

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School



# SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy was reviewed and approved by the Governing Body in Autumn 2025

It will be reviewed in Autumn 2026

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School

*'Learning together in Faith and Love'*

## Mission Statement

**"Learning together in Faith and Love"**

- St. Mary's R.C. Primary School exists to serve the Roman Catholic families of the Parish of Our Lady of the Holy Souls, Kensal New Town and other local parishes.

The aims of our schools are:

- To promote Christian values where children live, learn and celebrate the teaching of Christ.
- To provide a curriculum which is broad, balanced and meaningful and where children can experience enjoyment and fulfilment.
- To promote the highest standards of teaching and learning within the framework of the National Curriculum
- To develop in each child a sense of achievement, value and self worth and to achieve the standards of which they are capable.
- To help our children acquire the skills of independent learning and make sufficiently rapid progress.
- To provide a safe and secure environment where children feel valued, and where they respect, help and care for each other.
- To involve parents in all aspects of their child's education and promote good home/school partnership.
- To develop in our children awareness and respect for the different cultures and religions represented in society and their responsibility to the wider community.
- To foster the continuing development of staff, parents and governors in serving the community.

**St. Mary's Values- these are the values that underpin all areas of our school community:**

- Kindness
- Respect
- Tolerance
- Honesty
- Responsibility (for ourselves and our world)
- Co-operation

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## INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE FOR POLICY

In line with the Government's vision for all services for children and young people, the Governors and all school staff recognise that children have a fundamental right to learn in a safe environment and to be protected from harm, regardless of their age, gender, race, culture or disability. Young people are less likely to learn effectively and go on to lead positive and independent lives if they are not kept healthy and safe. This school is therefore committed to providing an environment, which is safe and where the welfare of each child is of paramount importance. This will include a commitment to ensuring that all pupils feel confident that any concerns they may have will be listened to and acted upon.

To this end, the Governors and school staff will be committed to ensuring that all members of the school community are aware of school responsibilities and procedures in this area. This will include communicating policies and procedures effectively with parents/carers, ensuring all staff and relevant members of Governing Body attend appropriate training and working effectively with other professionals on behalf of children in need or enquiring into allegations of child abuse.

This safeguarding system that all of our LA and Diocesan services are part of is described in the statutory guidance '**Keeping Children Safe in Education**

**September 2024**.

### **Legislative framework:**

- Department for Education Statutory Guidance "Keeping Children Safe in Education" September 2024
- 'Working together to Safeguard Children 2023'
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Ofsted Policy on Safeguarding children and young people and young vulnerable adults (February 2015)
- Bi-borough Safeguarding Board Arrangements
- 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' document
- Early Years Foundation Stage Document 2019
- Equality Act 2010

### **Guiding Principles for Intervention to Protect Children**

The school will ensure that the principles identified below, many of which derive from the Children Act 1989, are followed by all staff:

- All children have a right to be kept safe and protected from abuse;
- Child abuse can occur in all cultures, religions and social classes;
- Staff must be sensitive to the families cultural and social background;

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- Children must have the opportunity to express their views and be heard
- If there is a conflict of interests between the child and parent, the interests of the child must be paramount;
- The responsibility to initiate agreed procedures rests with the individual who identifies the concern;
- All staff must endeavour to work in partnership with those who hold parental responsibility for a child
- Information in the context of a child protection enquiry must be treated as CONFIDENTIAL and only shared with those who need to know.
- All staff should have access to appropriate and regular training
- School management must allow staff sufficient time to carry out their duties in relation to child protection and safeguarding
- Children must be protected from maltreatment whether that is within or outside the home, including online.

## Aims and objectives

- To raise awareness of all school staff of the importance of safeguarding and child protection, and in particular to make clear responsibilities for identifying and reporting actual or suspected abuse;
- To ensure pupils and parents are aware that the school takes child protection seriously and will follow the appropriate procedures for identifying and reporting abuse and for dealing with allegations against staff;
- To promote effective liaison with other agencies in order to work together for the protection and welfare of all pupils;
- To support pupils' development in ways which will foster security, confidence and independence;
- To integrate a child protection curriculum within the existing curriculum, allowing for continuity and progress through all the Key Stages;
- To make appropriate links and reference to policies in related areas such as discipline and bullying.

## Procedures

The school Child Protection procedures comply with all the relevant legislation and other guidance and advice from the **Bi-Borough Safeguarding Children's Board**.

The Governing Body and the Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that all staff receive regular training and support in respect of safeguarding and child protection and know which senior member of staff to refer to for advice in the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Lead officer(s).

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The Governing Body recognises its own responsibilities to ensure the school has sufficient resources to effectively deliver its safeguarding responsibilities to the highest standard and to request information as part of the Headteacher's report regarding the safeguarding practice of the school so any identified gaps are remedied in a timely way.

## **The School Designated Lead (SDL)**

### **The school's Safeguarding Team**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Child Protection Officers at St Mary's Catholic Primary School are **Geraldine Hampton**, The Executive Headteacher, and **Magdalena Tusting**, The Head of School, and **Christian Larke** Assistant Headteacher and Behaviour and Pastoral Care Lead. Geraldine Hampton and Magdalena Tusting will liaise with the Local Authority Children's Services Team and Ofsted as necessary. Christian Larke is the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The School's Designated Safeguarding Lead (**DSL**), Magdalena Tusting, is the first point of contact for any member of the school staff who has a concern about the safety and wellbeing of a pupil. The Deputy DSL, Christian Larke, is the first point of contact in the absence of the DSL to avoid any unnecessary delays in responding to a child/young person's needs.

The DSL and Deputy DSL are also responsible for online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place.

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The DSL and Deputy DSL are also responsible for online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place.

All staff receive regular Safeguarding training, including PREVENT training. All staff members are asked to be vigilant concerning signs and evidence of physical, sexual and emotional abuse or neglect. Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone.

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All staff members are expected to be mindful that early information sharing is vital for the effective identification, assessment, and allocation of appropriate service provision, whether this is when problems first emerge, or where a child is already known to local authority children's social care.

## **Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation:**

**Abuse:** a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. Children and young people may be abused in a family, institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

### **Types of abuse:**

**Physical abuse** involves hitting, shaking, throwing, burning, suffocating or any other physical harm. Deliberately causing a child's ill health also constitutes physical abuse.

**Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. Showing children pornographic materials, sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways also constitutes sexual abuse.

**Emotional abuse** involves persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or torture likely to cause severe adverse effects on the emotional stability of a child. Such behaviour may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless, unloved, or inadequate, or making them feel frightened or vulnerable.

**Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical, emotional or psychological needs, and is likely to have a severe impact on their health, development or emotional stability. Neglect may involve failing to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter or failing to adequately protect them from physical harm or ill health. Neglect can also be failure to meet the basic emotional needs of a child.

### **Domestic abuse**

Domestic abuse has been added to the list of safeguarding issues in the KCSIE 2023 and all staff are made aware of it in our Safeguarding training.

The guidance makes it clear that domestic abuse:

- can be psychological, physical, sexual, financial, or emotional

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- can impact on children through seeing, hearing or experiencing the effects of domestic abuse and/or experiencing it through their own intimate relationships, all of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.

Staff must take into consideration that harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others.

## **Upskirting**

All staff should be made aware that 'upskirting' is now a criminal offence. A definition has been included which describes upskirting as, "taking a picture under a person's them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.

## **'Honour-based' violence** (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage)

Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage have been added into the title header to make it clearer what honour based violence includes. "Abuse committed in the context of preserving "honour" often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators". It is important that all staff are aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors.

## **Serious crime**

All staff should be aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in well-being, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

We use the advice for schools and colleges, provided in the Home Office's Preventing youth violence and gang involvement and its criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: **county lines guidance**.

**Child sexual exploitation** is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual

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activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. Child sexual exploitation (CSE) as outlined in Child Sexual Exploitation 2017 is a crime with devastating and long lasting consequences for its victims and their families.

Exploitation can include instances where a child or young person may be groomed to become involved in sexual or criminal activity. This is a significant distinction where previously they may have been viewed **as an offender instead of a victim**.

Childhoods and family life can be ruined and this is compounded when victims, or those at risk of abuse, do not receive appropriate, immediate and ongoing support.

## **Potential Indicators of Child Sexual Exploitation:**

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones etc. without plausible explanation;
- Gang-association and/or isolation from peers/social networks;
- Exclusion or unexplained absences from school, college or work;
- Leaving home/care without explanation and persistently going missing or returning late;
- Excessive receipt of texts/phone calls;
- Returning home under the influence of drugs/alcohol;
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age/sexually transmitted infections;
- Evidence of/suspicions of physical or sexual assault;
- Relationships with controlling or significantly older individuals or groups;
- Multiple callers (unknown adults or peers);
- Frequenting areas known for sex work;
- Concerning use of the Internet or other social media;
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours;
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being.

**Sexual Exploitation can have links to other types of crime.** These include:

- Child trafficking
- Domestic abuse
- Sexual violence in intimate relationships
- Grooming (including online grooming)
- Abusive images of children and their distribution
- Drugs-related offences

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- Gang-related activity
- Immigration-related offences
- Domestic servitude Link to DfE;

## **Child on child abuse**

All staff should recognise that children are capable of abusing other children.

This is most likely to include, but not limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying)
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- sexual violence and sexual harassment
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and initiation-type violence and rituals.

**Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as “banter” or “part of growing up”.** Different gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with child on child abuse. This could for example include girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to initiation-type violence;

At St Mary's we believe that all children have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm by adults in the school and other students.

We recognise that some students will sometimes negatively affect the learning and wellbeing of others and their behaviour will be dealt with under the school's Positive Behaviour Management Policy. Occasionally, allegations may be made against students by others in the school, which are of a safeguarding nature. Safeguarding issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. It is likely that to be considered a safeguarding allegation against a pupil, some of the following features will be found.

The allegation:

- is made against an older pupil and refers to their behaviour towards a younger pupil or a more vulnerable pupil;
- is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence;
- raises risk factors for other pupils in the school;
- indicates that other pupils may have been affected by this student;
- indicates that young people outside the school may be affected by this pupil;

At St Mary's we will support the victims of child on child abuse by:

- ensuring that all allegations are taken seriously;
- ensuring that the child is listened to;

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- recording all incidents;
- acting on information and following safeguarding procedures;
- providing support through pastoral care to monitor the individual;
- share the information with the child's parent/carer in order to ensure support is available out of school hours;
- offering and referring to Early Help
- Sexting: In cases of 'sexting' we follow guidance given to schools and colleges by the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) published in 2017: Sexting in schools and colleges, responding to incidents, and safeguarding young people.

The Governing body and the school staff ensure that there is:

- A clear procedure to minimise the risk of child on child abuse;
- Record keeping on how allegations of child on child abuse are recorded, investigated and dealt with;
- A clear process as to how victims, perpetrators and any other child affected by child on child abuse will be supported;
- Recognition of the gendered nature of child on child abuse (i.e. that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys perpetrators), but that all child on child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously;

## **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex from primary through to secondary stage. It can occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable.

As set out in Part one of Keeping Children safe in education (KCSIE), all St Mary's staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of '**it could happen here**'.

At St Mary's addressing inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be relatively innocuous) is an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future.

As set out in Part one of KCSIE, all staff need to be aware that safeguarding incidents and behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school.

At St Mary's we believe it is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. Along with providing support to

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children who are victims of sexual violence or sexual harassment, the school will need to provide the alleged perpetrator(s) with safeguarding support as appropriate and implement any disciplinary sanctions. Staff must remember that a child abusing another child may be a sign they have been abused themselves or a sign of wider issues that require addressing within the culture of the school. Taking disciplinary action and providing appropriate support, can, and should, occur at the same time if necessary.

It is noted in our safeguarding training that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone they are being abused.

The staff prioritise the importance of explaining to children that the law is in place to protect rather than criminalise them. Staff at St Mary's appreciate the importance of understanding intra-familial harm, and any necessary support for siblings following incidents

The new safeguarding legislation alongside the **Equality Act 2010** requires that the school needs to be conscious that pupils with **protected characteristics** may be more at risk of harm.

Any member of the school community:

- must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their protected characteristics
- must consider how they are supporting pupils with protected characteristics
- must take positive action, where proportionate, to deal with the disadvantages these pupils face, for example, by making reasonable adjustments for disabled children and supporting girls if there is evidence they are being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or harassment.

Protected Characteristics are as follows:

- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Colour
- Nationality or ethnicity
- Sex
- Gender reassignment
- Religion and belief
- Sexual orientation
- Special educational needs

## Online Safety

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The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues.

Child sexual exploitation; radicalisation; sexual predation: technology often provides the platform that facilitates harm.

An effective approach to online safety empowers a school or college to protect and educate the whole school or college community in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any incident where appropriate.

The Governors and the Senior Leadership Team regularly review the effectiveness of school filters and monitoring systems as we recognise the importance of safeguarding children from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material, and we understand that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues.

## The 4 key categories of risk

Our approach to online safety is based on addressing the following categories of risk:

**Content** – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, such as pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation and extremism; this also includes misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories our pupils may be harmed by.

**Contact** – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users, such as peer-to-peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes

**Conduct** – personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, such as making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography), sharing other explicit images and online bullying;

**Commerce** – risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams

## To meet our aims and address the risks above, we will:

- Educate pupils about online safety as part of our curriculum. For example:
  - The safe use of social media, the internet and technology
  - Keeping personal information private
  - How to recognise unacceptable behaviour online
  - How to report any incidents of cyber-bullying, ensuring pupils are encouraged to do so, including where they're a witness rather than a victim

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- Train staff, as part of their induction, on safe internet use and online safeguarding issues including cyber-bullying, the risks of online radicalisation, and the expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring. All staff members will receive refresher training as required and at least once each academic year
- Educate parents and carers about online safety via our website, communications sent directly to them and during parents' evenings. We will also share clear procedures with them so they know how to raise concerns about online safety
- Make sure staff are aware of any restrictions placed on them with regards to the use of their mobile phone and cameras, for example that:
  - Staff are allowed to bring their personal phones to school for their own use, but will limit such use to non-contact time when pupils are not present
  - Staff will not take pictures or recordings of pupils on their personal phones or cameras
- Make all pupils, parents, carers, staff, volunteers and governors aware that they are expected to sign an agreement regarding the acceptable use of the internet in school, use of the school's ICT systems and use of their mobile and smart technology
- Explain the sanctions we will use if a pupil is in breach of our policies on the acceptable use of the internet and mobile phones
- Make sure all staff, pupils and parents/carers are aware that staff have the power to search pupils' phones, as set out in the [DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation](#)
- Put in place robust filtering and monitoring systems to limit children's exposure to the 4 key categories of risk (described above) from the school's IT systems.
- Carry out an annual review of our approach to online safety, supported by an annual risk assessment that considers and reflects the risks faced by our school community
- Provide regular safeguarding and children protection updates including online safety to all staff, at least annually, in order to continue to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard effectively
- Review the child protection and safeguarding policy, including online safety, annually and ensure the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly

## Filtering and Monitoring

The DSL has the responsibility to manage the School's filtering and monitoring system

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The School uses the London Grid For Learning (LGFL) for its filter system. The School has effective monitoring strategies in place and the DSL/Deputy regularly monitor the filtering system to ensure its effectiveness and reliability. Data gathered after monitoring is presented to Governor's at least annually.

All staff are aware of their responsibility with regard to monitoring and filtering.

The School takes great care to block harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning.

### **Looked After Children and previously Looked After Children**

The role of Designated Teacher for Looked After Children (LAC) and previously Looked After Children became statutory in September 2009 under the Children and Young Persons' Act 2008 (the 2008 Act). The designated teacher must be a qualified teacher with status and experience to advise and provide training to school staff on issues relating to Looked After Children (LAC) and previously Looked After Children. They need to be able to influence decisions about the teaching and learning of these children.

The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children and previously Looked after Children at St Mary's school is Christian Larke.

#### **Responsibilities in school:**

- knowing who all the LAC and previously LAC are in school and ensuring that availability of all relevant details from school record-keeping systems as required;
- attending relevant training about LAC and previously LAC, and acting as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to LAC and previously LAC;
- promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations;
- helping school staff understand the issues that affect the learning of LAC and previously LAC, such as differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual children;
- making sure that LAC and previously LAC are prioritised in one-to-one tuition arrangements and that carers understand the importance of supporting learning at home;
- removing the barriers to learning for LAC and previously LAC;
- ensuring any LAC and previously LAC new to the school are welcomed positively and assessed when they start at the school to identify strengths and weaknesses in their learning. This will be used to inform planning and teaching;
- developing personalised learning packages for LAC and previously LAC in conjunction with the relevant teaching staff;
- ensuring that the LAC and previously LAC in their school have a voice in setting learning targets for themselves;
- championing for LAC and previously LAC;

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- leading on developing and implementing the Personal Education Plan (PEP) within the school. The social worker is responsible for initiating the PEP process completing the front page of the PEP form;
- monitoring the child's progress against the targets on the PEP and extending these targets if they have been achieved;
- ensuring the child makes a smooth transition to the new school and that the child's records are transferred without delay;
- liaising with the Virtual School in all aspects of the LAC and previously LAC progress and support;
- convening urgent multi-agency meetings if a LAC and previously LAC is experiencing difficulties or is at risk of exclusion;
- arranging for a mentor or key worker to whom the young person can talk to;
- arranging for the LAC and previously LAC to be supported by his/her peers;
- producing at least one annual report to the governing body which should include: current progress, attendance and exclusions (if any), any concerns regarding behaviour, how the PEP has been implemented and whether the actions put in place are effective in addressing the learning needs of LAC and previously LAC. The report must not mention the children's names for confidentiality reasons;
- promoting good home-school links and the importance of education as a way of improving life chances for LAC and previously LAC.

## **The role of virtual school heads**

The roles of the Virtual School Heads have been extended to include a non-statutory responsibility to promote the educational achievement of all children in kinship care, working closely with the school attended by LAC.

## **Alternative provision**

If a pupil needs to attend an alternative provision setting, the school will obtain written information from the alternative provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at their establishment.

This includes written confirmation that the alternative provider will inform St Mary's as the commissioning school of any arrangements that may put the child at risk (i.e., staff changes), so that we can ensure itself that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on new staff."

The school will ensure that we are informed at all times where a child is based during school hours, including having records of the address of the AP and any satellite sites that a child may attend.

Reviews of the placement will be frequent in order to have reassurance that the child is regularly attending and the placement is safe and meets the child's needs.

If a safeguarding concern arises, the placement will be immediately reviewed and terminated if necessary.

## **Children with SEND**

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The Governing Body recognise that children with special educational needs may be especially vulnerable to abuse and expect staff to take extra care to interpret correctly apparent signs of abuse or neglect. Indications of abuse will be reported as for other pupils. The Senior Designated Teacher(s) will work with the special educational needs co-ordinator to identify pupils with particular communication needs and to ensure clear guidance is available for staff in relation to their responsibilities when working with children with intimate care needs, according to the Guidelines set out in **Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2025**.

## Children with a Social Worker

At ST Mary's school, we recognise that when a child has a social worker, it is an indicator that the child is more at risk than most pupils. This may mean that they are more vulnerable to further harm, as well as facing educational barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and poor mental health. We consider these needs, when making plans to support pupils who have a social worker. Regular meetings and check-ups will take place as well as links being made with all relevant support agencies.

## Extended Schools and Before and After School Activities

Where the School premises is hired or rented out to organisations or individuals (for example to community groups, sports associations, and service providers to run community or extra-curricular activities) it is the School's responsibility to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to keep children safe. This includes after school clubs.

When services or activities are provided by the school, the School's own arrangements for child protection will apply. Where services or activities are provided separately, the School will seek assurance that the provider concerned has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place and ensure that there are arrangements in place for the provider to liaise with the School on these matters where appropriate. This applies regardless of whether or not the children are on the school roll.

The Governing Body will also ensure safeguarding requirements are included in any transfer of control agreement (i.e. lease or hire agreement), as a condition of use and occupation of the premises; and that failure to comply with this would lead to termination of the agreement.

## Children Missing in Education

Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. It is important that the school responds quickly to persistently absent pupils and children missing education. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority

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children's social care and need a social worker where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

At St Mary's we have half-termly attendance meetings with the Executive Head, Assistant Head and the School administrator to identify pupils with low attendance and who may be at risk. Data is scrutinised to identify genuine concerns and trends. Letters and/or meetings are held with parents of such children and data shared with Governors.

Administration staff and teachers know to report immediate concerns to the DSL.

## Specific Safeguarding Issues

School staff members need to be aware of specific safeguarding issues and be alert to any risks, such as child sexual exploitation, fabricated or induced illness, female genital mutilation, private fostering, child on child abuse etc., and the local procedures to respond to risks.

All staff at St Mary's school are aware that **mental health problems** can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. School staff are not expected or trained to diagnose mental health conditions or issues, but may notice behaviours that may be of concern.

Where staff have a mental health concern about a child that may also be a safeguarding concern, they should raise the issue by informing the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a deputy.

## Opportunities to teach safeguarding

At St Mary's we seek opportunities for teaching safeguarding as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. This will be covered through **Relationships and Sex Education**.

## Staff Induction

All new staff and volunteers receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training at induction (including online safety, which includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring)

Inductions are provided by a senior leader and include reference to the following policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
- Positive Behaviour Management policy
- Staff Conduct policy

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- Safeguarding response to children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/or prolonged periods of time
- Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies).

Copies of these policies can be made available to all staff and are accessible on the school server and the school website.

## **Staff Training**

All staff receive safeguarding and child protection updates (via email, messaging, staff meetings and Insets), as required, and at least annually, to continue to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. Comprehensive safeguard training, including online safety, (including an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring) are delivered each year as a twilight inset so all staff can attend.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead and other members of the Senior Leadership Team attend DSL Forums and other training events organised by the LA or the Local Safeguarding Children Board every year.

All members of school staff must develop their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse and must access Safeguarding training on an annual basis.

Staff attendance at the Safeguarding training is compulsory and is monitored by the Headteacher and the Designated Senior member of staff.

## **Staff responsibilities**

Staff understand that it is of paramount importance to have an "awareness culture" and one of approachability and listening to children and other stakeholders.

St Mary's Catholic Primary school is committed to ensuring that it meets the responsibilities in respect of child protection by giving its staff regular training and support.

We ensure that:

Staff receive training from the **Local Safeguarding Board** or/and **Designated Safeguarding Lead Officers**.

Governors should receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training at induction, and then at regular intervals. Training should provide them with the knowledge to ensure their school's safeguarding policies and procedures are effective.

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Staff are carefully recruited, have verified references and have full up to date Enhanced Disclosure and Barring System check (DBS) as appropriate. (see Single Central Record of DBS checks) which are renewed every three years.

We check the ongoing suitability of our staff by asking them to complete an annual form stating that nothing has changed in relation to their DBS check that could prevent them to be working with children. We also ask our staff to sign a disclosure by association ensuring that there is nothing, in there are no issues of disqualification in relation to any members of their close family.

Following the new guidance in KCSIE 2023, the Senior Leaders will consider carrying out an online search as part of our due diligence on the shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which the school might want to explore with the applicant at interview.

Parents must not use mobile phones or cameras in the activity/meeting rooms, or crèche room or during any activities or events when other people's children are present without consent.

Volunteers are briefed about child protection by their appropriate line manager.

Permanent staff receive the policy as part of their induction.

Staff are trained in Safeguarding issues and are updated as often as necessary.

Staff are aware of the main indicators of abuse.

Staff are aware of the main definitions and signs and symptoms of abuse.

Safeguarding is a common item in our staff meetings agenda.

Staff are aware of the importance of e-safety and will point this to the parents using the centre.

We have procedures for recording the details of visitors to the school.

St Mary's Catholic primary school committed to meeting our responsibility in the respect of child protection by treating all allegations seriously, sensitively and confidentially.

If a child makes an allegation or a disclosure, the member of staff concerned will:

- Listen carefully to what the child has to say
- Make no observable judgements
- Ensure the child is safe, comfortable and not left alone
- Make no promises that cannot be kept e.g. promising not to tell anybody what they are told

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Staff are supported and encouraged to trust their professional instincts - if they suspect that abuse has taken place they should report it to the Lead Officer immediately. Information recorded will include full details of the alleged incident, details of all the parties involved, dates, times and locations and supporting information or evidence from members of staff. The staff will take great care to distinguish between fact and opinion when recording suspected incidents.

If there are reasonable grounds to believe that a child has been or is in danger of being abused, the procedure below will be activated:

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer will contact the Bi-borough Safeguarding Hub or Child Protection Team in Children's Services as appropriate.
- Ofsted will be informed as appropriate.
- Following advice from the Bi-borough Safeguarding Hub, the Lead Officer informs parents first or, depending on the nature of the concern, makes a referral without communicating with parents. The parent should be informed of the referral, only if it is clear that this will not place the child in more harm. In the case of suspected sexual abuse the parents must not be informed under any circumstances.

If a child protection referral is made, we follow the Bi-borough Safeguarding Board arrangements for making a referral.

An Initial Child Protection Conference is held within fifteen working days. The case conference offers the opportunity to share information and formulate a plan of action. Staff attend and participate in all case conferences and Core Group Meetings held under the LA guidelines.

All information relating to individual child protection issues are confidential and staff act accordingly. We only share information with appropriate and relevant persons and on a need to know basis.

## **Adult behaviours of concern**

All St Mary's staff members can recognise and are aware of adult behaviours that disrespect or ignore boundaries and make children vulnerable to abuse. Staff behaviour is monitored closely through regular supervision. The following behaviours will be monitored and recorded and appropriate action will be taken as required:

- Makes others uncomfortable by ignoring social, emotional or physical boundaries or limits

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- Refuses to let a child set any of his or her own limits. Uses teasing or belittling language to keep a child from setting a limit.
- Insists on hugging, touching, kissing, tickling, wrestling with or holding a child even when the child does not want this physical contact or attention.
- Frequently walks in on children in the bathroom
- Turns to a child for emotional or physical comfort by sharing personal or private information or activities, normally shared with adults
- Has secret interactions with children (e.g. games, sharing drugs, alcohol, or sexual material)
- Insists on or manages to spend uninterrupted time alone with a child;
- Seems "too good to be true," i.e. takes children on special outings alone; buys children gifts or gives them money for no apparent reason;
- Allows children to consistently get away with inappropriate behaviours
- Frequently points out sexual images or tells dirty or suggestive jokes with children present;
- Exposes a child to adult sexual interactions or images without apparent concern;
- Is overly interested in the sexuality of a particular child (e.g., talks repeatedly about the child's developing body);
- Controlling Behaviour and unrealistic expectations;
- Blames Children for Problems;
- Blames Children or others or own Feelings: "you make me mad," ", "I can't help being angry;
- Hypersensitivity;
- Cruelty to animals or children;
- Verbal abuse;
- Threats of violence;
- Breaking or striking objects;
- Using any force during an argument;
- Neglecting children;
- Emotional abuse and using inappropriate language;

## Dealing with Allegations against Staff

If a concern or allegation is raised by a parent, the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL/Deputy DSL)** will meet with the parent immediately, recording full details of the conversation. The Lead Officer will advise the parent that an investigation will be carried out immediately and the parent kept informed of the actions taken. Parents will be asked to keep matters confidential whilst the

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investigation is conducted, bearing in mind that a breach in confidentiality might jeopardise the investigation and have legal implications for those involved.

The Lead Officer will carry out an immediate risk assessment in relation to the staff member who is the subject of the allegation and the children and adults involved and put in place any protective measures that might be appropriate. The Lead Officer will follow procedures laid out in RBKC Safeguarding Policy in relation to allegations against a member of staff.  
[www.rbkc.gov.uk/subsites/safeguardingchildren.aspx](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk/subsites/safeguardingchildren.aspx)

The Lead Officer will immediately consult with the Local Area Designated Officer for Safeguarding, (Tel: 020 7598 4638, and inform Ofsted (0300 123 1231), and the **LADO**. If the allegation is made against a professional employed by an external organisation working in the centre, the DSL Officer will inform their line manager of the action taken.

The same process will apply if the allegation is made by a child, a colleague, or another member of staff. Any child making a disclosure will be fully supported as outlined in the section above "Dealing with cases of suspected abuse." Their parents will be informed of the matter following consultation with the Local Authority Safeguarding Team.

On being informed of an allegation against staff, the Local Area Designated Officer will be contacted. A decision will be made by the Headteacher and DSL, in consultation with the LADO, as to whether the member of staff should be (a) Suspended or (b) continue working, while the investigation is being carried out.

The parent and, as appropriate, the child, will be interviewed. The member of staff concerned will then be informed of the nature of the allegation and given the opportunity to respond.

The borough's disciplinary policy will apply to any member of staff, student or volunteer under investigation for alleged abuse.

In the event that an allegation is made about the DSL, Christian Larke, Deputy DSL Officer, will be informed. She will then contact the Local Area Designated Officer and Ofsted.

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If an allegation is made against the Deputy DSL Officer, the person to whom the allegation is reported will ring the Local Area Designated Officer directly and report the allegation to **Hilary Shaw**, Bi-borough Safeguarding and Child protection Schools and Education Senior Adviser (Tel: 020 7598 4876, email: [hilary.shaw@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:hilary.shaw@rbkc.gov.uk)) and/or **Elaine Campbell**, Bi-borough Safeguarding Lead For Schools and Education (Tel: 07890 397061, email: [elaine.campbell@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:elaine.campbell@rbkc.gov.uk)).

Guidelines for all staff on recognising and responding to child abuse and keeping themselves safe from allegations of abuse are attached to this policy, together with the contact details of the Local Authority Child Protection advisers.

## **Whistleblowing**

(Definition: Whistle blowing is raising a concern about malpractice within an organisation).

We strongly believe that the children who attend our school have the right to play and learn in a safe and positive environment.

This section of our policy refers to how individuals (staff, volunteers, members of the advisory board, parents and students) are given the right to make a complaint should they witness any concerns surrounding the protection of children or adult behaviour within the children centre.

Brining a complaint or concern to the DSL officer or the Deputy DSL Officer or another professional is the responsibility of everyone.

This policy provides individuals in the workplace protection from victimisation or punishment where they raise a genuine concern about misconduct or malpractice in the organisation. The policy is underpinned by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, which encourages people to raise concerns in order to promote good governance and accountability in the public interest. The Act covers behaviour which relates to:

- A criminal offence
- Failure to comply with any legal obligation
- A miscarriage of justice
- Danger to the health and safety of an individual and/or the environment
- Deliberate concealment of information of any of the above

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Whistle blowing is also underpinned by **'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2024'**.

We aim to nurture a culture of openness and transparency in our school, which makes it safe and acceptable for an employee, volunteer, student or advisory member to raise a concern. It is not an alternative to the complaints policy.

St Mary's school is committed to providing paid and unpaid staff with an effective mechanism for dealing with situations that arise from concerns within the workplace. An employee, volunteer, student or advisory group member who, acting in good faith, wishes to raise a concern, should normally report the matter to the DSL or Deputy DSL Officers, who should advise the individual of the action she will take in response to the concerns expressed.

Concerns should be investigated and resolved as quickly as possible. If the individual feels they cannot discuss the matter with the DSL or Deputy DSL officers and has concerns after informing them, the concern should be reported to the Advisory Group. The advisory group will then decide (in consultation, if necessary with other professional bodies, such as Area Safeguarding board, Ofsted and the Local Authority) what action is to be taken. This may include whether the concern can be dealt with through the school's own complaints policy. A disclosure will be protected. Confidentiality will be maintained wherever possible. The individual raising the concern will not suffer any detrimental treatment and will be supported as much as possible.

For more information, please see the Reporting Concerns at work, Whistleblowing Policy.

## **Staff Contact with Pupils**

As adults in positions of trust and in order to minimise the risk of accusations being made against staff as a result of their daily contact with pupils, all school staff will adhere to the school's expectations regarding professional conduct and should familiarise themselves with the DfE Guidance regarding reasonable force:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/268771/use\\_of\\_reasonable\\_force\\_-\\_advice\\_for\\_headteachers\\_staff\\_and\\_governing\\_bodies\\_-\\_final\\_july\\_2013\\_001.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/268771/use_of_reasonable_force_-_advice_for_headteachers_staff_and_governing_bodies_-_final_july_2013_001.pdf)

## **Curriculum**

The Governing Body believe that the school curriculum is important in the protection of children. They will aim to ensure that curriculum development

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meets the following objectives (these are often met through the PSHE and citizenship curriculum):

- Developing pupil self-esteem;
- Developing communication skills;
- Informing about all aspects of risk;
- Developing strategies for self-protection;
- Developing a sense of the boundaries between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour in adults;
- Developing non-abusive behaviour between pupils

## **Confidentiality**

The Governing Body accepts that child protection raises issues of confidentiality, which should be clearly understood by all staff. Reports to the Governing Body will not identify individual children.

## **Record Keeping and Reporting**

The Governing Body expect all staff to maintain high quality signed and dated child protection records, which separate fact, allegation, hearsay and opinion and which clearly indicate decisions and action taken. These records may in some cases be required in court proceedings.

The Governing Body further expect school staff to assist the Family and Children's Services Department by providing information to contribute to child protection enquiries and for child protection case conferences as required.

## **Monitoring Pupils on the Child Protection Register**

The Governing Body expects the Head Teacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead Officers to ensure that teachers monitor closely the welfare, progress and attendance of all pupils. Relevant and pertinent information relating to children either subject to a Child Protection Plan or deemed Children in Need will be provided in a timely fashion to Family and Children's Services staff.

## **Communicating Safeguarding Policy to Parents and Pupils**

The Governing Body expect parents and pupils to be informed that the school has a Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and is required to follow the LSCB Guidelines for reporting suspected abuse to the Family and Children's Services Department.

Pupils and parents should know how the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection systems work and with whom they can discuss any concerns. They should also be made aware of local or national telephone help lines.

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## **Monitoring and evaluating effectiveness of the school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**

The governors require the Headteacher to report to them annually on the effectiveness of the school's child protection policy and on associated issues in the school over the preceding year.

### **Child Protection in relation to other school policies**

This Safeguarding and Child Protection policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies such as:

- Positive Behaviour management Policy, including section on Anti-bullying;
- Positive Restraint Policy;
- Equality Policy;
- Accessibility Plan;
- SEND Policy;
- E-Safety Policy
- RSE and PHSE Policies