

# Policy on the protection of children and adolescents

## 1. Educational context

Since its foundation in 1565, Herlufsholm skole has been committed to an educational philosophy where young people are challenged to take on responsibility. This concept depends on the health and well-being of every individual member of the school community.

The school leadership and members of staff of Herlufsholm skole have a duty to care for children and adolescents who are members of the school community. These individuals (pupils) are the legal wards of Herlufsholm skole. In this respect Herlufsholm skole supports and protects each pupil's dignity and personal integrity. Children's rights as defined by the Danish constitution, civil law and social statutes as well as the UN convention on the rights of the child form the basis of our policy.

## 2. Responsibilities of the School Leadership

### 2.1 The School Leadership ensures;

2.1.1 that responsible members of staff take necessary steps to protect and reinforce the self-esteem and self-confidence of each pupil;

2.1.2 that all members of the school community (pupils and members of staff) experiencing personal difficulty or who recognise a need in others have a responsible person to turn to;

2.1.3 that parents of pupils who have experienced mistreatment are informed promptly and appropriately by a member of the school leadership. In the event of an incident involving sexual abuse school leadership informs the social services in accordance with Danish law. If the student is under 18, the parents will be made aware of this.

2.1.4 that opportunities for external counselling and support are available to pupils and their families, should this be deemed appropriate.

### 2.2 The School Leadership is committed to fostering a supportive, protective environment in which members of the school community can flourish in that;

2.2.1 threats to the safety of members of the school community are identified (eg. Fire, school shooting) and require the preparation and review of alarm plans in cooperation with relevant competent authorities. There is a designated crisis team ready to react in a prescribed manner should an emergency situation arise.

2.2.2 The school leadership ensures professional care and support for its pupils and encourages behavior that reflects a mutual respect between all members of the school community.

2.2.3 A new contract of employment is signed only after confirmation of police clearance.

2.2.4 members of staff are made aware of the issues of mistreatment and abuse. They are also informed of the warning signs which may indicate that a pupil has been mistreated in some way.

2.2.5 the observance of pupils' rights is upheld at all times and necessary strategies for assurance are adapted according to new and relevant guidelines as they are published.

## 3. Responsibilities of members of staff:

3.1 All adults employed at Herlufsholm Skole who work directly with pupils share a responsibility for their well-being. Members of staff are obliged to report any incident where the rights of the children under their care are violated to the school leadership (see 3.2), including cases where this violation is brought about by fellow pupils. This report is confidential and is not for the attention of any other third party. Not only the teaching staff, but also non-teaching and support staff, trainee teachers and freelance staff declare, are expected to act accordingly.

3.2 The school leadership and the boarding school head must be informed of every case of mistreatment of a pupil for whom they are responsible. The case in question is dealt with confidentially and, after advice has been sought, a decision will be made as to the involvement of further parties.

Similarly they will decide if involvement of medical, pastoral or counselling professionals is desirable to ensure a response appropriate to the needs of the pupil in question and others who may be involved.

3.3 Members of staff are approachable, supportive and encourage pupils in their academic and personal development. At the same time they maintain a professional distance, respecting pupils' privacy.

Due to the nature of their work, staff responsible for boarding houses throughout the school, as well as other colleagues involved in supporting the boarding school, develop close relationships with the pupils entrusted to their care.

Members of staff avoid situations in which their actions or words may be misunderstood or misrepresented.

Specifically, physical and verbal abuse is neither permitted nor is it justifiable. Comments that demean, discriminate or violate personal privacy are avoided.

#### **4. Responsibilities of the pupils**

4.1 All pupils at Herlufsholm skole share responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of their fellow-pupils. It is their duty, when aware of violations of the rights of other pupils, to ask the perpetrator(s) to stop acting in a hurtful way. Should this course of action prove unsuccessful, it is a pupil's duty to report the case.

4.2 It is forbidden to use physical violence or verbal abuse. This is also applicable to jokes, allusions and remarks, etc. that discriminate or affect a person's privacy.

4.3 Any violence against fellow-pupils may, upon prior review of the individual case, lead to expulsion from the school and boarding school.

4.4 Pupils who experience violence personally or witness it in their surroundings should inform members of the school staff or call anyone from the Senior Leadership Team.

#### **5. Suspected abuse – identification and response**

##### **5.1. What is meant by mistreatment of a pupil?**

###### **5.1.1 Neglect:**

the result of ignoring a child's developmental needs or not providing adequate supervision.

###### **5.1.2 Emotional mistreatment:**

rejecting a child, refusing to acknowledge a child or deliberately making him unhappy through verbal abuse.

###### **5.1.3 Physical mistreatment:**

the result of the use of excessive physical force by an adult or a fellow pupil.

###### **5.1.4 Sexual abuse:**

In addition to the criminal acts defined by Danish criminal law this policy applies when a member of staff makes or attempts to initiate contact of a sexual nature with a pupil regardless of whether that pupil, a ward of the school, is of full legal age or not.

Furthermore this policy applies to sexual contact between pupils which one of those involved does not understand, cannot give consent to, and/or which cause emotional and/or physical harm.

Inappropriate behaviour, which harms another person and touching, is included expressly in this definition.

###### **5.1.5 Abuse with help of media**

The breach of personal rights (informational self-determination and data protection) of staff and pupils by illegal use of digital or other media.

## **5. 2. How may mistreatment be revealed?**

Behaviour that is out of character is not in itself an indication of mistreatment. Nonetheless, there are three ways in which the suspicion of mistreatment may be raised:

5.2.1 through observations of signs and symptoms:

- unusual behaviour,
- unexplained injuries,
- emotional withdrawal – showing lack of trust in adults,
- eating problems,
- not growing or putting on weight,
- timidity and nervousness,
- mood-swings or aggression,
- deterioration in academic work or under-achievement,
- tiredness;

5.2.2 through allegations or reports of mistreatment made by another person, perhaps a concerned pupil or parent;

5.2.3 by admission from the child that he is being mistreated.

## **5.3. Response when mistreatment is suspected or reported:**

5.3.1 If any member of staff:

- suspects that mistreatment is occurring,
- identifies a case of mistreatment,
- is concerned that school practices or the behaviour of others may be putting a child at risk, he must
- record relevant information,
- not make any attempt to investigate the incident themselves,
- treat the incident with strict confidentiality and report it to a member of school leadership or the head immediately.

5.3.2. If a member of staff has an incident, complaint or suspicion reported to him, he must

- immediately stop any other activity to listen,
- not ask leading questions,
- not give assurances of confidentiality, but guarantee that only those that need to know will be informed,

after the conversation:

- record relevant information,
- not make any attempt to investigate the incident themselves,
- treat the incident with strict confidentiality and report it to the school's leadership or the head immediately.

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Leadership Team Herlufsholm Skole



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