Every Child Matters', duties conferred by the Children's Acts 1989 and 2004, S175/157 of the 2002 Education Act, the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the guidance contained in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children', 'What to do if You're Worried a Child is Being Abused', the DCSF circular 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education' (2007) and procedures etc using Norfolk Local SCB.

The policy is applicable to all on and off-site activities. It should be read in conjunction with the pastoral care policy, the bullying policy and the confidentiality policy.

It was first drawn up in 1999 by the headmistress in conjunction with the director of pastoral care, with the proviso that it be reviewed on an annual basis. A major review in line with current legislation and thinking was undertaken in 2008 by the headmistress and director of pastoral care in consultation with the head of juniors and the senior mistress, before being presented in draft form to the staff and governors.

### 2 Responsibilities

All adults working at THS School (including visiting staff, volunteers and students on placement) are required to report instances of actual or suspected child abuse or neglect to the designated person with responsibility for child protection (the headmistress) who will decide if there is a safeguarding issue. The designated person for EYFS is Marion Murphy. If in doubt, appropriate advice will be sought from the Local Authority Designated Officer. The parent or carer will not be informed where this might compromise the safety of the child.

Medical assistance will be sought if necessary. If the pupil is thought to be at immediate risk because of parental violence, intoxication, substance abuse, mental illness or threats to remove the child during the school day, urgent police intervention will be requested. All existing and potential parents will be informed of the school's safeguarding responsibilities and the existence of this policy. If an accident or incident occurs in school, the parents will be notified as soon as possible.

THS recognises the need to be vigilant to the potential threat posed by strangers or others, including parents.

### **3 Vulnerable Pupils**

Any incidents or concerns regarding pupils with Child Protection Plans will be referred directly to the allocated social worker. Pupils witnessing or living in a household affected by domestic violence will be referred to the designated person as a safeguarding issue. THS recognises that some children are vulnerable because of:

- disability
- homelessness
- refugee/asylum seeker status
- substance abuse
- young carer status
- mid-year admissions
- exclusion from school

All staff should be aware of the symptoms of abuse/neglect that these pupils might exhibit, following the regular INSET provided by THS, eg physical signs, under-achievement, sexual awareness inappropriate for the age and emotional development of the pupil.

If it comes to light that a pupil under the age of 13 is, or may be, sexually active this will be referred to Children's Services. Regarding a pupil between the ages of 13 and 16, an individual risk assessment will be conducted in accordance with child protection procedures. This will determine if and how much information is to be shared with parents and the investigating agencies.

### **4 Training**

Whole school inset on safeguarding issues will be on a 3-year cycle (last in September 2008). All newly-appointed teaching and non-teaching staff will be informed of this policy. The designated person and deputy will attend the LA's induction course and refresher training every 2 years. (Designated person last trained in September 2008.)

### **5 Recruitment**

THS will follow safe recruitment procedures regarding identity, qualifications and health checks. References will be verified, and CRB checks undertaken. Before staff undertake duties, consultation with the DCSF Protection of Children Act List (PoCAL) and List 99 will be completed. The headmistress and a member of the governing body will undertake on-line safe recruitment training offered by

the National College for School Leadership. THS will only use employment agencies which show that they positively vet their staff. Any misconduct will be handled according to the policy as all staff, whether permanent or temporary, will be made aware of this policy. The staff handbook confirms the child protection procedures followed in the school.

## **6 Volunteers**

Anyone engaged by THS in a voluntary capacity with pupils will be subjected to all reasonable vetting procedures and CRB check. They may be required to provide references. They will work under the supervision of an established member of staff and will be subject to the same code of conduct as paid employees. At no time will they be given responsibility for the personal care of pupils. Voluntary sector groups that operate within the school, or provide off-site services for our pupils or who use the premises, will be expected to adhere to this policy.

## **7 Staff Code of Conduct**

Reference should be made to the staff code of conduct to which all paid and voluntary staff are expected to adhere in respect of their contact with pupils and their families. Pupils will be treated with respect and dignity and any sanction should not fall outside those detailed in the school's behaviour policy. It would not be reasonable or possible to preclude all physical contact between staff and pupils, but staff are expected to exercise caution and avoid placing themselves in a position that might be open to criticism or misinterpretation. Any physical restraint used will always comply with issued guidelines and will always be reported to the headmistress. For their own protection, staff should exercise caution when alone with pupils. Other than in formal teaching situations, the door should always be left open. In cases where confidentiality cannot be promised or whether otherwise deemed necessary, the member of staff should always be accompanied. Staff should be aware of the possible risks that might arise from social contact out of school.

Home visits or private tuition should only take place with the headmistress' prior knowledge and consent. Any unplanned contact or 'crushes' will be reported to the headmistress. Staff will not disclose personal contact details to pupils or parents unless it is necessary for educational reasons. The headmistress must be informed when this is done. For off-site visits, THS will provide a mobile phone.

## **8 First Aid and Medical Plans**

Reference should be made to the first aid policy. Except in cases of emergency, first aid will only be administered by a qualified first-aider. All treatment will be recorded and, where significant, will be shared with parents and carers. Pupils with long-term medical conditions will be made the subject of a medical plan agreed with parents.

## **9 Contractors**

Reference should be made to the health and safety policy. Any contractors engaged by the school for building work on site will be made aware of the child protection policy and the rationale behind it. Long-term contractors who work regularly on site may be asked for their consent for CRB checks to be

undertaken. Contractors will not have direct access to pupils in non-teaching situations. All contractors and sub-contractors will be issued with the THS code of conduct for staff. Compliance with this policy will be monitored.

## **10 Complaints/Allegations against Staff**

Reference should be made to the complaints policy. THS will take all complaints made against members of staff seriously. Procedures are in place for any member of staff, parent or pupil who wishes to raise a concern regarding the actions of a member of staff and will be brought to the immediate attention of the headmistress. This may include physical mishandling or verbal abuse. The headmistress will seek appropriate advice if the following criteria apply:

- An allegation of physical bodily harm requiring first aid or medical treatment.
- Any suspicion of parental instigation or collusion.
- The allegation has been reported to the police or Children's Services by the parent or pupil.
- The pupil is looked after in public care.
- The pupil is the subject of a Child Protection Plan.
- The pupil has a disability or a statement of SEN.
- The member of staff has been the subject of previous complaints.
- The allegation is one of sexual abuse.

In considering whether or not to refer the matter to Children's Services, the headmistress may seek advice from the chair of governors. If the allegation concerns the headmistress, this should be brought to the attention of the chair of governors. The chair of governors is Paul Ramage. The governor with specific responsibility for child protection is Mary Philpott. Any member of staff formally disciplined for the mistreatment of pupils, or who resigns before disciplinary action can be taken, will be notified to Children's Services and the Independent Safeguarding Authority.

## **11 Records**

Brief and accurate written notes will be kept of all incidents and child protection or Child in Need concerns relating to individual pupils. This information may be shared with other agencies, as appropriate. Parental consent will be sought before making a Child in Need (S17) referral to Children's Services. If consent is withheld, consideration will be given to the potential impact of this on the child and the need for a child protection referral S47 which does not require parental consent.

CP records are kept securely by the designated person and separately from educational records. They may only be accessed by the designated person, their deputy, and the senior managers of the school.

If a pupil is prematurely withdrawn from the school due to a family move or any other reason, all efforts will be made to identify any new address and the school to which they are being admitted and to ensure that their educational records are sent on without delay. If the parents/carer fails to provide this information, an urgent referral will be made to the Education Welfare and Attendance Service in order that they may make further enquiries. If educational records are sent to

this school concerning a pupil who is not registered, they will be returned to the sending school with a note advising them to refer to their LA's Education Welfare Service. A child's name will only be removed from the school's admission register in accordance with the Pupil Registration Regulations or with the authorisation of the Education Welfare and Attendance Service.

The content of child protection conference or review reports prepared by the school will follow the headings recommended by Children's Services and will, whenever possible, be shared with the parents/carers in advance of the meeting.

THS will require documentary proof as to identity of pupils presented for admission. If there is any doubt as to the identity of pupils presented for admission, advice will be sought from the LA and other statutory agencies, as appropriate. Accurate records will be maintained of those with parental responsibility and emergency contacts. Pupils will only be released to the care of those with parental responsibility or someone acting with written consent.

CP records will be sent to receiving schools separately and under a confidential cover.

## **12 Safety in School**

No internal doors to classrooms will be locked while pupils are present in school. Entry to school premises will be controlled by doors and gates with keycodes. Authorised visitors to school, including visiting instrumental teachers, will be logged in and issued with visitors' badges. Unidentified visitors will be challenged by staff or reported to the head or school office. Carelessness in closing any controlled entrance will be challenged.

The presence of intruders and suspicious strangers seen loitering near the school or approaching pupils, will be reported to the police and the LA with a view to alerting other local schools through appropriate systems.

Parents, carers or relatives may only take still or video photographic images of pupils in school or on school-organised activities with the prior consent of the school, and then only in designated areas. If parents do not wish their children to be photographed or filmed and express this view in writing, their rights will be respected.

## **13 Curriculum**

THS acknowledges the important role the curriculum can play in the prevention of abuse and in the preparation of our pupils for the responsibilities of adult life and citizenship. Staff are expected to explore opportunities that exist in their subject area for addressing the 'Every Child Matters' outcomes framework. As appropriate, the curriculum will be used to build resilience, self-esteem and assertiveness to help pupils to keep safe and to know how to ask for help if their safety is threatened.

As part of developing a healthier, safer lifestyle, pupils will be taught for example:

- to recognise and manage risks in different situations and then to decide how to behave appropriately
- to recognise when pressure from others (including people they know) threatens their personal safety and well-being, including when and where to get help to judge what kinds of physical contact are acceptable and unacceptable
- to judge what kinds of physical contact are acceptable and unacceptable
- to use assertiveness techniques to resist unhelpful pressure
- emotional literacy

All computer equipment and internet access within the school will be subject to appropriate parental controls and internet safety rules. All working within THS in any capacity will be expected to read and comply with the THS ICT code of conduct.

THS will work with partners (including Agencies Supporting Schools Programme and Safer Schools Partnership) to promote health school status through the curriculum with the aim of:

- developing an ethos, curriculum and environment which encourages a healthy lifestyle for pupils
- ensuring that food and drink provided by the school reinforces the healthy lifestyle message
- providing physical education and sport to promote physical activity
- promoting an understanding of the full range of issues and behaviour which impact upon lifelong health and well-being.

#### **14 Working in Partnership with Parents**

As our aim is to secure the best outcome for our pupils, THS CP policy is to work in partnership with parents/carers to secure the best possible outcomes. Therefore we strive to communicate as clearly as possible the aims of the school:

- We will try to communicate clearly in all handbooks, newsletters and correspondence.
- Via the school council we will involve pupils in the development of codes of conduct, school rules and behaviour policies which will then be communicated to parents.
- We will liaise with agencies in the statutory, voluntary and community sectors and locality teams that are active in supporting families.
- We will be alert to the needs of parents/carers who do not have English as their first language.
- We will keep parents informed as and when appropriate.

#### **15. Complaints and monitoring**

All complaints arising from the operation of this policy will be considered under the THS complaints procedure, with reference to the LA's lead officer, as necessary. The governing body of THS will review safeguarding issues and their implications for this policy on an annual basis.

The headmistress will report annually, in the autumn term, upon levels of CP referrals made by the school during the past year, training undertaken by THS staff and governors, and any changes in legislation or local/national guidance.

*October 2009*