



## SAFEGUARDING (Child Protection Policy)

**The School refers to all staff and students in St Mary's School which includes: the Early Years/Foundations Stage (EYFS), Preparatory Department (Years 1-6), Senior House (Years 7-11) and the Sixth Form.**

Governors' Committee Responsible:	The Full Governing Body
Governor Lead:	Mrs Christine Bayliss
Chair of Governors:	Mr Derek Wilson
Designated Safeguarding Leads:	Mrs Jo Kingston, Senior Deputy Head (Senior House) Mrs Mairead Carney, Head of Prep Department (Prep and EYFS)
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mrs Deadman (Acting Deputy Head) Miss Rebecca Rose (Prep Department)
Status & Review Cycle:	Annual
Next Review Date:	September 2022

### Important contact details

If you have concerns about a child you must refer this to the DSL as soon as possible. Or to the Deputy DSL if DSL is not available.

Mrs Kingston [jkingston@st-marys.bucks.sch.uk](mailto:jkingston@st-marys.bucks.sch.uk)

Mrs Carney [mcarney@st-marys.bucks.sch.uk](mailto:mcarney@st-marys.bucks.sch.uk)

Miss Rose [rose@st-marys.bucks.sch.uk](mailto:rose@st-marys.bucks.sch.uk)

Mrs Deadman [jdeadman@st-marys.bucks.sch.uk](mailto:jdeadman@st-marys.bucks.sch.uk)

If they are not available then you should discuss the concern with the Local Safeguarding Board First Response Team on 01296 383962 or 0800 999 7677 if out of hours  
**[www.bucksc.gov.uk/reportaconcern](http://www.bucksc.gov.uk/reportaconcern)**

If you have concerns about the behaviour of a member of staff you must refer this to the Headmistress as soon as possible or the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) (LADO) Safeguarding (01296 382070 or [secure-LADO@bucksc.gov.uk](mailto:secure-LADO@bucksc.gov.uk)).

All staff may raise concerns directly with Children's Social Care. Details of full local procedures are available on <https://www.buckssafeguarding.org.uk/childrenpartnership/>. If



a child is in immediate danger or is at

risk of harm a referral should be made to children's social care and/or the Police immediately. This includes concerns about children who may be at risk of being drawn into terrorism. Staff may also dial 101, (the non-emergency Police number) and the DfE dedicated telephone helpline and mailbox for non emergency advice for staff and governors 0207 340 7264 and [counter-extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:counter-extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk). Depending on the level of risk, the School would also consider referral to Channel or Children's Social Care. If a teacher discovers an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under the age of 18 the teacher must report this to the Police as well as social care.

There is also further guidance from NSPCC about when to call the Police here: [NPCC - when to call the Police](#)

The Governing Body takes seriously its responsibility under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 (section 157 for Independent Schools) to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to work together with other agencies to ensure adequate arrangements within our School to identify assess and support those children who are suffering harm. We are committed to acting at all times in the best interest of the child and to ensuring the best possible outcomes for the child.



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## Introduction

This Child Protection Policy forms part of a suite of documents and policies which relate to the safeguarding responsibilities of the school.

In particular, this policy is linked to the following policies: Working from home policy, Mental Health Policy, Safer Recruitment, Missing Child, Children Missing from Education, Prevent, Relationships and Sex Education (Secondary)\*, Pastoral Care, Attendance, Pupil Confidentiality\*, Behaviour & Sanctions and Anti-Bullying as well as the policies relating to the safe use of mobile devices\*, E-safety and Use of Physical Restraint. There is also relevant information in the Staff AUP\*. Policies marked with an \* are available on request from the School Office, all other policies are on the website. The Code of conduct for all staff and the Safer Recruitment policy are available from the school office on request.

This policy applies to all governors, staff and volunteers and was developed with reference to the following key documents and in line with the government's 'Every Child Matters':

- The Children Acts 1989 & 2004
- UN Convention on the rights of the child
- The Equality Act 2010
- [“Keeping Children Safe in Education”](#)- statutory guidance for schools and further education colleges. September 2021 including Disqualification under the Childcare Act (2018)
- [‘Working together to Safeguard Children’, 2018 \(WT\)](#)
- [Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales](#) (Prevent – Statutory Guidance issued under section 29 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, updated April 2021)
- The use of social media for online radicalisation (July 2015)
- [The Prevent Duty; Departmental advice for schools](#) (June 2015)
- [Buckinghamshire Multi-Agency Information Sharing for Children, Young People & Families](#) – Code of Practice for sharing personal information, 2017.
- Joint NEOST/ Teacher Union Guidance on Education Staff and Child protection: Staff facing an allegation of abuse. Sept 2006
- Education Act Section 175 (section 157 for Independent Schools).
- Safe working practice for the protection of children and staff in education settings (IRSC 2015).
- [“What to do if you are worried a Child is being Abused”](#) 2015
- ‘Dealing with Allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff’ Oct 2012
- ISI Regulatory Requirements Part 3
- Children Missing From Education, Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (Sept 2016)
- Information sharing Guidance for safeguarding practitioners- DfE July 2018
- [Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children in schools and colleges Sept 2021.](#)
- [Multi Agency Statutory guidance on FGM](#)

This policy is available publicly on the School website, under School Information ‘Policies’ tab.

At St Mary's we recognise that child protection is a most important issue and that, as a school community, we have a particular responsibility to provide all our pupils with a safe, secure environment in which to learn, ensuring it is one in which they know they will be listened to.

We recognise that **all** staff and Governors have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm, and that the child's welfare is our paramount concern. All staff believe that our school should provide a safe, caring, positive and stimulating environment that promotes the positive mental health, social, physical and moral development of the individual child. We recognise that safeguarding incidents can happen anywhere and staff should be alert to possible concerns being raised in this School and to 'think the unthinkable'. To this end, all staff and volunteers are required to read Part 1 and Annex B of the document "Keeping Children Safe in Education" (September 2021).

KCSIE defines safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as:

- 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

## **Aims and Procedures**

The **aims** of this policy are:

- To ensure that the best interests of the child are at the forefront of all systems and processes.
- To support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and resilience
- To provide an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued and respected, feel confident and know how to approach adults if they are in difficulties.
- To provide an environment where children where children feel comfortable to approach staff with concerns, confident they will be listened to, and inappropriate behaviour will be addressed. To maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'.
- To raise the awareness of all teaching and non-teaching staff of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and promptly reporting possible cases of abuse, acknowledging at all times the crucial importance of Early Help.
- To raise the awareness of staff that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school or college and/or can occur between children outside of these environments
- To make staff aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- To provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm, and ensure that we, the School, contribute to assessments of need and support plans for those children.
- To ensure that the school has robust systems in place for ensuring the true and accurate records of events are kept and appropriately stored, and to ensure that any

such records clearly differentiate between fact and opinion.

- To acknowledge the need for effective and appropriate communication between all members of staff in relation to safeguarding pupils.
- To develop a structured procedure within the school which will be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse.
- To develop effective working relationships with all other agencies involved in safeguarding children, sharing information quickly and challenging inaction.
- To ensure that all adults within our school who have access to children have been checked as to their suitability. This includes volunteers and other community users of our facilities as well as visiting speakers, the latter to be carefully researched and vetted by the Headmistress.
- To ensure resources are allocated to meet the needs of pupils requiring child protection or early intervention.

## Procedures

Our school procedures for safeguarding children will be in line with Buckinghamshire County Council and Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership, Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2021) and Working Together to safeguard children (2018). We will ensure that all members of the Governing Body understand and fulfil their responsibilities, namely to ensure that:

- There is a Child Protection policy together with a staff behaviour (Code of Conduct) policy
- We monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Child Protection Policy and are satisfied that it is being complied with.
- The School operates safer recruitment procedures by ensuring that there is at least one person on every recruitment panel that has completed Safer Recruitment training
- The School has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff and volunteers and to make a referral to the DBS/TRA if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns, or would have had they not resigned.
- The appointed Designated Senior Leads (DSLs) and any Deputies are members of the Senior Leadership team or Senior Management Team. Their roles and responsibilities are made explicit in those post holder job descriptions.
- On appointment, the DSLs undertake interagency training which is updated every two years, with further training undertaken in the alternate years, in accordance with the Learning Pathway agreed by Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP).
- The designated Governor and the Head will be fully trained in child protection issues and procedures, with that training updated every two years.
- All other staff, including Governors, have Safeguarding training updated every 3 years with annual refreshers conducted within school in order to develop their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse, how to respond to a pupil who discloses abuse and the procedure to be followed in appropriately sharing a concern of possible abuse or a disclosure of abuse. This will include on-line safety training and raise awareness of local issues as advised by the BSCP.
- As part of staff induction or training updates a selection of questionnaires, case

studies and other appropriate resources are used to ensure that staff understand their responsibilities outlined in KCSIE 2021 Part 1, 5 and Annex B.

- Through training and updates staff are made aware of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm, including behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking, misuse of alcohol, deliberately missing education, consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos.
- All staff (and volunteers in regulated activity) are required to read Part 1, 5 and Annex B of KCSIE, the child protection policy and the staff code of conduct annually, and undertake further training to meet statutory requirements. Any updates to KCSIE are immediately disseminated to staff. Staff confirm that they have done this via email to the DSLs.
- All members of teaching staff and support staff as appropriate complete Channel's online training <http://www.lscb.org.uk/channel-general-awareness-e-learning/> and <https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/edu/screen1.html> and how to make a referral online to [https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/prevent\\_referrals/01-welcome.html#](https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/prevent_referrals/01-welcome.html#) and FGM training <http://www.fgmelearning.co.uk/>. Staff are required to print their certificate on completion and present it to the DSL.
- All staff are required to have an awareness of BSCP continuum of need.
- All staff are trained to recognise the importance of Early Help at the point of need to prevent issues escalating. **Children in need (possibly section 17 referral)** – can be supported by universal services such as counsellors, Health care or Family support services. Single or Multi agency. **Children at risk (Section 47)** – need immediate intervention to ensure their safety. Contact First Response or police.
- The use of personal mobile phones and/or cameras in the EYFS is strictly prohibited. Where photographs are required they must be taken on school cameras and stored in strict accordance with the School's policy on taking and storing of images. (ie on the designated area on the School system).
- A member of the Governing Body, usually the Chair, is nominated to liaise with the Local Authority on Child Protection issues and in the event of an allegation of abuse made against the Headteacher.
- Child Protection policies and procedures are reviewed annually by the DSL and the Governing Body, and that the Child Protection policy is available on the School website or by other means.
- The Governing Body considers how children may be taught about safeguarding and the risk of child exploitation. This may be part of a broad and balanced curriculum covering relevant issues through personal social health and economic education (PSHCEE) and through Relationships and Sex Education (RSE).
- That enhanced DBS checks are in place for the Chair of Governors
- Section 128 Checks are carried out on all persons involved in the management of the school at middle management level and above.
- All parents/carers are made aware of the school's responsibilities in regard to child protection procedures through publication of the School's Child Protection Policy on the school website.
- Community users organising activities for children are aware of and understand the School's child protection guidelines and procedures, and our expectation of how they should maintain a safe environment which supports children's welfare and development by having appropriate safeguarding and child protection procedures in place. It is the responsibility of the governing body to ensure that safeguarding

requirements are included in any transfer of control agreement. We reserve the right to decline access to use the school facilities where we believe their ethos or practice is not aligned with this policy.

- The school must see the up to date Child Protection Policy of any organisation hiring the schools facilities.
- Our selection and recruitment policy includes all checks on staff and regular volunteers' suitability in accordance with the guidelines of KCSIE (2020). Casual volunteers such as parent support will not be left unsupervised with pupils. Before any adults have unsupervised contact with pupils, all the checks stipulated by government regulations will have been satisfactorily completed to ensure that such individuals are suitable to work with children, in line with the school's safer recruitment policy which is available on request from the school office.
- The name of any member of staff considered not suitable to work with children will be notified to the DBS.
- All new staff, including temporary staff and volunteers in regulated activity, will be provided with induction training that includes the School's child protection policy, the staff code of conduct, Behaviour and Sanctions policy, the Attendance policy, and the identity of the designated person. They will also be provided with a copy of Part 1 and Annex B of the KCSIE document and be required to confirm that they have read this and undertaken any relevant training.
- Our procedures will be annually reviewed and up-dated.
- All visitors to the school, including visiting speakers, will be notified to the Headmistress in advance and will be accompanied at all times whilst on the School site. Their ID is checked on arrival at school and they will be advised on how to report a concern via posters and the visitors badge. Visitors are requested to turn their mobile phone off.
- The name of the Designated Person will be clearly shown in the school, with a statement explaining the School's role in referring and monitoring cases of suspected abuse.
- Ensuring that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place safeguarding children from potentially illegal, harmful and inappropriate on-line material, being subjected to harmful on-line interaction with other users, or conducting personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm. This will include a clear policy on the use of mobile phone technology within the school.
- We will ensure that any weaknesses or deficiencies in child protection arrangements are remedied without delay.

### **Disqualification under the Childcare act 2006 as amended by the 2018 regulations.**

In addition to the above all staff who work directly with or are involved in the management of Early Years or are involved in any way with later years care (under 8's) before or after school are required to self declare if they are disqualified by the Childcare act 2006 as amended by the 2018 regulations. The staff who are included in this regulation are required to complete a self-declaration form that will be stored on their staff file. The date of this is logged on the SCR.

In the EYFS setting the school will inform Ofsted of any allegations against people living or working at the premises, or of any other abuse alleged to have taken place on the premises,

as soon as practicable and within 14 days at the latest.

Ofsted Whistleblowing Hotline on 0300 1233155. email [whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk).

All staff are required to notify the school if their circumstances change.

## Designated Safeguarding Lead

We understand that our responsibility to safeguard children requires that we all appropriately share any concerns that we may have about children to ensure that the child receives the right help at the right time. One governor and one senior member of staff is designated with the responsibility of overseeing child protection matters at the school. The Designated Senior Leads with responsibility for child protection are the Senior Deputy Head in Senior House (Mrs Jo Kingston) and the Head of the Prep Department (Mrs Mairead Carney) in EYFS and the Preparatory Department. Mrs Deadman is Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead in Senior House. Miss Rebecca Rose is the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead in the Preparatory Department. The designated Governor is Mrs Christine Bayliss. These persons are responsible for:

- To ensure that all actions, decision, systems and processes have the best interests of the child at heart.
- Referring a child if there are concerns about a child's welfare, possible abuse or neglect to First Response. A written referral using the [Multi Agency Referral Form](#) (MARF) will be emailed to First Response as soon as possible within the school day, using the [Continuum of Need document](#) and [Assessment Framework](#) (WT2018 para 59) to inform any plans. The Local Authority should make a decision within one working day of a referral being made. The DSL should follow up on a referral if information is not forthcoming.
- Referring (or assisting other staff to do so if more appropriate) to family support, CAMHS or other professional agencies where Early Help is needed but the situation does not meet the thresholds for more formal intervention.
- Work locally with relevant agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children. The three safeguarding partners (the local authority; a clinical commissioning group for an area within the local authority; and the chief officer of police for an area (any part of which falls within the local authority area) .
- Refer cases to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required.
- Ensuring referrals to partner agencies, including referrals to First Response, are followed up in writing within 24 hours of initial contact.
- Ensuring Children receive the right help at the right time using the [Buckinghamshire Continuum of Need Document](#) and the Working Together July 2018 Assessment Framework to inform plans for support or protection.
- Remaining updated with the BSCP assessment process for providing Early Help and intervention.
- Ensuring that detailed and accurate written records of concerns about a child are kept even if there is no need to make an immediate referral, including details of the concern, how it is being followed up/resolved, and noting actions, decisions and outcomes. Other staff will not keep duplicate or personal records of child protection concerns.
- Ensuring on-going monitoring and re-assessment of concerns if the situation does not improve.

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- Ensuring that all such records are kept confidentially and securely and are separate from pupil records, with a front sheet listing dates and brief entry to provide a chronology in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR. An indication of additional and separate record keeping should be marked on the pupil records.
- Acting as a focal point for staff concerns regarding child protection issues including Prevent and liaising with other agencies and professionals.
- Support staff who make referrals to local children's social care or the Channel programme.
- Refer cases where a person has been dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the DBS/TRA.
- Refer cases where a crime has been committed to the Police
- They ensure that the Headmistress is kept fully and immediately informed of any safeguarding concerns including ongoing enquiries under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and Police investigations.
- As required, liaise with the 'Case Manager' and the LADO (in cases which concern a member of staff) for child protection concerns.
- Ensuring that either they or another appropriately informed member of staff attend case conferences, family support meetings, core groups, or other multi-agency planning meetings, contribute to the Framework for Assessments process, and provide a report which has been shared with the parents.
- To know which children have a social worker and promote their educational outcomes by liaising with staff and the social worker to enable them to maintain high aspirations for that child, and any adjustments or support is provided for the child.
- Ensuring that any absence, without satisfactory explanation, of a pupil currently subject to a child protection plan is referred to their Social Worker.
- With the Headmistress, ensuring that any proposal by parents/carers to electively home educate is in the best interests of the child, ideally meeting with parents and other relevant professionals (if appropriate) before a final decision is made.
- Ensuring that all school staff (including volunteers and supply staff) are aware of the school's CP policy and procedures and know how to recognise and refer any concerns.
- Encourage a culture of listening to children and ensure the child's wishes and feelings are taken into consideration when deciding on the next steps.
- Ensuring safeguarding records, legislation and guidance are up to date and are maintained in accordance with GDPR.
- Where children leave the school ensure their child protection file, including concerns being monitored, is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible. This is transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit and confirmation of receipt should be obtained. At this point the records will be destroyed except for the transfer of records form.
- Where children join the school, ensuring that the feeder school is contacted to ascertain if any child protection concerns were raised during their time at that school.
- If the child is now 18 and moving out of compulsory education, or the destination is not known for any reason copies of any Child Protection records will be retained until the student reaches the age of 25 years.
- We have a robust system for reviewing our archived information held. Our files are stored and disposed of in line with GDPR protocols.

- Ensure adequate and appropriate cover arrangements are in place for out of hours/out of term activities. The DSL private contact details are provided as and when required as part of the risk assessment process.
- Providing an annual report for the Governing Body, detailing any changes to the policy and procedures; training undertaken by the Designated Person, and by all staff and Governors; number and type of incidents/cases, and number of children referred to Children's Social Care and subject to Child Protection Plans. Findings of the audit are shared with the Local Authority.
- Meeting termly with the Nominated Governor to share oversight of the safeguarding provision, monitor performance and develop plans to rectify any gaps in policy or procedure.
- Keeping themselves up to date with knowledge to enable them to fulfil their role, including attending relevant training every year (in accordance with the Learning Pathway), provided by the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership, or the Education Safeguarding Advisory Service.

## **Supporting Children**

We recognise that a child who is abused, who witnesses violence or who lives in a violent environment may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame themselves, and find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self worth.

We recognise that the school may provide the only stability in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm. We also recognise that abuse can occur anywhere. Threats to the welfare of a child can occur from within families, school, their peer or the wider community. We understand that the safeguarding and protection of students has to be viewed within the context of the student's lived experience and the factors around her which may impact on this; friends, family school and their community.

We accept that research shows that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn.

All staff have responsibility for promoting a caring, safe and positive environment within the school. Girls are aware that they may approach any member of staff as well as their class teacher/form tutor, Head of Key Stage, Senior Deputy Head/Head of Prep Department. On occasion a member of staff may be required to act as the lead professional in undertaking an early help assessment, in partnership with the DSL.

Any child may benefit from early help, but all school and college staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who has increased vulnerability such as:

- is disabled and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory education, health and care plan)
- is part of the LGBTQ group or exploring gender identification
- is a young carer
- is a looked after child, previously looked after or has a social worker

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- is an Asylum seekers
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems or domestic abuse
- has returned home to their family from care
- is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- is a privately fostered child
- is showing signs of mental health behaviours
- is at risk of discrimination due to faith and belief, race or ethnicity.

Any cases where Early Help has been considered will be kept under constant review and referred to children's social care as appropriate.

Our school will support all pupils by:

- Ensuring that children know and understand how to report abuse, knowing that their concern will be treated seriously, and knowing that they can safely express their views and give feedback.
- Encouraging the development of self esteem and resilience, including to radicalisation, in every aspect of school life including through the curriculum with particular attention to the safe use of electronic equipment and the internet.
- Equipping them with the information they need to adjust their behaviour in order to reduce risks.
- At least annually, making them aware of the risks posed by adults or young people who use the internet or social media to bully, groom, abuse or radicalise other people, especially vulnerable people.
- Ensuring that internet safety is integral to the school's ICT curriculum as well as PSHCE and SRE. Assisting staff, students and parents to understand the risks posed by the content, conduct, contact and commerce in the digital world.
- Through the PSHCE program increasing their awareness of HBA, FGM, Forced marriage, CCE and CSE, Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment, including sexting and mental health behaviours and promotion of how to develop the skills to encourage positive mental health.
- Liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children.
- If a pupil has medical needs, we will liaise with the parent/carer, GP and/or school nurse to ensure that an appropriate care plan is in place.
- Notifying Social Care as soon as there is a significant concern.
- Ensuring that, should the need arise, a named teacher is designated for Looked After Children (LAC) and that an up to date list of children who are subject to a Care Order or are accommodated by the Local Authority is regularly reviewed and updated. The designated teacher should work with Local Authority/Virtual School Head to promote the academic achievement of pupils who are/or were previously looked after. The Education of Children in Public Care (ECPC) Team must be made aware of

all LAC in the school. Staff need to be aware that previously looked after children remain vulnerable.

- We recognise that children with special needs are at an increased risk of abuse. Changes in mood, patterns of behaviour, injury and responses to stimulus around them may be wrongly attributable to their disability. Staff are therefore trained to **question behaviours** and be **professionally curious** about changes noted
- Notifying Social Care when a child attending the school is privately fostered.
- Providing continuing support to a pupil (about whom there have been concerns) who leaves the school by ensuring that such concerns and school medical records are forwarded under confidential cover to the Designated Person at the pupil's new school as a matter of urgency. The DSL will ensure that confirmation of receipt of the documents is received and then destroy the copies in school.
- The original copy of significant documents will be retained at our school if the child is 18 or above, or the destination is not known such as the child is being electively home educated.
- Monitoring attendance (for further details see the school's attendance and children missing in education policy).
- Ensuring that we have a minimum of two emergency contacts to support prompt communication in the event of a serious incident or a child missing from school.
- Parents/Carers are required to inform the school if there are any changes to a pupil's living arrangement. St Mary's School have a duty to inform the local authority if child under the age of 16 is being privately fostered for a period of more than 28 days (i.e living with someone other than a parent, step-parent, aunt, uncle or grandparent).

## **Guidance for Staff on How to Deal with Disclosure**

Information about possible abuse may come to a member of staff in several ways - direct allegation from a child that has been abused, through a friend, relative or other child, through a child's behaviour or through observation of an injury to the child.

If a teacher or other member of staff has concerns about any pupil or incident that touches upon child protection issues, he or she should report them as soon as possible to a Designated Safeguarding Lead. In the unlikely event that the DSL/Deputy DSL are not available staff must share their concerns with the most senior member of staff.

Pupils who have a problem may speak to someone whom they trust. It is important that the member of staff sets the boundaries firmly at the outset of such a conversation, making it clear that no one can offer absolute confidentiality. A pupil who is insistent upon confidentiality should be referred to an external source, such as ChildLine (details are given in the Policy for Pupils on Confidentiality Issues). If the pupil is only prepared to speak if absolute confidentiality is guaranteed, the member of staff should terminate the conversation at that point. The adult should provide the Designated Senior Lead with a written account of what has transpired as a matter of urgency.

If a pupil decides to speak to a member of staff about the fact that either she, or a pupil known to her, is being bullied, harassed or abused, the member of staff should:

- Ensure that the child is in a safe place and in receipt of support.
- React professionally, and remember that they are not carrying out an investigation, (which is a task for specialists)

- Take what the child says seriously, and calmly, without becoming emotionally involved
- The child should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem, or to feel shamed for making a report.
- Staff should reassure the child they are being taken seriously, they will be supported and kept safe.
- Make it clear why unconditional confidentiality cannot be offered, (drawing on the policy for pupils on confidentiality issues as necessary)
- Explain that any adult member of staff is obliged to inform the Designated Senior Lead making clear who that person is, if there are child protection or safeguarding issues involved, in order that specialist help can be arranged
- Encourage the pupil to speak directly to the DSL
- Explain that only those who have a professional “need to know” will be told, and, if appropriate, measures will be set up to protect the pupil from retaliation and further abuse
- Reassure the child that she was right to tell and that she is not to blame for having being bullied or abused
- Allow the child to tell her own story, without asking detailed or leading questions
- Defendants have been acquitted where leading questioning or inappropriate investigation has been proven. It is vital that subsequent enquiries should not be prejudiced by detailed questioning in school.
- Record what has been said, using the child’s words, on the Welfare Protection Form found in the staff information hand book. Make some very brief notes immediately after the interview and write them up fully as soon as possible. Keep your original notes in case a court requires them. Record date, time, place, any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the actual words used by the girl. Be objective: include statements and observable things, rather than your interpretations or assumptions. Fact not opinion. Draw a diagram to indicate the position of any bruising. The report should be signed and dated, and state the member of staff’s position in the school.
- Inform the DSL as soon as possible - at least by the end of the morning/afternoon session of that day
- Inform the Headmistress immediately in cases where abuse from a member of staff is alleged, or if the incident happened inside the school, or on a school trip. (If the Headmistress is unavailable – or is involved - the Chairman of Governors should be told immediately. Contact details may be obtained in confidence from the Bursar).
- Remember your own support needs and ensure that you receive this support without compromising the confidentiality of the girl with colleagues.
- Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. 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 and pass this information onto the DSL or DMHL (Designated Mental Health Lead – Jacqui Deadman).

**If there is immediate risk of harm to a child, DSL/staff will not delay and call 999. The DSL must then notify First Response of the situation and what action has been taken.**

**If a child needs urgent medical attention, the DSL will call for an ambulance by calling 999. They will then contact First Response for advice about informing parents/carers.**

If there are non-urgent signs of physical injury, that may (or may not) be the result of abuse or bullying, medical help should be summoned, or the pupil should be taken to the medical room.

If there are sufficient grounds for suspecting significant harm, a referral will be made to First Response and the Police if it is appropriate. The rationale for this decision should be recorded by the DSL.

The Designated Senior Lead will consider how best to support and monitor the pupil concerned through any process of investigation, liaising closely with parents, carers, First Response, Police or other agencies involved to identify the action or support strategies that will be appropriate. If the member of staff is concerned that the appropriate action has not been taken they should liaise with the DSL and if necessary make a referral to First Response themselves. Staff acknowledge that safeguarding responsibility does not end once they have informed the DSL of any concerns, although specific details of further actions may be appropriately withheld by the DSL as information will only be shared on a need to know basis.

Following a disclosure, the child will be accompanied and supported at all times until a plan is agreed as to how best they can be safeguarded.

### **REMEMBER TED**

Your aim should be to establish as quickly and accurately as possible the details of the injury or abuse. Questioning should be brief and gentle using open rather than closed questions ("How did it happen?" rather than "Did [ ] hit you?").

Tell me more about....

Can you Explain how that happened, how you felt?

Describe what happened

Keep a note of what you heard and saw.

**BETTER STILL**..... with care and sensitivity, pass the pupil to the Designated Senior Lead immediately.

### **Confidentiality**

We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential.

The Designated Senior Lead will disclose personal information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need to know basis only.

However, all staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.

Staff must not keep duplicate or personal records of child protection concerns. All information must be reported to the DSL and securely stored.

All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or well-being or that of another.

## **PARENTS**

In general, we believe at St Mary's School that parents should be informed about any concerns regarding their children. It is important that we are honest and open in our dealings with them.

However, concerns of this nature must be referred to the Designated Senior Lead who will decide on the appropriate response. In a very few cases, it may not be right to inform parents of our concerns immediately as that action could prejudice any investigation, or place the child at further risk. In such cases, advice will be sought from First Response and the Police if appropriate. The child's views should be taken into account.

The DSL will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to Social Care with their parents/carers unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm, or impede a criminal investigation. If in doubt, we will consult with First Response on this point. We recognise that GDPR must not be a barrier for sharing information regarding safeguarding concerns.

We also recognise that in some cases there may be cultural differences of opinion on abuse. However as a school we follow the guidance and legislation in KCSIE 2021 and the law. In such cases support and advice from social care and the Police would be sought.

This school recognises that listening to children/young people is an important and essential part of safeguarding them against abuse and neglect. Children and young people may disclose abuse or make an allegation. We will take these matters seriously and ensure that the appropriate next steps are taken and endeavour to keep the child/young person regularly informed as to the progress of her concerns.

## **Supporting Staff**

We recognise that staff working in the school who have become involved with a child who has suffered harm, or appears to be likely to suffer harm, may find the situation stressful and upsetting.

We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the Designated Senior Lead and to seek further support. This could be provided by the Headmistress or another trusted colleague and/or a representative of a professional body or trade union, as appropriate.

We have adopted a Code of Conduct for staff at our School. This forms part of staff induction and is in the staff employment manual. We understand that staff should have access to advice on the boundaries of appropriate behaviour.

We recognise that our Designated Senior Lead(s) should have access to support and

## **Allegations against staff**

### INTRODUCTION

Allegations that a member of staff (including supply staff and volunteers) has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

either inside the school premises, outside of School or during a school trip or visit could be made by:

- Parents
- The abused pupil
- Other members of staff
- Other pupils
- The Police or Social Services
- A third party

An allegation of such seriousness would normally be made directly to the Headmistress but if another member of staff is told first, she/he will ensure that the Headmistress is informed immediately.

If the Headmistress is unavailable – or is involved - the Chairman of Governors should be told at once. (The Bursar can be approached in confidence to establish contact).

All school staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents to be conducted in view of other adults.

All staff should be aware of the School's own Staff Code of Conduct.

Guidance about conduct and safe practice, including safe use of mobile phones by staff and volunteers will be given at induction.

### ANONYMOUS ALLEGATIONS

If we are faced with an anonymous allegation of child abuse which names both a member of staff and a child, we will handle it in exactly the same way as if we knew the identity of the person making the allegation. Where the allegation names the member of staff; but not the pupil, we will normally interview the member of staff, and ask for his or her version of

events.

#### THE FIRST RESPONSE

We will respond promptly and sensitively to the legitimate concerns of the victim and his or her family. We undertake to take any allegation of abuse, involving a member of staff, very seriously.

We understand that a pupil may make an allegation against a member of staff.

If such an allegation is made, or information is received which suggests that a person may be unsuitable to work with children, the member of staff receiving the allegation or aware of the information, will immediately inform the Headmistress.

The Headmistress on all such occasions will **immediately and without delay** discuss with the Local Authority Designated Office (LADO - 01296 382070) the nature, context and content of the allegation and agree a course of action, including any involvement of the Police. Where an allegation against a member of staff is substantiated we will work with the LADO to determine whether there are any improvements to be made to the school procedures or practices to help prevent similar events in the future.

She will

- Follow advice given by the LADO relating to supporting the child making the allegation, as well as other children connected to the organisation.
- Establish the facts before jumping to any conclusion
- Inform the member of staff concerned honestly of the allegation that has been made, and advise him or her to contact their Trade Union or Professional Association for advice and support
- Inform the child's parents in confidence, asking them to maintain confidentiality whilst the investigation takes place, unless the allegation involves the parents, in which case we will contact Social Care before making contact.
- Inform the parents about the progress of the case, and the outcome where there is not a criminal prosecution, including the outcome of any disciplinary process in confidence. Parents are not normally entitled to the details of any disciplinary proceedings.
- Ensure the LADO is provided feedback about the outcome of any internal investigations.
- If the allegation is made against a member of staff supplied by an external agency, the Headmistress will keep the agency fully informed and involved in any enquiries from the LADO.
- If the allegation is considered 'low level' and does not meet the thresholds set out in paragraph 338 of KCSIE 2021 the Headmistress will take appropriate action and/or follow disciplinary procedures to address the behaviour. The member of staff will be given support and/or training as appropriate. Employers of agency staff or contractors will be informed. If required improvements will be made to the staff code of conduct and safeguarding procedures shared with all staff.

If the allegation made to a member of staff concerns the Headmistress, the person

receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Chair of Governors who will consult with the LADO as in the previous paragraph without notifying the Headmistress first.

#### THE NEXT STEP

Although a formal investigation is a matter for specialists, where the facts suggest that there may be reasonable grounds for suspecting actual abuse, or grooming of a child, or other criminal behaviour, the Headmistress will:

- Contact First Response,
- Invite the Police to conduct the investigation
- Consider suspending the member of staff (or volunteer) concerned

#### SUPPORT FOR THE PUPIL

Our priority is to safeguard the young people in our care. We will give all the support that we can to a pupil who has been abused. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider how best to support and monitor the pupil concerned through any process of investigation, liaising closely with parents, guardians, social care, or other agencies involved to identify the support strategies that will be appropriate.

#### SUSPENSION

Suspension of a member of staff is a neutral act and does not imply that any judgment has been reached about his or her conduct. Even so, it is a serious step, and we will take legal advice beforehand, and will normally only suspend a member of staff where:

- There is a serious risk of harm (or further harm) to the child
- The allegations are so serious as to constitute grounds for dismissal, if proven
- The Police are investigating allegations of criminal misconduct

We recognise fully that we have a duty of care towards all of our staff, and we will always:

- Keep an open mind until a conclusion has been reached
- Interview a member of staff before suspending him or her
- Keep him or her informed of progress of the investigation

Any member of staff who is invited to a meeting whose outcome is likely to result in his or her suspension, is entitled to be accompanied by a friend or Trade Union representative.

If it is deemed appropriate to suspend the member of staff, written confirmation should be dispatched within one working day, giving as much detail as appropriate for the reasons for the suspension. The member of staff will be offered support and provided with a named contact within the school and their contact details. Restrictions will apply to all staff and volunteers regarding contact with them whilst they are suspended, including via social media.

Our lettings agreement for other users requires that the organizer will follow

Buckinghamshire Council procedures for managing allegations against staff and where necessary, the suspension of adults from school premises.

#### ALTERNATIVES TO SUSPENSION

We will always consider whether an alternative to suspension might be appropriate. Possibilities include:

- Sending the member of staff on leave
- Giving him or her non-contact duties
- Ensuring that a second adult is always present in the classroom when he or she teaches

#### IF THE MEMBER OF STAFF RESIGNS

The resignation of a member of staff or volunteer mid-way through an investigation would not lead to the investigation being abandoned. Our policy is always to complete every investigation into allegations of child abuse.

#### SETTLEMENT AGREEMENTS

The policy at St Mary's School is to follow the DfE guidance set out in "Keeping Children Safe in Education" on the use of settlement agreements in cases of child abuse which is:

*Settlement agreements (sometimes referred to as Compromise agreements), by which a person agrees to resign, and a school agrees not to pursue disciplinary action, and both parties agree a form of words to be used in any future reference, must not be used in these cases. In any case, such an agreement will not prevent a thorough Police investigation where that is appropriate. Nor can it override the statutory duty to make a referral to DBS/TRA where circumstances require it.*

#### LENGTH OF INVESTIGATORY PROCESS

We recognise that everyone's interests are served by completing any investigatory process as swiftly as possible. St Mary's School is a small community and we will aim to spend as little time as is compatible with fair and impartial processes on the investigatory process. We would expect almost every case to be completed within one month. If the case is more complex reviews will be held every 2-4 weeks.

#### REFERRAL TO THE Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

Like all schools, we have a statutory legal duty to refer an individual, where there is the risk that he or she may harm, or has caused harm to children, to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) immediately after the individual's dismissal or resignation because he or she has been considered unsuitable to work with children. This would also include cases of non-renewal of a fixed-term contract, no longer engaging/refusing to engage a supply teacher provided by an employment agency, terminating the placement of a student teacher or other trainee, no longer using staff employed by contractors, no longer using volunteers.

Reports concerning members of staff or volunteers are normally made by the Headmistress. If the Headmistress is involved, the report is made by the Chairman of Governors.

The referral form can be downloaded from the DBS website on (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>). The school plays no part in the subsequent process of barring individuals from working with children and/or vulnerable adults. We also have a legal duty to respond to any requests for information that we receive from the DBS at any time.

The school also recognises that it has a duty to consider making a referral to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) where a teacher has been dismissed (or would have been dismissed had he/she not resigned). The reasons for such an order include: 'unacceptable professional conduct', 'conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute' or a 'conviction, at any time, for a relevant offence'. Referrals made to DBS are automatically shared with TRA.

#### RECORDING ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

We will record all allegations of abuse, details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved, and our subsequent actions, including any disciplinary actions, on an individual's file. A copy will be given to the individual and he or she will be told that the record will be retained until he or she reaches statutory retirement age, or for ten years, if that is longer. These records are maintained in a way that is confidential and secure, and in accordance with GDPR.

#### HANDLING UNFOUNDED OR UNSUBSTANTIATED ALLEGATIONS

##### *The Child*

A child who has been at the centre of unfounded or unsubstantiated allegations of child abuse needs professional help in dealing with the aftermath. We will liaise closely with Social Care to set up a professional programme that best meets her needs, which may involve the Adolescent Mental Health Services and an Educational Psychologist as well as referral to the School Counsellor. We shall be mindful of the possibility that the allegation of abuse was an act of displacement, masking abuse that is actually occurring within the child's own family and/or community.

However much support the child may need in such circumstances; we need to be sensitive to the possibility that the aftermath of an unfounded allegation of abuse may result in the irretrievable breakdown of the relationship with the teacher. In such circumstances, as a last resort, we may conclude that it is in the child's best interests to move to another school. We would do our best to help her to achieve as smooth a transition as possible, working closely with the parents or guardians.

##### *The Member of Staff*

A member of staff could be left at the end of an unfounded or unsubstantiated allegation of child abuse with severely diminished self-esteem, feeling isolated and vulnerable, all too

conscious that colleagues might shun him/her on the grounds of “no smoke without fire”. Consideration should be given as to how the member of staff’s contact with the child or children who made the allegation can best be managed, if they are still a pupil at the school. If issues of professional competency are involved, and though acquitted of child abuse, disciplinary issues are raised, we recognise that he or she is likely to need both professional and emotional help. We will undertake to arrange a mentoring programme in such circumstances, together with professional counselling outside the school community. A short sabbatical, phased return or period of re-training may be appropriate.

#### ALLEGATION OF ABUSE OF A CHILD WHO IS NOT A PUPIL AT THE SCHOOL

If we were given information that suggested that a member of staff was abusing a child who was not a pupil at St Mary’s School, we would immediately pass such information to First Response to handle. We would then interview the member of staff and formally advise him/her of the allegations, making it clear that the school would not play any part in the investigatory process. He or she would be advised of the possibility of facing suspension, re-assignment to other duties etc in exactly the same way as if the allegation had involved a school pupil. If the allegation is subsequently proved to be unfounded, he or she would be given full support by the school in resuming his/her career.

The Chairman of Governors should be told at once of any allegation involving the Headmistress. He will contact the LADO and obtain legal advice before proceeding to the steps outlined above.

If a school or college has concerns about an existing staff member’s suitability to work with children, the school or college should carry out all relevant checks as if the person were a new member of staff.

#### **Transfer of Risk**

Should an individual staff member or volunteer be involved in child protection, other safeguarding procedures or Police investigations in relation to abuse or neglect that may have happened outside of school, they must inform the Headmistress. In these circumstances, the school will need to assess whether there is any potential for risk of transfer to the workplace and the individual’s own work with children or young people.

#### **Whistleblowing**

We have a whistleblowing policy which staff are required to familiarise themselves with during their induction period.

#### **Physical Intervention/Positive Handling**

We understand that physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures. Any physical

restraint is only permissible when a child is in imminent danger of inflicting an injury on herself or on another, and then only as a last resort, when all efforts to diffuse the situation have failed. Another member of staff should, if possible, be present to act as a witness. All incidents of the use of physical restraint should be recorded in writing and reported immediately to the Headmistress who will decide what to do next.

**Please refer to the School's policy on the Use of Physical Restraint, including arrangements relating to close one-to-one teaching, particularly in Expressive Arts and sports provision.**

## **Anti-bullying**

Our School policy on anti-bullying is set out in a separate document and acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures. This includes all forms e.g. cyber, racist, homophobic and gender related bullying. We keep a record of known bullying incidents. All staff are aware that children with SEND and/or differences/ perceived differences are more susceptible to being bullied / victims of child abuse and should not assume that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood or injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration.

Where there is an allegation of abuse by one or more pupils against another pupil when there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, any such abuse will be referred to First Response. In such an event, all children involved, whether perpetrator or victim, will be treated as being "at risk". Ongoing support and/or counseling will be provided for both perpetrator and victim as appropriate. This may need to continue/be monitored for some time as feelings of remorse, regret or unhappiness may occur at a much later stage.

If a pupil feels particularly vulnerable they may be assigned a named person who they can talk to and who can support strategies for managing future issues. Other external services will be identified to offer additional support if required.

Additionally support in improving peer group relationships and restorative work through Form/Year group activities, PSHCE lessons and relevant workshops/speakers may be required. See appendix 3 for more information on Peer on Peer abuse.

**Please refer to the School's Anti-Bullying Policy**

## **Prevention**

We recognise that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our pupils by providing pupils with effective lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection.

The school community will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an ethos, which is understood by all staff, which enables children to feel secure and encourages them to talk knowing that they will be listened to.

- Ensure that all children know there is an adult in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.
- Provide, across the curriculum, opportunities which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm, to recognise the dangers of child sexual exploitation and to know to whom they should turn for help. In particular this will include anti-bullying work, e-safety, prevention of political indoctrination and road safety. Also focused work in Year 6 to prepare for transition to Secondary School and more personal safety/independent travel.
- Ensure all staff are aware of school guidance for their use of mobile technology and have discussed safeguarding issues around the use of mobile technologies and their associated risks.

### **Health & Safety**

Our Health & Safety policies, set out in separate documents, reflect the consideration we give to the protection of our children both physically within the school environment and, for example, when away from the school when undertaking school trips and visits.

### **Mental Health Policy**

Our School policy on mental health is set out in a separate document. Staff are trained to make them aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. We also inform all staff that only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. 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.

Staff also need to be made aware that where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education. Staff are encouraged to take immediate action if they have a mental health concern about a child, and follow the child protection policy and inform the necessary DSL immediately.

Our School has a comprehensive PSHCE programme that incorporate mental health issues and seeks to give the children the skills to develop mentally healthy approach to live, as well as the resilience to cope with life's normal ups and downs.

### **Please refer to the School's Mental Health Policy**

### **Home Stay Visits**

On occasions where it might be necessary to use accommodation offered by host families on residential trips, the school will make an assessment of the suitability of the adults in the respective families and will obtain an enhanced DBS check with barred list and follow the guidance in KCSIE 2021. We are aware that the DBS cannot access criminal records held overseas. We will however contact the relevant foreign embassy or High Commission of the

country in question and find out if similar checks can be done in that country. We will also work with partner schools abroad to ensure that families have been correctly and thoroughly checked, and are safe and known to the partner school.

The following procedures will be observed:

- The trip provider will provide full details of the selection and allocation arrangements for host families, including details of the safeguarding and risk management processes.
- Personal safety guidance will be given to pupils linked to this risk management process.
- Full personal and contact details of all members resident in the host families' homes will be obtained in advance and shared with parents, along with specific house rules and the designated family member responsible.

Group leaders will ensure that the following measures are in place:

- Contact numbers for local support, such as agents.
- Accurate written information held by all leaders on location of pupils.
- Information for pupils enabling 24hr contact for more than one leader.
- Emergency 'visit at once' code between pupils and leaders.
- Physical or telephone contact with all pupils within 2 hours of allocation.
- A means by which group leaders can contact pupils every day (physical or telephone).
- A means by which accommodation inspections can be undertaken on request.
- A process and means to move pupils away from unsuitable accommodation or to a place of safety if necessary.

A full debrief between the group leader and the DSL will take place upon return to school following the trip.

### **Missing Child Policy**

Every care is taken to ensure that our children are accounted for at all times. However, in the unlikely event that it is suspected that a child has gone missing the Missing Child Policy is followed.

**Please refer to the School's policies relating to Health and Safety, Educational Visits, EYFS and use of ICT.**

## Monitoring and Evaluation

Our Child Protection Policy and Procedures will be monitored and evaluated by:

- Governing Body visits to the school
- Annual Report to BSCP which is approved by the Governors
- SLT 'drop ins' and discussions with children and staff
- Scrutiny of Attendance data
- Scrutiny of range of risk assessments
- Logs of bullying/racist/behaviour incidents for SLT to monitor
- Review of parental concerns

If any member of staff does need feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection procedures or the way a concern is being handled, they should consult the NSPCC's what you can do to report abuse dedicated helpline 0800 028 0285 or email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

### Policy Review

The Governing Body of our school is responsible for ensuring the annual review as a minimum of this policy, or as there are changes to legislation.

**Child protection is always our top priority.**

**Copies of our Safer Recruitment Policy and Staff Code of Conduct are available on request from the School Office.**

**Reviewed September 2021**

**In addition please see appendices to this document below**

### Acronyms

DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead
DMHL	Designated Mental Health Lead
AUP	Acceptable Use Policy
BSCP	Bucks Safeguarding Children Partnership
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service
LADO	Local Authority Designated Officer
HBA	Honour Based Abuse
HSB	Harmful Sexual Behaviour

FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
CCE	Child Criminal Expolitation
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
LA	Local Authority
SEND	Special Education Needs and Disability
CME	Children Missing in Education
TRA	Teaching Regulation Agency (formerly NCTL)

## APPENDIX ONE

### Recognising signs of child abuse

#### Categories of Abuse:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect

#### Signs of Abuse in Children:

The following non-specific signs may indicate something is wrong:

- Significant change in behaviour
- Extreme anger or sadness
- Aggressive and attention-seeking behaviour
- Suspicious bruises with unsatisfactory explanations
- Lack of self-esteem
- Self-injury
- Depression
- Age inappropriate sexual behaviour

#### Risk Indicators

The factors described in this section are frequently found in cases of child abuse. Their presence is not proof that abuse has occurred, but:

- Must be regarded as indicators of the possibility of significant harm
- Justifies the need for careful assessment and discussion with designated / named / lead person, manager, (or in the absence of all those individuals, an experienced colleague)
- May require consultation with and / or referral to Children's Services

The absence of such indicators does not mean that abuse or neglect has not occurred.

In an abusive relationship the child may:

- Appear frightened of the parent/s
- Act in a way that is inappropriate to her/his age and development (though full account needs to be taken of different patterns of development and different ethnic groups)

The parent or carer may:

- Persistently avoid child health promotion services and treatment of the child's episodic illnesses
- Have unrealistic expectations of the child
- Frequently complain about/to the child and may fail to provide attention or praise (high criticism/low warmth environment)
- Be absent or misusing substances
- Persistently refuse to allow access on home visits
- Be involved in domestic abuse

Staff should be aware of the potential risk to children when individuals, previously known or suspected to have abused children, move into the household.

### **Recognising Physical Abuse**

The following are often regarded as indicators of concern:

- An explanation which is inconsistent with an injury
- Several different explanations provided for an injury
- Unexplained delay in seeking treatment
- The parents/carers are uninterested or undisturbed by an accident or injury
- Parents are absent without good reason when their child is presented for treatment
- Repeated presentation of minor injuries (which may represent a "cry for help" and if ignored could lead to a more serious injury)
- Family use of different doctors and A&E departments
- Reluctance to give information or mention previous injuries

### **Bruising**

Children can have accidental bruising, but the following must be considered as non accidental unless there is evidence or an adequate explanation provided:

- Any bruising to a pre-crawling or pre-walking baby
- Bruising in or around the mouth, particularly in small babies which may indicate force feeding
- Two simultaneous bruised eyes, without bruising to the forehead, (rarely accidental, though a single bruised eye can be accidental or abusive)
- Repeated or multiple bruising on the head or on sites unlikely to be injured accidentally
- Variation in colour possibly indicating injuries caused at different times
- The outline of an object used e.g. belt marks, hand prints or a hair brush
- Bruising or tears around, or behind, the earlobe/s indicating injury by pulling or twisting
- Bruising around the face

- Grasp marks on small children
- Bruising on the arms, buttocks and thighs may be an indicator of sexual abuse

### **Bite Marks**

Bite marks can leave clear impressions of the teeth. Human bite marks are oval or crescent shaped. Those over 3 cm in diameter are more likely to have been caused by an adult or older child.

A medical opinion should be sought where there is any doubt over the origin of the bite.

### **Burns and Scalds**

It can be difficult to distinguish between accidental and non-accidental burns and scalds, and will always require experienced medical opinion. Any burn with a clear outline may be suspicious e.g.:

- Circular burns from cigarettes (but may be friction burns if along the bony protuberance of the spine)
- Linear burns from hot metal rods or electrical fire elements
- Burns of uniform depth over a large area
- Scalds that have a line indicating immersion or poured liquid (a child getting into hot water is his/her own accord will struggle to get out and cause splash marks)
- Old scars indicating previous burns/scalds which did not have appropriate treatment or adequate explanation

Scalds to the buttocks of a small child, particularly in the absence of burns to the feet, are indicative of dipping into a hot liquid or bath.

### **Fractures**

Fractures may cause pain, swelling and discolouration over a bone or joint.

Non-mobile children rarely sustain fractures.

There are grounds for concern if:

- The history provided is vague, non-existent or inconsistent with the fracture type
- There are associated old fractures
- Medical attention is sought after a period of delay when the fracture has caused symptoms such as swelling, pain or loss of movement
- There is an unexplained fracture in the first year of life

### **Scars**

A large number of scars or scars of different sizes or ages, or on different parts of the body, may suggest abuse.

Physical abuse may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child

## **Recognising Emotional Abuse**

The persistent maltreatment of a child such as to cause severed and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to the child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature 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. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Emotional abuse may be difficult to recognise, as the signs are usually behavioural rather than physical. The manifestations of emotional abuse might also indicate the presence of other kinds of abuse.

The indicators of emotional abuse are often also associated with other forms of abuse.

The following may be indicators of emotional abuse:

- Developmental delay
- Abnormal attachment between a child and parent/carer e.g. anxious, indiscriminate or not attachment
- Indiscriminate attachment or failure to attach
- Aggressive behaviour towards others
- Scape-goated within the family
- Frozen watchfulness, particularly in pre-school children
- Low self esteem and lack of confidence
- Withdrawn or seen as a "loner" – difficulty relating to others

## **Domestic Abuse**

All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognised that exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have serious and long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children, and are victims in their own right. In some cases, children may blame themselves. Our school is signed up to Operation Encompass which means that the police inform the school if they have attended and incident of domestic abuse to enable the school to monitor and support the child according to their need.

Domestic abuse can take place in different types of relationships, including ex-partners and other family members. It can include many types of abusive behaviour such as physical, emotional or economic abuse, and coercive and controlling behaviour.

## Recognising Signs of Sexual Abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not 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. They may also include 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. Sexual abuse can take place online and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The **Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool** and the [NSPCC Harmful Sexualised Behaviour Framework](#) can be used as guidance to support professionals in identifying and responding to sexual behaviour in children.

Boys and girls of all ages may be sexually abused and are frequently scared to say anything due to guilt and/or fear. This is particularly difficult for a child to talk about and full account should be taken of the cultural sensitivities of any individual child/family.

Recognition can be difficult, unless the child discloses and is believed. There may be no physical signs and indications are likely to be emotional/behavioural.

Some behavioural indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

- Inappropriate sexualised conduct
- Sexually explicit behaviour, play or conversation, inappropriate to the child's age
- Continual and inappropriate or excessive masturbation
- Self-harm (including eating disorder), self mutilation and suicide attempts
- Involvement in prostitution or indiscriminate choice of sexual partners
- An anxious unwillingness to remove clothes e.g. for sports events (but this may be related to cultural norms or physical difficulties)

Some physical indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

- Pain or itching of genital area
- Blood on underclothes
- Pregnancy in a younger girl where the identity of the father is not disclosed
- Physical symptoms such as injuries to the genital or anal area, bruising to buttocks, abdomen and thighs, sexually transmitted disease, presence of semen on vagina, anus, external genitalia or clothing

## **Sexual Abuse by Young People**

The boundary between what is abusive and what is part of normal childhood or youthful experimentation can be blurred. The determination of whether behaviour is developmental, inappropriate or abusive will hinge around the related concepts of true consent, power imbalance and exploitation. This may include children and young people who exhibit a range of sexually problematic behaviour such as indecent exposure, obscene telephone calls, fetishism, bestiality and sexual abuse against adults, peers or children.

Developmental Sexual Activity encompasses those actions that are to be expected from children and young people as they move from infancy through to an adult understanding of their physical, emotional and behavioural relationships with each other. Such sexual activity is essentially information gathering and experience testing. It is characterised by mutuality and of the seeking of consent.

Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour can be inappropriate socially, inappropriate to development, or both. In considering whether behaviour fits into this category, it is important to consider what negative effects it has on any of the parties involved and what concerns it raises about a child or young person. It should be recognised that some actions may be motivated by information seeking, but still cause significant upset, confusion, worry, physical damage, etc. it may also be that the behaviour is “acting out” which may derive from other sexual situations to which the child or young person has been exposed.

If an act appears to have been inappropriate, there may still be a need for some form of behaviour management or intervention. For some children, educative inputs may be enough to address the behaviour.

Abusive sexual activity included any behaviour involving coercion, threats, aggression together with secrecy, or where one participant relies on an unequal power base.

## **Assessment**

In order to more fully determine the nature of the incident the following factors should be given consideration. The presence of exploitation in terms of:

- **Equality** – consider differentials of physical, cognitive and emotional development, power and control and authority, passive and assertive tendencies
- **Consent** – agreement including all the following:
  - Understanding what is proposed based on age, maturity, development level, functioning and experience
  - Knowledge of society’s standards for what is being proposed
  - Awareness of potential consequences and alternatives
  - Assumption that agreements or disagreements will be respected equally
  - Voluntary decision
  - Mental competence

- **Coercion** – the young perpetrator who abuses may use techniques like bribing, manipulation and emotional threats of secondary gains and losses that is loss of love, friendship, etc. Some may use physical force, brutality or the threat of these regardless of victim resistance.

In evaluating sexual behaviour of children and young people, the above information should be used only as a guide.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation**

The definition of child sexual exploitation is as follows:

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity or criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology such as involving children in the production of sexual images or forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities CSE can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex. It can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity and may occur without the child or young person's immediate knowledge (e.g. through others copying videos or images they have created and posted on social media,).

#### [CSE Guidance Core Document](#)

We recognise that exploitation includes the trafficking of children and Modern Day Slavery.

#### [Victims of modern slavery – frontline staff guidance](#)

The following list of indicators is not exhaustive or definitive but it does highlight common signs which can assist professionals in identifying children or young people who may be victims of sexual exploitation.

Signs include:

- underage sexual activity
- inappropriate sexual or sexualized behaviour
- sexually risky behaviour, 'swapping' sex
- repeat sexually transmitted infections
- in girls, repeat pregnancy, abortions, miscarriage
- receiving unexplained gifts or gifts from unknown sources
- having multiple mobile phones and worrying about losing contact via mobile
- having unaffordable new things (clothes, mobile) or expensive habits (alcohol, drugs)
- changes in the way they dress

- going to hotels or other unusual locations to meet friends
- seen at known places of concern
- moving around the country, appearing in new towns or cities, not knowing where they are
- getting in/out of different cars driven by unknown adults
- having older boyfriends or girlfriends
- contact with known perpetrators
- involved in abusive relationships, intimidated and fearful of certain people or situations
- hanging out with groups of older people, or anti-social groups, or with other vulnerable peers
- associating with other young people involved in sexual exploitation
- recruiting other young people to exploitative situations
- truancy, exclusion, disengagement with school, opting out of education altogether
- unexplained changes in behaviour or personality (chaotic, aggressive, sexual)
- mood swings, volatile behaviour, emotional distress
- self-harming, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, overdosing, eating disorders
- drug or alcohol misuse
- getting involved in crime
- Police involvement, Police records
- involved in gangs, gang fights, gang membership
- injuries from physical assault, physical restraint, sexual assault.

### **Recognising Neglect**

Evidence of neglect is built up over a period of time and can cover different aspects of parenting. Indicators include:

- Failure by parents or carers to meet the basic essential needs e.g. adequate food, clothes, warmth, hygiene and medical care
- A child seen to be listless, apathetic and unresponsive with no apparent medical cause
- Failure of child to grow within normal expected pattern, with accompanying weight loss
- Child thrives away from home environment
- Child frequently absent from school
- Child left with adults who are intoxicated or violent
- Child abandoned or left alone for excessive periods

## Appendix Two

### Honour Based Abuse

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of so called HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. If in any doubts staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA.

### Forced Marriage (FM)

This is an entirely separate issue from arranged marriage. It is a human rights abuse and falls within the Crown Prosecution Service definition of domestic violence. Young men and women can be at risk in affected ethnic groups. Whistle-blowing may come from younger siblings. Other indicators may be detected by changes in adolescent behaviours. Some pupils due to additional needs may not be able to give informed consent. Never attempt to intervene directly as a school or through a third party.

### Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

It is essential that staff are aware of FGM practices and the need to look for signs, symptoms and other indicators of FGM. **From October 2015 it will be mandatory for teachers to personally report to the Police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. If they suspect or think a child is at risk of FGM the teacher should follow local safeguarding procedures and inform the DSL.**

What is FGM?

It involves procedures that intentionally alter/injure the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

#### 4 types of procedure:

Type 1 Clitoridectomy – partial/total removal of clitoris

Type 2 Excision – partial/total removal of clitoris and labia minora

Type 3 Infibulation entrance to vagina is narrowed by repositioning the inner/outer labia

Type 4 all other procedures that may include: pricking, piercing, incising, cauterising and scraping the genital area.

#### Why is it carried out?

Belief that:

- FGM brings status/respect to the girl – social acceptance for marriage
- Preserves a girl's virginity
- Part of being a woman / rite of passage
- Upholds family honour
- Cleanses and purifies the girl
- Gives a sense of belonging to the community
- Fulfils a religious requirement
- Perpetuates a custom/tradition
- Helps girls be clean / hygienic
- Is cosmetically desirable
- Mistakenly believed to make childbirth easier

Is FGM legal?

FGM is internationally recognised as a violation of human rights of girls and women. It is **illegal** in most countries including the UK.

Circumstances and occurrences that may point to FGM happening

- Child talking about getting ready for a special ceremony
- Family taking a long trip abroad
- Child's family being from one of the 'at risk' communities for FGM (Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Sierra Leon, Egypt, Nigeria, Eritrea as well as non-African countries including Yemeni, Afghani, Kurdistan, Indonesia and Pakistan)
- Knowledge that the child's sibling has undergone FGM
- Child talks about going abroad to be 'cut' or to prepare for marriage

Signs that may indicate a child has undergone FGM:

- Prolonged absence from school and other activities
- Behaviour change on return from a holiday abroad, such as being withdrawn and appearing subdued
- Bladder or menstrual problems
- Finding it difficult to sit still and looking uncomfortable
- Complaining about pain between the legs
- Mentioning something somebody did to them that they are not allowed to talk about
- Secretive behaviour, including isolating themselves from the group
- Reluctance to take part in physical activity

- Repeated urinal tract infection
- Disclosure

The 'One Chance' rule

As with Forced Marriage there is the 'One Chance' rule. It is essential that settings /schools/colleges take action **without delay**.

### **Preventing Radicalisation**

Children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk is a part of Schools' safeguarding approach.

**Extremism** is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.

**Radicalisation** refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

**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 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.

School is subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

### **County Lines**

Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move [and store] drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including schools, further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, special educational needs schools, children's homes and care homes. Children are often recruited to move drugs and money between locations and are known to be exposed to techniques such as 'plugging', where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network. One of the ways of identifying potential involvement

in county lines are missing episodes (both from home and school), when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism<sup>103</sup> should be considered. If a child is suspected to be at risk of or involved in county lines, a safeguarding referral should be considered alongside consideration of availability of local services/third sector providers who offer support to victims of county lines exploitation.

Further information on the signs of a child's involvement in county lines is available in guidance published by the [Home Office](#).

### **Child Criminal Exploitation**

The definition of child criminal exploitation in KCSIE is as follows:

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

The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. CCE can include children being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country (county lines, see page 85 for more information), forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people. Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:

- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
- Children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being;
- Children who misuse drugs and alcohol;
- Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late;
- Children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation as perpetrators can threaten victims and their families. CCE of girls can be very different to boys. All children being exploited are at higher risk of CSE.

### **Homelessness**

Being homeless or at risk of becoming homeless present a real risk to a child's welfare. The DSL are aware of the contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority. Whilst St Mary's School is a fee paying school in an affluent area, staff, and in particular SLT need to be aware of the pressure of changing family situations, and in particular, economic struggles that could be both a threat to the security of a family, their ability to pay fees and possibly even their risk of losing a home. Any uncertainty will cause stress for the family and therefore any children living in the home.

## Appendix Three

### Peer on Peer abuse

In cases where there is possible abuse by one or more pupils against another pupil where there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, information will be referred to the local authority as a child protection concern. We fully appreciate in these cases that support/counselling is needed for the alleged perpetrator(s) as well as the victim.

Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'. It is important to consider the forms abuse may take and the subsequent actions required.

Whilst all the usual good practice applies to listening and recording these incidents in the case of peer on peer abuse the following advice should also be taken into consideration. Staff should consider gaining support from pastoral staff and the DSL if they are not already involved.

- The situation should be dealt with immediately and sensitively
- It is important to gather the information as soon as possible to gather the true facts around what has occurred, as soon after the child(ren) may have forgotten.
- It is important to deal with the situation sensitively and think about the language that is used to avoid a child feeling labelled or blamed.
- Staff should not be prejudiced, judgemental, dismissive or irresponsible in dealing with such sensitive matters.
- Staff should reassure victims that they are being taken seriously, they will be supported and kept safe. Victims should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem, or to feel shamed for making a report.
- Speak to **all** the young people involved separately to gain a statement of facts from them, using consistent language and open questions. Please refer to antibullying policy.
- Inform the DSL of any concerns if they are not already involved.

The DSL will take following into consideration to inform any action:

- Has this been a deliberate or contrived situation for a young person to be able to harm another?
- Is there an underlying reason why the pupil behaved in this way?
- Is this repeated behavior?
- What is the age of the pupils involved.
- Is there a large difference in power between the victim and perpetrator e.g. size, ability, social status or other vulnerabilities including SEND or CP/CIN/LAC.
- Are any of the pupils at risk of significant harm in which case a referral will be made to social care.
- Parents may need to be informed if other services have not already done so or the DSL is allocated that role. This is best done face to face.
- If the victim is deemed 'Gillick competent' following the Fraser guidelines and does not wish parents to be informed this must be taken into consideration. If the risk of harm is evident the pupil should be encouraged to share the information with their parent.

- What on going support and intervention is required by any pupils involved.
- If a child is considered to be at risk of harm will refer to social and police if appropriate.

A chronology including all decisions, actions and the reasons for making them will be recorded by the DSL.

Once the outcome of the incident has been established it is necessary to ensure that future incidents of abuse do not occur again. For example:

Where did the incident occur? Was it observed? Is more supervision required in a particular area? Are there any issues that need to be addressed via Pastoral staff or the PSHCE curriculum.

### **Types of abuse**

There are many forms of abuse that may occur between peers and this list is not exhaustive. Each form of abuse or prejudiced behaviour is described in detail followed by advice and support on actions to be taken. It is recognised that peer on peer abuse is often gender specific with girls much more likely to be victims and boys to be perpetrators, and can involve children in the wider community.

#### **Physical abuse e.g. (biting, hitting, kicking, hair pulling etc.)**

Physical abuse may include, hitting, kicking, nipping, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm to another person. There may be many reasons why a child harms another and it is important to understand why a young person has engaged in such behaviour, including accidentally before considering the action or punishment to be undertaken.

#### **Sexual Violence and Harassment (inappropriate sexual language, touching, sexual assault etc.)**

Sexually harmful behaviour from young people is not always contrived or with the intent to harm others. There may be many reasons why a young person engages in sexually harmful behaviour and it may be just as distressing to the young person who instigates it as well as the young person it is intended towards. Sexually harmful behaviour may range from inappropriate sexual language, inappropriate role play, upskirting, to sexually touching another or sexual assault/abuse.

#### **Bullying (physical, name calling, homophobic etc.)**

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both young people who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems. In order to be considered bullying, the behaviour must be aggressive and include:

- An Imbalance of Power: Young people who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change

over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.

- Repetition: Bullying behaviours happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumours, attacking someone physically or verbally or for a particular reason  
e.g. size, hair colour, gender, sexual orientation, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

### **Cyber bullying**

Cyberbullying is the use of phones, instant messaging, e-mail, chat rooms or social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter to harass threaten or intimidate someone for the same reasons as stated above. It is important to state that cyber bullying can very easily fall into criminal behaviour under the Malicious Communications Act 1988 under section 1 which states that electronic communications which are indecent or grossly offensive, convey a threat or false information or demonstrate that there is an intention to cause distress or anxiety to the victim would be deemed to be criminal. This is also supported by the Communications Act 2003, Section 127 which states that electronic communications which are grossly offensive or indecent, obscene or menacing, or false, used again for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety to another could also be deemed to be criminal behaviour. If the behaviour involves the use of taking or distributing indecent images of young people under the age of 18 then this is also a criminal offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Outside of the immediate support young people may require in these instances, the school will have no choice but to involve the Police to investigate these situations.

### **Sexting**

Sexting is when someone sends or receives a sexually explicit text, image or video. This includes sending 'nude pics', semi-nudes, 'rude pics' or 'nude selfies' and upskirting. Pressuring someone into sending a nude picture can happen in any relationship and to anyone, whatever their age, gender or sexual preference. However, once the image is taken and sent, the sender has lost control of the image and these images could end up anywhere. By having in their possession, or distributing, indecent images of a person under 18 on to someone else, young people are not even aware that they could be breaking the law as stated as these are offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

### **Initiation/Hazing**

Hazing is a form of initiation ceremony which is used to induct newcomers into an organisation such as a private school, sports team etc. There are a number of different forms, from relatively mild rituals to severe and sometimes violent ceremonies. The idea behind this practice is that it welcomes newcomers by subjecting them to a series of trials which promote a bond between them. After the hazing is over, the newcomers also have something in common with older members of the organisation, because they all experienced it as part of a rite of passage. Many rituals involve humiliation, embarrassment, abuse, and harassment.

### **Prejudiced Behaviour**

The term prejudice-related bullying refers to a range of hurtful behaviour, physical or emotional or both, which causes someone to feel powerless, worthless, excluded or marginalised, and which is connected with prejudices around belonging, identity and equality in wider society – in particular, prejudices to do with disabilities and special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender, home life, (for example in relation to issues of care, parental occupation, poverty and social class) and sexual identity (homosexual, bisexual, transsexual).

### **Teenage relationship abuse**

Teenage relationship abuse is defined as a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse, perpetrated by an adolescent (between the ages of 13 and 18) against a current or former partner. Abuse may include insults, coercion, social sabotage, sexual harassment, threats and/or acts of physical or sexual abuse. The abusive teen uses this pattern of violent and coercive behaviour, in a heterosexual or same gender relationship, in order to gain power and maintain control over the partner.

## Appendix Four

### Sexual violence and sexual harassment

Sexual violence or harassment is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. It is not 'part of growing up' or 'having a laugh'. KCSIE 2021 Part 5 makes clear the serious nature of sexual violence and harassment. Staff should be aware of the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours such as lifting skirts, grabbing bottoms or breasts.

Further advice can be found at:

[Sexual Violence and Harassment between children in schools and colleges](#)

The following procedure is based on the government guidance for dealing with these issues in school. Staff should be aware that girls, children with SEND and LGBT children are at greater risk.

The following steps will be taken:

### Disclosure

If a child discloses an incident of sexual violence or harassment, as with any other disclosure, it is essential that the child is reassured that they will be taken seriously and supported. The child has placed them in a position of trust so staff need to be respectful. Victims should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem, or to feel ashamed for making a report.

A child may disclose such incidents to any member of staff who should listen carefully to the child, being non judgemental, asking only necessary open questions and being clear about boundaries and how the report will be progressed. Ideally there will be two members of staff present one being the DSL. It may be possible for the second member of staff to take notes, but it is important to remain engaged with the child. It is essential that the victim understands who the report will be shared with and why. The member of staff should record the report using the child's words, recognising that the report could become part of a statutory assessment by children's social care and/or part of a criminal investigation using the Welfare Check Form. The DSL should be informed as soon as possible.

Where the report includes and online element staff should be aware of the advice about sexting. See appendix five. Staff must not view or forward illegal images of a child.

Staff recognise that 'Upskirting' is a criminal offence and must be reported promptly to the DSL or Headmistress or most senior member of staff.

Upskirting is defined in KCSIE 2021:

The Voyeurism (Offences) Act, which is commonly known as the Upskirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019. 'Upskirting' is where someone takes a picture under a persons clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender, can be a victim.

### **Risk Assessment**

Following a report the DSL will make an immediate risk assessment and needs assessment. This will be on a case by case basis and will consider:

- the victim, especially their protection and support
- the alleged perpetrator
- any action required to support or protect other children (and if appropriate staff) at school.

The risk assessment will need to be kept under constant review to ensure the safety of all pupils. In particular, it is important to consider the proximity of the victim and the alleged perpetrator. Do they share classes, school premises or transport? All risk assessments will be recorded and regularly reviewed as more information comes to light or circumstances change. The DSL (or deputy) should ensure they are engaging with children's social care and specialist services as part of the plan of support for the children involved. Clear records will be retained along with a chronology.

### **Response**

The DSL will need to manage the next steps taking into consideration:

- the wishes of the victim and how they want to proceed. Victims should be given as much control as possible over any decisions about how the report will be progressed and support that they will be offered, whilst ensuring their safety. They may not disclose the whole picture immediately so it is essential that dialogue is kept open and encouraged. The victim will be given the option of having a designated trusted adult of their choice within the school to talk about their needs, as well as the option of somewhere to withdraw to if they are finding it difficult to maintain a full-time timetable.
- if a crime has been committed and/or HSB has been displayed.
- the ages and developmental stages of the children involved
- any power imbalance such as age difference, maturity or confidence. For example, does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty?
- whether the incident is one-off or is there a pattern of abuse
- sexual harassment and sexual violence can take place within intimate personal relationships between peers.
- whether there are ongoing risks to the victim or other children/adults/staff?
- other issues in the wider context to be considered – child's background, family and community, CCE, CSE.

Once the DSL has considered the above the report could be managed in one of the following ways. All decisions and the reasons for making them will be recorded and dated by the DSL. In all cases it will be made clear that sexual violence and harassment is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

A decision will need to be made about when to inform the alleged perpetrator and their parents/carers if appropriate. If a report is going to be made to social care and/or the Police the DSL should speak to the relevant agency and discuss next steps, and how the alleged perpetrator will be informed of the allegation.

## ST. MARYS SCHOOL, GERRARDS CROSS

1. Manage internally – for one-off incidents that do not involve a criminal offence and the children involved are not considered in need of early help or statutory intervention. Pastoral support and counselling may be required to support the victim and alleged perpetrator. Consideration will also be given to any advice, preventative education or support that is needed to be delivered to any pupils affected.
2. Early Help – support provided to address issues of non-violent harmful sexual behaviour with aim of preventing any escalation. This will normally be a multi-agency approach, involving preventative education and engagement with parents.
3. Referral to social care – if a child has been harmed, is at risk of harm or in immediate danger a referral should be made. Normally parents or carers will be informed unless there is a compelling reason not to do so, such as this will put the child at additional risk. If a referral is made, it will be considered if other children are in need of protection or other services. The DSL will work closely with the relevant social worker to ensure the best possible support package for the victim and, if appropriate, the alleged perpetrator and any other children that require support. However, at all times the school will take every measure possible to protect the victim, any other children/staff and the alleged perpetrator. If social care decides that statutory intervention is not appropriate, the school will refer again if they believe the child remains in immediate danger.
4. Reporting to the Police – this will normally be in conjunction with a referral to social care. If the report is of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault this should be reported to the Police regardless of age. Normally the parents or carers will be informed unless there is a compelling reason not to do so such as this is likely to put the child at further risk. If the parents are not informed the school will continue to support the victim in any decisions that they take and seek the support of other relevant specialist agencies for the victim. Once a report has been made the school will take advice from the Police about what information can be disclosed to staff and in particular to the alleged perpetrator and their parents/carers, and the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity. The school recognises parents/carers of the alleged victim may need help to understand the school's duty of care towards all children involved in these situations. If the Police decide not take further action the school will continue to engage specialist support for the victim as required and take any steps necessary to safeguard all the children involved.

It is unlikely that a child will be on Police bail with conditions attached, so when there is a criminal investigation the school will work with children's social care and the Police to ensure all children involved are supported and that no actions jeopardise the Police investigation. It is important that the victim can continue their normal routine, including receiving an education. Regardless of the outcome of any criminal investigation the school will continue to work with the victim, alleged perpetrator and other children/staff affected to ensure that all children are protected and supported, particularly from any bullying or harassment, and that the risk assessment is updated. This will include how to support the rights of both the victim and alleged perpetrator to an education. If necessary, this may be at an alternative school. The school will also consider any sanctions that need to be applied in accordance with the school's behaviour policy but acknowledges that this must not interfere with or compromise any Police investigation.

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The needs and wishes of the victim, as well as their safety, remain paramount and the school recognises that these arrangements may be long term. If the victim moves schools the DSL will ensure that the new educational institution is made aware of any ongoing support, as well as transferring any child protection records. The most suitable way of doing this should be discussed with the victim and their parents/carers where appropriate.

Possible sources of support are Children and Young People's Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ChiSVAs), Rape Crisis Centres, Survivors Trust and Internet Watch Foundation (when illegal images need to be removed). It is also recognized the sexual assault can result in a range of physical, mental and sexual health problems and support from the NHS Sexual Assault Referral Centre may be sought.

Support for the alleged perpetrator needs to be carefully considered as they may have unmet needs and their behaviour (HSB) may be a symptom of their own abuse or exposure to abusive materials or practices. The school will take a multi-agency approach to any support offered seeking help from social care, the Police and other specialist services. If the alleged perpetrator moves to another educational institution the DSL will make them aware of any ongoing support required, risks to other children as well as transferring the child protection files.

If the report is proven to be unfounded, unsubstantiated, false or malicious the school will consider the support needed for the child making the report, acknowledging this may be a cry for help. If the report is deliberately malicious or invented the school will consider if any disciplinary action is required in line with the school behaviour policy.

## Appendix Five

### Sexting in Schools

Making, possessing and distributing any imagery of someone under 18 which is 'indecent' is illegal. This includes imagery produced by a young person under 18. However, the law was created before the mass use of social media and it is not intended to criminalise children.

'Indecent' is not defined in legislation. When cases are prosecuted, the question of whether any photograph of a child is indecent is for a jury, magistrate or District Judge to decide based on what is the recognised standard of propriety. For most purposes, if imagery contains a naked young person, a topless girl, and/ or displays genitals or sex acts, including masturbation, then it will be considered indecent. Indecent images may also include overtly sexual images of young people in their underwear.

The National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) has made clear that incidents involving youth produced sexual imagery should primarily be treated as safeguarding issues. Schools may respond to incidents without involving the Police.

The following details how incidents of Youth Produced Sexual Imagery (Sexting) are dealt with within school. Further advice can be found at

[Sharing Nudes and Semi- Nudes: advice for educational settings working with children and young people.](#)

### School Procedure

A risk assessed approach will be taken in line with the above guidance to ensure a swift response, the primary concern being that all children and young people involved are safeguarded, protected and educated.

The following outlines the steps which will be taken in these situations.

The incident should be referred to the DSL as soon as possible. The DSL should hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff. The initial review meeting should consider the initial evidence and aim to establish whether there is an immediate risk to a young person or young people. Factors that need to be considered are:

- Why was the imagery shared? Was the young person coerced or put under pressure to produce the imagery?
- Who has shared the imagery? Where has the imagery been shared? Was it shared and received with the knowledge of the pupil in the imagery?
- Are there any adults involved in the sharing of imagery?
- • What is the impact on the pupils involved?
- Do the pupils involved have additional vulnerabilities?
- Does the young person understand consent?
- Has the young person taken part in this kind of activity before?

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Based on this risk assessment the following decisions need to be made:

- If a referral should be made to the Police and/or children's social care. They should always be contacted if it is believed that social care have been involved with the young person in the past.
- 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 (see below for further information).
- Any relevant facts about the young people involved which would influence risk assessment
- If there is a need to contact another school, college, setting or individual
- Whether to contact parents or carers of the pupils involved - in most cases parents should be involved

After the initial review meeting the following steps need to be taken:

1. There should be subsequent interviews with the young people involved (if appropriate). Staff need to be aware that the students involved are likely to be embarrassed and ashamed, and need to proceed with sensitivity and empathy.
2. Parents should be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put the young person at risk of harm.
3. At any point in the process if there is a concern a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to children's social care and/or the Police immediately.
4. The need to provide ongoing support/counselling to anyone involved, including their parents will be considered.

(See Annex A of the guidance detailed above for a list of questions and support that could be offered).

All decisions and actions and reasons for taking them and dates are recorded in the Safeguarding files and in line with the schools Child protection policy. Any decisions should be made by the DSL, Head teacher with input from other members of staff if appropriate.

### **Searching devices, viewing and deleting imagery**

If any devices need to be seized and passed onto the Police then the device(s) should be confiscated and the Police should be called. The device should be turned off and placed under lock and key until the Police are able to come and retrieve it.

Adults should not view youth produced sexual imagery unless there is a good and clear reason to do so. The decision to view images should be based on the professional judgement of the DSL and comply with the Child

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Protection Policy and procedures. It should never be viewed if the act of viewing will cause significant distress or harm to the pupil.

If the decision is to view the imagery the DSL would need to be satisfied that viewing:

Is the only way to decide if other agencies need to be involved.

It is necessary to report the image to have it taken down, or support the pupil/parents in making a report.

It is unavoidable because the pupil has presented an image directly to staff or it has been found on a school device or network.

The decision should be taken with the Headteacher. Another member of staff should be present in the room (ideally the Headteacher or another member of SLT) but this member of staff does not need to view the image. The viewing should take place on school premises and be recorded in the safeguarding records, including who was present, why the image was viewed and any subsequent actions. This should be signed and dated. The imagery should never be copied, printed or shared: this is illegal.

**When there is a need to refer to external agencies, for example social care and the Police**

An immediate referral to Police and/or children's social care should be made if at this initial stage:

1. The incident involves an adult
2. 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)
3. What you know about the imagery suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person's developmental stage, or are violent
4. The imagery involves sexual acts and any pupil in the imagery is under 13
5. You have reason to believe a pupil or 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 a school may decide to respond to the incident without involving the Police or children's social care (a school can choose to escalate the incident at any time if further information/concerns come to light). The decision to respond to the incident without involving the Police or children's social care would be made in cases when the DSL is confident that they have enough information to assess the risks to pupils involved and the risks can be managed within the school's pastoral support and disciplinary framework and if appropriate local network of support.

If there are any doubts about whether to involve other agencies, a referral should be made to the Police.

Once the school has decided that other agencies do not need to be involved, or after consultation with them it is decided that the school can manage the situation internally, then, consideration should be given to deleting the imagery from devices and online services to limit any further sharing of the imagery. In most cases it is

recommended that the young people are asked to delete the imagery themselves and confirm that they have deleted it. They should be given a deadline for deletion across all devices, online storage or social media sites. They should be reminded that possession of youth produced sexual imagery is illegal and if it is discovered later that they did not delete the image they are committing a criminal offence and the Police may become involved. Parents and carer should be informed unless this presents a further risk to the young person. School will then consider if further disciplinary measures need to be taken in accordance with the Behaviour and Sanctions policy.

### **Education and promotion of protective factors**

In order to prevent these incidents occurring, safeguard our students and give them and their parents the skills they need to deal with such situations, the issues of youth produced sexual Imagery are covered in the following ways:

1. As part of PSCHÉ programme and ICT curriculum
2. Staff Safeguarding training
3. Parents e safety and other information evenings

## Contacts in County

<p><b>Education Safeguarding Advisory Service</b> ESAS offers support to education providers to assist them to deliver effectively on all aspects of their safeguarding responsibilities.</p>	<p><a href="mailto:secure-esasduty@buckinghamshire.gov.uk">secure-esasduty@buckinghamshire.gov.uk</a> Telephone number: 01296 387981</p>
<p><b>First Response Team (including Early Help, Channel)</b> The First Response Team process all new referrals to social care, including children with disabilities. Referrals are assessed by the team to check the seriousness and urgency of the concerns and whether Section 17 and/or Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 apply. The First Response Team will ensure that the referral reaches the appropriate team for assistance in a quick and efficient manner.</p>	<p>01296 383962  Out of hours 0800 999 7677</p>
<p><b>Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)</b> The Buckinghamshire Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is responsible for overseeing the management of all allegations against people in a position of trust who work with children in Buckinghamshire on either a paid or voluntary basis</p>	<p>01296 382070</p>
<p><a href="#">Bucks Family Information Service</a> Information for families on a range of issues including childcare, finances, parenting and education</p>	<p>01296 383065</p>
<p><a href="#">Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP)</a> Procedures, policies and practice guidelines</p>	
<p><a href="#">Schools Web</a> School bulletin, Safeguarding links, A-Z guide to information and services</p>	
<p><b>BCC Equalities &amp; School Improvement Manager</b></p>	<p>01296 382461</p>
<p><b>BCC Prevent Co-ordinator Prevent Education Officer</b></p>	<p>01296 674784 07793 658693</p>
<p><b>Thames Valley Police</b></p>	<p>101 (999 in case of emergency)</p>

## Other contacts

<p>NPCC <a href="#">NPCC</a> <a href="#">When to call the Police</a></p>	
<p>NSPCC</p>	<p>0800 800 5000</p>
<p>NSPCC whistleblowing advice line. what you can do to report abuse help line.</p>	<p>0800028 0285 <a href="mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk">help@nspcc.org.uk</a></p>

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Childline <a href="#">Childline</a>	0800 11 11
Kidscape – Parent Advice Line (bullying) (Mon-Weds from 9:30am to 2:30pm) <a href="#">Kidscape</a>	020 7823 5430
Female Genital Mutilation Helpline (NSPCC) <a href="#">NSPCC FGM Helpline</a>	0800 028 3550 <a href="mailto:fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk">fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk</a>
Samaritans - Helpline <a href="#">Samaritans</a>	116 123
Forced Marriages Unit - Foreign and Commonwealth Office <a href="#">Forced marriage - GOV.UK</a>	020 7008 0151 <a href="mailto:fm@fco.gov.uk">fm@fco.gov.uk</a>
Crimestoppers <a href="#">Crimestoppers</a>	0800 555 111
R-U Safe? Barnardos - Children/Young People Sexual Exploitation Service <a href="#">Barnardos RUSafe Bucks</a>	01494 785 552
<a href="#">CEOP</a> (Child Exploitation and Online Protection)	
<a href="#">Public Health England - Rise Above</a>	
<a href="#">National Domestic Abuse Helpline</a>	0808 2000 247
<a href="#">Educate Against Hate</a>	

See below for assessment framework

## Assessment Framework

(from Working Together to Safeguard Children, July 2018)

