

SINCLAIR HOUSE SCHOOL

Safeguarding Children – Working alone with pupils

This policy applies to both the Montessori Nursery and the Prep school including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is publicly available on the school website and upon request a copy (which can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required) may be obtained from the School Office.

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Responsible Area	Safeguarding Team

Signed:

Date: 25th January
2021



Mrs Carlotta T.M O'Sullivan (Principal and Proprietor)

Date of next review: 25th
January 2022

All adults who come into contact with pupils in their work have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare. The vast majority of adults who work with our students act professionally and aim to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the well-being and very best outcomes for students in their care. However, it is recognised that in this area of work tensions and misunderstandings can occur. It is here that the behaviour of adults can give rise to allegations of abuse being made against them. Allegations may be malicious or misplaced. They may arise from differing perceptions of the same event, but when they occur, they are inevitably distressing and difficult for all concerned. Equally, it must be recognised that some allegations will be genuine and there are adults who will deliberately seek out, create or exploit opportunities to abuse children. It is therefore essential that all possible steps are taken to safeguard pupils and ensure that the adults working with them are safe to do so.

Staff must conduct themselves professionally in their relationships with pupils, parents and staff, and must not behave in a way that could bring the school into disrepute or risk allegations being made. Members of staff and volunteers need to be aware that unwary actions can be misconstrued as unprofessional conduct, with a potentially damaging effect on careers.

To avoid misunderstandings the following should be adhered to carefully:

- Members of staff should exercise particular caution and sensitivity before visiting lavatories or changing areas. Male members of staff should never be in girls' changing areas unless accompanied by a female member of staff and likewise for female staff and boys changing rooms.
- No member of staff should ever be behind a locked door with a child.
- Ensure that unnecessary contact with children is avoided (e.g. children sitting on laps or hair stroking etc.) and that outward displays of affection are only appropriate in the case of comforting a distressed child, and should never occur unless there is another adult present.

- Whilst it would be unrealistic and undesirable to preclude all physical contact between adults and children, staff are expected to exercise caution and avoid placing themselves in a position where their actions might be open to criticism or misinterpretation.
- Staff should take great care that relationships with individual children are kept on a professional level. It is important that all children are treated the same and that discipline is fair, consistent and impartial. Staff should take care that "joking comments" cannot be misconstrued to give offence and no friendships should be formed – staff and pupil relationships must remain professional with clear boundaries between pupil and staff member.
- Staff must not be party to gossip about colleagues or children.
- Personal or academic Information on children should be kept confidential and away from other children or parents.
- The highest level of confidentiality should be maintained at all times in relationships with both adults and children. Staff, however, should make it clear that there are certain circumstances (e.g. where a child is suffering or is likely to suffer harm) when other people will need to be told so that the community or the child can be protected. If a child asks to tell a member of staff something in confidence, they should always be told that this will depend upon the circumstances and absolute confidence cannot be guaranteed.
- If a child behaves inappropriately or makes an inappropriate advance to a member of staff, it is essential that the child is immediately informed that the language or behaviour is unacceptable. The incident, and what has been done and said, should be recorded on CPOMs, alerting the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads immediately.

Working alone with pupils

For their own safety and protection, staff should exercise caution in situations where they are alone with pupils. These may include: musical instrument tuition; 1:1 coaching; student counselling; conveying a student by car (not likely at SHS); engaging in electronic communication with a student; meeting with a pupil. In a 1:1 situation, staff should ensure that:

- One-to-one meetings should, wherever possible, take place in public or semi-public place such as classrooms or office, with the door open. If in classrooms, ensure you are seated so that you and the child can be seen through the visibility panel in the door, leaving the door ajar.
- When in a private meeting with a child or one-to-one session as occurs, ensure furniture is positioned to allow easy access into or out of the room and if for a particular reason the door can't be left ajar, the glass panel in the door must not be obscured so that you can be seen clearly and the window is opened.
- Staff will at no time travel unaccompanied outside of the school with children.
- Inform another adult of where they are and that they are meeting a pupil.
- Staff should ensure that a meeting is arranged during normal school hours when there are plenty of other people about.
- Do not continue the meeting for any longer than is necessary to achieve its purpose.
- Avoid sitting or standing in close proximity to the pupil, except as necessary to check work.
- Avoid using "engaged" or equivalent signs on doors or windows.
- Avoid idle discussion.
- Avoid all unnecessary physical contact and apologise straight away if there is accidental physical contact.
- Avoid any conduct that could be taken as a sexual advance.
- Report any incident that causes you concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in accordance with the School's Child Protection Policy and make a written record (signed and dated), logged on CPOMs.

- Report any situation where a pupil becomes distressed or angry to the Designated Safeguarding Lead via CPOMs.
- (Nursery) While changing a child's nappy or wet clothes, the door to the toilets must always remain open, and the member of staff must be wearing gloves.