

Emmanuel Christian School

Policy for the Protection of Children.

1. Introduction.

Emmanuel Christian School places the highest priority on the safety and well being of the children entrusted into its care by their parents.

We acknowledge that just because ECS is a Christian School we cannot take child protection for granted. A clear policy and procedures must be in place to ensure a safe and protective environment.

None of the School's policies should be seen in isolation. The Discipline Policy, The Policy for Physical Intervention/Restraint of Pupils, and The Health and Safety Policy have particular relevance to this one and should be cross referenced.

2. Spiritual Commitment

Children are not our property to do with as we choose. They belong to the Lord. Scripture makes it clear that "little ones" are precious to Him.

He took a little child and had him stand among them. Taking him in his arms, he said to them, "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me". Mark Ch. 9 vs. 36-37

One aspect of this 'preciousness' is the Lord's desire to protect, particularly from those who would draw them into sin. Jesus made this clear when speaking to His disciples.

Things that cause people to sin are bound to come, but woe to that person through whom they come. It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around his neck than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin. So watch yourselves. Luke Ch. 17 vs. 1-3

3. Duties under existing legislation

- Children Act 1989

Principles

+ Paramountcy...The welfare of the child is paramount.

+ Parental responsibility...Defined as the duty of parents to care for their child physically, emotionally and morally.

+ Partnership...Professionals and family are to work together for the benefit of the child.

+ Participation...The child's wishes and feelings should be ascertained.

Vol. 5 of the Children Act Guidance and Regulations sets out the protective responsibilities of independent schools, such as ECS, as follows:

“In safeguarding and promoting welfare, proprietors (and those to whom responsibility is delegated) need to be concerned with the health, happiness and proper physical, intellectual, emotional, social and behavioural development of that child, as well, of course, with protecting him against the risk of significant harm.”

“Schools should be aware that pupils may suffer physical, sexual or emotional abuse either at home or away from the school or within school itself. Schools should have clearly laid down and recognised procedures for dealing with abuse.” Para. 3 :2

- DfES Guidance 0027/2004 Safeguarding Children in Education.

Paragraphs 6,7 and 8 state that:

6. Everyone in the education service shares an objective to help keep children and young people safe by contributing to:

*Providing a safe environment for children and young people to learn in education settings; and
Identifying children and young people who are suffering or are likely to suffer significant harm, and taking appropriate action with the aim of making sure they are kept safe both at home and at school.*

7. Achieving these aims requires systems designed to:

*Prevent unsuitable people working with children and young people.
Promote safe practice and challenge poor and unsafe practice.
Identify instances in which there are grounds for concern about a child's welfare and initiate/take appropriate action to keep them safe.
Contribute to effective partnership working between all those involved with providing services for children.*

8. The purpose of this guidance is to help LEAs, schools and FE institutions make sure they have effective systems in place to support achieving those objectives.

Paragraph 14 states that:

*There are two aspects to the promoting and safeguarding of the welfare of children. They are:
+ arrangements to take all reasonable measures to ensure that risks of harm to children's welfare are minimised; and
+ arrangements to take all appropriate actions to address concerns about the welfare of a child, or children, working to agreed local policies and procedures in full partnership with other local agencies.*

Paragraph 34 sets out clearly the responsibilities of the proprietor of an independent school, such as ECS.

4. Preventing abuse

There are a number of steps that can be taken to help prevent abuse.

- Policies: developing written policies, including record keeping and reporting protocol.
- Recruitment: appropriate recruitment and training of workers.
- Guidelines: for workers including codes of practice for activities.
- Education: helping children to protect themselves.

5. Recognising abuse

What is child abuse?

In current thinking, abuse can be defined by the following two questions.

- *Is the child suffering or experiencing anything detrimental to his/her development? This includes ill treatment (physical, sexual, mental), impairment of health, impairment of development.*
- *Is it a significant or noteworthy cause or effect given the age/development of the child? Is it attributable to care or treatment given or likely to be given?*

Who abuses children?

- Rarely a stranger – only in 10% of cases
- Usually someone who knows the child, e.g. parent, babysitter, sibling, relative, friend of the family.
- Sometimes, someone in authority, e.g. teacher, youth worker, children's worker, church worker/leader.
- Sometimes, paedophiles and others who set out to join organisations to obtain access to children.

6. Categories of Abuse

- **Physical abuse** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.
- **Possible signs of physical abuse:**
 - + Unexplained injuries or burns, particularly if they are recurrent.
 - + Refusal to discuss injuries.
 - + Improbable explanation for injuries
 - + Untreated injuries or lingering illnesses not attended to
 - + Admission of punishment that appears excessive
 - + Shrinking from physical contact
 - + Fear of returning home or of parents being contacted

- + Fear of undressing
 - + Fear of medical help
 - + Aggression/bullying
 - + Running away
 - + Significant change in behaviour without any explanation
 - + Deterioration in work
 - + Unexplained pattern of absence which may serve to hide bruises or other physical injuries
- **Emotional abuse** is the persistent ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that he/she is worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as he/she meets the needs of another person.
 - **Possible signs of emotional abuse:**
 - + Continual self deprecation
 - + Fear of new situations
 - + Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
 - + Self harm or mutilation
 - + Compulsive stealing/scrounging
 - + Drug/solvent abuse
 - + Neurotic behaviour – obsessive rocking, thumb sucking etc.
 - + Air of detachment – “don't care attitude”
 - + Social isolation – does not join in and has few friends
 - + Desperate attention-seeking behaviour
 - + Eating problems including over eating and lack of appetite
 - + Depression/withdrawal
 - + Severely delayed social development, poor language and speech.
 - **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health and development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing or shelter, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of a child's basic emotional needs.
 - **Possible signs of neglect:**
 - + Constant hunger
 - + Poor personal hygiene
 - + Inappropriate clothing
 - + Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school
 - + Untreated medical problems
 - + Low self esteem
 - + Poor social relationships
 - + Compulsive stealing/scrounging
 - + Constant tiredness
 - + Left without appropriate adult supervision in circumstances which could endanger the child.

- **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at pornographic material, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- **Possible signs of sexual abuse in young children:**
 - + Bruises, scratches, burns or bite marks on the body
 - + Scratches, abrasions or persistent infections in the anal or genital regions
 - + Sexual awareness inappropriate for the child's age – shown for example in drawings, vocabulary, games etc.
 - + Sexually abusive behaviour towards other children: particularly those children younger or more vulnerable
 - + Frequent public masturbation
 - + Attempts to teach other children about sexual activity
 - + Refusing to stay with certain people or go to certain places
 - + Aggressiveness, anger, anxiety, tearfulness

7. Responding to a disclosure by a child

Sometimes children will want to talk about abuse because they feel safe with you. It may be that you know the child and his/her family well and will find difficulty in believing what is being shared. Initially, your main role is to **listen**.

Helpful things you might say:

- Thank you for telling me.
- It's not your fault.
- I want to help you.

The following points give advice on how to deal with a child who makes an allegation of abuse:

- + The child should be listened to but not interviewed or asked to repeat the account. Avoid questions particularly leading questions.
- + The child should not be interrupted when recalling events.
- + All information should be carefully noted, including details such as timing, setting, who was present and what was said, in the child's words.
- + Care should be taken not to make assumptions or interpretations about what the child is saying.
- + Suggestions should not be made to children as to alternative explanations for their worries.
- + Explain to the child what is going to happen next and that you will let him/her know what happens.
- + The written record of the allegation should be signed and dated by the person who received it as soon as practicable.
- + All subsequent actions should be recorded.

Concluding

- Reassure the child that he/she was right to tell you and show acceptance.
- Don't promise confidentiality.

Cultural issues

Crucial to any assessment is a knowledge and sensitivity to racial, cultural and religious patterns. While these different practices must be taken into account, all children have basic human rights. As individuals we may explain the context in which the action took place but it does not excuse the behaviour of the individual.

Effect of abuse on the spirit.

Abused children can suffer from problems of poor self image and blame. A child may feel dirty or unlovable. Self esteem will be affected. "God could not love me, I am too bad." We need to reassure him/her that, "Nothing can separate us from the love of God." Romans 8: 35-39. Praying with the child acknowledging that we are special to God, He made us in His image and that He wants only the best for us may be helpful.

8. Code of practice and responsibilities

In relation to the children entrusted to their care, the Governors of Emmanuel Christian School recognise their responsibility to do all that they can to ensure the safety and well being of all of the children.

They, with the teaching and volunteer staff, will implement this policy and code of practice with rigour.

They will seek to maintain a secure, stable atmosphere and environment where children can grow in the knowledge of God and His world.

The Responsibilities of the Designated Person:

- + Refer cases of suspected abuse or allegation to the relevant investigating agencies
- + Act as a source of support, advice and expertise within the school when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies
- + Liaise with the Chair of Governors to inform her of any issues and ongoing investigations.
- + Keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of referrals/concerns
- + Undertake appropriate training to enable her to carry out the responsibilities *This training should be updated every two years.*
- + Ensure that all adults in the school have access to a copy of the Child Protection Policy
- + Facilitate training for the adults in the school as appropriate

The Responsibilities of Staff and Volunteer Workers in the school:

Individual members of staff/volunteers should ensure that:

- + They report to the person with designated responsibility any suspicion of abuse or neglect even if the suspicion concerns the conduct of an employee, a volunteer worker, a governor, a trainee, a visitor or other young person or child
- + They write a signed, dated and timed note of what has been noticed, said and done for the child protection file (in locked filing cabinet) as soon as possible
- + They contact the CCPAS, our umbrella organisation, if the concern involves the Designated Person and her Deputy

The Responsibilities of Governors:

- + The Chair of Governors will act as the Nominated Governor for Child Protection issues.
- + The Governors will receive annually a report on changes to the child protection policy or procedures, training undertaken by the designated teacher, other staff and Governors; the number of incidents/cases (without detail or names); and the place of Child Protection issues within the school curriculum.
- + The nominated Governor will ensure, in liaison with the designated teacher, that the school has a Child Protection policy and procedures which are known to all adults working in the school, (now in staff handbook).
- + She will liaise when necessary with the designated teacher regarding allegations of abuse giving due regard to the issues of confidentiality.
- + She will attend training for nominated Governors as appropriate.
- + Should a complaint be made to a Governor about action by an adult in the school of a child protection nature it should be passed immediately to the nominated Governor who will seek advice from CCPAS.

11. Recruitment and Selection of Staff and Volunteer Workers.

This is the responsibility of the school's Governing Body.
Reference should be made to the Policy and Notes of Guidance for the Recruitment and Selection of Staff and Volunteer Workers.

Whilst the subject of this policy is the protection of children, there is a responsibility on the part of the Governors to set up and on the part of the workers to comply with procedures that will ensure no adults in the school will be placed in a vulnerable position leaving them open to allegations of mis-conduct or abuse.

Safe Environment.

- Record Keeping and Supervision

A register of attendance is to be completed at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. Any variation during the day should be noted. e.g. a child leaving school early for an appointment.

All visitors must sign themselves in and out in the book provided.

There must always be two adults on site and ideally three.

Adult ratio to children for off site visits should never be less than 1:4 for the youngest children.

If the number of children is less than four there must be two adults with them. Ideally, there should be a male and a female adult accompanying any off site visit.

An adult should avoid being alone with a child in a closed area.

If confidentiality is an issue the worker should ensure that another adult is in the building and aware of what is happening.

- Physical contact/intervention

The level of personal care e.g. toileting, must be appropriate to the age and need of the child.

Adults should treat all children with dignity and respect in attitude, language used and actions.

Any physical contact should be time limited and appropriate.

Whilst it may be appropriate to give a child a comforting hug when there are others present it is not appropriate when the adult is alone with the child.

The child's privacy must be respected. This is particularly important in the supervision of toilet areas and changing facilities.

Where possible and practical, an adult should not be alone with one child in a vehicle. It may be necessary to enlist the help of parents to avoid this situation.

- Reporting a concern about or a disclosure of abuse.

Report the matter with urgency to the Child Protection Co-ordinator, Caroline Vickers. If she is involved in the allegation, or it is inappropriate for her to deal with it, the report should be made to her deputy, Carol Patel. If both are involved, or it is inappropriate for either of them to deal

with it, the report should be made to the Chair of Governors or a member of the school's Spiritual Oversight Committee. A decision will then be made whether or not to contact the Churches Child Protection Advisory Service (CCPAS), our umbrella agency to seek their advice. (PO Box 133, Swanley, Kent BR8 7UQ. 'phone 01322 660011/667207) The CCPAS will confirm any advice given in writing in case this is needed for reference purposes in the future.

All matters will be taken into consideration and a decision will be made whether or not to refer the case to Social Services.

Whilst there may be some sympathy for others involved in the allegation the paramount concern should always be the welfare of the child.

If an allegation is made against an adult working in the school and it is decided to proceed with a referral the adult will be asked to stand down from his/her involvement with the children while investigations are made.

As a Christian School we would want to acknowledge our reliance upon the Lord and His leading in all matters.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight." Proverbs 3: 5-6

This policy will be reviewed annually and revised as necessary.

Some Useful Documents

Dept. of Health Publication "What to do if you are worried a child is being abused."

Filed in admin cabinet under Other Agencies.....Dept of Health.

DfES Child Protection: Preventing Unsuitable Persons from Working with Children and Young Persons in the Education Service.

DfES Guidance: "Safeguarding children in Education"

DfES updates on all CPP matters.

All filed in admin cabinet under Other Agencies... DfES

CCPAS Up-date papers. (Received regularly)

Filed in admin cabinet under Other Agencies...CCPAS

Pat Wells

Chair of Governors

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Checked and revised Caroline Vickers and Neil Seeds September 2009

