



# GORDONSTOUN

## Historical Child Abuse Policy

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## I: OUR COMMITMENT

Gordonstoun recognises that abuse during childhood can have wide-ranging and serious consequences for that individual. For some victims and survivors these effects endure throughout adult life. In acknowledging this impact, Gordonstoun's 'Historical Child Abuse' Policy is based on five key principles:

**Recognise** - Gordonstoun listens to, takes seriously and acts responsibly towards allegations of historical abuse.

**Respond** - Gordonstoun seeks to support the welfare of alumni who report historical abuse, actively listening to what outcome and support they require.

**Report** - Gordonstoun shares information carefully, ensuring that actions are always respectful, professional, lawful, and based on what we know to be good practice.

**Record** – Gordonstoun has clearly defined procedures for documenting, updating and reviewing allegations of abuse; which keeps the alumni informed of progress and outcome of any investigation.

**Review** – Gordonstoun seeks to review individual cases and use that learning to continually improve its policies on safeguarding and wellbeing.

The aim of this policy is to clearly explain how someone can report an allegation of historic abuse, the support we can offer, our commitment to victims and survivors, demonstrating that Gordonstoun takes all allegations of historic abuse seriously.

This policy ensures that all staff and governors at Gordonstoun understand their responsibilities in responding to an allegation of abuse reported by, or on behalf of, a former student.

## 2: SCOPE

This policy relates specifically to abuse disclosed by, or on behalf of, students once they have left the school, including those who left many years ago. Allegations may be made in regards to incidents perpetrated by students, staff or visitors past and present.

All staff and governors are instructed to familiarise themselves with this policy, so they are clear about their role, responsibility and expectations in responding to an allegation of historic abuse.

Any allegations, relating to a current student (as a victim / survivor or a perpetrator), are managed in accordance with Gordonstoun's Wellbeing and Child Protection Policy and Procedures and are therefore out of scope of this policy.

Any allegations, regarding a current member of staff, are managed in accordance with Gordonstoun's Wellbeing and Child Protection Policy and Procedures and are therefore out of scope of this policy.

Any allegations, regarding a former member of staff, are covered by this policy.

## **3: RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Governors**

The Board of Governors are accountable for ensuring that we have effective child protection policies and procedures in place that are reviewed regularly. They are also accountable for the provision of the Named Person Service. They have a duty of care, which includes taking necessary steps to safeguard and protect students and alumni.

The Governors must ensure that there is an effective Policy on 'Historical Child Abuse' and that it is implemented effectively.

### **The School Executive**

The School Executive is comprised of the Principal, the Bursar, the Head of Senior School and the Head of Junior School. They are responsible for the School's response to any allegation of historic abuse and will be informed of any allegation that has been disclosed.

### **The Designated Child Protection Lead**

Is the identified person (currently the Deputy Head Pastoral) who holds responsibility for the implementation of the 'Historical Child Abuse Policy' and effective management of disclosures of historic abuse. This includes initiating preliminary enquiries into alleged concerns and reporting to the relevant statutory agencies. In addition, they will provide advice and support to the Principal and other senior members of staff on best practice in adhering to this Policy and Procedures, safer working practices and management of allegations and investigations.

### **Alumni Response**

There is a small team, called Alumni Response, who are trained to respond appropriately to any allegation of historic abuse. They can provide initial support, information and can signpost to external support organisations. They will contact an individual within 5 working days, after receiving an allegation of abuse.

### **Front Line Call Handlers**

Staff such as our Receptionists, the Principal's PA, the Gordonstoun Alumni Office, secretaries and the Marketing Team, will receive most of the calls regarding allegations of historic abuse. These staff have been given training, in order to best handle calls of this nature. They will probably be your first point of contact and will take down your details and arrange for a member of Alumni Response to contact you to discuss your allegation further.

### **All Staff**

All staff are responsible for ensuring that all historic/non-recent abuse concerns are reported to the Designated Child Protection Lead, in accordance with this Policy and accompanying Procedures.

## 4: MAKING AN ALLEGATION OF HISTORIC ABUSE

There are various ways to contact us to report historic abuse and to talk about concerns:

- Call the school on 01343 837 837 and ask to speak to Alumni Response
- Email your concerns to [alumniresponse@gordonstoun.org.uk](mailto:alumniresponse@gordonstoun.org.uk)
- Write to us at: Alumni Response, Gordonstoun, Elgin, Moray, IV30 5RF
- Report your allegation directly to the Police by calling 101
- You can also contact the [Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry](https://www.scottishchildabuseinquiry.scot) on 0800 0929 300 or [talktous@childabuseinquiry.scot](mailto:talktous@childabuseinquiry.scot) or PO BOX 24085, Edinburgh, EH7 9EA

## 5: OUR RESPONSE

### Phone calls

If a member of frontline staff receives a call regarding allegations of historic abuse, callers are asked not to tell their story in the first phone call, but instead the person taking the call (the call handler) will take down contact details and assure the caller that a designated specialist will call them back. Details will be recorded and include:

- Name (if the caller wishes to disclose this)
- Preferred method of contact & contact details
- The preferred time for us to call back
- If someone else answers their phone, can we identify ourselves as Gordonstoun?
- Is it safe to leave a voicemail identifying ourselves?
- Years attended school (if this is applicable and if the caller wishes to disclose this)

The call handler will email the details to Alumni Response to inform them of the call. A member of Alumni Response will contact the caller within 5 working days, although they will attempt to contact them as soon as possible.

If the call is out with normal working hours (Mon-Fri, 9-5), they can go through to the on-call member of SLT (Senior Leadership Team), who will pass the same details to Alumni Response, who will contact them within 5 working days.

### Emails

When an allegation is received by email, it will be allocated to Alumni Response, who will attempt to make contact with the sender within 5 working days.

### Letters

When an allegation is received by letter, it will be allocated to Alumni Response Team, who will aim to contact the sender within 5 working days of receipt of the letter and otherwise no later than 10 days.

## **Speaking to Alumni Response**

The team has been specially trained to deal with calls of this nature and understand the wide-ranging impact that childhood abuse and trauma can have on an individual. They also understand that every individual's experience is unique. They will listen carefully, sympathetically and acknowledge the experience.

They will have reviewed the relevant student file before calling, emailing or writing to the victim/survivor. They will also seek to ascertain what next steps, or outcome, the victim/survivor is looking for in terms of their case. They can signpost to further support, including Barnardo's Making Connections Service. They can provide details of current Child Protection and Wellbeing at the school and can arrange a visit to the school, if the victim/survivor feels it would be beneficial to their recovery.

They will record the details of the allegation electronically, which will be securely logged on to our computer system. This will be immediately passed to the Designated Child Protection Lead and the case discussed.

The School Executive will then be informed of the case.

Next steps will depend on what actions the victim/survivor would like to see.

It is important to note that it is Gordonstoun's policy to refer all potentially criminal allegations of abuse, perpetrated by staff, students or third parties, to the police and relevant statutory agencies, as we have a duty of care under law.

It is not Gordonstoun's role to investigate allegations of abuse, as we are not qualified or able to do this. Investigations are conducted by statutory agencies such as the police. Gordonstoun will work closely with these agencies to assist with any investigation. Where an allegation concerns a current member of staff, as well as reporting to statutory agencies, Gordonstoun will apply its employment policies.

## **6: WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?**

Gordonstoun recognises that each person's case is individual to their circumstances and experiences. We will tailor our response accordingly, with the person at the centre. Gordonstoun strives to support former students through the disclosure process and beyond. Support may include help from qualified outside agencies, signposting to further support or information on current practices at Gordonstoun today.

### **Acknowledgement**

Anyone who reports an allegation of abuse will receive a written acknowledgement of their experience from the school Principal.

### **Support & Advice**

We are not qualified counsellors and cannot provide long term emotional support to alumni. What we can do is signpost you to other agencies who specialise in this area. This includes the Barnardo's Making Connections Service.

### ***Barnardo's Making Connections Service***

In 2017 Gordonstoun initiated a consultation with former students, carried out by Professor Andrew Kendrick of the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children (CELCIS). Professor Kendrick gave a clear recommendation that some former students would value an independent point of contact for those who would like to speak about their experiences but who understandably don't feel comfortable, or able, to contact the School directly. Gordonstoun has therefore commissioned the Barnardo's to provide this service.

They will work with former Gordonstoun students, for as long as needed, to help them shape a plan for on-going support and/or counselling. They can also provide support throughout the process of reporting allegations to the police, where this is necessary.

All discussions with Making Connections will be confidential unless a child may currently be at risk, in which case they have a duty to report to the police. Barnardo's will hold records of individuals that access their service, independently from Gordonstoun, and will only inform the school of specific personal details if given permission by the individual.

**PLEASE NOTE:** As of December 2020 Barnardo's are not currently able to offer this service due to the impact of Covid-19 on service delivery.

### **Reporting to Police / Criminal Proceedings**

As we have stated above, we will refer all potentially criminal allegations of abuse, perpetrated by staff, students or third parties, to the police and/or relevant statutory agencies.

In cases where there is a potentially criminal act, but the victim/survivor does not wish to make a report, or share their details with the police, Gordonstoun will share intelligence with the police anonymously, not sharing the victim/survivor's name.

If you do wish to make a formal report to the police, we will support you in this and assist in the investigation in any way that we can. Gordonstoun itself does not investigate cases, as we are not qualified to do so, but will work closely with police in any investigation.

### **Engaging with the School**

Some people find it useful to call or visit the school to see how it has changed and speak to the current Pastoral Team about how we manage Child Protection and Wellbeing in the present day. We are happy to accommodate this, if it is an avenue that you are interested in. We can also provide you with a copy of our current Wellbeing and Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

### **Accessing your school file**

Former students can make a written request to access their school file. We will apply the principles of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR in dealing with that request.

### **Civil litigation**

Some may wish to initiate civil proceedings against the school. Gordonstoun maintains appropriate insurance premiums to cover future financial compensation claims, from alumni reporting allegations

of historic abuse. The School Executive will ensure that our insurers and solicitors are kept appropriately informed of all cases that involve potential civil litigation proceedings.

## **7: OUTCOMES & LEARNING**

Gordonstoun will review each case that we receive and the learnings from those reviews will inform and develop our best practise in how we respond to allegations of Historic Abuse and our Child Wellbeing Policy.

Gordonstoun is committed to gaining as much knowledge as it can about historical abuse and disseminating this learning in order to promote effective practice and inter-agency working.

Quarterly meetings will be held with the Principal, Designated Child Protection Lead and Alumni Response Team to discuss cases and identify any patterns or learnings from them. Standing agenda items will include:

- Updates on Existing Cases
- New Allegations
- Best Practice and News in the Sector
- Training Needs

# APPENDIX A: LINKS TO SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS

## General Support:

Citizens Advice [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

Future Pathways <https://future-pathways.co.uk/>

The National Association for People Abused in Childhood (NAPAC) [www.napac.org.uk](http://www.napac.org.uk)

National Confidential Forum [www.nationalconfidentialforum.org.uk](http://www.nationalconfidentialforum.org.uk)

Rape Crisis England & Wales [www.rapecrisis.org.uk](http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk)

Rape Crisis Scotland [www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk](http://www.rapecrisisscotland.org.uk)

Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry [www.childabuseinquiry.scot](http://www.childabuseinquiry.scot)

Scottish Childhood Abuse [www.mygov.scot/childhood-abuse](http://www.mygov.scot/childhood-abuse)

Speak out Scotland [www.speakoutscotland.org](http://www.speakoutscotland.org)

The Samaritans [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

The Survivors Trust (TST) [www.thesurvivorstrust.org](http://www.thesurvivorstrust.org)

## Legal Advice & Support:

Citizen's Advice Bureau <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/family/children-and-young-people/child-abuse/financial-compensation-for-child-abuse/>

Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/criminal-injuries-compensation-authority>

Law Society of Scotland can help you find a Scottish solicitor specialising in this area of law <https://www.lawscot.org.uk/find-a-solicitor/>

Legal Aid Scotland can help you find a Scottish solicitor who specialises in this type of law and who offers Legal Aid <https://www.slab.org.uk/public/solicitor-finder/>

Scottish Women's Rights Centre <https://www.scottishwomensrightscentre.org.uk/> Freephone 08088 010 789

Victim Support Scotland <https://www.victimsupportsco.org.uk/>

## For the families of those affected by non-recent abuse:

MOSAC was established almost 30 years ago and provides supportive services to non-abusing parents and carers whose children have been sexually abused. Along with counselling and therapy for vicarious trauma, they provide parents with advice on how to talk to and support their children <https://mosac.org.uk/>