

POLICY ON CONFIDENTIALITY (GIRLS)

Introduction

Child abuse is when someone under 18 is being harmed, or is not being looked after properly. It is no respecter of class, wealth or ethnicity. People who abuse children may look, and otherwise behave, as quite ordinary, respectable people. This can make it difficult for children to be believed or to find help.

Every year in Britain, a large number of babies, young children and teenagers are abused, neglected or deliberately harmed. We have to make sure this isn't happening to girls at QM. We are all of us responsible for protecting children and young people from harm.

Abuse is never right. It is not your choice. The NSPCC says "Abuse is always wrong and it is never the young person's fault."

What is Child Abuse?

The NSPCC defines child abuse as:

"Child abuse is ...when an adult harms a child or a young person under the age of 18..... Child abuse can take four forms, all of which can cause long term damage to a child: physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and child sexual abuse. Bullying and domestic violence are also forms of child abuse.

"A child may be experience abuse if he or she is:

- *Frequently dirty, hungry or inadequately dressed*
- *Left in unsafe situations, or without medical attention*
- *Constantly "put down," insulted, sworn at or humiliated*
- *Seems afraid of parents or carers*
- *Severely bruised or injured*
- *Displays sexual behaviour which doesn't seem appropriate for their age*
- *Growing up in a home where there is domestic violence*
- *Living with parents or carers involved in serious drug or alcohol abuse*

"Remember, this list does not cover every child abuse possibility"

What can you do if you are worried?

Although it may be difficult, it is important to talk to somebody:

- If it happens to you, tell someone whom you trust, at once. You need help.
- If it happens to a friend, advise them to tell someone at once. He or she needs help.

Who can you talk to?

Miss Amanda Proctor is the School's Child Protection Officer. You can see her at any time if you are being abused, or someone that you know is being abused. You should speak to her even if the abuse is taking place outside school.

Some people may prefer to speak to one of the Sisters, the Chaplain, the School Counsellor, or to another member of staff. The important thing is that you talk to someone whom you trust, who will listen to you.

Want to talk to someone outside QM

The Duty Team, Childrens' Services: 01904 554141

Family Protection Unit 08456 060247

Childline is a free confidential helpline for children and young people. You can call any time on 0800 11 11, or look at their website at www.childline.org.uk

Kidscape has helpful advice on www.kidscape.org.uk

Relate 01904 625971

Castlegate (Support & Advice for Young Adults) 01904 555400

The NSPCC have a contact line on 0808 800 5000 for children and young people. Their website is www.nspcc.org.uk/kidszone.

The Samaritans can be called at any time on 08457 909090

Another website which is helpful is www.worriedneed2talk.org.uk

What happens next?

Whoever you talk to in school will take you seriously, but won't ask too many questions. It is important to get the right people, who are experienced in keeping children & young people safe to come and help you. We have to ask experts to advise you. We will work to keep you safe; but you may also need professional support.

We promise to do all we can to ensure that the other parts of your life are not disrupted more than is necessary.

Please remember **no** member of QM staff is allowed to keep this type of information to themselves. They have to pass it on, so that help can be obtained. However, only those who need to know will be told. We will explain this at the time and tell you who has to be told and the reason. We will suggest that you talk to them yourself.

REMEMBER - nobody has the right to abuse children. It is very important that you tell someone.

See also

Anti-bullying policy
Boarding Handbooks
Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy
School rules (Calendar)
Worries & Complaints
Esafety guidelines

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