



INDEPENDENT PERSON POLICY

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Reviewer(s)	Director Of Safeguarding, Mental Health, and Wellbeing
Approved by	Principal
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INTRODUCTION

The National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (NMS), 2022 require the Worthgate School to identify at least one person other than a parent, outside the staff, and those responsible for the leadership and governance of the School, who boarders may contact directly about personal problems or concerns at the 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 displayed around the School and within all Boarding Houses.

ROLE CONTEXT

The Independent Person must be student focused, however sympathetic 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 with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who is also the Director of Safeguarding, Mental Health, and Wellbeing, and students. They will work within all School policies and procedures. All grievances or disputes should follow the procedures and guidance within the applicable School's policies.

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.

ROLE DESCRIPTION

OVERVIEW OF THE ROLE

As described within the National Minimum Standards for Boarding (2022) 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 School.

REPORTS TO

The Independent Person will be directly responsible to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). They will work within the framework set by and under the general direction of the Principal.

CONCERNS AND DECISIONS

The Independent Person will consult and work primarily with the 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.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ROLE

In consultation with the DSL, they 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 DSL for reports, reviews, and other meetings.
- Work in a student-centred manner, being clear about confidentiality and where boundaries lie.
- Consider the School views on the student's needs, as well as the student's wishes and views.

SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITIES:

- To know the identity of the School's DSL and Deputy DSLs.
- Proactively be alert to indicators of potential safeguarding issues.
- Be aware of the Worthgate School's Child Protection and 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 to social care, or concerns may be passed to the DSL.
- Engage in safe practice and professional conduct to safeguard students to mitigate against the potential for misunderstandings or situations being misconstrued.

The Worthgate School is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of students and expects 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 to the DSL.

After 12 months the Principal and the DSL will review the arrangement. However, if for any reason the Independent Person is unable to continue with the role, they should contact the DSL as soon as is reasonably practicable.

ETHICS AND BEHAVIOUR

The Independent Person is expected to follow Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024), Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (2022).

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Knowledge, Experience and Training

The Independent Person should have qualities, skills, experience and/or qualifications in other settings that enable them to undertake work in a professional capacity with students. These may include:

- An understanding and empathy with the needs of School age students.
- An understanding and appreciation of the difficulties caused by living away from home.
- The ability to work flexibly with a variety of adults and students.
- An understanding of Good Care Practice and Principles.
- An appreciation of the Children's Act 1989, the Children's Act 2004, and the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (2022) and other relevant legislation.
- Qualifications/experience in counselling and/or other relevant disciplines.

RELATED POLICIES:

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Confidentiality Policy