



**ST MARY'S**  
CATHOLIC PRIMARY  
SCHOOL

**Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy**  
**September 2023**

Approved by:	Local Governing Body	Date: 29.9.2023
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Last reviewed on:	1.9.2023
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Next review due by:	1.9.2024
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Signed by Principal: *B. Binello*

Signed by Chair of LGB: *T. Guinan*

## Important Contacts

ROLE/ORGANISATION	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Mrs I Borriello	01384 985 005
Deputy DSL	Ms R Mosley	01384 985 005
Local authority designated officer (LADO)	Yvonne Nelson-Brown  Sukhchandani Kaur	<a href="mailto:Yvonne.Nelson-Brown@dudley.gov.uk">Yvonne.Nelson-Brown@dudley.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:Allegations@dudley.gov.uk">Allegations@dudley.gov.uk</a>  <a href="mailto:Sukhchandani.Kaur@dudley.gov.uk">Sukhchandani.Kaur@dudley.gov.uk</a>
Chair of Governors	Mr T Guinan	01384 985 005
Safeguarding Governor	Mr T Guinan	01384 985 005

## School Mission Statement

*At St. Mary's, we are called together to love, learn and care like Jesus- for ourselves and each other- always trusting in Him.*

### 1. Purpose and Aims

**The school aims to ensure that:**

- Appropriate action is taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare
- All staff are aware of their statutory responsibilities with respect to safeguarding
- Staff are properly trained in recognising and reporting safeguarding issues

Some children have an increased risk of abuse, and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise children's diverse circumstances. We ensure that all children have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face.

**We give special consideration to children who:**

- Have special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities
- Are young carers
- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, LGBTQ+, gender identification or sexuality
- Have English as an additional language

- Are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence
- Are at risk of FGM, sexual and criminal exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation
- Are asylum seekers
- Are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs
- Are Children in Care or previously Children in Care
- Are missing or absent from education for prolonged periods and/or repeat occasions
- Whose parent/carer has expressed an intention to remove them from school to be home educated

## 2. Statutory Framework

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2022\)](#) and [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2018\)](#), and the [Governance Handbook](#) in addition [DfE's filtering and monitoring standards](#). We comply with this guidance and the arrangements agreed and published by our 3 local safeguarding partners.

This policy is also based on the following legislation:

- Part 3 of the schedule to the [Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#), which places a duty on academies and independent schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school
- Section 157 of the [Education Act 2002](#), which places welfare, health and safety duty on schools
- [The Children Act 1989](#) (and [2004 amendment](#)), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children
- Section 5B(11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the [Serious Crime Act 2015](#), which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18
- [Statutory guidance on FGM](#), which sets out responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM
- [The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974](#), which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children
- Schedule 4 of the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#), which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children
- [Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty](#), which explains schools' duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism

Information Sharing (2018)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/721581/Information\\_sharing\\_advice\\_practitioners\\_safeguarding\\_services.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721581/Information_sharing_advice_practitioners_safeguarding_services.pdf)

- The [Childcare \(Disqualification\) and Childcare \(Early Years Provision Free of Charge\) \(Extended Entitlement\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2018](#) (referred to in this policy as the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations) and [Childcare Act 2006](#), which set out who is disqualified from working with children
- This policy also meets requirements relating to safeguarding and welfare in the [Early years foundation stage statutory framework \(EYFS\) September 2021](#)

This policy also complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

➤ The school's policy has been written taken into consideration our locally agreed multi-agency procedures that have been put in place by the three safeguarding partners:

- ✓ (The local authority (LA))
- ✓ Integrated care boards (previously known as clinical commissioning groups) for an area within the LA
- ✓ The chief officer of police for a police area in the LA area

. The links for Dudley's procedures are below:

<https://dudleysafeguarding.org.uk/>

<https://dudleysafeguarding.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/DSPP-Support-Level-Guidance-and-Framework-March-2023.pdf>

The safeguarding priorities for Dudley 2022/24 are:

Neglect

Exploitation

Family Safeguarding

These are detailed further on the above website and are included in whole school training.

### **3. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**

The DSL is a member of the senior leadership team. Our DSL is Mrs I. Borriello (Principal). The DSL takes lead responsibility for child protection and wider safeguarding. The DSL takes lead responsibility for child protection and wider safeguarding in the school. This includes online safety and understanding our filtering and monitoring processes on school devices and school networks to keep pupils safe online.

During term time, the DSL will be available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Out of school hours the DSL is contactable by completing the "contact school" form on the website for a direct message to be sent to the DSL.

When the DSL is absent, the deputy DSLs - Mrs N. Poynter and Ms R. Mosley - will act as cover.

The DSL will be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to:

- Work closely with teachers and share information & provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and safeguarding and child protection matters
- Set out procedures so that staff promptly share their safeguarding concerns in writing
- Help promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children, including children with a social worker, are experiencing, or have experienced, with teachers and school leadership staff. Their role could include ensuring that the school, and their staff, know who these children are, understand their academic progress and attainment and maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort; supporting teaching staff to identify the challenges that children in this group might face and the additional academic support and adjustments that they could make to best support these children.
- Refer cases of suspected abuse and neglect to the local authority children's social care as required and support staff who make referrals to local authority children's social care.
- Refer cases to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required and support staff who make referrals to Channel programme.
- Refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police

- Take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so
- Contribute to the assessment of children, particularly in relation to Early Help
- Work closely with Mental Health Leads
- Refer suspected cases, as appropriate, to the relevant body (local authority children's social care, Channel Panel or police), and support staff who make such referrals directly, including ensuring, where necessary, a child has an appropriate adult
- Have a good understanding of harmful sexual behaviour
- Have a good understanding and takes the lead of the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place at our school, this is included in the DSL's job description
- Be confident that they know what local specialist support is available to support all children involved (including victims and alleged perpetrators) in sexual violence and sexual harassment, and be confident as to how to access this support
- Be aware that children must have an 'appropriate adult' to support and help them in the case of a police investigation or search
- The DSL will also keep the headteacher informed of any issues and liaise with local authority case managers and designated officers (LADO) for safeguarding and child protection concerns as appropriate.

The full responsibilities of the DSL and deputies are set out in their job descriptions.

#### **4. The Principal, Governing Body, Trustees**

**The Principal is responsible for the implementation of this policy, including:**

- Ensuring that staff (including temporary & supply staff) and volunteers are informed of our systems which support safeguarding, including this policy, as part of their induction
- Communicating this policy to parents when their child joins the school and via the school website
- Ensuring that the DSL has appropriate time, funding, training and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent
- Ensuring that all staff undertake appropriate safeguarding and child protection training and update this regularly
- Acting as the 'case manager' in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff or volunteer, where appropriate
- Referring cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service/Teaching Regulatory Agency/TRA as required
- Completing appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training
- Ensuring the relevant staffing ratios are met, where applicable
- Making sure each child in the Early Years Foundation Stage is assigned a key person
- Overseeing the safe use of technology, mobile phones and cameras in the setting
- Promoting good oral health and signposting accordingly to services

**The Governing Body will approve this policy at each review, ensure it complies with the law and hold the Principal to account for its implementation.**

The Board of Directors delegates responsibility for the monitoring of this policy to the Local Governing Body. The Local Governing Body will appoint an LGB member Safeguarding Lead to monitor the effectiveness of this policy in conjunction with the full Local Governing Body. This is always a different person from the DSL.

The Chair of the Board will appoint a 'case manager' if an allegation of abuse is made against the Principal (see appendix 1).

Ensure that the school has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place and review their effectiveness. This includes:

- Making sure that the leadership team and staff are aware of the provisions in place, and that they understand their expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring as part of safeguarding training
- Reviewing the [DfE's filtering and monitoring standards](#), and discussing with IT staff and service providers what needs to be done to support the school in meeting these standards

Where another body is providing services or activities (regardless of whether or not the children who attend these services/activities are children on the school roll):

- Seek assurance that the other body has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies/procedures in place, and inspect them if needed
- Make sure there are arrangements for the body to liaise with the school about safeguarding arrangements, where appropriate
- Make sure that safeguarding requirements are a condition of using the school premises, and that any agreement to use the premises would be terminated if the other body fails to comply.

All Governors have read and understood Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023. (Part Two of this policy has information on how governors are supported to fulfil their role.)

## 5. Safeguarding Policies and Procedures/Legal Responsibilities and duty to share information

**Our safeguarding responsibilities include:**

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

**Child protection** is part of this definition and refers to activities undertaken to prevent children suffering, or being likely to suffer, significant harm.

**Abuse** is a form of maltreatment of a child and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm.

**Neglect** is a form of abuse and is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

**Sharing nudes or semi-nudes** (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) is the sharing of sexual imagery (photos or videos) by children

**Children** includes everyone under the age of 18.

The following three **Safeguarding Partners** are identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education (and defined in the Children Act 2004, as amended by chapter 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017). They will decide to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs:

- The local authority (LA)
- An integrated care systems for an area within the LA
- The chief officer of police for a police area in the LA area

## Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding and child protection is **everyone's** responsibility. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and governors/trustees in the school and is consistent with the procedures of the 3 safeguarding partners. Our policy and procedures also apply to extended school and off-site activities.

The school plays a crucial role in preventative education by embedding safeguarding and well being in the school curriculum. Our school curriculum is detailed in Section 21 of this Policy

### All staff

All staff will read and understand part 1 and Annex B of the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, and review this guidance at least annually.

All staff will be aware of:

- Our systems which support safeguarding, including this child protection and safeguarding policy, the staff code of conduct, the role and identity of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputies, the behaviour policy, and the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education
- The behaviour policy
- Online Safety policy
- The Early Help process and their role in it, including identifying emerging problems, liaising with the DSL, and sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment
- The process for making referrals to local authority children's social care and for statutory assessments that may follow a referral, including the role they might be expected to play
- What to do if they identify a safeguarding issue or a child tells them they are being abused or neglected, including specific issues such as FGM, and how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality while liaising with relevant professionals
- The signs of different types of abuse and neglect, as well as specific safeguarding issues, such as child exploitation (CSE/CCE), indicators of being at risk from or involved with serious violent crime, FGM and radicalisation
- The importance of reassuring victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe
- The fact that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of their home, at school and online.
- What to look for to identify children who need help or protection.

### Staff safeguarding training.

- All staff members will undertake safeguarding and child protection training, online safety training including IT filtering and monitoring roles and responsibilities, together with managing allegations and whistle-blowing procedures, to ensure they understand the school's safeguarding systems and their responsibilities and can identify signs of possible abuse or neglect. This training will be regularly updated and will be in line with local and statutory guidelines.
- All staff will undertake annually training on Cyber-security training.
- Have regard to the Teachers' Standards to support the expectation that all teachers:
- Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe environment
- Have a clear understanding of the needs of all pupils/students.
- All staff will have training on the government's anti-radicalisation strategy, Prevent, to enable them to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas.

- Staff will also receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates including online safety, as required but at least annually. Regular updates throughout the academic year could include (for example, through emails, e-bulletins and staff meetings) as required, but at least annually.
- All new staff will receive robust safeguarding training in line with the whole school training package, this will be delivered as part of their induction process before they commence working with our pupils/students.

## **Volunteers and Contractors**

All volunteers and contractors will receive appropriate Safeguarding information and training, as applicable.

All visitors will be required to verify their identity to the satisfaction of staff and to leave their belongings, including their mobile phone(s), in a safe place during their visit.

If the visitor is unknown to the setting, we will check their credentials and reason for visiting before allowing them to enter the setting. Visitors should be ready to produce identification.

Visitors are expected to sign the visitors' book and wear a visitor's badge.

Visitors to the school who are visiting for a professional purpose, such as educational psychologists and school improvement officers, will be asked to show photo ID and:

- Will be asked to show their DBS certificate, which will be checked alongside their photo ID; or
- The organisation sending the professional, such as the LA or educational psychology service, will provide prior written confirmation that an enhanced DBS check with barred list information has been carried out

All other visitors, including visiting speakers, will always be accompanied by a member of staff. We will not invite into the school any speaker who is known to disseminate extremist views and will carry out appropriate checks to ensure that any individual or organisation using school facilities is not seeking to disseminate extremist views or radicalise pupils or staff.

## **The DSL and Deputies**

The DSL and deputies will undertake child protection and safeguarding training at least every 2 years. Online safety training will be undertaken annually and regularly updated to keep knowledge of staying safe online and the risks associated up to date, this includes including filtering and monitoring and cyber security.

In addition, they will update their knowledge and skills at regular intervals and at least annually (for example, through briefings, meeting other DSLs, or taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments). They will also undertake Prevent Awareness training.

## **Governors**

All governors receive training about safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) at induction, which is regularly updated. This is to make sure that they:

- Have the knowledge and information needed to perform their functions and understand their responsibilities, such as providing strategic challenge
- Can be assured that safeguarding policies and procedures are effective and support the school to deliver a robust whole-school approach to safeguarding

As the chair of governors may be required to act as the 'case manager' if an allegation of abuse is made against the headteacher, they receive training in managing allegations for this purpose.

All Governors will undertake training relating to online filtering and monitoring, in addition one Governor will be trained in Cyber-security.

## **6. Confidentiality**

Refer to the MAC Data Protection Policy for further details on information sharing.



## You should note that:

- Timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding
- Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety, of children
- The Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe
- If staff need to share 'special category personal data', the DPA 2018 contains 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' as a processing condition that allows practitioners to share information without consent if it is not possible to gain consent, it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent, or if to gain consent would place a child at risk
- Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may not be in the child's best interests
- The government's [information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners](#) includes 7 'golden rules' for sharing information, and will support staff who have to make decisions about sharing information
- If staff are in any doubt about sharing information, they should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy)
- Confidentiality is also addressed in this policy with respect to record-keeping in section 9

## 7. Communication with parents

Where appropriate, we will discuss any concerns about a child with the child's parents. The DSL will normally do this in the event of a suspicion or disclosure.

Other staff will only talk to parents about any such concerns following consultation with the DSL.

If we believe that notifying the parents would increase the risk to the child, we will discuss this with the local authority children's social care team before doing so.

In the case of allegations of abuse made against other children, we will usually notify the parents of all the children involved.

We will work with the police and/or local authority children's social care to make sure our approach to information sharing is consistent.

## 8. Whole Staff Responsibilities

All Staff, volunteers and governors must follow the procedures set out below in the event of a safeguarding issue.

### If a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm, or in immediate danger

Make a referral to Multi Agency Support Team relevant to the child's home address, for Dudley children this is Dudley Front Door and/or the police **immediately** if you believe a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger. **Anyone can make a referral.**

Tell the DSL as soon as possible if you make a referral directly.

Dudley **Report it** page: <https://dudleysafeguarding.org.uk/>

If a child discloses a safeguarding issue to you, you should:

- Listen to and believe them. Allow them time to talk freely and do not ask leading questions
- Stay calm and do not show that you are shocked or upset
- Tell the child they have done the right thing in telling you. Do not tell them they should have told you sooner

- Explain what will happen next and that you will have to pass this information on. Do not promise to keep it a secret
- Write up your conversation as soon as possible in the child's own words. Stick to the facts, and do not put your own judgement on it
- Sign and date the write-up and pass it on to the DSL. Alternatively, if appropriate, make a referral to children's social care and/or the police directly, and tell the DSL as soon as possible that you have done so

Aside from the above professionals, do not disclose the information to anyone else unless told to do so by a relevant authority involved in the safeguarding process

It is important to also understand the following:

- ✓ The child may not feel ready, or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited or neglected
- ✓ Not recognise their experiences as harmful
- ✓ Feel embarrassed, humiliated, or threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability, sexual orientation and/or language barriers

None of this should stop you from having a 'professional curiosity' and speaking to the DSL if you have concerns about a child.

## 9. Record keeping

- We will hold records in line with our MAC records retention schedule.
- All safeguarding concerns, discussions, decisions made and the reasons for those decisions, must be recorded in writing. If you are in any doubt about whether to record something, discuss it with the DSL.
- Non-confidential records will be easily accessible and available. Confidential information and records will be held securely and only available to those who have a right or professional need to see them.
- Safeguarding records relating to individual children will be transferred within 5 days after they have left the school.
- If a child for whom the school has, or has had, safeguarding concerns moves to another school, the DSL will ensure that their safeguarding & child protection file is forwarded promptly and securely, within 5 school days of starting at the new education setting, and separately from the main pupil file. In addition, if the concerns are significant or complex, and/or social services are involved, the DSL will speak to the DSL of the receiving school and provide information (using the pupil safeguarding form) to enable them to have time to make any necessary preparations to ensure the safety of the child.
- All records will be stored on a web-based system (SafeGuard).

**If you have concerns about a child (as opposed to believing a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm or is in immediate danger) Figure 1 (page 12) illustrates the procedure to follow if you have any concerns about a child's welfare.**

Where possible, speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action.

If in exceptional circumstances the DSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to a member of the Senior Leadership Team and/or take advice from Local Authority Children's Social Care. Referrals should be made by completing a Request for Advice and Support [Children's Services Portal site](#) or contact 0300 555 0050.

To refer into Dudley Exploitation hub (DEX): [CS.Hub@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:CS.Hub@dudley.gov.uk) also complete a Request for Support and Advice Form to be submitted via the portal.

Make a referral to Local Authority Children's Social Care directly, if appropriate (see 'Referral' below). Share any action taken with the DSL as soon as possible.

You can also seek advice at any time from the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000. Share details of any actions you take with the DSL as soon as practically possible.

### **Referral**

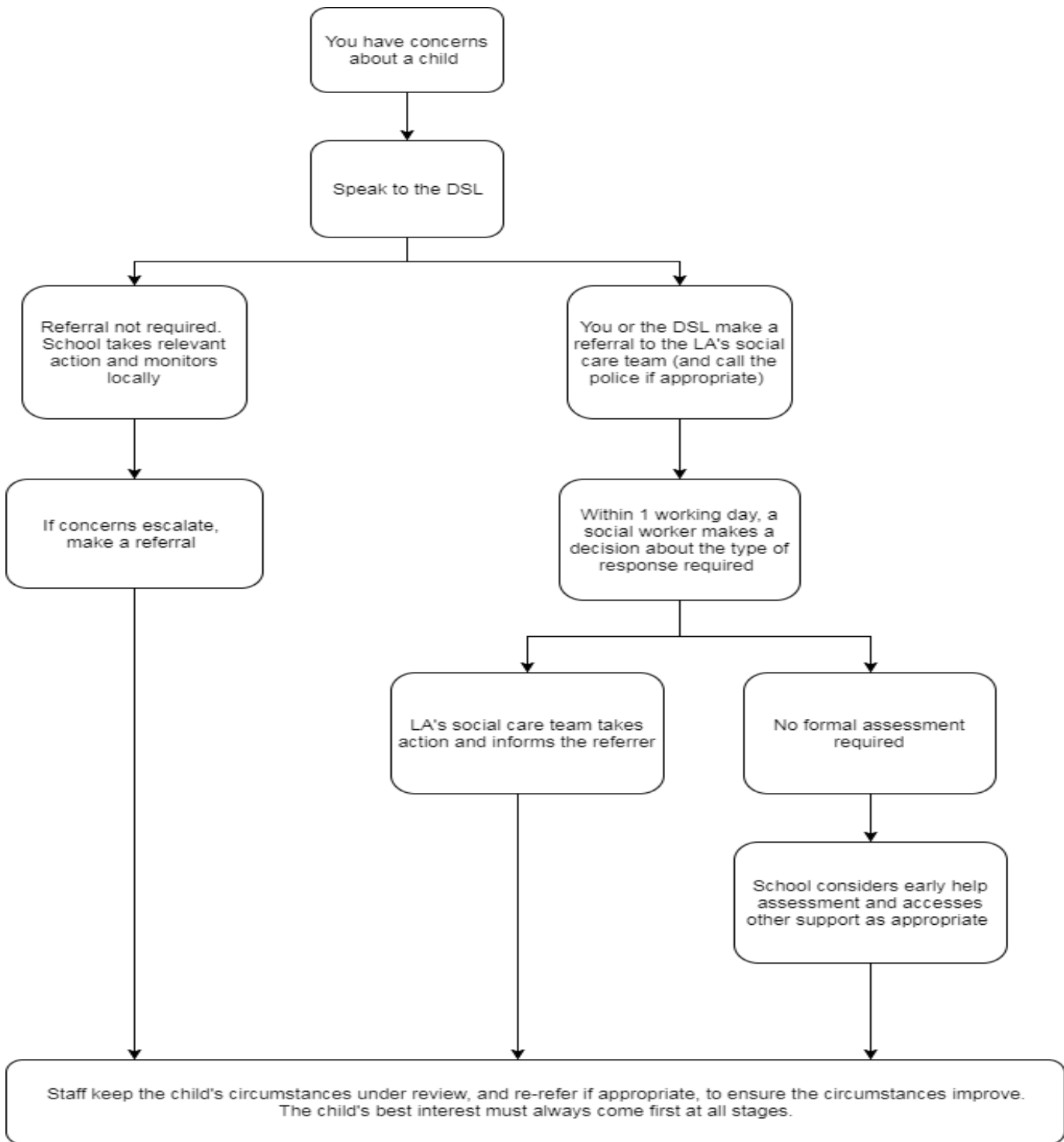
If it is appropriate to refer the case to Local Authority Children’s Social Care or the Police, the DSL will make the referral or support you to do so. If you make a referral directly you must tell the DSL as soon as possible.

The Local Authority will decide within 1 working day of a referral about what course of action to take and will let the person who made the referral know the outcome. The DSL or person who made the referral must follow up with the Local Authority if this information is not made available, and ensure outcomes are properly recorded.

If the child’s situation does not seem to be improving after the referral, the DSL or person who made the referral must follow local escalation procedures to ensure their concerns have been addressed and that the child’s situation improves. Advice and further information on Dudley Professional Resolution can be accessed from the Lead for Safeguarding in Education or directly of the Dudley Safeguarding partnership website.

**Figure 1: procedure if you have concerns about a child’s welfare (as opposed to believing a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger)**

(Note – if the DSL is unavailable, this should not delay action.)



## 10. Dudley's Thresholds and Early Help

If early help is appropriate, the DSL will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead practitioner.

The DSL will keep the case under constant review and the school will consider a referral to local authority children's social care if the situation does not seem to be improving. Timelines of interventions will be monitored and reviewed.

Level 1 - No referral is required. Professionals should contact Dudley's Family Information Service on 01384 814398 to obtain information about support available for children, young people and families.

Level 2 - Partner agencies should complete their own internal assessment as appropriate and forward this to the relevant Family Centre. Alternatively, an Early Help Assessment can be completed and forwarded to the appropriate Family Centre Cluster.

Level 3 - Referrals should be made by completing an Early Help Assessment and forwarding it to the appropriate Family Centre Cluster (Stourbridge Children's Centre).

View more information on [Dudley Early Help](#).

Dudley Safeguarding Partnership threshold guidance is below, this should be considered when completing Request for Help and Support Form

<https://dudleysafeguarding.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/DSPP-Support-Level-Guidance-and-Framework-March-2023.pdf>

## 11. When to be concerned

All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) **sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse)**, criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines, and radicalisation.

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. **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. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

## Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

Abuse, including neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap.

**Physical abuse** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

**Emotional abuse may involve:**

- Conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person
- Not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate
- Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction
- Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another
- Serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children

**Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether the child is aware of what is happening.

**The activities may involve:**

- Physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing
- Non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet)

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

**Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:**

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

## **12. Specific Safeguarding Issues**

All staff at St Mary's Catholic Primary school are expected to read Annex B of KCSiE 2022, which details information around specific safeguarding issues.

Staff receive training at the beginning of the year on specific safeguarding issues and regular update training throughout the year. We also ensure that our curriculum helps to educate pupils about appropriate behaviour as well as ensuring they know that they can talk to staff confidentially.

## **Child-on-child abuse**

Child-on-child abuse is when children abuse other children. This type of abuse can take place inside and outside of school. It can also take place both face-to-face and online and can occur simultaneously between the 2.

Victims will be taken seriously, kept safe and never be made to feel like they are creating a problem for reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment.

We recognise that children can abuse their peers. Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”.

We also recognise the gendered nature of child-on-child abuse. However, all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

Most cases of pupils hurting other pupils will be dealt with under our school’s behaviour policy, but this child protection and safeguarding policy will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns. This might include where the alleged behaviour:

- Is serious, and potentially a criminal offence
- Could put pupils in the school at risk
- Is violent
- Involves pupils being forced to use drugs or alcohol
- Involves sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, up skirting or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (including sharing nudes or semi-nudes)

### **If a pupil makes an allegation of abuse against another pupil:**

- You must record the allegation and tell the DSL, but do not investigate it
- The DSL will contact the Local Authority Children’s Social Care team and follow its advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence
- The DSL will put a risk assessment and support plan into place for all children involved (including the victim(s), the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made and any others affected) with a named person they can talk to if needed
- The DSL will contact the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), if appropriate

### **We will minimise the risk of Child-on-Child abuse by:**

- Challenging any form of derogatory or sexualised language or behaviour, including requesting or sending sexual images
- Being vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female pupils, and initiation or hazing type violence with respect to boys
- Ensuring our curriculum helps to educate pupils about appropriate behaviour and consent
- Ensuring pupils know they can talk to staff confidentially
- Ensuring staff are trained to understand that a pupil harming a peer could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy

## **Consensual and Non-consensual sharing of indecent images**

### **Your responsibilities when responding to an incident:**

If you are made aware of an incident involving the sharing of nudes or semi-nudes (also known as 'youth produced sexual imagery'), you must report it to the DSL immediately and reassure the pupil(s) that they will receive support and help.

You must **not**:

- View, download or share the imagery yourself, or ask a pupil to share or download it. If you have already viewed the imagery by accident, you must report this to the DSL
- Delete the imagery or ask the pupil to delete it
- Ask the pupil(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery (this is the DSL's responsibility)
- Share information about the incident with other members of staff, the pupil(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers
- Say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved
- Report the incident and reassure the pupil(s) that they will receive support and help from the DSL or deputies.

### **Initial review meeting**

Following a report of an incident, the DSL will hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff. This meeting will consider the initial evidence and aim to determine:

- Whether there is an immediate risk to pupil(s)
- If a referral needs to be made to the police and/or children's social care
- If it is necessary to view the imagery in order to safeguard the young person (in most cases, imagery should not be viewed)
- What further information is required to decide on the best response
- Whether the imagery has been shared widely and via what services and/or platforms (this may be unknown)
- Whether immediate action should be taken to delete or remove images from devices or online services
- Any relevant facts about the pupils involved which would influence risk assessment
- If there is a need to contact another school setting or individual
- Whether to contact parents or carers of the pupils involved (in most cases parents should be involved)

The DSL will make an immediate referral to police and/or children's social care if:

- The incident involves an adult
- There is reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example owing to special educational needs)
- What the DSL knows about the imagery suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person's developmental stage, or are violent
- The imagery involves sexual acts and any pupil in the imagery is under 13
- The DSL has reason to believe a pupil is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of the imagery (for example, the young person is presenting as suicidal or self-harming)

If none of the above apply then the DSL, in consultation with other members of staff as appropriate, may decide to respond to the incident without involving the police or children's social care.

### **Further review by the DSL**



If at the initial review stage, a decision has been made not to refer to police and/or children's social care, the DSL will conduct a further review.

They will hold interviews with the pupils involved (if appropriate) to establish the facts and assess the risks.

If at any point in the process there is a concern that a pupil has been harmed or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately.

### **Informing parents**

The DSL will inform parents at an early stage and keep them involved in the process, unless there is a good reason to believe that involving them would put the pupil at risk of harm.

### **Referring to the police**

If it is necessary to refer an incident to the police, this will be done through contacting a police community support officer by dialling 101.

### **Recording incidents**

All incidents and the decisions made in responding to them will be recorded. The record-keeping arrangements set out in section 9 of this policy also apply to recording incidents of sharing of nudes or semi-nudes.

## **Female Genital Mutilation - If you discover that FGM has taken place or a pupil is at risk of FGM**

The Department for Education's Keeping Children Safe in Education explains that FGM comprises '*all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs.*'

FGM is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting, harmful consequences. It is also known as 'female genital cutting', 'circumcision' or 'initiation'.

**Any teacher** who discovers (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a **pupil under 18** must immediately report this to the police, personally. This is a statutory duty, and teachers will face disciplinary sanctions for failing to meet it.

Unless they have been specifically told not to disclose, they should also discuss the case with the DSL and involve children's social care as appropriate.

**Any other member of staff** who discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a **pupil under 18** must speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures.

The duty for teachers mentioned above does not apply in cases where a pupil is *at risk* of FGM or FGM is suspected but is not known to have been carried out. Staff should not examine pupils.

**Any member of staff** who suspects a pupil is *at risk* of FGM or suspects that FGM has been carried out must speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures.

The DSL will make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to be alert to children affected by FGM or at risk of FGM.

## **Honour Based Abuse (including Forced Marriage)**

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community, including FGM, forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing.

Abuse committed in this context often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators.

All forms of HBA are abuse and will be handled and escalated as such. All staff will be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA or already having suffered it. If staff have a concern, they will speak to the DSL, who will activate local safeguarding procedures.

## Forced Marriage

Forcing a person into marriage is a crime. A forced marriage is one entered without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats, or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological.

Staff will receive training around forced marriage and the presenting symptoms. We are aware of the 'one chance' rule, i.e. we may only have one chance to speak to the potential victim and only one chance to save them.

If a member of staff suspects that a pupil is being forced into marriage, they will speak to the pupil about their concerns in a secure and private place. They will then report this to the DSL.

The DSL will:

- Speak to the pupil about the concerns in a secure and private place
- Activate the local safeguarding procedures and refer the case to the local authority's designated officer
- Seek advice from the Forced Marriage Unit on 020 7008 0151 or [fm@fco.gov.uk](mailto:fm@fco.gov.uk)
- Refer the pupil to an education welfare officer, pastoral tutor, learning mentor, or school counsellor, as appropriate

## Child Criminal Exploitation

Child criminal exploitation (CCE) is a form of abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator, and/or through violence or the threat of violence.

The abuse can be perpetrated by males or females, and children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse.

The victim can be exploited even when the activity appears to be consensual. It does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. For example, young people may be trafficked, forced to work in cannabis factories, modern slavery, coerced into moving drugs or money across the country (county lines), involved in gangs and knife crime, forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

**Indicators of CCE can include a child:**

- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation
- Involved in gangs and knife crime
- Suffering from changes in emotional wellbeing
- Misusing drugs and alcohol
- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late
- Regularly missing school or education
- Not taking part in education

If a member of staff suspects CCE, they will discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority's children's social care team and the police, if appropriate.

## Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. It may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

The abuse can be perpetrated by males or females, and children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse.

The victim can be exploited even when the activity appears to be consensual. Children or young people who are being sexually exploited may not understand that they are being abused. They often trust their abuser and may be tricked into believing they are in a loving, consensual relationship.

CSE can include both physical contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity. It can also happen online. For example, young people may be persuaded or forced to share sexually explicit images of themselves, have sexual conversations by text, or take part in sexual activities using a webcam. CSE may also occur without the victim's immediate knowledge, for example through others copying videos or images.

**In addition to the CCE indicators above, indicators of CSE can include a child:**

- Having an older boyfriend or girlfriend
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infections or becoming pregnant

If a member of staff suspects CSE, they will discuss this with the DSL. The DSL will trigger the local safeguarding procedures, including a referral to the local authority's children's social care team and the police, if appropriate.

## Children who are absent from education

A child going missing from education, particularly repeatedly, can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues. This might include abuse or neglect, such as sexual abuse or exploitation, FGM or forced marriage, or issues such as mental health problems, substance abuse, radicalisation, FGM or forced marriage.

There are many circumstances where a child may become missing from education, but some children are particularly at risk. These include children who:

- Are at risk of harm or neglect
- Are at risk of forced marriage or FGM
- Come from Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller families
- Come from the families of service personnel
- Go missing or run away from home or care
- Are supervised by the youth justice system
- Cease to attend a school
- Come from new migrant families

We will follow our procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of going missing in future. This includes informing the local authority if a child leaves the school without a new school being named and adhering to requirements with respect to sharing information with the local authority, when applicable, when removing a child's name from the admission register at non-standard transition points.

Staff will be trained in signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns which may be related to being missing, such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

If a staff member suspects that a child is suffering from harm or neglect, we will follow local child protection procedures, including with respect to making reasonable enquiries. We will make an immediate referral to the local authority children's social care team, and the police, if the child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger.

For further information: Children Missing Education statutory guidance for local authorities 2016

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/550416/Children\\_Missing\\_Education\\_-\\_statutory\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

## **Missing pupils**

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. If a child goes missing, we will follow the School's Attendance Policy and contact the Education Investigation Service for further advice and support.

## **Child abduction and community safety incidents**

Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a minor from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. Child abduction can be committed by parents or other family members; by people known but not related to the victim (such as neighbours, friends and acquaintances); and by strangers.

Other community safety incidents in the vicinity of a school can raise concerns amongst children and parents, for example, people loitering nearby or unknown adults engaging children in conversation.

As children get older and are granted more independence (for example, as they start walking to school on their own) it is important they are given practical advice on how to keep themselves safe. Many schools provide outdoor-safety lessons run by teachers or by local police staff.

If there is a concern about a child being abducted and/or there is a potential community safety incident, then the DSL or deputy should be informed immediately. The school will then follow the Borough's procedure if a child is at immediate risk of harm (call to MASH).

Further information is available at: [www.actionagainstabduction.org](http://www.actionagainstabduction.org) and [www.clevernevergoes.org](http://www.clevernevergoes.org).

## **Homelessness**

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare.

The DSL and deputies will be aware of contact details and referral routes into the local housing authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity (where appropriate and in accordance with local procedures).

Where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, the DSL will also make a referral to children's social care.

## Domestic Abuse

Children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse and/or violence at home where it occurs between family members. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long-lasting emotional and psychological impact on children.

If police are called to an incident of domestic abuse and any children in the household have experienced the incident, the police will inform the key adult in school (usually the designated safeguarding lead) before the child or children arrive at school the following day. West Midlands police forces are part of [Operation Encompass](#)

The DSL will provide support according to the child's needs and update records about their circumstances.

## Cybercrime

Cybercrime is criminal activity committed using computers and/or the internet. It is broadly categorised as either 'cyber-enabled' (crimes that can happen off-line but are enabled at scale and at speed on-line) or 'cyber dependent' (crimes that can be committed only by using a computer). Cyber-dependent crimes include:

- unauthorised access to computers (illegal 'hacking'), for example accessing a school's computer network to look for test paper answers or change grades awarded
- 'Denial of Service' (Dos or DDoS) attacks or 'booting'. These are attempts to make a computer, network or website unavailable by overwhelming it with internet traffic from multiple sources, and,
- making, supplying or obtaining malware (malicious software) such as viruses, spyware, ransomware, botnets and Remote Access Trojans with the intent to commit further offence, including those above.

Children with particular skills and interest in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into cyber-dependent crime.

If there are concerns about a child in this area, the DSL or deputy should consider referring into the **Cyber Choices** programme. This is a nationwide police programme supported by the Home Office and led by the National Crime Agency, working with regional and local policing. It aims to intervene where young people are at risk of committing, or being drawn into, low-level cyber-dependent offences and divert them to a more positive use of their skills and interests.

Note that **Cyber Choices** does not currently cover 'cyber-enabled' crime such as fraud, purchasing of illegal drugs on-line and child sexual abuse and exploitation, nor other areas of concern such as on-line bullying or general on-line safety.

Additional advice can be found at: [Cyber Choices](#), ['NPCC- When to call the Police'](#) and [National Cyber Security Centre - NCSC.GOV.UK](#).

## Child-on-Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

See part Five of KCSiE 2022

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also 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.

### Responding to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment

Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are likely to be complex and require difficult professional decisions to be made, often quickly and under pressure. Preplanning, effective training and effective policies will provide schools and colleges with the foundation for a calm, considered and appropriate response to any reports.

Ultimately, the school will make any decisions on a case-by-case basis, with the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) taking a leading role and using their professional judgement, supported by other agencies, such as children's social care and the police as required.

Staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of '**it could happen here**' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff should always act in the **best** interests of the child.

If staff have **any concerns** about a child's welfare, they should act on them **immediately**.

Up-skirting had been added into Sexual Harassment Section - **The Voyeurism (Offences) Act came into force on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2019 and has now been referenced.**

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school.

If a victim reports an incident, it is essential that staff make sure they 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 any form of abuse or neglect. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

When supporting victims, staff will:

- Reassure victims that the law on child-on-child abuse is there to protect them, not criminalise them
- Regularly review decisions and actions, and update policies with lessons learnt
- Look out for potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, and decide on a course of action where we identify any patterns
- Consider if there are wider cultural issues within the school that enabled inappropriate behaviour to occur and whether revising policies and/or providing extra staff training could minimise the risk of it happening again
- Remain alert to the possible challenges of detecting signs that a child has experienced sexual violence, and show sensitivity to their needs

Some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows that girls, children with SEN and/or disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) children are at greater risk.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- Challenging inappropriate behaviours
- Making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up

- Challenging physical behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them

If staff have any concerns about sexual violence or sexual harassment, or a child makes a report to them, they will follow the reporting procedures within school ensuring that the DSL is informed immediately.

## Radicalisation and Extremism

- **Radicalisation** refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups
- **Extremism** is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, such as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces
- **Terrorism** is an action that:
  - Endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people;
  - Causes serious damage to property; or
  - Seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system

The use or threat of terrorism must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

Schools have a duty to prevent children from being drawn into terrorism. The DSL will undertake Prevent awareness training and make sure that staff have access to appropriate training to equip them to identify children at risk.

We will assess the risk of children in our school being drawn into terrorism. This assessment will be based on an understanding of the potential risk in our local area, in collaboration with our local safeguarding partners and local police force.

We will ensure that suitable internet filtering is in place and equip our pupils to stay safe online at school and at home.

There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Radicalisation can occur quickly or over a long period.

Staff will be alert to changes in pupils' behaviour.

The government website [Educate Against Hate](#) and charity [NSPCC](#) say that signs that a pupil is being radicalised can include:

- Refusal to engage with, or becoming abusive to, peers who are different from themselves
- Becoming susceptible to conspiracy theories and feelings of persecution
- Changes in friendship groups and appearance
- Rejecting activities, they used to enjoy
- Converting to a new religion
- Isolating themselves from family and friends
- Talking as if from a scripted speech
- An unwillingness or inability to discuss their views
- A sudden disrespectful attitude towards others
- Increased levels of anger

- Increased secretiveness, especially around internet use
- Expressions of sympathy for extremist ideologies and groups, or justification of their actions
- Accessing extremist material online, including on Facebook or Twitter
- Possessing extremist literature
- Being in contact with extremist recruiters and joining, or seeking to join, extremist organisations

Children who are at risk of radicalisation may have low self-esteem or be victims of bullying or discrimination. It is important to note that these signs can also be part of normal teenage behaviour, staff should have confidence in their instincts and seek advice if something feels wrong.

If staff are concerned about a pupil, they will follow our reporting procedures including discussing their concerns with the DSL.

Staff should **always** act if they are worried.

Further information on the school's measures to prevent radicalisation are set out in other school policies and procedures, including the Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation policy.

### **If you have concerns about extremism**

If a child is not suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger, where possible speak to the DSL first to agree a course of action.

If in exceptional circumstances the DSL is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Speak to a member of the senior leadership team and/or seek advice from local authority children's social care. Make a referral to local authority children's social care directly, if appropriate (see 'Referral' above). Inform the DSL or deputy as soon as practically possible after the referral.

Where there is a concern, the DSL will consider the level of risk and decide which agency to make a referral to. This could include [Channel](#), the government's programme for identifying and supporting individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism, or the local authority children's social care team.

The Department for Education also has a dedicated telephone helpline, 020 7340 7264, which school staff and governors can call to raise concerns about extremism with respect to a pupil. You can also email [counter.extremism@education.gov.uk](mailto:counter.extremism@education.gov.uk). Note that this is not for use in emergency situations.

In an emergency, call 999 or the confidential anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321 if you:

- Think someone is in immediate danger
- Think someone may be planning to travel to join an extremist group
- See or hear something that may be terrorist-related

## **Serious violence**

Indicators which may signal that a child is at risk from, or involved with, serious violent crime may include:

- Increased absence from school
- Change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups
- Significant decline in performance
- Signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing
- Signs of assault or unexplained injuries
- Unexplained gifts or new possessions (this could indicate that the child has been approached by, or is involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation (see above))

Risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence include:

- Being male



- Having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school
- Having experienced child maltreatment
- Having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery

Staff will be aware of these indicators and risk factors. If a member of staff has a concern about a pupil being involved in, or at risk of, serious violence, they will report this to the DSL

## **Mental Health**

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.

The school's Mental Health Lead is Mrs N Poynter

Staff will be alert to behavioural signs that suggest a child may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Education staff, however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. Schools can access a range of advice to help them identify children in need of extra mental health support, this includes working with external agencies.

If you have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, take immediate action. If you have a mental health concern that is **not** also a safeguarding concern, speak to the DSL or deputy to agree a course of action.

For further information on the escalation, referral and accountability systems, refer to the Department for Education guidance on [mental health and behaviour in schools](#)

## **Areas with particular risk (not exhaustive)**

- **Physical intervention**
- **Personal/Intimate care**
- **Changing for PE and swimming**
- **1:1 working**
- **Overnight stays**
- **Host families**
- **Private Fostering**
- **School dogs/therapy dogs**
- **Pupils being taught off site**
- **Elective Home Education (EHE)**
- **Children persistently absent or have episodes of missing**
- **Young carers**
- **Children of parents with mental health issues**
- **Children and the court system**
- **Children with family members in prison**

## 13. LGBT+ pupils

Some pupils may be vulnerable due to their sexual orientation or gender identity, either because they are subject to homophobic, bi-phobic or transphobic bullying or because of negative responses from parents/carers or others, which may result in increased risk of self-harm, suicide or homelessness.

Several studies also evidence that LGBT+ young people may be at increased risk of becoming victims of CSE.

Staff should therefore ensure that they are aware of the increased risk factors and know how to access appropriate support for these young people when required. Staff must endeavour to provide a safe space for children to speak out, ensuring that LGBT+ pupils have a trusted adult with whom they can be open.

## 14. Online Safety and the use of mobile technology

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.

To address this, our school aims to:

- › Have robust processes in place to ensure the online safety of pupils, staff, volunteers and governors
- › Protect and educate the whole school community in its safe and responsible use of technology, including mobile and smart technology (which we refer to as 'mobile phones')
- › Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for the whole school community
- › Establish clear mechanisms to identify, intervene in and escalate any incidents or concerns, where appropriate

### 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
- › **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; and
- › **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:
- › Train staff on safe internet use and online safeguarding issues including cyber-bullying and the risks of online radicalisation. All staff members will receive refresher training at least once each academic year
- › Educate and engage with parents/carers about online safety via our school website, communications sent directly to them and during parent workshops. We will also share clear procedures with them so they know how to raise concerns about online safety
- › Work with our central IT team to 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

This section summarises our approach to online safety and mobile phone use. For comprehensive details about our school's policy on online safety and the use of mobile phones, please refer to our online safety policy.

Screening and confiscation guidance:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1091132/Screening\\_Screening\\_and\\_Confiscation\\_guidance\\_July\\_2022.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1091132/Screening_Screening_and_Confiscation_guidance_July_2022.pdf)

## 15. Children in Care (CiC) and Post Children in Care

The Designated Person (the designated teacher) should aim to work in partnership with the Virtual School Coordinator on how funding can best support the progress of a CiC. The name of the Virtual Headteacher is Emma Thomas [Emma.Thomas@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:Emma.Thomas@dudley.gov.uk).

We will ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep Children in Care and previous Children in Care safe. We will ensure that:

- Appropriate staff have relevant information about Children in Care's looked after legal status, contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility, and care arrangements
- The DSL has details of children's social workers and relevant virtual school heads

We have appointed a designated teacher, Ms R. Mosley, who is responsible for promoting the educational achievement of Children in Care and previous Children in Care in line with [statutory guidance](#).

The designated teacher is appropriately trained and has the relevant qualifications and experience to perform the role.

**As part of their role, the designated teacher will:**

- Work closely with the DSL to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding Children in Care and previous Children in Care are quickly and effectively responded to
- Work with virtual school heads to promote the educational achievement of, Children in Care and previous Children in Care, including discussing how pupil premium plus funding can be best used to support CiC and meet the needs identified in their personal education plans

We have appointed an appropriately trained teacher, Ms R. Mosley, to take the lead on promoting the educational achievement of Children in Care and previous Children in Care.

**As part of their role, they will:**

- Work closely with the DSL to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding CiC are quickly and effectively responded to
- Work with virtual school heads to promote the educational achievement of Children in Care and previous Children in Care.

## 16. Pupils/students with a social worker

Pupils/students may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. We recognise that a child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm as well as potentially creating barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health.

The DSL and all members of staff will work with and support social workers to help protect vulnerable children.

Where we are aware that a pupil has a social worker, the DSL will always consider this fact to ensure any decisions are made in the best interests of the pupil's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. For example, it will inform decisions about:

- Responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks
- The provision of pastoral and/or academic support

## **17. Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities**

We recognise that pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group, including:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration
- Pupils being more prone to peer group isolation than other pupils
- The potential for pupils with SEN and disabilities being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers

## **18. Safer Recruitment procedure**

Refer to the Emmaus Catholic MAC document Safer Recruitment and Selection Guidance for specific details of the recruitment and selection process at St. Mary's Catholic Primary School.

For guidance use: Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings (GSWP2020) - Addendum April 2020

At least one person conducting any interview for a post at the school will have undertaken safer recruitment training. This will cover, as a minimum, the contents of the Department for Education's statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, and will be in line with local safeguarding procedures.

We will record all information on the checks carried out in the school's single central record (SCR). Copies of these checks, where appropriate, will be held in individuals' personnel files. We follow requirements and best practice in retaining copies of these checks, as set out below.

### **New staff**

When appointing new staff, we will:

- Verify their identity
- Obtain (via the applicant) an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate, including barred list information for those who will be engaging in regulated activity (see definition below). We will not keep a copy of this for longer than 6 months
- Obtain a separate barred list check if they will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available
- Verify their mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities
- Verify their right to work in the UK. We will keep a copy of this verification for the duration of the member of staff's employment and for 2 years afterwards
- Verify their professional qualifications, as appropriate
- Ensure they are not subject to a prohibition order if they are employed to be a teacher

- Carry out further additional checks, as appropriate, on candidates who have lived or worked outside of the UK, including (where relevant) any teacher sanctions or restrictions imposed by a European Economic Area professional regulating authority, and criminal records checks or their equivalent
- Check that candidates taking up a management position are not subject to a prohibition from management (section 128) direction made by the secretary of state
- We will ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where we take a decision that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment on the individual's personnel file. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.

We will ask for written information about previous employment history and check that information is not contradictory or incomplete.

We will seek references on all short-listed candidates, including internal candidates, before interview. We will scrutinise these and resolve any concerns before confirming appointments. The references requested will ask specific questions about the suitability of the applicant to work with children.

**Regulated activity** means a person who will be:

- Responsible, on a regular basis in a school or college, for teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children; or
- Carrying out paid, or unsupervised unpaid, work regularly in a school or college where that work provides an opportunity for contact with children; or
- Engaging in intimate or personal care or overnight activity, even if this happens only once and regardless of whether they are supervised or not

### **Existing staff**

If we have concerns about an existing member of staff's suitability to work with children, we will carry out all the relevant checks as if the individual was a new member of staff. We will also do this if an individual moves from a post that is not regulated activity to one that is.

We will refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child or vulnerable adult where:

- We believe the individual has engaged in relevant conduct; or
- The individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence, or there is reason to believe the individual has committed a listed relevant offence, under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (Prescribed Criteria and Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2009; or
- The 'harm test' is satisfied in respect of the individual (i.e. they may harm a child or vulnerable adult or put them at risk of harm); and
- The individual has been removed from working in regulated activity (paid or unpaid) or would have been removed if they had not left

### **Agency and third-party staff**

We will obtain written notification from any agency or third-party organisation that it has carried out the necessary safer recruitment checks that we would otherwise perform. We will also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

### **Contractors**

We will ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, who is to work at the school has had the appropriate level of DBS check (this includes contractors who are provided through a PFI or similar contract). This will be:

- An enhanced DBS check with barred list information for contractors engaging in regulated activity
- An enhanced DBS check, not including barred list information, for all other contractors who are not in regulated activity but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children

We will obtain the DBS check for self-employed contractors.

We will not keep copies of such checks for longer than 6 months.

Contractors who have not had any checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity under any circumstances.

We will check the identity of all contractors and their staff on arrival at the school.

For self-employed contractors such as music teachers or sports coaches, we will ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where we decide that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.

### **Trainee/student teachers**

Where applicants for initial teacher training are salaried by us, we will ensure that all necessary checks are carried out.

Where trainee teachers are fee-funded, we will obtain written confirmation from the training provider that necessary checks have been carried out and that the trainee has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with children.

In both cases, this includes checks to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006.

### **Volunteers**

We will:

- Never leave an unchecked volunteer unsupervised or allow them to work in regulated activity
- Obtain an enhanced DBS check with barred list information for all volunteers who are new to working in regulated activity
- Carry out a risk assessment when deciding whether to seek an enhanced DBS check without barred list information for any volunteers not engaging in regulated activity. We will retain a record of this risk assessment
- Ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where we decide that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought

### **Governors**

All governors and trustees will have an enhanced DBS check without barred list information.

They will have an enhanced DBS check with barred list information if working in regulated activity.

The Chair of the board will have their DBS check countersigned by the secretary of state.

All local governors and members will also have the following checks:

- A section 128 check (to check prohibition on participation in management under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008).



- Identity
- Right to work in the UK
- Other checks deemed necessary if they have lived or worked outside the UK

### **Staff working in alternative provision settings**

Where we place a pupil with an alternative provision provider, we obtain written confirmation from the provider that they have carried out the appropriate safeguarding checks on individuals working there that we would otherwise perform.

### **Adults who supervise pupils on work experience**

When organising work experience, we will ensure that policies and procedures are in place to protect children from harm.

We will also consider whether it is necessary for barred list checks to be carried out on the individuals who supervise a pupil under 16 on work experience. This will depend on the specific circumstances of the work experience, including the nature of the supervision, the frequency of the activity being supervised, and whether the work is regulated activity.

### **Pupils staying with host families**

Where the school decides for pupils to be provided with care and accommodation by a host family to which they are not related (for example, during a foreign exchange visit), we will request enhanced DBS checks with barred list information on those people.

Where the school is organising such hosting arrangements overseas and host families cannot be checked in the same way, we will work with our partner schools abroad to ensure that similar assurances are undertaken prior to the visit.

## **19. Procedure for dealing with Allegations about Staff - Concerns about a staff member, supply teacher or volunteer**

If you have concerns about a member of staff (including a supply teacher or volunteer), or an allegation is made about a member of staff (including a supply teacher or volunteer) posing a risk of harm to children, speak to the principal. If the concerns/allegations are about the principal/principal, speak to the chair of governors.

The school will work with other agencies to investigate when a member of staff has **“behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children”**

Any concerns about the conduct of other adults in the school should be taken to the principal.

**LADO is Yvonne Nelson-Brown [Yvonne.nelson-brown@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:Yvonne.nelson-brown@dudley.gov.uk)**

Refer to Part Four of KCSiE for the procedure for dealing with complaints and allegations about staff.

### **Procedure for dealing with complaints and allegations about the principal/principal**

Concerns about the Principal should go to the Chair of Governors.

The Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) is Yvonne Nelson-Brown (01384 813110).

General helpline: 01384 813062

The DSPP allegations’ process is managed by the LADO, who is responsible for:

- Managing individual cases
- Providing advice and guidance
- Liaising with police and other agencies
- Monitoring progress of cases for timeliness, thoroughness and fairness.

Referral pathway - All statutory partner agencies are required to report all allegations to the LADO within one working day. All referrals should be sent to [allegations@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:allegations@dudley.gov.uk).

In Dudley, Yvonne Nelson-Brown is responsible for managing allegations, and reports to Dudley Safeguarding People Partnership.

**Ofsted** 0300 123 3155 [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) whistle blowing hotline

**NSPCC** 0800 028 0285 [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

## **20. Whistleblowing**

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School is committed to providing a positive working environment which is free from prejudice and unlawful discrimination and any form of harassment, bullying or victimisation. We have developed a number of key policies to ensure that the principles of Catholic Social Teaching in relation to human dignity and dignity in work become embedded into every aspect of school life and these policies are reviewed regularly in this regard. Refer to the Emmaus Catholic MAC Whistle Blowing Policy for further information.

## **21. Safeguarding in the Curriculum**

Pupils are taught appropriate information about safeguarding and how to keep themselves safe throughout several areas of the curriculum. There is a planned and progressive online safety programme and PSHE/RSE programme at St. Mary's Catholic Primary School and explicit lessons throughout the year around items such as staying safe, when to talk and consent. Learning opportunities are embedded into the curriculum throughout the school and are taught in all year groups.

## **22. Special Circumstances**

Refer to the following policies and procedures which relate to the wider remit of safeguarding:

- **Behaviour**
- **SEND**
- **Staff Code of Conduct**
- **Complaints**
- **Health and safety**
- **Attendance**
- **Online safety**
- **Equality**
- **Relationship education**
- **First aid**
- **Curriculum**
- **Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children**
- **Privacy notices**
- **GDPR**
- **Whistleblowing**
- **Safer Recruitment**
- **Anti-bullying**
- **IT / Acceptable Use policy**



## **Non-collection of children**

If a child is not collected at the end of the session/day, we will:

- Attempt to make contact with any of the contacts we hold on file for the child
- If a child has not been collected by 3:30pm, and no contact has been made, the child will be sent to after-school club and the parent(s) charged appropriately
- If a child has not been collected by 4:15pm and no contact has been established, a call Children's Front Door team may be made.

## Appendix 1: allegations of abuse made against staff

### Section 1: allegations that may meet the harms threshold

This section applies to cases in which it is alleged that a current member of staff, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, has:

- › Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or
- › Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- › Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- › Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour taking place both inside and outside of school

If we're in any doubt as to whether a concern meets the harm threshold, we will consult our local authority designated officer (LADO).

We will deal with any allegation of abuse quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation. Advice and support from HR will be sought for any case.

A 'case manager' will lead any investigation. This will be the principal, or the chair of governors where the principal is the subject of the allegation. The case manager will be identified at the earliest opportunity.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

### Suspension of the accused until the case is resolved

Suspension of the accused will not be the default position, and will only be considered in cases where there is reason to suspect that a child or other children is/are at risk of harm, or the case is so serious that there might be grounds for dismissal. In such cases, we will only suspend an individual if we have considered all other options available and there is no reasonable alternative.

Based on an assessment of risk, we will consider alternatives such as:

- › Redeployment within the school so that the individual does not have direct contact with the child or children concerned
- › Providing an assistant to be present when the individual has contact with children
- › Redeploying the individual to alternative work in the school so that they do not have unsupervised access to children
- › Moving the child or children to classes where they will not come into contact with the individual, making it clear that this is not a punishment and parents/carers have been consulted
- › Temporarily redeploying the individual to another role in a different location, for example to an alternative school or other work within the company

If in doubt, the case manager will seek views from the school's personnel adviser and the designated officer at the local authority, as well as the police and children's social care where they have been involved.

### Definitions for outcomes of allegation investigations

- › **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation
- › **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive, or to cause harm to the subject of the allegation
- › **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation
- › **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation (this does not imply guilt or innocence)
- › **Unfounded:** to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made

## Procedure for dealing with allegations

In the event of an allegation that meets the criteria above, the case manager will take the following steps:

- › Conduct basic enquiries in line with local procedures to establish the facts to help determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation before carrying on with the steps below
- › Discuss the allegation with the designated officer at the local authority. This is to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action, including whether further enquiries are necessary to enable a decision on how to proceed, and whether it is necessary to involve the police and/or children's social care services. (The case manager may, on occasion, consider it necessary to involve the police *before* consulting the designated officer – for example, if the accused individual is deemed to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence. In such cases, the case manager will notify the designated officer as soon as practicably possible after contacting the police)
- › Inform the accused individual of the concerns or allegations and likely course of action as soon as possible after speaking to the designated officer (and the police or children's social care services, where necessary). Where the police and/or children's social care services are involved, the case manager will only share such information with the individual as has been agreed with those agencies
- › Where appropriate (in the circumstances described above), carefully consider whether suspension of the individual from contact with children at the school is justified or whether alternative arrangements such as those outlined above can be put in place. Advice will be sought from the designated officer, police and/or children's social care services, as appropriate
- › Where the case manager is concerned about the welfare of other children in the community or the individual's family, they will discuss these concerns with the DSL and make a risk assessment of the situation. If necessary, the DSL may make a referral to children's social care
- › **If immediate suspension is considered necessary**, agree and record the rationale for this with the designated officer. The record will include information about the alternatives to suspension that have been considered, and why they were rejected. Written confirmation of the suspension will be provided to the individual facing the allegation or concern within 1 working day, and the individual will be given a named contact at the school and their contact details
- › **If it is decided that no further action is to be taken** in regard to the subject of the allegation or concern, record this decision and the justification for it and agree with the designated officer what information should be put in writing to the individual and by whom, as well as what action should follow both in respect of the individual and those who made the initial allegation
- › **If it is decided that further action is needed**, take steps as agreed with the designated officer to initiate the appropriate action in school and/or liaise with the police and/or children's social care services as appropriate
- › Provide effective support for the individual facing the allegation or concern, including appointing a named representative to keep them informed of the progress of the case and considering what other support is appropriate.
- › Inform the parents or carers of the child/children involved about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know (following agreement with children's social care services and/or the police, if applicable). The case manager will also inform the parents or carers of the requirement to maintain confidentiality about any allegations made against teachers (where this applies) while investigations are ongoing. Any parent or carer who wishes to have the confidentiality restrictions removed in respect of a teacher will be advised to seek legal advice
- › Keep the parents or carers of the child/children involved informed of the progress of the case (only in relation to their child – no information will be shared regarding the staff member)
- › Make a referral to the DBS where it is thought that the individual facing the allegation or concern has engaged in conduct that harmed or is likely to harm a child, or if the individual otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child

If the school is made aware that the secretary of state has made an interim prohibition order in respect of an individual, we will immediately suspend that individual from teaching, pending the findings of the investigation by the Teaching Regulation Agency.

Where the police are involved, wherever possible the school will ask the police at the start of the investigation to obtain consent from the individuals involved to share their statements and evidence for use in the school's disciplinary process, should this be required at a later point.

### **Additional considerations for supply teachers and all contracted staff**

If there are concerns or an allegation is made against someone not directly employed by the school, such as a supply teacher or contracted staff member provided by an agency, we will take the actions below in addition to our standard procedures.

- › We will not decide to stop using an individual due to safeguarding concerns without finding out the facts and liaising with our LADO to determine a suitable outcome
- › The governing board will discuss with the agency whether it is appropriate to suspend the individual, or redeploy them to another part of the school, while the school carries out the investigation
- › We will involve the agency fully, but the school will take the lead in collecting the necessary information and providing it to the LADO as required
- › We will address issues such as information sharing, to ensure any previous concerns or allegations known to the agency are taken into account (we will do this, for example, as part of the allegations management meeting or by liaising directly with the agency where necessary)

When using an agency, we will inform them of our process for managing allegations, and keep them updated about our policies as necessary, and will invite the agency's HR manager or equivalent to meetings as appropriate.

### **Timescales**

We will deal with all allegations as quickly and effectively as possible and will endeavour to comply with the following timescales, where reasonably practicable:

- › Any cases where it is clear immediately that the allegation is unsubstantiated or malicious should be resolved within 1 week
- › If the nature of an allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, appropriate action should be taken within 3 working days
- › If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, this should be held within 15 working days

However, these are objectives only and where they are not met, we will endeavour to take the required action as soon as possible thereafter.

### **Specific actions**

#### **Action following a criminal investigation or prosecution**

The case manager will discuss with the local authority's designated officer whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and, if so, how to proceed, taking into account information provided by the police and/or children's social care services.

#### **Conclusion of a case where the allegation is substantiated**

If the allegation is substantiated and the individual is dismissed or the school ceases to use their services, or the individual resigns or otherwise ceases to provide their services, the school will make a referral to the DBS for consideration of whether inclusion on the barred lists is required.

If the individual concerned is a member of teaching staff, the school will consider whether to refer the matter to the Teaching Regulation Agency to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching.

#### **Individuals returning to work after suspension**

If it is decided on the conclusion of a case that an individual who has been suspended can return to work, the case manager will consider how best to facilitate this.

The case manager will also consider how best to manage the individual's contact with the child or children who made the allegation, if they are still attending the school.

#### **Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious reports**

If a report is:

- Determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the DSL will consider the appropriate next steps. If they consider that the child and/or person who made the allegation is in need of help, or the allegation may have been a cry for help, a referral to children's social care may be appropriate
- Shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the school will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual(s) who made it

### **Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious allegations**

If an allegation is:

- Determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the LADO and case manager will consider the appropriate next steps. If they consider that the child and/or person who made the allegation is in need of help, or the allegation may have been a cry for help, a referral to children's social care may be appropriate
- Shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the school will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual(s) who made it

## **Confidentiality and information sharing**

The school will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

The case manager will take advice from the LADO, police and children's social care services, as appropriate, to agree:

- Who needs to know about the allegation and what information can be shared
- How to manage speculation, leaks and gossip, including how to make parents or carers of a child/children involved aware of their obligations with respect to confidentiality
- What, if any, information can be reasonably given to the wider community to reduce speculation
- How to manage press interest if, and when, it arises

## **Record-keeping**

The case manager will maintain clear records about any case where the allegation or concern meets the criteria above and store them on the individual's confidential personnel file for the duration of the case.

The records of any allegation that, following an investigation, is found to be malicious or false will be deleted from the individual's personnel file (unless the individual consents for the records to be retained on the file).

For all other allegations (which are not found to be malicious or false), the following information will be kept on the file of the individual concerned:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation
- Details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved
- Notes of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome
- A declaration on whether the information will be referred to in any future reference

In these cases, the school will provide a copy to the individual, in agreement with children's social care or the police as appropriate.

Where records contain information about allegations of sexual abuse, we will preserve these for the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), for the term of the inquiry. We will retain all other records at least until the individual has reached normal pension age, or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.

## **References**

When providing employer references, we will:

- Not refer to any allegation that has been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious, or any repeated allegations which have all been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious

- › Include substantiated allegations, provided that the information is factual and does not include opinions

## Learning lessons

After any cases where the allegations are *substantiated*, the case manager will review the circumstances of the case with the local authority's designated officer to determine whether there are any improvements that we can make to the school's procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

This will include consideration of (as applicable):

- Issues arising from the decision to suspend the member of staff
- The duration of the suspension
- Whether or not the suspension was justified
- The use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated. We will consider how future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual

For all other cases, the case manager will consider the facts and determine whether any improvements can be made.

## Non-recent allegations

Abuse can be reported, no matter how long ago it happened.

We will report any non-recent allegations made by a child to the LADO in line with our local authority's procedures for dealing with non-recent allegations.

Where an adult makes an allegation to the school that they were abused as a child, we will advise the individual to report the allegation to the police.

## Section 2: concerns that do not meet the harm threshold

This section applies to all concerns (including allegations) about members of staff, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors, which do not meet the harm threshold set out in section 1 above.

Concerns may arise through, for example:

- › Suspicion
- › Complaint
- › Safeguarding concern or allegation from another member of staff
- › Disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside the school
- › Pre-employment vetting checks

We recognise the importance of responding to and dealing with any concerns in a timely manner to safeguard the welfare of children.

## Definition of low-level concerns

The term 'low-level' concern is any concern – no matter how small – that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- › Is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, **and**
- › Does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the designated officer at the local authority

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- › Being overly friendly with children
- › Having favourites
- › Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
- › Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- › Humiliating pupils

## Sharing low-level concerns

We recognise the importance of creating a culture of openness, trust and transparency to encourage all staff to confidentially share low-level concerns so that they can be addressed appropriately.

We will create this culture by:

- Ensuring staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others
- Empowering staff to share any low-level concerns as per section 7.7 of this policy
- Empowering staff to self-refer
- Addressing unprofessional behaviour and supporting the individual to correct it at an early stage
- Providing a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised
- Helping to identify any weakness in the school's safeguarding system

## Responding to low-level concerns

If the concern is raised via a third party, the principal will collect evidence where necessary by speaking:

- Directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously
- To the individual involved and any witnesses

The principal will use the information collected to categorise the type of behaviour and determine any further action, in line with the school's staff code of conduct. The principal will be the ultimate decision-maker in respect of all low-level concerns, though they may wish to collaborate with the DSL.

## Record keeping

All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing. In addition to details of the concern raised, records will include the context in which the concern arose, any action taken and the rationale for decisions and action taken.

Records will be:

- Kept confidential, held securely and comply with the DPA 2018 and UK GDPR
- Reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, we will decide on a course of action, either through our disciplinary procedures or, where a pattern of behaviour moves from a concern to meeting the harms threshold as described in section 1 of this appendix, we will refer it to the designated officer at the local authority
- Retained at least until the individual leaves employment at the school

Where a low-level concern relates to a supply teacher or contractor, we will notify the individual's employer, so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

## References

We will not include low-level concerns in references unless:

- The concern (or group of concerns) has met the threshold for referral to the designated officer at the local authority and is found to be substantiated; and/or
- The concern (or group of concerns) relates to issues which would ordinarily be included in a reference, such as misconduct or poor performance