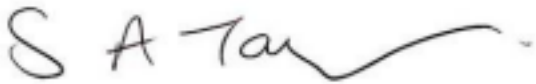


Residential Independent Person Policy & Role 2026



Achievement Beyond Expectation

Policy Ratified on	13/03/2026
Signed Chair of Governors	n/a
Signed Headteacher	



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1. Description

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 at all reasonable times, visits regularly (at least monthly), and knows the children. The person should have the necessary skills to interact and communicate effectively with the children and be able to recognise good/poor care and safeguarding concerns. Children who cannot communicate verbally are given the means to request individual support. Schools may need to make a range of arrangements for independent support, which might be provided by more than one person, to ensure that the needs of each child are met.

• Reports to: Residential Manager

2. Introduction

- Sidestrand Hall School operates a system whereby any child or young person who wishes to talk to an independent adult about personal problems or concerns at school/boarding can do so. Details including email, phone number and dates of visits of Independent Listeners are displayed in each of the boarding houses.
- The Independent person system is confidential and the Independent person is under no obligation to inform the School of any calls unless there are clear safeguarding issues. The Independent person will also visit the boarding provision once every month to make themselves known to staff and children/young people in boarding.
- The role of Independent person is expected to follow all policies and procedures driven by the *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, (DfE, September 2022—all parts), *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, (DfE, 2015) and the *National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools* (DfE September 5th 2022).
- It is a fundamental value of the school that we help our students to remain healthy, enabling them to continue to access their education without stigma or exclusion. Hence all staff at Sidestrand Hall School are committed to ensuring our children/young people are safe and feel they have someone to talk to.

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3. Main Areas of Responsibility

- Under the direction of and in consultation with the Residential Manager, the Independent person will be required to note the following:
 - a) Take into account the Schools views on the Children's/young people's needs, as well as the children's/young people's wishes and views;
 - b) If contacted by a child/young person, they should provide an opportunity for them to talk through problems and issues in a safe and non-discriminatory manner;
 - c) Encourage the children/young people to participate in decisions affecting them;
 - d) Complete records of their visits and records of any contact made by a child/young person.
 - e) Safeguarding and child protection issues arising from conversations with children/young people should be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) either directly or via C-Poms online reporting system.
 - f) Provide feedback to the Residential Manager for reports, reviews and other meetings;
 - g) Work in a child centered manner, being clear about confidentiality and where boundaries lie.

4. Safeguarding Responsibilities:

- To know the identity of the Schools Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy.
- Proactively be alert to indicators of potential safeguarding issues and report these immediately in accordance with the Schools procedure.
- To have read and understood the Schools Safeguarding Policy and to follow its requirements. In reporting safeguard concerns.
- To complete the required training relating to Safeguarding of Children provided by the School.
- Engage in safe practice and professional conduct to safeguard children to mitigate against the potential for misunderstandings or situations being misconstrued.
- The School is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and young people and expects the same from its volunteers, employees and representatives.

5. Supervision

- The Independent person will receive ongoing 'on the job' support and guidance from the Residential Manager on an ad hoc basis during their time as an Independent person as and when required. A formal, regular supervision will be put into place if deemed necessary or requested.

6. Job Context

- The Independent person must be child focused however sympathetic they may be to other points of view. The function is to compliment the work and activities of the boarding 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

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unquestioningly what those responsible for the child tell them is in the child's interests, but

should remain open-minded and foster a healthy scepticism.

7. Knowledge Experience and Training

- The Independent Listener should have qualities, skills, experience and/or qualifications in other settings that enable them to undertake work in a professional capacity with children. These may include:
 - a) An understanding and empathy of the needs of school age children and adolescents;
 - b) An understanding and appreciation of the difficulties caused by living away from home;
 - c) The ability to work flexibly with a variety of adults and children;
 - d) An understanding of how the boarding provision works within the school; e) An appreciation of the Children Act 1989, the Children Act 2004 and the National Minimum Standards and other relevant legislation;

8. Problems and Decisions

- The Independent Person will consult and work with the Residential Manager (and the DSL where required), boarding staff and the children/young people. They will work within all school policies and procedures. All grievances or disputes should follow the procedure and guidance within the Schools Policy.

9. Duration

- The initial arrangement would be for a period of 12 months, after 12 months the arrangement will be reviewed by the Head Teacher, Residential Manager and the DSL. However, if for any reason an Independent Person is unable to continue with the role they should contact the Residential Manager as soon as is reasonably practicable.

10. Notes on Independent Listeners

The role is voluntary although reasonable expenses for travel may be agreed in advance.

The following procedure is to be followed in any appointments:

- a) Appointment procedures will be required to follow the *National Minimum Standards for Residential special schools* on Safer Recruitment
- b) The position is subject to the usual DBS, child protection, welfare and 'whistle blowing' requirements;
- c) Offer an appropriate role description (this document) and briefing/induction; d) Be clear that the position is independent of the main lines of school management, but still subject to the Schools specification and organisation;
- e) Ensure Independent Person knowledge of 'school norms and expectations' f) There must be clear rules on confidentiality – and duty to breach if the event of disclosure or if informed of safeguarding risks to students or other pupils, there must be no absolute guarantee of secrecy;