

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY  
Clare College, Cambridge

**Introduction**

Clare College recognises that fellows, staff and students of the College may sometimes work with children in the course of their duties. In this context, the College is committed to respecting the rights, wishes and well-being of children with whom it is working; taking all reasonable steps to protect children from physical, sexual and emotional abuse; promoting the welfare of children and their protection within a relationship of trust.

The following policy is established to support these commitments and to ensure that the College fulfils its obligations under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and any subsequent legislation.

The designated officer responsible for implementing the College's policy for the protection of children is the Senior Tutor.

**Definitions**

A "child" is anyone under the age of 16. An individual aged 16 or 17, should be treated as a child if there is to be frequent contact with an adult, defined as three or more days in a thirty day period.

**Special Provisions**

College staff who may come into regular unsupervised contact with children will be asked to undergo an appropriate level of DBS check.

All volunteers who have not undergone a DBS check must ensure that they are not left alone with an individual child or group of children and must always make sure that appropriate staff are present.

Those working with children must follow the Code of Practice below.

You must:

- treat all children and young people with respect
- provide an example of good conduct you would wish others to follow
- ensure that whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during activities with children, or at least that you are within sight or hearing of others
- respect a child's right to personal privacy
- encourage children to feel comfortable and caring enough to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like
- remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well-intentioned
- be aware that even caring physical contact with a child may be misinterpreted
- recognise that special care is required in moments when you are discussing sensitive issues with children

You must not:

- have inappropriate physical or verbal contact with children
- be alone with a child, if possible
- allow yourself to be drawn into inappropriate attention-seeking behaviour
- make suggestive/derogatory remarks or gestures in front of children
- jump to conclusions about others without checking facts
- exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues
- show favouritism to any individual
- rely on your good name or that of the College to protect you
- believe "It could never happen to me"
- take a chance when common sense, policy and practice suggest a more prudent approach

## **GENERAL GUIDANCE**

### **Planning and Supervision**

All activities or assignments involving children should be planned in advance to ensure they take into account the age range and ability of the participants. Staff supervising activities or assignments involving children or vulnerable adults should be competent and trained to do so. Where appropriate, a risk assessment will be undertaken and documented.

All staff are required to ensure that, whenever possible, there is more than one adult present during activities with children, or at least that they are in sight or hearing of others.

### **Physical Contact**

On no account should any member of staff, worker or volunteer have any physical contact with a child unless it is to prevent an accident or injury to themselves or anyone else (e.g. to prevent a fall) or in the case of medical assistance being needed (e.g. to administer first aid), in which case the prior consent of the affected person should be requested where possible.

Where appropriate, consent from parents or those with parental or caring responsibility should be obtained.

If a child is hurt or distressed, the staff member, worker or volunteer should do his/her best to comfort or reassure the affected person without compromising his/her dignity or doing anything to discredit the person's own behaviour.

### **Communication**

Communication with children is vital in establishing relationships built on trust. Those working with children or vulnerable adults should listen to what they are saying, and respond appropriately. Children are entitled to the same respect as any member of staff, worker or volunteer. It should also be made clear to them what standards of behaviour and mutual respect are expected from them. It is important to remember that behaviours and intentions can easily be misinterpreted, no matter how well intentioned.

Those working with children should behave appropriately, ensure that language is

moderated in their presence and should refrain from adult jokes or comments which are clearly unsuitable.

### **Suspicious of Abuse**

If a staff member receives from a child an allegation that the child or another child is being abused, has been abused, or is at risk of abuse they should:

- listen carefully and stay calm
- Ensure that they do not interview the child. However, if necessary, they may seek to clarify, using open questions and without putting words into the child's mouth, in order to be sure that they understand what the child is telling them
- Reassure the child that by telling them they have done the right thing
- Inform the child that they must pass the information on, but that only those that need to know about it will be told
- Inform the child to whom they will report the matter
- Make a detailed note of the date, time, place, what the child said and did and the questions asked of the child, etc

The staff member should then give the details to the Senior Tutor. It is NOT the College's responsibility to investigate any suspicions. This requires expertise which the College does not have, and the responsibility is to report it only.

The Senior Tutor will appropriately record an allegation or reported incident. She will be responsible for contacting the statutory child protection agency such as the Local Safeguarding Children Board or the Police if necessary. The Senior Tutor will consult with the Master, the Bursar and the HR Manager about any decision to contact the appropriate authority. During an investigation into allegations of abuse, it may be appropriate to suspend a worker or remove them from having any contact with children until an investigation has been carried out.

Any allegations of abuse made against a staff member will be thoroughly investigated and dealt with through the disciplinary procedure. Serious breaches may lead to dismissal.

### **Safety**

The safety of people at work is paramount and the College is therefore committed to providing a safe environment within which to work. Those working with children should ensure that all appropriate risk assessments and security checks have been carried out prior to any activity or assignment. This should include first aid cover and accident reporting.

If transporting children, the transport should be checked to ensure it is roadworthy and adequate for the purpose. Any equipment used must be safe and only used for the purpose for which it is intended. Users should be adequately trained. Appropriate insurance should be up to date and adequate to cover such assignments and should cover the children.

### **Confidentiality**

All information regarding children is highly confidential and should only be shared with appropriate parties on a need to know basis.

Anyone who is likely to have access to confidential material regarding children will be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement. The requirement for confidentiality is emphasised.

### **Contact**

Contact should not be made with any of the children for any other reason unrelated to the particular work. In particular, staff are required to do everything to maintain the College's reputation for integrity and responsibility in dealing with such people, and should not enter into any social or other non-work related arrangements with them.

### **Gifts and inducements**

On no account should anyone from the College give a child a gift or do anything which could be in any way considered a bribe or inducement to enter into a relationship or give

rise to any false allegations or improper conduct against the individual.

**Last up-dated February 2016**