

Non-Recent Child Abuse Policy

This Policy applies to the whole School and is published to staff, pupils and parents

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Table of Contents

1. Our Commitment	2
2. Scope.....	2
3. Responsibilities	2
a. Governors.....	2
b. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT)	3
c. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).....	3
d. Safeguarding Team	3
e. Front Line Call Handlers.....	3
f. All Staff.....	3
4. Making an Allegation of Non-recent Abuse	3
5. Our Response	3
a. Phone calls	3
b. Emails	4
c. Letters	4
d. Speaking to a DSL or a Deputy	4
6. What happens next?	5
a. Acknowledgement	5
b. Support & Advice	5

1. Our Commitment

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, Longridge Towers School's 'Non-recent Child Abuse' Policy is based on five key principles:

Recognise - We listen to, take seriously and act responsibly towards allegations of non-recent abuse.

Respond - We seek to support the welfare of alumni who report non-recent abuse, actively listening to what outcome and support they require.

Report - We share information carefully, ensuring that actions are always respectful, professional, lawful, and based on what we know to be good practice.

Record – We have clearly defined procedures for documenting, updating and reviewing allegations of abuse; which keeps the alumni informed of progress and outcome of any investigation.

Review – We seek to review individual cases and use that learning to continually improve our policies on safeguarding and wellbeing.

The aim of this policy is to clearly explain how someone can report an allegation of non-recent abuse, the support we can offer, our commitment to victims and survivors, demonstrating that we take all allegations of non-recent abuse seriously.

This policy ensures that all staff and Governors at Longridge understand their responsibilities in responding to an allegation of abuse reported by, or on behalf of, a former pupil.

2. Scope

This policy relates specifically to abuse disclosed by, or on behalf of, pupils once they have left the School, including those who left many years ago. Allegations may be made in regard to incidents perpetrated by pupils, 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 non-recent abuse.

Any allegations, relating to a current pupil or staff member (as a victim / survivor or a perpetrator), are managed in accordance with our Safeguarding Policy and procedures and are therefore out of scope of this policy.

Any allegations, regarding a former member of staff, are covered by this policy.

3. Responsibilities

a. Governors

The Board of Governors are accountable for ensuring that we have effective child protection policies and procedures in place that are reviewed regularly. They have a duty of care, which includes taking necessary steps to safeguard and protect pupils, staff and alumni.

The Governors must ensure that there is an effective Policy on 'Non-recent Child Abuse' and that it is implemented effectively.

b. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

The Senior Leadership Team is comprised of the Headmaster, the Finance Director, the Head of Junior Department, the Senior Leader / Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the Deputy Head. They are responsible for the School's response to any allegation of Non-recent abuse and will be informed of any allegation that has been disclosed.

c. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is the identified person who holds responsibility for the implementation of the 'Non-recent Child Abuse Policy' and effective management of disclosures of non-recent abuse. 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 members of SLT on best practice in adhering to this Policy, safer working practices and management of allegations and investigations.

d. Safeguarding Team

There is a small team of Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads, led by the DSL, who are trained to respond appropriately to any allegation of non-recent abuse. They can provide initial support, information and can signpost to external support organisations. They will contact an individual within 5 working days, after receiving an allegation of abuse.

e. Front Line Call Handlers

Staff such as our Receptionists, the Headmaster's PA, the PA to the Head of the Junior Department or the Registrar, will receive most of the calls regarding allegations of non-recent abuse. These staff will receive the call and contact the DSL or another member of SLT. They will probably be the first point of contact and will take down your details and arrange for an SLT member to contact the caller to discuss the allegation further.

f. All Staff

All staff are responsible for ensuring that all non-recent abuse concerns are reported to the DSL, in accordance with this Policy and accompanying Procedures (see section 5 and 6).

4. Making an Allegation of Non-recent Abuse

There are various ways to contact us to report non-recent abuse and to talk about concerns:

- Call the School on 01289 307584 and ask to speak to the DSL
- Email your concerns to enquiries@lts.org.uk
- Write to us at: DSL, Longridge Towers School, Berwick Upon Tweed, TD15 2XQ
- Report your allegation directly to the Police by calling 101
- NSPCC helpline, 0800 136 663 or email help@nspcc.org.uk
- National Association for People Abused in Childhood 0808 8010331
- You can also contact the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry on 0800 0929 300 or talktous@childabuseinquiry.scot or PO BOX 24085, Edinburgh, EH7 9EA

5. Our Response

a. Phone calls

If a member of our staff receives a call regarding allegations of non-recent 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 Longridge?
- 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 above details to the DSL or a Deputy to inform them of the call. A member of SLT will contact the caller within five working days, although they will attempt to contact them sooner, if possible.

If the call is out with normal working hours (Mon-Fri, 9-5), the caller can leave a message asking for the DSL to contact them.

b. Emails

When an allegation is received by email, it will be allocated to the DSL or their Deputy, who will attempt to make contact with the sender within five working days. Emails can be sent to DSL@lts.org.uk.

c. Letters

When an allegation is received by letter, it will be allocated to the DSL or their Deputy, who will aim to contact the sender within five working days of receipt of the letter and otherwise no later than 10 days.

d. Speaking to a DSL or a Deputy

Our DSL has been specially trained to deal with calls of this nature and 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.

Where possible, they will have reviewed the relevant pupil file 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, including Barnardo's Making Connections Service or Child Line.

Our DSL can also provide details of current Safeguarding at the School and can arrange a visit to the School, if the victim/ survivor feels 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.

The DSL will inform the SLT 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 Longridge's policy to refer all potentially criminal allegations of abuse, perpetrated by staff, pupils or third parties, to the police and relevant statutory agencies, as we have a duty of care under law.

It is not Longridge'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 police. We will, however, 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 the School's employment policies.

6. 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 of all that we do. We strive to support former pupils through the disclosure process and beyond. Support may include help from qualified outside agencies, signposting to further support or information on current practices at Longridge today.

a. Acknowledgement

Anyone who reports an allegation of abuse will receive a written acknowledgement of their experience from the DSL.

b. Support & Advice

We are not qualified counsellors and cannot provide long term emotional support to alumni. What we can do is signpost you to other agencies who specialise in this area. This includes the Barnardo's Making Connections Service or NAPAC.