

# **Child Protection Policy**

## **INTRODUCTION**

**Lusitânia Primary School (LPS)** takes the matter of child protection seriously.

This document outlines the guidelines and procedures of relevance to child protection.

Every pupil should feel safe and protected from any form of abuse. Lusitânia is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare and care of its pupils and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Lusitânia will take all reasonable measures to:

- ensure that suitable staff and volunteers are recruited to work with pupils;
- be alert to signs of abuse both at Lusitânia and elsewhere;
- do all that is possible to protect each pupil from any form of abuse, whether from an adult or another pupil;
- deal appropriately with every suspicion or complaint of abuse;
- support pupils who have been abused;
- design and operate procedures which ensure that teachers and others, who are innocent, are not prejudiced by false allegations;
- be alert to the needs of pupils with medical conditions;
- operate clear policies on drugs, alcohol and substance abuse;
- teach pupils about safeguarding through the curriculum and specifically via Life Skills lessons;
- take all practicable steps to ensure that Lusitânia premises are as secure as possible.
- The school has its own security guards and CCTV system. All visitors to Lusitânia are checked in and out.

### **Designated Child Protection Officer (CPO)**

The Designated CPO at Lusitânia is the Deputy Head.

The CPO has overall responsibility for matters relating to pupil protection and welfare. The CPO will be given the time, funding, training and resources to enable him/her to support/train other staff on safeguarding matters.

Parents are welcome to approach the CPO if they have any concerns about the welfare of any pupil in the school.

### **The main responsibilities of the CPO are:**

- to be the first point of contact for parents, pupils, teaching and non-teaching staff and external agencies in all matters relating to Child Protection and to provide support, advice and expertise on all matters concerning safeguarding;
- to co-ordinate the pupil protection procedures at Lusitânia and to review and update regularly the procedures and implementation of the procedures working with the Headmaster, as necessary;
- to ensure that all members of staff and volunteers receive the appropriate training on Child Protection;
- to advise and act upon all suspicion, belief and evidence of abuse reported to him/her;

- to keep the Headmaster informed of all actions unless the Headmaster is the subject of a complaint; and
- to ensure the Lusitânia Child Protection Policy is available publicly to parents and pupils.

### **Duty of employees and volunteers**

Every employee who assists at Lusitânia is under a general duty to

protect pupils from abuse;

- be aware of the Lusitânia Child Protection Procedures and to follow them;
- know how to access and implement the Lusitânia Child Protection procedures, independently if necessary;
- keep a sufficient record of any significant complaint, conversation or event in accordance with this policy; and
- report any matters of concern to the relevant CPO.

### **Training**

All staff will be provided with Child Protection training as part of their induction to Lusitânia and will have update training from time to time.

### **Complaints of abuse**

Every complaint or suspicion of abuse from within or outside Lusitânia will be taken seriously and action will be taken in accordance with this policy.

Please refer to the Procedures that follow.

# PROCEDURES

## Types and signs of abuse

### Types of abuse

#### Abuse may include:

- a) **Physical abuse:** a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding or otherwise causing physical harm to a pupil. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a pupil.
- b) **Emotional abuse:** the persistent emotional maltreatment of a pupil such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the pupil's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a pupil that he/she is worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of the other person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on pupils. These may include interactions that are beyond a pupil's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the pupil participating in normal social interaction. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing the pupil to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of pupils. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a pupil, although it may occur alone.
- c) **Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a pupil or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the pupil 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 kissing, rubbing and inappropriate touching outside of clothing. It may also include non-contact activities, such as involving pupils in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging pupils to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a pupil in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other pupils.
- d) **Neglect:** the persistent failure to meet a pupil's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the pupil's health or development. Once a pupil is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); failing to ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- e) **Pupil sexual exploitation:** involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (for example food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts, money or in some cases simply affection) for engaging in sexual activities. Sexual exploitation can take many forms ranging from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for affection or gifts, to serious organised crime by gangs and groups. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power in the relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim which increases as the exploitative relationship develops. Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying including cyber bullying and grooming. It is also important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse.
- f) **Cyber abuse:** involves children being abused via the internet or social media through the various forms of communication.

## **Signs of abuse**

Possible signs of abuse include:

- a) the pupil says he/she has been abused or asks a question or makes a comment which gives rise to that inference;
- b) injury where there is no reasonable or consistent explanation for a pupil's injury; the injury is unusual in kind or location or there have been a number of injuries and there is a pattern to those injuries;
- c) the pupil's behaviour stands out from the group as either being extreme model behaviour or extremely challenging behaviour, or there is a sudden or significant change in the pupil's behaviour;
- d) the pupil asks to drop subjects with a particular teacher and seems reluctant to discuss the reason;
- e) the pupil's development is delayed, the pupil loses or gains weight or there is deterioration in the pupil's general wellbeing;
- f) the pupil appears neglected, i.e. dirty, hungry, inadequately clothed;
- g) the pupil is reluctant to go home, or has been openly rejected by his/her parents ; and
- h) Inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff or any other person working with pupils; for example the use of inappropriate sexual comments, excessive one to one attention or inappropriate sharing of images.

## **Guidance for staff on suspecting or hearing a complaint of abuse from a pupil**

### **Action staff must take**

A member of staff suspecting or hearing a complaint of abuse must:

- i. listen carefully to the pupil and keep an open mind. The member of staff should not take a decision as to whether or not the abuse has taken place
- ii. not ask leading questions, i.e. a question which suggests its own answer;
- iii. reassure the pupil but not give a guarantee of confidentiality. The member of staff should explain that they need to pass the information to the relevant CPO who will ensure that the correct action is taken; and
- iv. keep a sufficient written record of the conversation, which should include:
  - a. the date and time;
  - b. the place of the conversation; and
  - c. the essence of what was said and done by whom and in whose presence.The record should be signed by the person making it and should use names, not initials. The record must be kept securely and handed to the relevant CPO as soon as possible.
- v. keep any evidence, for example, scribbled notes, mobile phones containing text messages, clothing, computers, of relevance and pass it on to the relevant CPO.

All suspicions or complaints of abuse must be reported to the relevant CPO as soon as possible, unless it is an allegation against a member of staff in which case the procedures set out under the heading "*Dealing with allegations against staff*".

### **Dealing with allegations against staff (i.e. adults)**

The procedures for dealing with allegations made against staff will be used when the member of staff or volunteer has

- i. behaved in a way that has harmed a pupil, or may have harmed a pupil;

- ii. possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a pupil; or
- iii. behaved towards a pupil or pupils in a way that indicates he/she would pose a risk of harm if he/she work regularly or closely with pupils.

All such allegations must be dealt with as a priority so as to avoid any delay.

### **Reporting an allegation against staff or volunteer**

When an allegation or complaint is made against any member of staff or volunteer, the matter should be reported immediately to the relevant CPO. The CPO will raise the matter with the Headmaster as a matter of urgency.

When an allegation or complaint is made against the Headmaster or CPO it should be reported directly to the Chairman of Board of Governors.

### **Disclosure of information**

The Headmaster will inform the accused person having met with the relevant CPO. Lusitânia has a duty of care for its employees and will therefore ensure that effective support is provided for anyone facing an allegation. In addition to being informed of the allegation individuals will be given an explanation of the likely course of action and offered appropriate support.

The Parents of the pupil involved will be informed of the allegation as soon as possible. They will also be kept informed of the progress of the case, including the outcome of any disciplinary process.

The identification of a teacher who is the subject of such an allegation will not be disclosed to the press or in public by the School.

### **Suspension**

Suspension will not be an automatic response to an allegation and will only be considered to facilitate an investigation in a case when:

- i. there is reason to believe that a pupil is at risk of significant harm; or
- ii. the allegation is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal.

A member of staff will only be suspended if there is no reasonable alternative. If suspension is deemed appropriate, the reasons and justification will be recorded, and the member of staff notified of those reasons in writing.

### **Return to work**

If it is decided that the person who has been suspended should return to work, Lusitânia will consider how best to facilitate this e.g. arranging a phased return and/or the provision of a mentor to provide assistance and support in the short term. Lusitânia will also consider how best to manage the contact with the pupil who made the allegation.

### **Ceasing to use staff**

If Lusitânia ceases to use the services of a member of staff or volunteer because he/she is unsuitable to work with pupils the matter will be reported to CHISZ/ATS and, if necessary and following legal advice, to the Ministry and/or police.

If a member of staff or volunteer tenders his/her resignation, or ceases to provide his/her services, any pupil protection allegations may still be followed up by Lusitânia, depending on the circumstances and the nature of the allegation, in accordance with this policy.

## **Timescales**

All allegations will be dealt with as a priority and within the timescales detailed in the Code of Conduct for Salaried Staff or according to the NEC Regulations for non-salaried staff.

If a disciplinary hearing is required it will also be dealt with in accordance with the Lusitânia Code of Conduct for Salaried Staff or according to the NEC Regulations for non-salaried staff.

## **Unsubstantiated or malicious allegations**

- i. When an allegation by a pupil is shown to have been deliberately invented or malicious, the Headmaster will discipline the pupil concerned; it is likely that the disciplinary sanction will be exclusion from Lusitânia.
- ii. When a parent has made a deliberately invented or malicious allegation it is highly likely that the Headmaster will require the parent to withdraw his/her son/daughter from Lusitânia.
- iii. Whether or not the person making the allegation is a pupil or a parent (or other member of the public), the school reserves the right to contact the police to determine whether any action might be appropriate.
- iv. Details of allegations found to be malicious will be removed from personnel records.
- v. An allegation proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious will not be referred to in employer references.

## **Dealing with allegations against pupils**

Lusitânia recognises that pupils can negatively affect the learning and wellbeing of others and under such circumstances it may be necessary to deal with them under the school's disciplinary policies. Occasionally allegations may be made against pupils by other pupils, which related to child protection e.g. physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. Under such circumstances it is likely that the allegation:

- i. is made against an older pupil and refers to their behaviour towards a younger pupil or a more vulnerable pupil;
- ii. is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence;
- iii. indicates that other pupils may have been affected by this pupil; and/or
- iv. indicates that young people outside the school may be affected by this pupil.

Examples of safeguarding issues against a pupil could include:

- a) Physical abuse
  - violence, particularly pre-planned; and
  - forcing others to use drugs or alcohol.
- b) Emotional abuse
  - blackmail or extortion; and
  - threats and intimidation.
- c) Sexual abuse
  - indecent exposure, indecent touching or serious sexual assaults; and
  - forcing others to watch pornography or take part in sexting.
- d) Sexual exploitation
  - photographing or videoing other pupils performing indecent acts; and
  - young people suffering from sexual exploitation themselves may be forced to recruit other young people under threat of violence.

When an allegation is made by a pupil against another pupil, members of staff should consider whether the complaint raises a safeguarding concern.

If there is a safeguarding concern the relevant CPO should be informed. A factual record should be made of the allegation, but no attempt should be made to investigate the circumstances without first referring the matter to the relevant CPO.

If the allegation indicates that a potential criminal offence may have taken place once an initial investigation has been completed the matter will be reported, following legal advice, to the PED and/or police together with the parents of the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator.

It may be appropriate to suspend the accused pupil, whilst the matter is being investigated; under such circumstances the PED will be informed in the usual way.