

POLICY STATEMENT



Policy	Access to Independent Help Policy
ISSR Standard No	8
School Department	Safeguarding

Date Written	13 May 2018
Written by	K Samson
Approved by	SMT
Date of Approval	18 May 2018
Next major review date	August 2018
Location and disseminations	A copy of the policy can be found, in the school admin office and on the school website.
The context of the policy and its relationship to other policies	This policy should be considered in conjunction with other written policies on behaviour, health and safety, medicines, school visits, child protection and safeguarding.

1. Current NMS Regulations State

- 1.1. The school identifies at least one person other than a parent, outside the staff, *and those responsible for the leadership and governance of the school*, who boarders may contact directly about personal problems or concerns at school. Boarders are informed who this person is, and how to contact them and *they are easily accessible*. Boarders are also provided with one or more appropriate helpline(s) or outside telephone numbers, including the *Office of the Children's Commissioner*, to contact in case of problems or distress.

2. Our Practice:

- 2.1. The School produces and advertises all relevant contact details of those who can provide appropriate support for student (staff both in and out of school) – via the website and posters in classrooms and boarding houses. Those details made available include:
 - 2.1.1. Form/House Tutor

- 2.1.2. Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- 2.1.3. Additional DSL
- 2.1.4. Head of Boarding
- 2.1.5. Health and Safety Director
- 2.1.6. Health Centre
- 2.1.7. School Counsellor
- 2.1.8. Independent Listener
- 2.1.9. The Samaritans
- 2.1.10. Childline
- 2.1.11. Office of the Children's Commissioner

2.2. In addition, Boarding Houses have post boxes for students to post concerns anonymously should they choose.

3. The Counsellors:

- 3.1. The School employs the services of two counsellors – one of whom attends the School five days per week and the other is available by appointment. Their services are available for both Day students and Boarders. They can be contacted via the Wellbeing Hub, Health Centre (or using the post boxes in the Health Centre) or by attendance at their “drop in” sessions or even via email (all as detailed on the “Who to Talk to” poster displayed around School. Both counsellors report to the Health Centre and Designated Safeguarding Lead, so that key information can be passed on as appropriate. Confidentiality is maintained unless there is a safeguarding concern and this is discussed with the pupil before the DSL is informed. Parents are not usually informed if a pupil has opted to self-refer or is referred to a counsellor in the Senior School.
- 3.2. In the case of short term or one off access to counselling, there is no charge to parents. In the case of pupils who join Buckswood School with a pre-existing need for ongoing access to counselling, or where long term or more specialist counselling is deemed to be desirable, pupils and parents might be signposted to external counselling services or asked to make alternative private arrangements. It is likely in such instances that a charge will be incurred. The School will do all that it can to facilitate such appointments should this be necessary.

4. The Independent Listener

- 4.1. The School has one Independent Listener. The provision of an Independent Listener ensures that every student who wishes to talk to an independent adult can do so. This provides a possible ‘safety valve’ for pupils with concerns or problems. All students are made aware of the name and contact details of the Independent Listener via the “Who to Talk to?” posters around the School and Boarding Houses. Wherever possible the Independent Listener drops into school to visit an assembly, whole school event, or to visit House meetings, once a year. The Independent Listener is not an employee of the School.
- 4.2. All students are assured of the discrete nature of any communication with the Independent Listener. However, in accordance with the School's Safeguarding Policy it is emphasised that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed if a disclosure of abuse or suspected abuse is made.

- 4.3. The Independent Listener keeps in touch with School as follows:
 - 4.3.1. Immediately contacts the DSL (or another member of SMT if they are unavailable) if they become aware of an urgent concern or safeguarding matter
 - 4.3.2. Routinely reports back at End of a Term – even if “nil return” (recorded by the DSL).
 - 4.3.3. Keeps in touch with the School and familiar with its ethos by attending key events such as the Christmas Carol Service, Sports and Speech Day etc.

5. **Kooth:**

- 5.1. Kooth is a provider of online counselling and emotional well-being platform for children and young people. It is anonymous and is accessible through mobile, tablet and desktop. It is free at the point of use. An early intervention solution, Kooth helps to reduce waiting times for young people seeking help while removing the stigma associated with accessing mental health support. It is available Monday to Friday 12.00 – 22.00 and at the weekend from 18.00 – 22.00. The service is accredited by the BACP and supported by the NHS and Lottery funding. Pupils in the School are made aware of this service through posters with contact details around the school.

APPOINTMENT OF THE INDEPENDENT LISTENER

The following procedure is to be followed in appointing the Independent Listener:

- The School will follow the normal recruitment policy in line with current legislation, National Minimum Standards for Boarding, ISI regulations and KCSIE guidance, including appropriate checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- The Independent Listener will be included in the Single Central Register.
- The Independent Listener will be subject to the School’s policies on Safeguarding and Child Protection, and Whistleblowing.
- This document will be provided to the Independent Listener as a job description.
- The Independent Listener will be provided with an induction which will include safeguarding and child protection training as well as a discussion of the ethos, aims and pastoral care of the School.
- The School will make it clear that the position, which is an unpaid and voluntary role, is to support the boarding students, in particular, and lies outside the School management structure.
- The School will be aware of the Independent Listener’s other roles and experience (e.g. police officer, governor, doctor, vicar, counsellor, local dignitary).
- The School will be aware of the Independent Listener’s own other professional expectations and codes (e.g. religious, medical, counselling).
- The School will make clear to the Independent Listener the rules on confidentiality – especially their duty to breach confidentiality if informed of a safeguarding risk to a student or students.
- The School will ensure that, alongside their understanding of the supportive pastoral structures in place within the School, students are aware of the role of Independent Listener including the rules on confidentiality.