

Independent Listeners

Standard 14.4 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Standards (NMS) requires schools to appoint an independent listener, as a possible 'safety valve' for pupils with concerns or problems.

The following procedure is to be followed in any appointments:

1. Appointment procedures to follow the NMS Staff recruitment standards (standard 38)
2. This is to be followed 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. The needs to be an awareness of perception of other roles held (eg governor, doctor, 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. Brief on specific situations – eg bullying, drugs
9. Clarify relationship with his / her own other professional expectations and codes – religious, medical
10. Extent of awareness amongst pupils – person, role, rules, access
11. Double feedback – from independent listener re. general welfare issues raised (not specific instances), from pupils re. the service and access to it
12. Independent listener's knowledge of 'school norms and expectations' – current issues, National minimum standards

Sherborne Prep School has three independent listeners whose details are available around the School and whose names are listed in our Child Protection Policy. They are:

Dr Simon Mottram (School Doctor)

Reverend Stephen Gray (School Chaplain, Sherborne School)

Reverend Becky Ayers Harris (School Chaplain, Sherborne Girls)