

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

January 2019

Statement

Summerhill is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff, volunteers and visitors to share this commitment.

We recognise that **all adults** have a full and active part to play in protecting pupils from harm. This protective role is also performed by our students who, as they grow up in the community, naturally recognise that they can make a significant contribution to safeguarding their peers. Thus, as a community of adults and students we all recognise that a child's welfare is our paramount concern. This means that we should consider, at all times, what is in the **best interests** of the child.

Definition

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Introduction

'Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure that children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety. Schools should consider this as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum.' (*'Keeping children safe in education.'* Sept. 2018 p.22)

Safeguarding is to be found at the heart of Summerhill School; a democratic, self-governing community in which adults and students have complete parity of status and where a clear distinction is made between freedom and licence. Community life teaches everybody about the importance of communication, negotiation and compromise as a means of preventing and resolving issues.

Perhaps the three most important and difficult safeguarding challenges that the school is faced with today are the issues of online safety, sex and relationships and, to a lesser extent, self-harm. These are issues which any school, and many families, in the United Kingdom confront. However, Summerhill is uniquely positioned to manage these issues because of its democratic nature and structures.

Abuse of any type and of any degree can only occur when there exists some sort of power differential and Summerhill goes further than any other school to reduce, as much as possible, the power differential that can exist between students, and between adults and students, and thus reduce the risk of abuse, reduce the safeguarding risk. Put simply, minimise the power differential and you automatically begin to minimise the safeguarding risk. The reduction in the power differential at Summerhill School is achieved through its unique philosophy of education. Further, this reduction in the power differential ensures

that there is a high level of open, honest communication and trust between the adults and students.

'Working together to safeguard children' states:

'... that effective safeguarding is achieved by putting children at the centre of the system....' (Working together to safeguard children', HM Government, July 2018, p.9)

Summerhill School epitomises a child-centred approach to safeguarding. It is a place where the views of the child are constantly being expressed and heard, in particular, in the school meeting.

The daily life of the school is governed by the school meetings, held regularly, in which everybody has an equal vote. The meetings are used to create, confirm and amend all the school laws which form the structure of expectations for the community of adults and students. They are laws which the children and adults feel are right and appropriate; they have the backing of the vast majority of children and adults in the community and that is why the laws are adhered to by the vast majority of the community. Further, every member of the community is aware that he or she can bring a case to the meeting to either have a particular law overturned or, alternatively, to be made an exception to a particular law.

It is our laws and our method of creating and enforcing them which could be described as our 'behaviour policy'.

The school meeting is the forum to bring the whole school's attention to any safeguarding issues and at Summerhill no form of abuse whatsoever is tolerated by the community. Any student or staff can bring any safeguarding incident to the meeting which is both a legislative and judicial body. Meetings are currently held three times a week but a special meeting can be called (with the permission of the 'chairman' who is almost always a senior student) **by anybody, at any time, day or night**, if required. Should an incident require further investigation, the meeting would decide how to proceed and, in particular, who would conduct the investigation (e.g. ombudsmen, investigation committee). Thus, both students and staff are answerable to the whole community. Nobody in the school is exempt from this, and no subject is beyond the community's discussion.

The openness of the meeting system ensures that, for example, in a case of peer on peer abuse, the victim experiences the whole hearted support of the community whilst the perpetrator is not only 'fined' for his/her actions but also experiences the community's expressions of disapproval, including from his/her peer group, for his or her **actions**. This is an extremely powerful message because, unlike in an ordinary school, the message of disapproval is conveyed by the whole community and not by just one or two adults. Further, the discussion becomes an important safeguarding learning experience for everybody. All incidents discussed in the school meeting are recorded in the meeting minutes.

A variety of 'fines' can be imposed depending on the case. The community tries to find a 'fine' that is most appropriate to the offence and to the individual perpetrator.

It is important to note that a 'fine' is not given as a punishment but as a way in which the perpetrator can make amends to the community for their offence to the community. Further, the 'fine' serves to give the victim a sense that justice has been done. Once the 'fine' has been 'paid', the whole community, including the perpetrator, 'moves on' and the

community disapproves very strongly of any harassment, any continuation of the argument, after the case has been brought to the meeting.

It must be emphasised that the vast majority of 'peer on peer' abuse cases brought to the meeting are low level harassment cases such as name calling etc. Further, it is important to note that there are very few specifically 'gender related' incidents, where it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys perpetrators, which is a particular cause for concern in many schools throughout the UK.

The risk of abuse, the risk of any safeguarding incident, is further minimised by the use of elected ombudsmen (boys and girls) and beddies officers (boys and girls). Ombudsmen are usually ten older students, (though sometimes an adult stands and is elected), whose job is to respond to any immediate problems that may arise between students and, far more rarely, between students and adults. If an ombudsman is unable to successfully mediate between the two parties, then he or she will bring the matter to the meeting. It is also possible for the ombudsman to bring the matter to the meeting irrespective of whether the issue has been resolved or not and thus alert the whole community to a particular issue. Further, ombudsmen can represent students in the school meeting, if requested to do so.

Beddies Officers are older students (again, sometimes an adult stands and is elected) whose job is to put students to bed at night and to wake them up in the morning. Beddies officers work in pairs and there is a different pair of beddies officers for each day of the week.

However, the school meeting and the use of ombudsmen and beddies officers are not the only safeguarding mechanisms employed. Safeguarding is lived out and taught in a variety of formal and informal settings. Some examples include the 'formal' sex and relationship and online safety discussions, and the numerous 'informal' small group or one-on-one conversations which can occur, day or night, in almost any area of the school.

The result is that the Summerhill experience leads the students to develop an inner self-confidence, which, amongst other things, empowers the students to raise safeguarding issues themselves, either publicly, or privately with appropriate individuals. There is an expectation on all community members to safeguard each other and even if there is some hesitancy among certain students to initiate a discussion or express some concern, the very nature of the place (the 'panopticon'*) ensures that the adults in the community know what is happening and can, if necessary, initiate a discussion.

Stated in simple language, we all know (the adults and the students) when somebody is spending too much time on the internet. We all know when a student is doing something on the internet that might be considered unsafe. We all know when students are engaging, or are likely to engage, in an under-age sexual relationship. We all know if a student is experimenting with self-harm. This knowledge enables the adults to act in a way that is appropriate to each individual circumstance.

The Summerhill experience also enables pupils to grow in a family environment, free from the usual social prejudices found in many other schools, in particular, gender based prejudices. This in turn creates, throughout the school, a marked confidence and friendship between the sexes, and between all age groups. Central to this experience is the accommodation arrangements where the presence of girls on the same corridor as boys brings a greater equilibrium to the whole area and contributes significantly to the lack of gender related safeguarding incidents.

To conclude, safeguarding at Summerhill is not an abstract, adult driven concept but something which is not only very real and robust but also something the students and adults at Summerhill actually **live** on a daily basis.

* For further information on the 'panopticon' in relation to Summerhill, please see '*Can Liberal Education Make a Comeback? The case of 'Relational Touch' at Summerhill School*'. Ian Stronach & Heather Piper. *American Educational Research Journal*. March 2008. Vol 45 No. 1 pp.6-37.

For more information on the school's 'behaviour policy', see *Summerhill Laws, Searching and Confiscation Policy*, and *Procedure for Missing Children*.

This policy is informed, first and foremost, by the educational philosophy of the school's founder, A.S. Neill, who acted 'in the **best interests** of the child' when he first started the school with '..... one main idea: to '*make the school fit the child* – instead of making the child fit the school.' (*'Summerhill'* A.S. Neill. Pelican Books. 1968, p.20)

In addition, this policy is informed by a wide range of government documents, both statutory and non-statutory. They include, but are not limited to, the following:

- *Keeping children safe in education (September 2018)*
- *Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (September 2018) which is incorporated in the above named document.*
- *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused - Advice for practitioners (March 2015)*
- *Working together to safeguard children (July 2018)*
- *Information Sharing – Advice for practitioners providing services to children, young people, parents and carers (July 2018)*
- *Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales (July 2015)*
- *The Prevent duty: Departmental advice for schools and childminders (June 2015)*
- *The use of social media for online radicalisation (July 2015)*
- *Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges. Advice for governing bodies, proprietors, headteachers, principals, senior leadership teams and designated safeguarding leads. (May 2018)*

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following five Summerhill policy documents: *Code of Conduct, Online Safety Policy, Managing allegations of abuse against members of staff or volunteers/interns, Sex and Relationships Guidelines/Policy* and *Whistle blowing Policy*

and

the following government documents: *Keeping children safe in education Part 1 & Annex A (Sept. 2018)* and *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (March 2015)*

Should parents wish to obtain copies of the aforementioned policies, please email the office at office@summerhillschool.co.uk.

Wherever the word 'staff' is used, it covers ALL staff, including domestic/kitchen

staff, peripatetics, interns etc.

Safeguarding Aims:

- To provide an environment where all members of the community feel safe, secure, valued and respected.
- To raise awareness of **all staff** to the need to safeguard children and young people and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.
- To ensure **all staff** know how to respond to a disclosure from a child and will take action in accordance with government guidance and the locally agreed inter-agency safeguarding procedures put in place by the Suffolk Safeguarding Children Board (www.suffolkscb.org.uk).*
- To provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm. We will contribute to assessments of need and support packages for those children.
- To emphasise the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff.
- To develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies.
- To recognise and protect those who may be vulnerable to radicalisation or exposed to extremist views.

****Safeguarding arrangements at local authority level are under review. At some point in the near future ('no later than July 2019'), safeguarding arrangements in Suffolk will be led by the 'three safeguarding partners', that is the local authority, police and health, working together as joint and equal partners. (SSCB Newsletter June 2018)***

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Andrew, a senior member of staff, and he takes '**lead responsibility** for safeguarding and child protection.' The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) is Zoe and, as school principal, she takes '**leadership** responsibility for the [school's] safeguarding arrangements.' Their contact details are:

Andrew – Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Contact details:

Mobile: 07730672659 Email: andysummerhill@hotmail.com

Zoe – School Principal and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)

Contact details:

Mobile: 07903938188 Email: zoe@summerhillschool.co.uk

The role and responsibilities of the DSL

Manage referrals

The designated safeguarding lead (and/or the DDSL) is expected to:

- refer cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children's social care (Customer First) as required;
- refer cases to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required;

All referrals of concerns about children will be reported within one working day. If necessary, **anyone** can make a referral and they will inform the DSL as soon as possible that a referral has been made. Parents/Carers will be contacted in line with the following guidance: *'You MUST inform those with parental responsibility of your referral, unless to do so would place the child at further risk of significant harm.'* (SSCB Multi-Agency Referral Form, April 19 2018, p.1). However, a referral to children's social care and / or the police in order to obtain statutory services does **not** require parental **consent**.

- support staff who make referrals to local authority children's social care and/or referrals to the Channel programme;
- refer cases to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). The school has a statutory duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, or has been removed from working in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left. The DBS will consider whether to bar the person. Referrals should be made as soon as possible and no later than one month;
- refer cases to the Teacher Regulation Agency. If, on conclusion of the case, the person is dismissed or the employer ceases to use the person's services, or the person resigns or otherwise ceases to provide his or her services, the school will consider whether to refer the matter to the TRA to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching. The reasons a prohibition order would be considered are for 'unacceptable professional conduct', for 'conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute' or a 'conviction, at any time, for a relevant offence'. Referrals should be made as soon as possible and no later than one month;
- refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required.

Finally, the designated safeguarding lead is expected to:

- contact the LADO on any matter that the DSL considers cannot be properly dealt with internally.

Work with others

The designated safeguarding lead is expected to:

- liaise with Zoe, as principal, on all safeguarding matters.

The designated safeguarding lead (and/or the DDSL) is expected to:

- as required, liaise with the local authority and work with other agencies in line with *Working together to safeguard children (July 2018)*. The DSL/DDSL will work with relevant agencies to seek advice, support and guidance, drawing on multi agency expertise, knowledge and experience.
- liaise with staff on matters of safety and safeguarding (including online and digital safety) and act as a focal point for staff to discuss concerns if they feel unable to take concerns to the school meeting, the staff meeting or special attention meeting. Andrew and Zoe are available **at all times, day or night**, for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns (including concerns relating to radicalisation) and to act as a source of support, advice and expertise.

Training

The designated safeguarding lead undertakes training to obtain the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. This training is updated at least every two years.

The designated safeguarding lead undertakes Prevent awareness training.

In addition to the formal training set out above, the DSL's knowledge and skills are refreshed (this might be via e-bulletins, meeting other designated safeguarding leads, or simply taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments) at regular intervals, as required, but at least annually, to ensure the DSL understands and keeps up with any developments relevant to the role so they:

- understand the assessment process for providing early help and statutory intervention, including local criteria for action and the local authority children's social care referral arrangements.
- have a working knowledge of how the local authority conducts a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so;
- ensure each member of staff (especially new and part-time staff) has access to, and has read and understood, the school's safeguarding and child protection policy and all other relevant documents, including Part 1 and Annex A of *Keeping children safe in education (Sept. 2018)*.
- are alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and young carers;
- are able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals;

- understand and support the school with regards to the requirements of the Prevent duty and are able to provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation;
- are able to understand the unique risks associated with online safety and be confident that they have the relevant knowledge and up to date capability required to keep children safe whilst they are online at school;
- can recognise the additional risks that SEND children face online and are confident they have the capability to support them to stay safe online;
- obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses;

Raise Awareness

The designated safeguarding lead should:

- ensure the school's safeguarding and child protection policy is known, understood and used appropriately;

Staff need to be aware that safeguarding incidents can happen at any time or place and of the need to maintain an attitude of **'it could happen here'** where safeguarding is concerned.

- ensure the school's safeguarding and child protection policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly;

The safeguarding and child protection policy review is undertaken firstly by Zoe, Will and Henry and then by all the full-time staff to ensure the effectiveness of the safeguarding arrangements.

In addition, the 175/157 safeguarding self-review assessment is completed annually and is used to demonstrate that the school is effective in safeguarding and promoting its students' welfare.

- ensure the safeguarding and child protection policy is available publicly and all parents /carers are made aware, through the Summerhill Parents' Guide, of staff responsibilities, in particular, with regard to the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made. Further, parents/carers can ask the office for a copy of any school policy at any time.
- link with the local Suffolk Safeguarding Children Board to make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest local policies on safeguarding.
- provide Zoe, as principal, with a termly safeguarding action plan outlining, for example, safeguarding training to be undertaken by the DSL and others, policies to be reviewed etc.

Child protection files

The designated safeguarding lead will keep individual child protection files if required and where children leave the school ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible. The child protection file will be transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit, and confirmation of receipt will be obtained.

In addition, the designated safeguarding lead will consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school in advance of the child leaving.

Child Protection

Definition

Child Protection is:

- part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- **an activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm.**
- all agencies should aim to pro-actively safeguard and promote the welfare of children so that the need for action to protect children from harm is reduced.

Indicators of abuse and neglect (*Keeping children safe in education, Sept. 2018, p.14/15*)

‘All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues overlap with one another.

- **Abuse:** a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.
- **Physical abuse:** a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.
- **Emotional abuse:** the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child’s developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child

from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

- **Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education.
- **Neglect:** the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.'

Children with special educational needs and disabilities

Staff need to be aware that it can be more difficult to recognize abuse and neglect in this group of children because:

- of 'assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's impairment without further exploration;'
- children with SEN and disabilities 'are more prone to peer group isolation than other children' and
- they can be 'disproportionally impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- of communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.' (*Keeping children safe in education' September 2018. Part 2 p.27*)

Our whole school culture of safeguarding, together with our school meetings, staff meetings and, in particular, our special attention meetings ensures that this group of children are safeguarded both online and off.

For more information on children at Summerhill with special educational needs and disabilities, see *Special Educational Needs Policy*.

Categories - Signs and Indicators. What to look for.

<p>NEGLECT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tired/listless. • Unkempt. • Poor hygiene. • Untreated medical conditions. • Hungry. • Overeats when food is available. • Poor growth. • Poor/late attendance. 	<p>EMOTIONAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clingy. • Attention seeking. • Over ready to relate to others. • Low self-esteem. • Apathy. • Fearful/withdrawn. • Sleep disorders. • Depression/self-harm • Drink/drug/solvent abuse.
<p>PHYSICAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexplained injuries. • Injuries on certain parts of the body. • Injuries in various stages of healing. • Injuries that reflect an article used. • Flinching when approached. • Reluctant to change. • Crying/instability. • Afraid of home. • Behavioural extremes. • Apathy/Depression. 	<p>SEXUAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age inappropriate behaviour/knowledge. • Promiscuity. • Wary of adults. • Running away from home. • Eating disorders. • Depression. • Self-harm. • Unexplained gifts/money. • Smearing.

What to do

If a child reports that he/she is being abused, in any way whatever, or neglected, you **must** do the following:

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay calm, listen carefully and be supportive. Allow the child to speak without interruption. • Ask open questions, e.g. 'Tell me when .../ 'Explain what.../ 'Describe what.....') • Accurately record in writing what was said, using the child's words. Date and sign it. • Tell the child they have done the right thing by talking to you and tell the child what you will do next. • Inform Andrew and Zoe of your concerns immediately. • Seek support for yourself. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disbelieve what the child is telling you or be judgemental. • Ask any leading questions, or put ideas into the child's head or jump to conclusions. • Stop or interrupt a child who is recalling significant events. • Promise the child confidentiality – you must explain that you will need to pass on information to keep them safe. • Express an opinion about the alleged perpetrator of the abuse. • Use your own words to describe events. • Investigate. • View or forward possible illegal images of a child (if relevant).

Remember:

- **Make a clear and accurate record of what has been reported to you.**
- **If the report involves sexting, do not view or forward any possible illegal images.**
- **Use the school's 'Recording Form for Safeguarding Concerns'. Sign it and date it. You should be aware that your record of what was said could become part of a statutory assessment by children's social care and/or part of a criminal investigation.**

For more information on sexting, see *Online Safety Policy*

For more information on illegal items, see *Searching and Confiscation Policy*

Allegations against a child

- We understand that a child can make an allegation against another child.
- Any allegation against another child must be immediately reported to Zoe or Will or Henry, and to Andrew. If appropriate, they will, within one working day, contact Customer First on 0808 800 4005 and the Police will be contacted if it is suspected a crime has been committed.
- In the event of a disclosure, all children involved, whether perpetrator or victim, will be treated as being 'at risk'.
- Any child under suspicion will be suspended until further notice if there is no other reasonable alternative. Advice will be taken from Customer First in making this decision. The child will receive as much help from the school as we are able to offer.

Allegations against staff

- We understand that a child can make an allegation against **any** member of staff.
- Any concerns about, or allegations against, a member of staff must be immediately reported to Zoë or Will or Henry. If appropriate, they will, within one working day, contact the designated officer at the local authority on 0300 123 2044 and/or the Police on 01473 613500 if it is suspected a crime has been committed.
- The designated officer at the local authority should make a decision within one working day of a referral being made about what course of action is being taken and should inform the referrer of the outcome.
- In exceptional circumstances, such as an emergency or a genuine concern that appropriate action has not been taken, staff members can contact the designated officer at the local authority.
- If the allegation is against Zoe, Will or Henry, contact the designated officer at the local authority.
- Parents will be contacted in line with the following guidance: '*You MUST inform those with parental responsibility of your referral, unless to do so would place the child at further risk of significant harm.*' (SSCB Multi-Agency Referral Form April 19 2018, p. 1).
- No investigation will be carried out before the designated officer at the local authority is informed of the allegation.
- Any adult under suspicion will be suspended until further notice if there is no other reasonable alternative. Advice will be taken from the designated officer in making this decision. Any adult under suspicion will receive as much help from the school as we are able to offer both financially and personally.

For more information, see *Managing allegations of abuse against members of staff or volunteers/interns*.

Confidentiality

- We recognise matters relating to child protection are confidential.
- All staff are made aware that they cannot promise to keep secrets that could compromise the safety or welfare of a child.
- Where a child seeks to raise concerns confidentially with a member of staff and expressly withholds their agreement to their personal data being disclosed to their **parents or guardian**, the school will maintain confidentiality unless it has reasonable grounds to believe that the child does not fully understand the

consequences of withholding their consent, or where the school believes disclosure will be in the best interests of the child or other children.

- All staff are made aware that they have a legal responsibility to share information with other agencies. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety of children, which must always be the paramount concern.
- All staff are made aware that in the event of allegations being made against a member of staff, the school must make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity whilst an allegation is being considered or investigated.

For more information, see *Managing allegations of abuse against members of staff or volunteers/interns*.

Also, see *Data Protection Policy* and *'Information Sharing – Advice for practitioners providing services to children, young people, parents and carers'* (July 2018)

Record keeping

All concerns, discussions and decisions made and the reasons for those decisions are recorded in writing.

Supporting staff

We understand that it is stressful and upsetting to be involved with any child who has suffered harm. Zoë is always available to chat and talk through any anxieties.

Prevention

We recognise that the school plays a significant part in prevention of harm to our students. The school has an ethos that children are always listened to and they have a selection of trusted adults and good friends who they can talk to.

Recruitment

Our recruitment and selection policy includes all the required checks (including Later Years Childcare) and it is Andrew and Zoe's responsibility, working with Lynn, to ensure that all adults who have substantial access to children have been checked as to their suitability. Further, there is at least one person on every recruitment panel that has completed Safer Recruitment training. We reserve the right not to accept help from volunteers/interns. All staff and volunteers/interns are required to follow the school's code of conduct.

For more information, see *Recruitment and Selection Policy*, and *Code of Conduct*

Staff Training

'proprietors of independent schools.....should ensure that mechanisms are in place to assist staff to understand and discharge their role and responsibilities ...' (*'Keeping children safe in education'*, Sept 2018, p.4)

All staff receive relevant safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety and the Prevent Duty) at induction. The safeguarding induction process begins with the

new employee being emailed the schools' safeguarding induction pack. The contents of the pack include the following documents:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Summerhill School Code of Conduct
- Online Safety Policy
- Summerhill School Whistle blowing Policy
- Managing allegations of abuse against members of staff or volunteers/interns

The school's safeguarding induction pack also includes the following documents:

- Keeping children safe in education Part 1 and Annex A (Sept. 2018)
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (March 2015)

The pack is sent at least two full weeks before the new employee starts work at the school. The new employee is invited to discuss the contents of the induction pack in a meeting / training session with the DSL, set at a mutually convenient time, before there is any contact with students.

All new employees are reminded of the main safeguarding issues that the school faces and the existence and whereabouts of our disclosure forms. Finally, the new employee is asked to sign a piece of paper stating that they have read and understood the documents they received and are aware that Zoe and Andrew are available **at any time, day or night**, to answer any questions or concerns they may have about safeguarding children in Summerhill.

The online safety and data protection induction process is conducted by the school's online safety lead. The training includes, among other things, an introduction to Summerhill's 'Screening Laws' and an explanation on how we deal with online safety at Summerhill.

All training is in line with SSCB advice and includes how to manage a report by a child of any form of abuse including peer on peer sexual violence and sexual harassment. It is Suffolk Schools' choice (who are endorsed by SSCB) who provide the update training every **two** years for all staff.

In addition, all staff receive regular safeguarding and child protection training updates as required, and at least annually to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. The depth and detail of training needed by different groups of staff varies according to the nature of their role and the extent of their involvement with children.

For full-time staff, the thrice-weekly school meetings and twice-weekly staff meetings can serve, and often do, as safeguarding (including online safety) updates. The special attention meetings, which are usually held twice a term, also serve as safeguarding updates, as does the end of term oral reports. All these meetings are minuted.

Domestic / kitchen staff and part-time teachers are given safeguarding updates as and when required. For example, if there were concerns about a student's dietary habits, this would be passed on to the kitchen staff in order to aid monitoring the student's food intake. The information would normally be passed on orally by the DSL.

Online safety (including the Prevent Duty) is a significant element in the school's whole approach to safeguarding. Consequently, all full-time, live-in staff receive annual, 'in-house', online safety training at the beginning of the summer term. This training is approved by Suffolk Schools' choice. In addition, it is a school law that all full-time, live-in staff and all students attend a compulsory, basic, age appropriate, online safety chat/discussion which is held at the beginning of every academic year. No person can continue to use the school's internet, or their mobile data, without attending.

All members of staff are encouraged to seek advice and to reflect on their work safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. In addition, the termly chats with Zoe provide a further opportunity to review and assess one's own practice.

These are just some of the 'mechanisms' put in place to help all staff safeguard children effectively.

For more information on staff training, see the file ***Safeguarding Training – Whole School***.

Staff/Pupil Relationships

Although Summerhill's unique system reduces the power differential between staff and students, it does not eliminate it. Thus, all staff must be aware that as a result of their knowledge, position and/or the authority invested in their role, the relationship can never be one of equals and that all staff working with Summerhill students are in positions of trust in relation to them. Particular care should be taken when working in a one-to-one teaching or house-parenting situation.

For more information on staff/pupil relationships, see *Code of Conduct*

Use of mobile phones / devices

Our school laws govern the use of mobile technology in school. The 'screening laws' are our acceptable use policy, copies of which are displayed throughout the school.

For more information on this topic, see *Code of Conduct* and *Online Safety Policy*

Use of 'restraint'

In the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools, 'restraint' means using reasonable force or restricting liberty of movement to prevent a student committing an offence, injuring him/herself or other students, or destroying property.

At Summerhill, 'restraint' is never used. However, in the highly unlikely event of 'restraint' having to be used by any member of the community, the incident that caused the use of 'restraint' would be brought to the attention of the school meeting and appropriate action would be taken.

For more information on the use of 'restraint', see *'Use of reasonable force. Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies'*. (DfE July 2013) a copy of which can be found in the ***Safeguarding Reference Documents 1*** file which is in the staffroom.

For more information on the school's 'behaviour policy', see *Introduction* (above), *Summerhill Laws*, *Searching and Confiscation Policy*, and *Procedure for Missing Children*.

School Trips

School trips are risk assessed on a case by case basis and the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy always forms an important part of any school trip risk assessment. This includes any arrangements made by the school for the care and accommodation of Summerhill students with host families (known as homestays) either in the UK or abroad.

Whistle blowing

All staff are made aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of safeguarding children, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues. In addition, all staff are made aware of their duty to reassess any concerns they may have had when situations do not improve and to challenge any perceived inaction.

Information, guidance and support can be obtained from the **MASH Professional Consultation Line**. The consultation line allows professionals to access advice about a child at risk of abuse and to discuss the most appropriate and effective way of providing help and support. Advice will be given without recording the name of the child.

Call Suffolk MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) on 0345 6061499

OR

the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line on 0800 028 0285.

For more information, see *Whistle blowing Policy*

Specific Safeguarding Issues

At Summerhill, the main safeguarding issues are the following:

Online safety (including sexting)

We recognise the dangers of Internet use and the importance of safe use of the web. Further, we are aware that The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on the school to have '**due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism**'.

Awareness of online safety issues is raised in various ways, most important of which is the school meeting which brings the whole school's attention to these issues.

Sexting

Sexting is when someone shares sexual, naked or semi-naked images or videos of themselves or others, or sends sexually explicit messages.

Creating or sharing explicit images of a child is illegal even if the person doing it is a child.

Any concerns about an individual, or individuals, must be reported to Zoe or Will or Henry and Andrew as soon as possible.

For more information on the school's response to incidents of this nature, see *Online Safety Policy*.

For detailed information on sexting, see *Sexting in schools and colleges: responding to incidents and safeguarding young people (UKCCIS, August 2016)* a copy of which can be found in the **Safeguarding Reference Documents 1** file which is in the staffroom.

For more information on online safety including the use of mobile technology and The Prevent Duty, see *Online Safety Policy*.

Sex and Relationship Concerns

All staff should be alert to inappropriate pupil relationships and the potential for peer on peer abuse. Any concerns about an individual, or individuals, must be reported to Zoe or Will or Henry and Andrew as soon as possible.

For more information, see *Sex and Relationships Guidelines/Policy*. It is recommended that all full-time staff read *Working with Sexually Active Young People under the Age of 18' (SSCB. August 2017)*. See **Safeguarding Reference Documents 1** file in the staffroom.

Self-Harm

Any concerns about an individual must be reported to Zoe or Will or Henry and Andrew as soon as possible.

For more information on self-harm, see **Safeguarding Reference Documents 1** file.

Peer on Peer Abuse

This includes, but is not limited to, such things as:

- bullying (on and offline)
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling etc.;
- gender based violence (sexual violence and sexual harassment);
- race based violence (physical and verbal)
- sexting/'youth produced sexual imagery'
- initiation type violence

At Summerhill, no form of abuse whatsoever is tolerated by the community and neither is it ever 'passed off as 'banter', just having a laugh or 'part of growing up' (*Keeping children safe in education, Sept. 2018, p.24*). Further, the risk of peer on peer abuse is minimised by the existence of, amongst other things, the school meeting and the use of elected ombudsmen and our whole school culture of safeguarding each other (see the introduction above).

For more information on online bullying and sexting, see *Online Safety Policy*.

For more information on sexual violence and sexual harassment, see *Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges. Advice for governing bodies, proprietors, headteachers, principals, senior leadership teams and designated safeguarding leads.* (DfE May 2018). A copy is held in the **Safeguarding Reference Documents 2** file.

Please note, a summary of the above document is now part 5 of *'Keeping children safe in education'* Sept. 2018, p.63 – p.75

Addressing the needs of victims, perpetrators and any other children affected by peer on peer abuse

As has been said, the majority of cases are low level harassment cases and usually all the victim requires is the support of the meeting. However, should the victim, or any other child affected by peer on peer abuse, require further support then the nature and level of support will depend on the individual circumstances and the level of need. These can include a quiet word from an ombudsman, asking the house-parent to provide support, providing formal counselling, referring to the local authority children's services, completing a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) form or referring to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

Equally, the perpetrator of abuse may require support such as that which is outlined above.

Where there is a safeguarding concern, Summerhill School will ensure that the student's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take. We will always act in the best interests of the child.

Further information – other specific safeguarding issues

Schools throughout the country are faced with a wide variety of safeguarding issues and there are now, in fact, more than twenty separate safeguarding issues. As has been said, the main safeguarding issues at Summerhill are related to online safety, sex and relationship concerns and, at times, self-harm. However, that does not mean that the school will not face other safeguarding issues and it is important that **all staff** are aware of the existence of some of these other issues and of the strategies employed to deal with them.

One key strategy is:

Early Help

Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life. It is a process in which a child's needs are assessed by various professionals such as a health visitor, GP, family support worker, teacher etc. It is a process which cannot go forward without the co-operation of the child and/or parents/carers.

It is important to understand the difference between a 'concern' about a child and a concern that a child might be in need, is in need, or suffering, or likely to suffer harm.

In the case of having a 'concern' about a child, staff should discuss with Zoe or Will or

Henry and Andrew what action should be taken. Possible actions include:

- managing any support for the child within the school or
- an early help assessment.

If early help is appropriate the designated lead will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment. In line with the concept of '**contextual safeguarding**', any assessment will consider the whole range of social environments where a child spends their time and therefore where a child might be at risk e.g. the school, the home, the neighbourhood, online etc. Staff may be required to support other agencies in an early help assessment. Any action taken will be done so in accordance with the locally agreed procedures put in place by the Suffolk Safeguarding Children Board using the referral threshold set by them.

For more information on 'Contextual Safeguarding', see *Contextual Safeguarding – an overview of the operational, strategic and conceptual framework*, (C. Firmin, University of Bedfordshire, Nov. 2017)

It could be argued that our whole school culture of safeguarding, together with our school meetings, staff meetings and special attention list and end of term oral reports function as Summerhill's 'early help', in that it is in these 'forums' that often problems occurring in a child's life are first raised and then acted upon. Further, it could be argued that the weakest link in our 'early help' system is sometimes the lack of information we get from parents about our newest students. It is for this reason that all new students are put on our special attention list.

For more information on Early Help, see *Suffolk Early Help Teams – Engagement Guidance* (SCC September 2017)

Child suffering or likely to suffer harm

If you have concerns that a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm, you must immediately report your concern to the DSL who will immediately call children's social care (Customer First) and the police if a crime has been committed. The SSCB MARF must be completed within twenty-four hours of the referral and a social worker makes a decision about the type of response that is required within one working day. A referral to obtain statutory services does not require parental consent.

Child in Need

A child in need is a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services. If you have concerns that a child may be in need, you must immediately report your concern to the DSL who will assess the concern and, taking into account any other safeguarding information known about the child, the DSL will consider what action needs to be taken such as contacting the MASH Professional Consultation Line for advice. If appropriate, the DSL will complete and submit the SSCB multi-agency referral form (MARF) to children's social care.

Where the safeguarding concern does not meet the threshold for completion of a MARF, the DSL should record how this decision has been reached and should consider whether

additional needs of the child have been identified that might be met by a co-ordinated offer of early help or some other form of support.

Safeguarding Thresholds

Level 4 High Risk

Children and young people who present with complex needs/risk. Including high level CSE concerns/risk. They will require specialist services and multi-agency statutory response - Child Protection (Children Act 1989 Section 47)

Level 3 Medium Risk

Children with multiple or complex needs, incl. medium risk of CSE, which have to be met by targeted services or by a multi-agency CAF assessment or by a Child in Need (Children Act 1989 Section 17) social work assessment.

Level 2 Low Risk to Vulnerable – Targeted Support

Children with emerging needs or low level Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) concerns that can be met with the support of a multi-agency CAF assessment and Family Network Plan.

Level 1 Universal

All children and young people accessing mainstream services with low level need that can be met by a single agency CAF (Common Assessment Framework) assessment and Family Network Plan.

For more information on Safeguarding Thresholds, see *Suffolk's Threshold of Need Guidance*, (SSCB, Oct. 2017)

Important safeguarding issues include:

- **Radicalisation** – the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups – see *Online Safety Policy*.
- **Children Missing Education** – children going missing from education, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues such as abuse and neglect. Matters relating to this issue are dealt with by the school secretary.
- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** – if a **teacher**, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher **must** report this to the police.
- **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)** - Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. ('Child sexual exploitation', DfE, Feb 2017, p.5). CSE is currently Suffolk's biggest safeguarding problem (15.3.17).
- **Child Criminal Exploitation – County Lines**. Criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity: drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns. Increasingly county lines drug networks are recruiting children in provincial towns rather than trafficking children from London or other major cities. It is estimated that there are considerably more than 900 county lines networks in England and Wales. County Lines is a big issue in Suffolk now (25.6.18)
- **Children and the court system** – Children are sometimes involved in the criminal court system or the family courts. Any involvement in the court system can be very stressful for children.
- **Domestic abuse** – Domestic violence and abuse is 'any incident or patterns of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to: psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional. Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children.
- **Honour Based Violence (HBV)** – so called 'honour-based' violence (HBV) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including FGM, forced marriage etc.
- **Private Fostering** – a private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately

(without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 years by someone other than a parent or close relative, in their own home, with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more.

Information about these and other issues, and the signs to be aware of, can be found in the ***Safeguarding Reference Documents*** files which are in the staffroom.

Alternatively

Visit the Suffolk Safeguarding Children Board website at: www.suffolkscb.org.uk

Further Information and (on the next page) some important telephone numbers

For more detailed information regarding safeguarding at Summerhill, see the following files which are in the staff room:

Safeguarding Children and Young People – Policies & Other Related Documents

Safeguarding Children and Young People – Meetings & Discussions

This *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy* is reviewed at least annually

Created by Carmel, Michael and Zoë November 2010.

Reviewed and updated January 2014

Reviewed and updated July 2014 due to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (April 2014)

Reviewed and updated May 2015

Reviewed and updated June 2015

Reviewed and updated September 2015

Reviewed and updated June 2016

Reviewed and updated July 2016, commencing September 5 2016. Next review due July 2017

Reviewed and updated April 2017

Reviewed and updated July 2018 commencing September 3 2018

Reviewed and updated December 2018 commencing January 2019.

SPS05

Some important telephone numbers

Children's Services:

Customer First – Children's Social Care (immediate safeguarding concerns)

Telephone: 0808 800 4005

Customer First – Professional Referral Line

Telephone: 03456 066 167

Designated Officer(s) at the local authority

Telephone: 0300 123 2044

E-mail: LADO@suffolk.gov.uk

MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub)

Professional Consultation Line. Telephone: 0345 6061499

Monday – Thursday: 9.00 to 5.00 pm. Friday: 9.00 to 4.25 pm.

Please note that the consultation line is not a point of referral

Suffolk Police: Telephone: 01473 613500

Police – Non-Emergency: Telephone: 101

IN AN EMERGENCY DIAL 999

Remember:

- **Anyone can make a referral**
- **Always act in the best interests of the child**
- **If you have any questions or concerns about safeguarding children, you can ask Zoe or Andrew at any time, day or night.**

