

BSN CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Rationale

The BSN is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of its students and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Achieving this objective requires systems designed to prevent unsuitable people working with children and young people and promoting safe practice, whilst challenging poor and unsafe practice. It is important to have good systems in place to identify abuse, well-trained staff who know what to do if a child is abused and guidance to staff on how to ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place students or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations to harm a child.

Procedure

The BSN aims to ensure that students who may suffer from abuse are supported and protected. It also aims to ensure that there are effective procedures in place that safeguard the needs of students.

Definition of child abuse

Child abuse is categorised into four categories and is defined as:

- Physical abuse: the child is hit, kicked, pinched, burnt etc.
- Psychological abuse (emotional): the child is rejected, terrorized, incited to behave in a strange or anti-social manner: extreme demands are placed on a child. The child may be psychologically neglected, isolated, ignored.
- Sexual abuse: the child is forced to endure sexual actions and/or to carry out sexual actions.
- Physical neglect: care (medical/physical) and/or safety is withheld from the child, the child does not get sufficient food or clothing.

Guidelines

The designated Child Protection Officer/ Head of School will endeavour to ensure that:

- There is a coordinated approach to child protection in the school.
- The BSN effectively liaises with other agencies and support services.
- All parties understand the need for confidentiality whilst at the same time appreciating that staff have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies.
- Information is kept confidentially and shared with appropriate people only. Child protection records can be kept securely on computer, or in writing and are exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data protection Act 1984. However, if a case goes to court the school may be required to provide its child protection records. If personal records are kept they should be unnamed and disposed of as soon as is possible if an official report is not made, following the advice of the AMK. Those pupils whose names are on the Child protection Register are closely monitored in line with what has been agreed in the Child Protection Plan. The advice of the Vetrouwenarts will be followed.
- All staff are alert to the signs of abuse be they physical, emotional or sexual.

- Staff will know to whom they should report any concerns or suspicions of abuse.
- All staff are aware that it is not their responsibility to investigate suspected abuse. They must listen to disclosures but not ask leading questions.
- Pupils feel able to confide in staff incidences of abuse and know that the information disclosed will be dealt with appropriately.
- Staff do not give undertakings of complete confidentiality
- Through the curriculum, pupils are helped to understand what is and is not acceptable behaviour towards them.
- Parents are informed of educational plans established in the light of child protection procedures

Responsibilities

In all schools the Head Teacher is the lead person responsible for Child protection. However, this responsibility may be delegated to another member of the Management Team if necessary or desirable. The name of the lead person is available at the School Office.

The Head of School will:

- Be regularly informed of any relevant child protection issues by the named person for Child Protection.
- Ensure that staff have a raised awareness of the signs of abuse and the procedures in place should a disclosure be made to them.

Named Person for Child Protection will:

- Act as the operational manager of Child Protection Procedures
- Take the lead role in liaison with outside agencies where there are child protection issues.

All Staff (Teaching and Non-Teaching) will:

- Have knowledge of the signs of abuse. Teachers will be alerted, through briefing, to the possible signs of child abuse. In the case of physical injury or neglect school nurses will be used to provide a professional opinion before referring suspected cases to the local authority.
- Be personally responsible for ensuring they are conversant with child protection procedures and know to whom they would report a suspicion of abuse.
- Be able to cope with disclosures in an appropriate manner.

Procedure for Child Protection Issues:

The BSN has pupils from many different cultures and backgrounds and thresholds for defining what may be the everyday experiences of a child as maltreatment (or not) will vary across these cultures. However, if a member of staff suspects that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, it is their responsibility to take steps to promote the child's welfare.

A protocol "Vermoeden Kindermishandeling" has been produced by the various GGD regions in Holland. These all follow the same principals and from these we take guidance as to the actions necessary where there is a suspected case of child abuse.

The source of a suspicion of child abuse can be:

- a member of staff may have recognised a significant and worrying change in behaviour of a pupil.
- someone else (another pupil) reports a worrying story about a pupil.
- a pupil takes a member of staff into his/her confidence about his/her situation.

Management of Suspected Cases of Abuse Responsibility of teaching/ support staff

Staff will endeavour to ensure that they:

- Listen calmly to what the pupil is saying but do not ask leading questions.
- Take the pupil seriously, do not express doubt about his/her story.
- Do not promise complete confidentiality.
- Support the pupil in the fact that they have shared this secret, and that you will not take any further steps without having discussed this with the pupil first.
- Report the alleged incident immediately to the Head of School or designated Deputy.

Responsibilities of Head of School/designated Deputy Head

- Assess the situation and make discreet enquiries to establish further information if appropriate, whilst maintaining complete confidentiality.
- If personal notes are made as an "aide-memoire" it is important to file them securely, preferably unnamed. These notes should then be destroyed as soon as possible (i.e. the case has been reported officially or closed).
- The Head of School may then take one of the following actions, depending on his/her evaluation of the situation:
- **Discuss** the situation with the parents
- **Request advice from the AMK** (Advies & Meldpunt Kindermishandeling).

It is possible to ask for this advice without having to name the child or the parents. If required the AMK can record the details under the name of the person asking for the advice. If the school later on requires further advice about the same child this then allows the details to be retrieved without having to give the name of the child. If the school does eventually decide to report the matter officially then earlier recorded information will be available.

Once a report is officially made to the AMK the responsibility for initiating help lies with the AMK. This is help for the family by agreement and may be through Bureau Jeugdzorg or other agencies.

- **Advice may also be sought** from the School Doctor at the Jeugd Gezondheidszorg.
- If the Head of School believes the alleged abuse to be **acute or life-threatening** it should be reported directly to the Raad voor de Kinderbescherming (Council for the protection of children) or to the Jeugd- en zedenpolitie (Youth and Vice police) within 24 hours. These reports cannot be made anonymously and are only for situations where it is believed necessary for a child be protected in a place of safety.
- The Principal of The School will be informed and kept up to date with developments.
- Recommendations made by Jeugdartsen or AMK will be followed.

Safer Practice in Recruitment

- The BSN website will carry a statement in the employment section about its commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and reference to the need for a successful applicant to undertake an Enhanced Disclosure via CRB.
- The BSN will use an application form to obtain a common set of core data from all applicants and it will require a signed statement that the person is not disqualified from work with children and has no convictions or cautions.
- The job description will state the individual's responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of the students s/he is responsible for or comes into contact with.
- References will be sought directly from the referee and must be scrutinised before a person's appointment is confirmed.
- The identity of successful candidates will need to be checked and all candidates should bring documentary evidence to that end (passport or driving licence or full birth certificate).
- At interview, candidates should bring documents confirming any educational and professional qualification that are necessary or relevant for the post.
- In addition to the candidate's ability to perform the duties of the post, the interview will also explore issues concerning the candidate's attitude towards children and young people, their ability to support the school's agenda for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of its students and any concerns arising from information provided by the candidate or referee.

Pre-Appointment Checks

An offer of appointment will be conditional upon:

- The receipt of at least two satisfactory references
- Verification of identity.
- A satisfactory CRB Disclosure or equivalent.
- Verification of qualifications and professional status where required.
- All checks will be documented and retained on the HR department as a central record and followed up where they are unsatisfactory

Induction and training

All staff induction will include information on the BSN's policies and procedures for safeguarding children which will enable them to fulfil their responsibilities in respect of child protection effectively. This will include anti-bullying, internet safety, local child protection procedures and guidance to staff on how to ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place pupils or themselves at risk. Refresher training for all staff will be available at least every three years. Staff with designated lead responsibility for child protection will have appropriate specific training at least every two years.

Part-time staff and volunteers will be made aware of Child Protection arrangements.

Procedures for dealing with allegations against staff

All allegations should be reported immediately to the Head of School and the Principal. In cases where the Principal or Headteacher is the subject of the concern, reports should be made to the Chair of Governors. There may be three strands in the consideration of an allegation:

- assessment by the Kindermishandeling about whether the child is in need of protection;
- police investigation (subject to the above);
- consideration by the school of disciplinary action.

Suspension should be considered in any of these cases but should not be automatic. The school should consider carefully whether the circumstances of a case warrant a person being suspended from contact with students until the allegation is resolved and advice should be sought from HR.

Parents or carers of the child will be told about the allegations as soon as possible if they do not already know of it. They should be kept informed about the progress of the case and told the outcome where there is no criminal prosecution.

The school will also keep the person who is the subject of allegations informed of the progress of the case and consider what other support is appropriate for the individual, consistent with the school's disciplinary procedure. They should be given a full opportunity to answer the allegation and make representations about it but the process of investigation should continue even if the person does not co-operate.

Clear and comprehensive records of the allegation, how it was followed up and resolved and a note of every action taken will be kept on the person's HR file and a copy provided to the person concerned. Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality while an allegation is being investigated and to manage cases to avoid any unnecessary delay.

The fact that a person tenders their resignation must not prevent an allegation being followed up in accordance with these procedures. The school will report to the relevant national body, in the case of UK teachers the DCSF at Darlington, within one month of leaving the school, any person whose services are no longer required because he/she is deemed unsuitable to work with children.

Avoiding Allegations of Harm to Students

Purpose of Guideline: to assist staff in using their own professional judgement and common sense so that they avoid situations that could lead to allegations of harm to children and young adults at BSN.

In any planned interaction with students bear in mind the following:

- How others might perceive your actions
- The age, gender and experience of the student
- The justification for the action
- The possibility that explicit permission is required
- Who else (particularly colleagues) should know what you plan to do.

Make sure that you are familiar with other policies that have a bearing on appropriate behaviour including the BSN Staff Code of Conduct and the Guidance for Staff Who May Need to provide Intimate Care for Children.

You need to think carefully about what is appropriate (and what could be misconstrued) in relation to the following:

- Physical proximity and contact with students
- The way you communicate with students in and out of the classroom
- Being alone with students (including car journeys)
- Being in places where students are changing clothes
- The choice of materials for the instruction or pastoral care of students.
- Insisting on appropriate communication with you from students

Reporting and Recording Incidents

- Always report to your Head Teacher or department manager any complaint or allegation made about you by a student, parent or other adult.
- Always place on record any incident in which you had to physically restrain a student.
- If in doubt about any matter relate to this topic consult your Head Teacher or department manager.

Allegations against students

The procedure for dealing with allegations against students will parallel those procedures laid out in the school's anti-bullying policy and, if abuse is suspected, will also include notifying the local authority as required.

Contractors

The BSN should seek to ensure that agencies or contractors who employ staff to work regularly with, or provide services for, students for whom the school is responsible also have in place measures to safeguard children. Occasional visitors should be monitored.

Volunteers

Volunteers are also seen by children as safe and trustworthy adults.

- All adult volunteers should be required to complete and sign a volunteer declaration, which should be kept on file at the relevant school.
- If a school is considering volunteers about whom it has little or no recent knowledge, it should adopt the same measures as it would for paid staff, especially if the help is to be once a month or more or overnight.
- If the volunteer is a parent well known to the school, a streamlined role can be adopted
- If this is a one off role, measures would be unnecessary provided the person is not left alone and unsupervised with children.
- Where volunteers are recruited by another organisation e.g. sports coaches from a local club, the school needs assurances from that organisation that the person has been properly vetted.
- Where allegations are made against volunteers the procedure for dealing with the allegations against staff will be invoked with the following difference: instead of suspension the school would cease to allow the volunteer to work with BSN children until the case has been closed.

Review: This policy & the procedures are subject to annual review (next in February 2010) as is the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged. Any deficiencies and weaknesses in child protection arrangements will then be remedied without delay.

CONTACT DETAILS FOR AGENCIES

BSN pupils live throughout the various districts of The Hague, Rotterdam and Amsterdam, Each having their own contact numbers. However, the advice for method of contact will be given through the AMK.

Listed below are the general numbers used for our school areas.

AMK Haaglanden AMK Zuid-Holland
Waldeck Pyrmontkade 872C OR Glahaven 66
2518JS, Den Haag
Tel: 070-3469717

Or

AMK Haaglanden AMK Zuid-Holland
Glahaven 66
3011 XK, Rotterdam
Tel: 010-4128110

Raad voor Kinderbescherming
Neuhuyskade 40
2596 XL, Den Haag
Tel: 070-3742300

Jeugd Gezondheidszorg (School doctor for The Hague schools)
't Kleine Loo 414
2592 CK, Den Haag
Tel: 070-3824424

Politie Haaglanden
Afd. Jeugd- en zedenpolitie
Postbus 277
2270 AG Voorburg
Tel: 070-3007211

For the Junior School Assen (The Helen Sharman School)

AMK Drenthe Jeugd Gezondheidszorg
Groningerstraat 107 GGD
9402 LA Assen Overcingellaan 19
Assen 9401 LA Assen
Tel: 0592-378128 Tel: 0592-306300