The Peterborough School

Historic Child Abuse Policy

Policy Reference:	7c Historic Child Abuse Policy
Review Date:	May 2025
Reviewed by:	Bursar
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Our Principles

We recognise that abuse during childhood can have wide-ranging and serious consequences for that individual. For some victims and survivors these effects endure throughout adult life. In acknowledging this impact, the Historic Child Abuse Policy is based on five best practice principles:

- **Recognise** – we will listen to, take seriously, and act responsibly about allegations of historical abuse.
- **Respond** – we seek to support the welfare of alumni (former pupils) who report historical abuse to us, actively listening to what outcomes and support they require.
- **Report** – we will share information carefully, ensuring that actions are respectful, professional, lawful, and based on what we know to be good practice.
- **Record** – we will document, update, and review allegations of abuse to meet our obligations to keep relevant parties both now and in the future informed of progress and the outcome of any investigation.
- **Review** – we will keep individual cases under review so that we might use that learning to continually improve our own policies on safeguarding and wellbeing and those across the Woodard group of schools.

The purpose of this policy is to outline how someone can report an allegation of historic abuse, the support we can offer, and our commitment to victims and survivors. We take all allegations of historic abuse seriously. This policy ensures that all staff and governors understand their responsibilities when responding to a disclosure.

Scope

This policy applies to abuse disclosed by, or on behalf of, students or staff who have left the School, including those who left many years ago. Allegations may be made in regards to incidents perpetrated by students, staff, or visitors past and present.

All staff and governors are instructed to familiarise themselves with this policy, so they are clear about their role, responsibility and expectations in responding to an allegation of historic abuse.

Any allegations relating to a current student, a current member of staff, or a governor (as a victim, survivor, or perpetrator), are managed in accordance with the School's current Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and are therefore out of scope of this policy. Any allegations regarding former students, members of staff, or governors are covered by this policy.

Responsibilities

Governors

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that effective Safeguarding and Child Protection policies and procedures are both in place and regularly reviewed. They are also responsible for the School's compliance with statutory reporting concerning child protection and the disclosure

of abuse. They have a duty of care, which includes taking necessary steps to safeguard and protect students and alumni. To that end, the governing body must ensure that there is an appropriate policy on Historical Child Abuse and that it is implemented effectively.

The Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for the School's response to any allegation of historic abuse and should be informed of any allegation that has been disclosed. They are also responsible, on behalf of governors, for liaison with insurers, solicitors, and other parties as required; and for alerting the Woodard Corporation that an allegation has been received, if appropriate.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead

The School has an identified person who holds responsibility for child protection and should also be responsible for the implementation of the Historical Child Abuse Policy, the effective management of disclosures of historic abuse, and mandatory reporting obligations. This includes initiating preliminary enquiries into alleged concerns and reporting to the relevant statutory agencies. In addition, they will provide advice and support to the Head and other senior members of staff on best practice in adhering to this Policy and Procedures, safer working practices, and management of allegations and investigations.

Alumni Response Team

The School has established a small team for Alumni Response, consisting of the core DSL team, who are trained to respond appropriately to any allegation of historic abuse involving a former pupil. They can provide initial support, information, and signposting to external support organisations. They should normally contact an individual within five working days of receiving any allegation of abuse.

Front Line Call Handlers

Staff such as receptionists, the Head's PA, the Alumni Office, the Chaplain, secretaries and the marketing team are most likely to receive any calls regarding allegations of historic abuse. These staff should be given training in order to best handle calls of this nature. They will often be the first point of contact with the School, taking down contact details from the caller, and arranging for a member of Alumni Response to contact them to discuss it further.

All Staff

All staff are responsible for ensuring that all historic/non-recent abuse concerns are reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Mr Pryor, in accordance with this Policy and accompanying procedures.

Making An Allegation Of Historic Abuse

There are various ways to contact us to report historic abuse and to talk about concerns:

- Call the School on 01733 343353 and ask to speak to the DSL
- Email your concerns to safeguarding@tpsch.co.uk
- Write to us at: Alumni Response, c/o The Peterborough School, Thorpe Road, Peterborough, PE3

6AP

- Report your allegation directly to the Police by calling 101
- Contact one of the support organisations listed in Appendix A.

School Response

Phone calls

If a member of frontline staff receives a call regarding allegations of historic abuse, callers are asked not to tell their story in the first phone call, but instead the person taking the call (the call handler) will take down contact details and assure the caller that a designated specialist will call them back. Details will be recorded and include:

- Name (if the caller wishes to disclose this)
- Preferred method of contact & contact details
- The preferred time for us to call back
- If someone else answers their phone, can we identify ourselves as the school?
- Is it safe to leave a voicemail identifying ourselves?
- Years attended school (if this is applicable and if the caller wishes to disclose this)

The call handler will email the details to the Head to inform them of the call. A member of Alumni Response will contact the caller within five working days, although they will attempt to contact them as sooner, if possible.

Commented [SD1]: Or DSL?

Emails

When an allegation is received by email, it will be allocated to Alumni Response, who will aim to make contact with the sender within five working days.

Letters

When an allegation is received by letter, it will be allocated to a member of the Alumni Response team, who will aim to contact the sender within 5 working days of receipt of the letter and otherwise no later than 10 days.

Anonymous Reports

Anonymous allegations will be taken seriously and reported to the statutory authorities as appropriate.

Speaking to Alumni Response

The team is specially trained to deal with calls of this nature and to understand the wide- ranging impact that childhood abuse and trauma can have on an individual. They also understand that every individual's experience is unique. They will listen carefully, sympathetically and acknowledge the experience.

They will have reviewed the relevant student information before calling, emailing or writing to the victim/survivor. They will also seek to ascertain what next steps, or outcome, the victim/survivor is looking for in terms of their case. They can signpost to further support. They can provide details of current policies at the School and can arrange a visit to the School, if the

victim/survivor feels feel it would be beneficial to their recovery.

They will record the details of the allegation electronically, which will be securely logged on to our computer system. This will be immediately passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the case discussed. The Senior Leadership Team will then be informed of the case. Next steps will depend on what actions the victim/survivor would like to see.

It is important to note that it is our practice to refer all potentially criminal allegations of abuse, perpetrated by staff, students, or third parties, to the relevant statutory agencies, as we have a duty of care under law.

It is not the School's role to investigate allegations of abuse, as we are not qualified or able to do this. Investigations are conducted by statutory agencies such as the Local Authority Designated Officer and the police. We will work closely with these agencies to assist with any investigation. Where an allegation concerns a current member of staff, as well as reporting to statutory agencies, we will apply our employment policies.

What Happens Next?

We recognise that each person's case is individual to their circumstances and experiences. We will tailor our response accordingly, with the person at the centre. We strive to support former students through the disclosure process and beyond. Support may include help from qualified outside agencies, signposting to further support, or information on current practices at the School today.

Acknowledgement

Anyone who reports an allegation of abuse will receive a written acknowledgement from the School's Head (or from the Chair of Governors if the allegation is against the Head).

Support & Advice

We are not qualified counsellors and cannot provide long term emotional support to alumni. What we can do is signpost to other agencies who specialise in this area, some of which are listed at Appendix A. We know that some former students would value an independent point of contact because they don't feel comfortable, or able, to contact the School directly.

Reporting to Police/Criminal Proceedings

As we have stated above, we will refer all potentially criminal allegations of abuse, perpetrated by staff, students or third parties, to the police and/or relevant statutory agencies.

In cases where there is a potentially criminal act, but the victim/survivor does not wish to make a report, or share their details with the police, we will share intelligence with the police anonymously, not sharing the victim/survivor's name.

If the victim/survivor does wish to make a formal report to the police, we will support them in this and assist in the investigation in any way that we can. We do not ourselves investigate cases, as we are not qualified to do so, but will work closely with the authorities in any investigation.

Engaging with the School

Some people find it useful to call or visit the School to see how it has changed and speak to the current pastoral team about how we manage wellbeing, safeguarding, and child protection in the present day. We are happy to accommodate this, if it is an avenue that the victim/survivor is interested in. Safeguarding and Child Protection policies are hosted on the School's website and we can also provide a copy of our current policies if required.

Accessing your school file

Former students can make a written request to access their school file. We will apply the principles of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR in dealing with that request.

Civil Litigation

Some may wish to initiate civil proceedings against the School. We have always held appropriate insurance premiums to cover claims, although it may not always be possible to prove historic cover owing to gaps in the historical archive. Nevertheless, the School will ensure that our insurers and solicitors are kept appropriately informed of all cases that involve potential civil litigation proceedings.

Outcomes & Learning

We will review each case that we receive, and the learnings from those reviews will inform and develop our best practice in how we respond both to allegations of historic abuse, and to our current policies on wellbeing, child protection, and staff conduct/disciplinary. We will disseminate this learning appropriately in order to promote effective practice and inter-agency working.

Appendix A: Links To Support Organisations

General Support

The Samaritans is available around the clock 365 days of the year to provide confidential emotional support for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair: www.samaritans.org

The Survivors Trust is a national membership organisation supporting specialist rape and sexual abuse services in the voluntary sector. They have over 120 member organisations throughout the UK and Ireland who provide specialist support services to over 100,000 survivors each year: www.thesurvivorstrust.org

Survivors UK offers a range of support services to men who experienced childhood or adult sexual abuse: www.survivorsuk.org

Rape Crisis England and Wales, and Scotland provides a directory of local support services:

Rape Crisis England & Wales: www.rapecrisis.org.uk

Rape Crisis Scotland: www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk

NAPAC - The National Association for People Abused in Childhood: www.napac.org.uk

Victim Support: www.victimsupport.org.uk

Legal Advice & Support

Citizen's Advice Bureau:

https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/family/children-and- young-people/child- abuse/financial-compensation-for-child-abuse/

Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority:

https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/criminal-injuries- compensation-authority

The Law Society can help you find a solicitor specialising in this area of law: https://solicitors.lawsociety.org.uk/

Legal Aid Agency: https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/legal-aid-agency

Family Support

MOSAC was established almost 30 years ago and provides supportive services to non-abusing parents and carers whose children have been sexually abused. Along with counselling and therapy for vicarious trauma, they provide parents with advice on how to talk to and support their children https://mosac.org.uk/