



Independent Person Policy and Job Description

2023-2024

The school has a system whereby any child who wishes to talk to an independent adult can do so. The independent person can be identified by posters around school in classrooms, the boarding house and in public places. The independent person has gone through a full recruitment process. This is a confidential system and the independent person is under no obligation to inform the school of any calls unless there is a safeguarding concern where the child is at risk of harm to themselves or others. The children are also able to contact our Chaplain at Sherborne School, and also Sherborne Girls School Chaplin, as well as Childline and ISI:

- Sarah Edwards sarah.c.edwards63@gmail.com
- Dr. David Campbell 01935810498 / 07402633600 / david.campbell@sherborne.org
- Reverend Katie Windle 07834762742 / k.windle@sherborne.com
- Childline: 0800 1111

ISI: (0300 123 1231)

The Children's Commissioner: Dame Rachel de Souza: 02077838330

[Children's Commissioner for England \(childrenscommissioner.gov.uk\)](http://childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)

Independent Listeners

The National Minimum Standards for Boarding Standards (NMS) requires schools to appoint an independent person, as a possible 'safety valve' for pupils with concerns or problems.

The following procedure is to be followed in any appointments:

1. Appointment procedures will follow the NMS Staff recruitment standards (NMS Standard 14)
2. This will be accompanied by an appropriate job description and briefing / induction
3. The position, which is an unpaid and voluntary role, is independent of the main lines of school management, but still subject to the school's specification and organisation
4. There needs to be an awareness of perception of other roles held (e.g. governor, doctor, chaplain, vicar, counsellor, local dignitary)
5. The position is subject to the usual child protection, welfare and 'whistle-blowing' requirements
6. If required, there must be carefully-planned access for pupils – time, place, ease of access, risks assessed and recorded
7. There must be clear rules on confidentiality – and duty to breach if informed of welfare risk to pupil or other pupils; no absolute guarantees of secrecy
8. The Independent Person will be briefed on specific situations to be aware of, and school policy e.g. bullying, drugs
9. They will clarify the relationship with their own other professional expectations and codes e.g. religious, medical
10. Extent of awareness amongst pupils – person, role, rules, access
11. Double feedback – this will come from the Independent Person regarding general welfare issues raised (not specific instances) from pupils regarding the service, and their ease of access to it

12. The Independent Person will need to have knowledge of 'school norms and expectations' including current issues, National Minimum Standards etc This will be done through regular training and communication with the Deputy Head (Pastoral)

Role and Job description:

ROLE OF THE INDEPENDENT PERSON:

1. The Independent Person will act as a confidential and supportive adult to students who wish to discuss concerns or worries. In a similar way to any member of staff, confidentiality cannot be maintained in a case where there is concern for the welfare or safety of the student (or others) as a consequence of any discussion with the Independent Person. In these situations, the Independent Person should inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or, in specific situations as detailed in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, the LADO team or the Police.

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

However:

- a. The Independent Person, with explicit agreement from/at the request of a student, may contact the School to share specific details or raise particular concerns.
- b. At their discretion, the Independent Person can report to the Deputy Head Pastoral or Head generic information such as the number of calls they receive.

3. The Independent Person will visit the school on occasion so the children are aware of who they are and the Independent Person role.

4. There will be no expectation that the Independent Person make themselves available in person for face to face meetings with the pupils.

APPOINTMENT OF THE INDEPENDENT PERSON

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 Person will be included in the Single Central Register.
- The Independent Person will be subject to school policy 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 pupils and lies outside the school management structure.
- The School will be aware of the 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 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 Person including the rules on confidentiality.

Date: Sept 2023
Author: Deputy Head Pastoral
Owner: Pastoral

Document No: SPS_DHP_021
Version: 002