



# Child Protection Policy

Schools Outreach Ltd

**REGISTERED CHARITY 516184 & COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE 1144035**

Authored by: Schools Outreach, 24th February 2004

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## Schools Outreach Ltd

The registered charity, Schools Outreach (516184), offers children and young people unconditional pastoral care by means of placing (at the request of schools, both primary and secondary) high-calibre, appropriately-trained individuals, each one based full-time and long-term in a school and its local community. She or he is there to complement caring teachers and parents and other childcare professionals, as well as becoming a resource for families within which the children and young people do not receive adequate care.

The charity believes that pastoral care contains two basic principles:

- provision of all basic needs and
- protection from harm and abuse

We accept the Department of Health's definitions of abuse and our workers are trained to look for and recognise the earliest possible evidence that a young person is showing symptoms of such abuses.

Whilst ultimately responsible to Schools Outreach, their employer, each worker has a Line Supervisor, a member of the school's senior management team, who is the on-site point of reference for the worker. Should any abuse be suspected or disclosed to the worker, the worker will always and immediately report to and seek advice from her/his Line Supervisor. Having done so the action taken will also be reported to the Schools Outreach Chief Executive. The report will be placed into the worker's file and held in confidence.

All workers will know the identity of the member of the school's staff who is the co-ordinator for child protection.

The Chief Executive must record all occasions when workers seek his advice, reporting the circumstances within which his advice was sought, and recording the advice given.

His reports must be held in confidence and be kept in the worker's file.

We consider the well-being and welfare of the individual young person to be our first concern, but note too that young persons have been known to make malicious accusations against teachers, care workers, peers and parents, and believe the veracity of a young person must be thoroughly investigated prior to any disclosure likely to result in legal procedures.

Workers are encouraged to be wise and sensitive in all their dealings with pupils and the teaching staff.

This will apply especially at times when pupils are being seen on a one-with-one basis. The worker must avoid situations which could lay the worker open to a suspicion of or accusations of a lack of wisdom concerning where, when, and under what circumstances one-with-one interviews are conducted. Workers are encouraged to conduct such interviews in rooms which are not isolated; which have doors which allow passers-by to see who is inside; which have adjoining doors to another occupied room; and only after a member of staff has been told an interview is taking place.

Workers are encouraged to visit pupils' homes only when accompanied by another adult, and when the Line Supervisor has been told about the visit.

Care, caution, wisdom, and sensitivity, must always be employed when workers meet with pupils both inside and outside the school building.

When in doubt, or in need of specific advice, workers are encouraged to seek the counsel of their Line Supervisors and the Schools Outreach Chief Executive.

When it is believed that abuse is occurring and that the abuse is a serious threat to the young person's health, or where a young person needs urgent medical attention, action should be taken without delay.

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## **What is abuse?**

### ***Physical Abuse***

Actual or likely physical injury to a young person, or failure to prevent physical injury or suffering to a young person, including deliberate poisoning, suffocation, and Munchausen's syndrome by proxy.

### ***Sexual Abuse***

Actual or likely sexual exploitation of a young person. The young person may be dependent and/or developmentally immature.

### ***Neglect***

The persistent or severe neglect of a young person, or the failure to protect a young person from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation, or extreme failure to carry out important aspects of nourishment and other aspects of care which can result in the severe impairment of a young person's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

### ***Emotional Abuse***

Actual or likely severe adverse effects on the emotional and behavioural development of a young person, caused by persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection. All abuse involves some emotional ill treatment. This category is used where it is the main or sole form of abuse.

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## **What are the signs of abuse?**

The following signs may be indicators of abuse. Equally, such signs could be misinterpreted. Where there is doubt – seek advice from your employer and/or your Line Supervisor.

### ***Physical***

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation offered for them
- Injuries which occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls, rough and tumble, sports, etc.
- Injuries which have not received medical attention
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains
- Bruises, bites, burns, fractures, scalds, cuts, scratches, etc., or other injuries which do not have an accidental explanation

### **Sexual**

- Allegations made by a young person concerning sexual abuse
- Excessive pre-occupation with sexual matters, or detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, and the participation in age-inappropriate sexual play
- Sexual activity in or through words, play or drawings
- The sexual provocation or seduction of adults
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home
- Severe sleep disturbance with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations
- Eating disorders: anorexia, bulimia

### **Neglect**

- Undernourishment, resulting in a failure to grow, constant hunger, unexplained tiredness, stealing or gorging food
- Untreated illness
- Inadequate care
- Inadequate clothing or footwear
- Dirtiness of clothing or body
- Frequent head lice infections
- Flea bites and other skin disorders
- Parent-supported truancy

### **Emotional**

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a young person withdraws or becomes clingy
- Depression – depression is a clinical condition and very different from “feeling low”
- Nervousness, extreme anxiety
- Obsessions, phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away from home or school
- Stealing, lying, involvement with others in criminal activities

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### **Our workers are assessed in three ways:**

1. We employ Staff Carers who visit our workers and are responsible for the pastoral care of the workers. Staff Carers spend time with the Line Supervisor and, when possible, the Head Teacher, and submit written reports to the Chief Executive after every visit. These reports are presented to all members of the charity's Council of Management.
2. The Line Supervisor can contact the Chief Executive at any time should she/he be concerned about the worker's performance in any way, and will write an annual assessment at the end of each academic year.

3. The workers keep detailed and accurate statistical records and case studies, and submit detailed reports every school term. They record every meeting with individual young persons, or groups of young persons, recording gender, reason for referral, frequency of meetings, and progress made. All reports are collated and pie charts produced as evidence of the effectiveness of high quality pastoral care.

Workers may also request the service and help of a professional supervisor who may be independent of the school, as an additional point of reference.

Schools Outreach is exceptionally thorough and careful in recruiting workers. We have a 20-page application form. All shortlisted applicants are police-checked. A worker's first year is probationary. We will never knowingly threaten a young person's life, health, well-being or happiness, existing solely for the purpose of offering young persons unconditional pastoral care.

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**Schools Outreach Ltd**

**c/o 109 Worcester Road, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B61 7HN, UK**

**Telephone 0845 459 1673**

**Email [info@schoolsoutreach.org](mailto:info@schoolsoutreach.org)**

**Website [www.schoolsoutreach.org](http://www.schoolsoutreach.org)**

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