

# Convent of Jesus and Mary Language College

## Safeguarding Policy and Procedures



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### Introduction

Schools and other educational establishments have a special role to play in child protection. The adults working there see children more regularly than anyone else in the caring services and have the opportunity to observe and communicate with children more than any other professional.

Teachers make a high percentage of child protection referrals. This should be expected as teachers are trained in child development and should be able to identify signs and recognise behaviour which is 'different' from usual.

As children or young people are likely to spend more time at school than anywhere else, other than at home, they will often choose a known adult at school to talk to about the situation at home. It is not unusual for the listener to feel uncomfortable with the subject or feel disbelief, be distressed or immobilised by what they are hearing. It is essential for educational staff to know that they are not alone and that there is a process both at the personal level within the school and within Brent to support them as well as the child.

We updated this policy in light of "Keeping Children Safe In Education" September 2016. This policy also takes into account key legislation (The Children Act 1989; Local Government Act 2000; Education Act 2002; Children Act 2004) and guidance contained in "Working Together to Safeguard Children" (2015); "What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: advice for practitioners" (2015); "Information Sharing" (2015). The policy reflects the school's on-going commitment to safeguarding and it aims to create a culture of vigilance. Safeguarding issues are explored as part of the curriculum.

The policy is to be read in conjunction with:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education [Part 1] 2016
- The Staff Code of Conduct

### Procedures

The Headmistress is ultimately responsible for child protection at the school. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is Dr Bonelli, Deputy Headteacher. Her role includes providing support to staff members to carry out their safeguarding duties and liaising closely with key stakeholders.

If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is not in school, any matter arising should go directly to the Headmistress or, in her absence, to Mr Haran or Mrs Peppiatt. The named Governor for safeguarding is Mr Finnegan, Chair of the Governing Body.

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If you observe what you consider to be unusual behaviour or suspect abuse whether it be emotional, physical injury, sexual abuse or neglect, your observations should be recorded using CPOMS (all verbal conversation should be promptly recorded in writing). You must also see the Designated Safeguarding Lead **immediately**. A recorded decision will be made whether to continue to observe, record or monitor, or whether to take further action.

*The best interests of the child are always paramount.* If a child or young person makes a disclosure to you, you may **NEVER** keep this as confidential between yourself and the child. Tell the child that you are obliged to let the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Headmistress know. Record the conversation as factually as possible on CPOMS. Then inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead as a matter of urgency. If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is not available, inform the Headmistress or a named deputy immediately. **It is not the responsibility of teachers or other staff to investigate suspected abuse.** In Brent that responsibility lies with Children's Services and/or the Police.

Strict confidentiality is essential.

The Headmistress and Designated Safeguarding Lead will be made aware of students whose names are on the Child Protection Register. They will inform others only on a 'need to know basis' e.g. the Head of Year and the Form Tutor.

We need to be especially mindful and sensitive to the needs of SEN pupils who can be more at risk of being harmed. As a girls school we also need to be mindful of those issues which have a greater effect on girls (e.g. grooming and sharing of explicit images-sexting).

Procedures to minimise the risk of peer on peer abuse and allegations by one pupil against another are detailed in the anti bullying policy, the student planner and the staff handbook.

The duty to follow Child Protection procedures applies to **ALL** staff. All staff must read the school's child protection procedures. All staff are expected to sign confirmation that they have read and understood these on an annual basis.

**Please read and be familiar with the following child protection procedures.**

#### **Formal Investigation Criteria**

A formal investigation is required under the child protection procedures when there are identified continuing concerns that the child or young person:

- has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm from physical injury including Female Genital Mutilation, the non-medical, partial or total removal of the external female genital organs (FGM –this requires immediate referral to the police). *Risk factors include: lower level of integration in UK society; mother/sister who have undergone FGM; girls being withdrawn from PSHE; visiting female elder from country of origin; being taken on a long holiday to country of origin; talk about a 'special' procedure to become a woman.* Physical abuse involves any action that causes physical harm to a child including fabricating the symptoms of or deliberately inducing illnesses. *Key features include: bruising; bite marks; burns and scalds; fractures in non-mobile children; injuries in unusual areas/with well-defined edges; old injuries or scars; refusal to discuss injuries; inconsistent explanations; talk of seemingly excessive punishment; arms and legs kept covered; reluctance to remove clothing for swimming/PE; parents who are uninterested or undisturbed by accident/injury.*
- has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm from sexual abuse. Sexual abuse involves forcing

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or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities including non-contact activities. *Key features include: aggression; withdrawn; self-harming, including eating disorders; drawings of sexually explicit behaviours; promiscuity/precociousness; inappropriate sexualized conduct; sexually explicit behaviour; reluctance to remove clothing for swimming/PE.*

- has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm from emotional abuse. Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. *Key features include: development delay; abnormal attachment to parent/carer; low self-esteem; lack of confidence; inappropriate emotional response.*
- has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm from neglect. Neglect is the failure to meet a child's physical and/or psychological needs. *Key features include: inadequate clothing for the child's size, weather or time of year; underweight for age; frequent school absences; poor health; emotionally needy; persistently dirty with a body odour.*
- has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm from self-abuse.
- is being sexually exploited. *Warning signs include: going missing for periods of time; returning home late; disengagement from education; poor school attendance; appearing with unexplained gifts; associating with others involved in sexual exploitation; frequently in the company of older people, particularly boyfriends/girlfriends; poor sexual health; mood swings/poor anger control/changes in emotional wellbeing; drug and alcohol misuse; inappropriate sexualized behaviour, especially around strangers; association with 'risky' adults; chronic tiredness; secretive behaviour; low-level crime; self-harm; talking about visiting different areas, especially at night.*
- is involved in violent extremism. All staff at the school undertake Prevent awareness training to equip them to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas.
- is likely to become a victim of honour-based violence - a violent crime or incident which may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family or community.
- is likely to go missing from education. All schools have a duty to inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the school and the local authority. School procedures include the prompt follow-up of all absences.
- Is being privately fostered. Where schools and colleges have not been involved in making the arrangement but a member of staff or volunteer at a school or college becomes aware that a pupil may be in a private fostering arrangement, where a child under the age of 16 (or 18 if disabled) is provided with care and accommodation by someone to whom they are not related in that person's home, they should raise this in the first instance with the designated senior person for child protection. The school or college should notify the local authority of the circumstances, and the local authority will check that the arrangement is suitable and safe for the child.

For your information, the courses of action available to us are:

- We can make a referral to social services at Brent Family Front Door.
- If we need more specific advice we can contact the Brent Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- If we believe it is a matter for the police we will contact our school liaison officers (PC Holly Breakwell or PC Gary Weedon), call 101 or call 999 in an emergency.

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## **Safer working practice (whistleblowing procedures)**

If staff members have concerns about another staff member then this should be referred to the Headmistress. Where there are concerns about the Headmistress, this should be referred to the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors in this school is:

NAME:	CONTACT NUMBER:
<b>Mr Danny Finnegan</b>	077 0909 5126 (Ms D. Bal – Clerk to the Governors)

In the absence of the Chair of Governors, the Vice Chair should be contacted. The Vice Chair in this school is:

NAME:	CONTACT NUMBER:
<b>Ms Marina Picano</b>	077 0909 5126 (Ms D. Bal – Clerk to the Governors)

In the event of allegations of abuse being made against the Headmistress, where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, allegations should be reported directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Staff may consider discussing any concerns with the Designated Senior Person and, if appropriate, make any referral via them. The person to whom an allegation is first reported should take the matter seriously and keep an open mind. S/he should not investigate or ask leading questions if seeking clarification; it is important not to make assumptions. Confidentiality should not be promised and the person should be advised that the concern will be shared on a 'need to know' basis only. Actions to be taken include making an immediate written record of the allegation using the informant's words – including time, date and place where the alleged incident took place, brief details of what happened, what was said and who was present. This record should be signed, dated and immediately passed on to the Headmistress. The recipient of an allegation must not unilaterally determine its validity, and failure to report it in accordance with procedures is a potential disciplinary matter. The Headmistress/Chair of Governors will not investigate the allegation itself, or take written or detailed statements, but will assess whether it is necessary to refer the concern to the Local Authority Designated Officer.

Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer through the whistleblowing procedure or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels may be open to them:

- Children's Services 020 8937 4300 or 020 8863 5250 outside office hours
- NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and Email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

To reduce the risk of allegations, all staff should be aware of safer working practice and should be familiar with the guidance contained in the staff handbook/ school code of conduct / staff behaviour policy.

All members of the SLT successfully completed the approved training for Designated Safeguarding Leads in July 2016. The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputies will receive training every two years (a course has been booked for July 2018), with annual updates for the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Several members of the support/pastoral team have successfully completed level 2 training. All staff receive level 1 training on safeguarding procedures as part of the Inset day at the start of the academic year. A specific separate session is offered to the line managers of non-teaching staff. Termly refreshers are offered as well as sessions for NQTs/new members of staff.

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Reviewed and adopted ..... *May 2018*  
Pastoral Committee

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