



# BEESTON HALL SCHOOL

## 8a – Boarders’ Safeguarding Policy

Please read in conjunction with 8b Access to Premises Policy and 7a Safeguarding Policy.

### Boarding and the Children’s Act

Beeston Hall recognises that, under the terms of Section 87 of The Children’s Act (1989) - Welfare of Children Accommodated in Independent Schools - the school has a statutory duty to safeguard and promote a child’s welfare by ensuring protection against significant harm or neglect. This statutory duty of care is geared to the individual child, not to the majority, and recognises each child’s right to live his or her life free from abuse of any type. Every child in the Boarding House has the right to develop academically, socially, morally and culturally in an atmosphere of encouragement and trust.

Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders while they are accommodated at the school and such arrangements have regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools.

The school further recognises that all pupils are equal participants deserving of equal opportunities, and care should be taken not to allow the majority to fade into the background by devoting 80% of time to 20% of the pupils. The school also understands that the Local Authority Social Services Department must take such steps as are necessary to determine whether this duty of care to the individual is being carried out. The Act applies to all children who are accommodated at school, not just the boarders who are ordinarily resident. However, it is understood that the House Parents, who observe and interact with the children during non-school hours, may be in a unique position to get to know those children extremely well and spot possible signs of harm, neglect or potential radicalisation. It is worth noting that this duty of care extends to visiting children, since it is the school that is doing the accommodating for that period of time.

### Child Protection

Keeping Children Safe In Education notes that children can be particularly vulnerable in residential settings, therefore we actively promote the development of co-operative, mutually respectful and supportive relationships between boarders, and between boarders and staff. The staff are available to boarders at all times and an Independent Listener from outside the school setting is also available. Boarders are advised during the Boarders’ Induction process of where they can seek help, and information is posted on noticeboards around the house. Staff must be routinely vigilant in supervising inter-personal relationships within the boarding house but should never intrude into individual relationships unless there is material cause for concern, with any such approach being made confidentially and discreetly. Staff must be vigilant and aware at all times where relationships may deteriorate and that within the boarding environment there exists the potential for abuse by peers. This can particularly be the case “behind closed doors” in dormitories. Pupils are actively encouraged to talk to the staff about their concerns.

## **Safe Recruitment**

All residential staff are subject to the school's usual safer recruitment procedures, which are set out in the school's policy. All adults who come into contact with the children are subject to an enhanced DBS check. In the case of any visitors to the boarding house, such as external providers for activities, the visitor will be chaperoned at all times by a member of staff and asked in advance as to the content of their talk/lecture. There are currently no persons over 16 not employed by the school but living in the same premises as children. However, staff are aware of the need to assess and comply with safeguarding regulations should that situation change. The school does not currently appoint guardians.

## **Physical Restraint**

The Act addresses the question of physical restraint. Please refer to Beeston Hall's 9a Restraint Policy.

## **Bullying**

The boarding staff will follow guidance from the school's 10a Countering Bullying Policy. Bullying in any of its many guises is forbidden and staff must act promptly against it. Signs of bullying which may be particular to the boarding house are:

- Difficulty concentrating during prep
- Not wanting to stay at school
- Social isolation or avoiding particular pupils
- The desire to remain with adults

Every member of staff must be an active presence in the house, and make sure that dorms, common rooms and other areas of the site are monitored. If bullying is suspected, the member of staff must intervene, listen carefully to reports, record any incidents and offer support to the victim. Bullying is a serious offence and in most cases the incident will be referred to in the first instance to the Deputy Head Pastoral.

Further guidance can be found in the Anti-Bullying Policy.

## **Counselling**

The House Parent or matrons department should be the first line of recourse and defence for all the boarders in boarding time. However, in some situations, a distressed boarder might find it difficult to seek help, in which case a discussion with the School's independent listener or form tutor would be encouraged.

## **Registration of pupils**

Evening register completed at the end of the evening by boarding staff at handover and Sunday registers are taken on all trips, at lunch and in the evening.

## **Boarding area Access & Security**

Parents have restricted access to the boarding areas; at drop off and collection at the beginning and end of term, half term and exeat. All external doors are snibbed after dark and access is obtained using a code. All boarding children must seek permission from the matron team to be permitted into the boarding house upstairs area during the school day. The intruder alarm is set every evening by the House Parent after all boarding staff have left the building after handover and matron has returned to the girls side of the boarding house. All children and boarding staff are aware of the Intruder Procedure.

## **Prevention of Physical harm**

Risk assessments are completed for all activities undertaken by the children and all children and boarding staff are aware of the school rules associated with the premises and equipment available to them. When playing

outside after dark all children are aware that they need to remain within the school grounds, in well lit areas and that they are not permitted to enter the woods.

### **Prevention of Emotional abuse**

All children are asked at the end of term who they would like to share a dorm with the following term to ensure that supportive relationships are maintained. A boarding questionnaire is completed in the Michaelmas term of each school year, then actions are completed during the following terms. Children may also use the 'Bring it to the nest' boxes to feedback anything anonymously, and the boarding council and student voice for anything important to them. The whole school RULER approach is embedded in the school to ensure children and staff develop and maintain their emotional intelligence, which benefits everyone. The boarding house has a charter which is a promise made by all boarding children to each other about how they would like the boarding house to feel and what they can do to make sure it happens, and how to manage conflict. We have our Independent Listener visiting every Wednesday at breakfast to maintain her relationship with the boarding children and ensure they know who she is. We have a Pastoral focus within each boarding meeting whereby children can be raised and discussed by any member of the team if they have a relationship or wellbeing concern.

Overseas children can use their mobile devices at specified times in the Drawing Room to communicate with family and friends, at least three times in a week. All boarders are able to use two phone boxes that are free to use.

For those boarders emotionally struggling, a personalised plan is triggered and created by houseparents alongside other relevant members of staff, and communicated to the necessary individuals. The child is then monitored and discussed in boarding meetings to ensure all boarding staff are aware of any actions as part of the plan.

### **Prevention of Neglect**

Our matron team is present 24 hours a day and they have involvement in evening and weekend duties, and boarding meetings to ensure they are aware of all pastoral information. We have Gap Students in our boarding team which helps to bridge the gap between more formal members of teaching staff, and younger team members. We receive daily pastoral updates from the Deputy Head Pastoral which keeps everyone informed of any concerns. We have a sufficient number of staff on duty to enable one to one discussion regularly, and if needed. As before, boarding meetings provide an opportunity for team members to raise anything they are concerned about and all boarding staff have read and understood the relevant policies as part of the boarding and school induction.

### **Access to Internet enabled devices**

Children do not have access to a computer without an adult present. We have a regular visiting outside speaker named Karl Hopwood to update staff, parents and pupils on relevant developments. Children are taught e-safety in computing lessons, the internet is filtered and each child's profile is monitored. We have a 'no device' rule for boarding children, with the exception of overseas children.

### **Prevention of Sexual abuse**

We have a Sex and Relationships Education programme included in the school timetable. Male staff members are not rostered on the girls side of the boarding house in boarding time however, there may be occasions when it is necessary for a male member of staff to be involved with the girls side for a particular reason. The 'bring it to the nest' boxes are available in five different discreet locations on school premises for children to use if they need to let someone know anything which concerns them.

Reviewed by David Lloyd-Peck – September 2021

Monitored by Bob Hammond – September 2021

Next review – September 2022