



Independent Person Policy

Scope:	Senior School (Including Boarding)
Release date:	September 2023
Author:	Senior Deputy Head Senior School
Reviewer:	International Director
Approval body:	Board of Directors <i>released pending ratification at Michaelmas Term Edcomm Meeting</i>
Review date:	September 2024

Linked Documents

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the:

- Safeguarding Policy (A6)
- Medical Policy

Availability

This Policy may be viewed on the School website, and a printed copy is available upon request from the School Office/Pupil Services Team.

Outline of Need

Wisbech Grammar School believes that the pastoral systems we have put in place provide equal opportunities to our pupils through a supportive and empathetic environment in which each individual should feel valued and free to develop their own personality and potential while discovering how to be a positive and contributing member of society. We aim to ensure that our community is one in which harassment, discrimination or any form of child-on-child abuse is not tolerated. Each pupil knows that any member of staff is available for advice and support including the Senior Deputy Head, Head of Boarding, the wider boarding team and any member of the teaching staff. All are made aware that the School Nurse and counsellor are available to be seen to discuss any problems they are having and that information will only be passed on if there is a safeguarding concern. We place great emphasis on Pastoral Care and feel that the systems in place effectively support our pupils with their wellbeing and mental health

We also recognise that there may be occasions when a pupil wishes to speak with someone who is not part of the School staff or the Board of Directors. The National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (September 2023) states that '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 children may contact directly about personal problems or concerns at the school. This person may be known as the 'independent person'. Children know who this person is, know how to contact them and feel comfortable talking to them. The person is easily accessible.'

Wisbech Grammar School has two Independent People who act in this capacity.

Jeijing Hao
Guardian – Access Education UK
309 Signals Drive,
Coventry,
CV3 1PA.
Mobile: 07760655888.
Email: jhao@access-edu.co.uk

Canon Matthew Bradbury
Priest-in-charge of St Peter and St Paul Wisbech
Rural Dean, Wisbech Lynn Marshland
The Vicarage, Love Lane, Wisbech, PE13 1HP
Tel: 01945 739680
Email: Matthewbrad@hotmail.co.uk

These contact details are displayed on House noticeboard alongside those of the Children's Commissioner and Childline.

The Role of an Independent Person

An Independent Person will act as a confidential and supportive adult to boarders in the House who wish to discuss concerns or worries. In a similar way to any member of staff, including the School Counsellor, School Nurse and Pastoral Staff, confidentiality cannot be maintained in a case where there is concern for the welfare or safety of the boarders (or others) as a consequence of any discussion with an Independent Person. An Independent Person should inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Senior Deputy Head), or, in specific situations as detailed in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, the Cambridgeshire Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub

Other than as set out above, there is no requirement for an Independent Person to report to the School any of the conversations they have with boarders.

An Independent Person, with explicit agreement from/at the request of a boarder, may contact the School to share specific details or raise particular concerns.

At their discretion, an Independent Person can report to the relevant Resident Tutor, Head of Boarding, Senior Deputy Head or Headmaster generic information such as the number of calls they receive and any particular themes that arise in conversations.

An Independent Person will visit the House on occasion (at least termly), have lunch/supper with the boarders and staff and familiarise themselves with the House on an informal basis.

There will be no expectation that an Independent Person make themselves available in person for face-face meetings with the boarders

It is expected that our international pupils will access support in the main through Jiejing Hao, the school guardian, as this will be in their native language, however now that boarding has been running for two years, we are aware that many pupils possess a good level of conversational English, and further to this might welcome a second layer of support in the form of a local volunteer independent of the school and their educational agency.

Appointment of an Independent Person

In the case of someone carrying out the role voluntarily

- The School will follow its normal recruitment policy in line with current legislation, National Minimum Standards for Boarding, ISI regulations and KCSIE (2023) guidance, including appropriate checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service,
- The Independent Person will be included in the Single Central Register,
- The Independent Person will be subject to the School's policies on Safeguarding and Child Protection, and Whistleblowing,
- The School will make it clear that the position, which is an unpaid and voluntary role, is to support the boarders, and lies outside the School management structure,
- The School will be aware of an Independent Person's other roles and experience (e.g. police officer, governor, doctor, vicar, counsellor, local dignitary),
- The School will be aware of the Independent Person's own other professional expectations and codes (e.g. religious, medical, counselling),
- The School will make clear to the Independent Person the rules on confidentiality – especially their duty to breach confidentiality if informed of a safeguarding risk to boarders (or others),
- The School will ensure that, alongside their understanding of the supportive pastoral structures in place within the School, boarders are aware of the role of Independent Person including the rules on confidentiality.

In the case of the role being fulfilled by a Guardian Paid by the Parents of Pupils:

- The School will ensure the Agency has fulfilled their safer recruitment policy
- The school will have in its possession a copy of the safer recruitment policy
- The school will ask for it to be confirmed that the Independent person has a valid DBS Certificate
- The school will have a copy of the agency's safeguarding policy
- The School will ensure that the Independent person has been safeguarding trained in their setting
- The School will keep in contact with the agency's safeguarding lead to discuss procedures and share policies
- The School will make clear to the Independent Person the rules on confidentiality – especially their duty to breach confidentiality if informed of a safeguarding risk to boarders (or others).
- The School will ensure that, alongside their understanding of the supportive pastoral structures in place within the School, boarders are aware of the role of Independent Person including the rules on confidentiality.