

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

This policy sets out guidelines, with full regard to Working Together to Safeguard Children 2016' and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' Sept. 2018, relating to the following areas:

1. Policy Statement
2. Recruitment of Staff
3. Recognition of Abuse
4. Responding to allegations of abuse or neglect
5. Maintaining a safe environment

Policy Statement

St. Mary's is committed to creating and maintaining the safest possible environment for children and young people. **Our school recognises its absolute duty of care** when working or having contact with children to promote and safeguard their welfare. Collective responsibility to protect our children from harm is required and **personal** responsibility of all adults working in our school is of paramount importance.

We believe that:

- The safety and welfare of children should always be of paramount importance whatever the circumstances.
- Everyone with a role in working with children has a responsibility to safeguard and promote a child's welfare particularly vulnerable to abuse.
- Special care is needed in dealing with children whose age, inexperience special educational or physical needs, looked after (or post- looked after' status, makes them vulnerable to abuse.
- Sufficient training must be available to staff and volunteers to provide them with the necessary knowledge to ensure safe care is always maintained.

Recruitment of Staff

At all stages in the recruitment process we will ensure the welfare of the pupils is of the highest priority by undertaking the appropriate safety checks. Staff who interview candidates for positions in the school are required to undertake the appropriate training for 'safer recruitment'; see the Staff Recruitment Policy for details.

A Single Central Record of staff and adults working in school is maintained. Nobody can start work in school prior to being vetted in accordance with current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) procedures: involving being checked against the List 99 / Barred list. All permanent, regular peripatetic staff and volunteers must have an enhanced DBS disclosure. Parents who assist on school trips do not need a DBS if their occasional support to children is supervised by a member of staff with DBS.

The School's job advertising always is to include the statement '*This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all children, and expects our staff and volunteers to share this commitment*'. Job adverts and application packs state clearly that the appointment will be subject to a satisfactory enhanced DBS.

Recognition of Abuse

The following behavioural signs may be indications of abuse, but they must not be taken in isolation from other circumstances in a child's life. The wider context of the child's experience out of school is considered by the Safeguarding Team at St Mary's when identifying potential and actual safeguarding and child protection needs. One sign alone may not be an indicator of abuse. Staff must be aware that 'peer on peer' abuse is a possibility.

Signs of Abuse

Physical signs

- Any allegations made by a child of physical abuse.
- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them.
- Injuries which occur to the body not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc.
- Injuries which have not received medical attention which you would expect a reasonable parent to give/ arrange.
- Instances where children are kept away from the group inappropriately.
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming.
- Bruises, bites, burns, fractures, etc. which do not have an accidental explanation (e.g. several cigarette burns in one place... one accidental – several?)
- Cutting/ slashing/ substance abuse* (*e.g. indicated possibly by sores around mouth)

Signs of possible sexual abuse

- Any allegations made by a child of sexual abuse
- Child with an excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and a detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, who regularly engages in age –inappropriate sexual play.
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing.
- Child who is sexually proactive or seductive with adults.
- Inappropriate bed- sharing arrangements at home.
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, or sometimes overt or veiled sexual connotations.
- Any signs/ symptoms/ behaviours arising from female genital mutilation (FGM).

Emotional signs

- Any allegations made by a child of emotional abuse.
- Marked changes or regression in mood and behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging. Also depression/aggression.
- Nervousness/ frozen watchfulness.
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration.
- Inappropriate relationships with peers or adults.
- Attention seeking behaviours.
- Persistent tiredness.
- Running away / stealing / lying.

Signs of neglect

- Inadequate/ inappropriate food and nutrition
- Inadequate shelter or living conditions
- Inadequate clothing.
- Exposure to physical danger or harm.
- Failure to ensure the child receives access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

Peer on Peer Abuse

- Child on child sexual harassment (e.g. directly or by text, social media)
- Such abuse cannot be treated as 'banter' – e.g. unwanted sexual comments.
- Child on child sexual violence (in line with Sexual Offences Act 2003)

Responding to allegations of abuse or neglect

- It is NOT the responsibility of anyone working for St. Mary's Catholic Primary School to take responsibility or to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. Rather, there IS a responsibility to act on concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities.
- St. Mary's has appointed a person responsible for Child Protection Matters – The Designated Senior Lead (DSL) is John Blaney, Deputy Head.
In his absence, the Headteacher – Helena Cusack – who is fully trained as DSL.
There are three other trained members of the SMT – Rachel Jones, Jon Clinton and Sharon Tame – who may also be approached with any child protection concerns in the absence of the DSL.
The DSL team is called the Senior Leadership Assessment Team (SLAT)
- If staff or visitors suspect that abuse or neglect has taken place, these concerns MUST be reported to the DSL/ SLAT as soon as

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possible. The DSL is then responsible for referring allegations or suspicions of abuse or neglect to the statutory authorities – via the 'Children's Advice & Support Service' (CASS) ' (0121 303 1888).

- Every effort must be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned but a child's disclosure must be acted upon and that will involve other, trusted adults in school on a need to know basis.
- In the event of a disclosure by a child:
If a child discloses abuse, listen carefully but DO NOT challenge their account of the event(s). Reassure them that it is safe to talk and write down what was said as soon as possible *afterwards* but not at the time. You cannot guarantee that the disclosure will not be shared with other adults who are responsible for safeguarding, but rather give reassurance that the child's concerns will be dealt with by persons whom they can trust to do so.
- DO NOT inform the alleged abuser about any suspicion of abuse or the child's disclosure until advice has been given on this by statutory agencies/ CASS.

Recording a concern

- Each class teacher and other staff member is requested to maintain a log of concerns. Significant concerns should always be referred to the DSL or other SLAT member; if unsure, the concern should be treated as significant.
- This is done through a paperless, electronic system – 'My Concern' – and all teaching staff and teaching assistants can access and log concerns electronically.
- Lunchtime supervisors are required to log all concerns in their daily log book and to bring any significant safeguarding concern – including child protection – to the attention of the DSL / SLAT on the **same day** of the incident/ disclosure.
- The logs are viewed by the SLAT team.
- Action must be taken and communicated to the person raising the concern when a child protection issue is raised and always preferably on the same day of the concern being raised.

Early Help

- As soon as a problem emerges, St Mary's will take action to support a child and their family if they cannot deal with this on their own. This may require multi-agency co-ordination and support. Children will be

listened to and placed at the heart of the solution to ensure their welfare is the priority of all involved.

Maintaining a safe environment

Where possible work in an open environment and avoid being alone with a child in an unobserved situation –e.g. Keep a classroom/ office door open and remain in view of passing 'corridor traffic'.

- Encourage openness and an environment in which there are no secrets. Do not use 'worry boxes' but help the children develop a sense that they can share their worries with a trusted adult.
- Treat all children / young people equally, with respect and dignity.

School trips and excursions

- Ensure that if mixed groups leave school on a trip that they are accompanied by a male and female member of staff where possible.
- Ensure that at any residential events adults should not stay in children's rooms or vice –versa.
- Secure parental consent to have their permission, if the need arises, to administer first aid and/ or other medical treatment.
- Keep a written record of any injury that occurs along with details of any treatment given.
- Staff and parents may transport children for approved school activities. Parental consent is necessary to transport young people in staff cars and the school should ensure that the insurance policy cover is appropriate for such trips. Child/ren must sit in the back of the car and not in the front seat.

Practice NEVER to be sanctioned

Staff members should never:

- Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games including horseplay.
- Share a room with a child.
- Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- Reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
- Allow allegations made by a child not to be acted upon.
- Do things of a personal nature for children, able or disabled, that they can do for themselves.

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- Do not invite children or young people into your home.
- Do not give a child special attention or favouritism that could be perceived as 'grooming', e.g. gifts, one to one time, that is not associated with their work or pastoral care. If you are unsure of your response to a child, please seek advice from the DSL or member the SLAT.

This policy is distributed to all teachers and is published on the School Website.

All staff are made aware of this policy and a copy is available in the staffroom and school 'staff common' drive (Policies) for staff to refer to.

We believe:

- All children have the right to be protected from harm.
- Children need to be safe and to feel safe in school.
- Schools can contribute to the prevention of abuse.
- Children need support which matches their individual needs, including those who may have experienced abuse.

St Mary's Catholic Primary School will fulfil local and national responsibilities as laid out in the following documents: -

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE March 2015)

And ongoing updates to the same, due to be published in 2018.

- Keeping children safe in education (DfE Sept 2018)
- Safeguarding Children & Safer Recruitment in Education (DfES 2006)
- The Procedures of Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board
- The Children Act 1989
- The Education Act 2002 s175 / s157
- Dealing with Allegations of Abuse (DfE 2012)

This policy has been reviewed by staff and Governors

Signed _____ (DSL) _____ Chair of Governors

Dated _____

KEY CONTACTS

(CASS) 0121 303 1888

Schools Safeguarding Lead Advisor – Jon Needham