

Independent Person Policy (formally 'Independent Listener')

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Introduction

The name of this document has been updated to reflect the change in the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (NMS) published in September 2022 specific to Standard 11.4. Formally known as 'Independent Listener', documents and posters will henceforth refer to an 'Independent *Person*' although the practical use of *Listener* and *Person* will be considered indistinguishable and interchangeable at Guildhouse School for the foreseeable future. This is because 'Independent Listener' is known nomenclature within our environment and changing it after it has been introduced to students presents a material risk of confusion.

The National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (NMS) require that at least one person other than a parent, member of staff and those responsible for the leadership and governance of the school, who boarders may contact directly about personal problems or concerns at school.

The Independent Person system is confidential, and Independent Persons are under no obligation to inform the school of every contact. Independent Persons may visit the school throughout the year to make themselves known to staff and students.

Any student who wishes to talk to an independent adult about personal problems or concerns at school can do so. Details of the Independent Person are on display within the Boarding House.

Role Context

The Independent Person must be student focused however sympathetic they may be to other points of view. The function is to complement the work and activities of school staff and parents.

In bringing this autonomous perspective, the Independent Person must behave in an anti-discriminatory manner. The Independent Person is not expected to accept unquestioningly what those responsible for the student tell them is in the student's interests but should remain open-minded and foster a healthy scepticism.

Problems and Decisions

The Independent Person will consult and work primarily with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Boarding Staff. They will work within school policies and procedures. All grievances or disputes should follow the procedures and guidance within the applicable school policy.

Supervision

Supervision arrangements should be discussed with the DSL to ascertain whether the Independent Person is able to arrange peer supervision. If they are unable to do so supervision will be arranged with the DSL.

Job Description

OVERVIEW OF THE ROLE

As described within the National Minimum Standards for Boarding the Independent Person is a person outside the staff and those responsible for the leadership and governance of the school, who students may contact directly about personal problems or concerns at the school.

REPORTS TO

You will be directly responsible to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. You will work within the framework set by and under the general direction of the Headteacher.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ROLE

In consultation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, you will:

- At all times work in the best interests of the student
- If contacted by a student, provide an opportunity for them to talk through problems and issues in a safe and non-discriminatory manner
- Encourage the students to participate in decisions affecting them
- Keep accurate and confidential records bearing in mind that some students wish to remain anonymous
- Provide feedback to the Designated Safeguarding Lead for reports, reviews and other meetings
- Work in a student-centred manner, being clear about confidentiality and where boundaries lie
- Take into account the school's views on the student's needs, as well as the student's wishes and views

SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITIES

- Know the identity of the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Proactively be alert to indicators of potential safeguarding issues
- Be aware of the school's Safeguarding Policy and to follow its requirements
- Attend training relating to Safeguarding provided by the school as required
- Safeguarding and child protection issues arising from conversations with students should be reported immediately. This may be a direct referral, or concerns may be passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Engage in safe practice and professional conduct to safeguard students to mitigate against the potential for misunderstandings or situations being misconstrued
- The school is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of students and expect the same from its volunteers, employees and representatives

DURATION

The initial arrangement will be for a period of 12 months. After which time the Independent Person will be expected to provide an anonymised summary of contacts from students during that period.

After 12 months the arrangement will be reviewed by the Headteacher and the Designated Safeguarding Lead. However, if for any reason you are unable to continue with the role you should contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as is reasonably practicable.

FOR REFERENCE

The Independent Person is expected to follow KCSIE (2024), Working Together (2018) and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (2023).



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