



# ST PAUL'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL

Our school is a place of learning  
a place of love

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

### **Introduction**

At St Paul's school we aim to develop an ethos in which children feel secure, their viewpoints are valued, they are encouraged to talk and are listened to.

The purpose of this policy is to inform staff, parents and governors about the school's responsibilities and to enable everyone to have a clear understanding of how these responsibilities should be carried out. The school follows the procedures contained in the Hertfordshire Area Child Protection Committee's document "Child Protection Procedures" – a guide to procedure and practice for all professional staff in Hertfordshire who work with children.

We are aware of the important role the school has in the early recognition of the signs and symptoms of abuse or neglect and the appropriate referral process. The teachers and other school staff, because they have daily contact with the children, are particularly well placed to observe: outward signs of abuse; changes in behaviour; failure to develop.

### **Statutory Framework**

In order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, the school will act in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- Education Act 2002 (section 175)
- Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Inter-agency Child Protection and Safeguarding Children Procedures

- Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (DfES 2006)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government 2010)
- The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005
- Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Teachers and Other Staff (DfE 2011)

'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (HM Government 2010) requires all schools to follow the procedures for protecting children from abuse which are established by the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board.

Schools are also expected to ensure that they have appropriate procedures in place for responding to situations in which they believe that a child has been abused or are at risk of abuse - these procedures should also cover circumstances in which a member of staff is accused of, or suspected of, abuse.

Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (DfES 2006) places the following responsibilities on all schools:

- Schools should be aware of and follow the procedures established by the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board
- Staff should be alert to signs of abuse and know to whom they should report any concerns or suspicions
- Schools should have procedures (of which all staff are aware) for handling suspected cases of abuse of pupils, including procedures to be followed if a member of staff is accused of abuse, or suspected of abuse
- A Designated Senior Person should have responsibility for co-coordinating action within the school and liaising with other agencies
- Staff with designated responsibility for child protection should receive appropriate training

Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (DfES 2006) also states:

**“All parents need to understand that schools and FE colleges have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are their pupils or students, that this responsibility necessitates a child protection policy and procedures, and that a school or FE college may need to share information and work in partnership with other agencies when there are concerns about a child’s welfare.”**

## **Aims**

**The aims of this policy are:**

- 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 raise the awareness of all teaching and non-teaching staff of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting cases of abuse.
- To provide an environment where staff and pupils can talk freely about concerns and know that they will be listened to and appropriate action will be taken.
- To provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm, and ensure we, the school, contribute to assessments of need and support plans for those children.
- 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.
- To ensure that all adults within our school who have access to children have been checked as to their suitability.

### **Role of Governors**

The Governing Body has overall responsibility for ensuring that there are sufficient measures in place to safeguard the children in their establishment. It is recommended that a nominated governor for child protection is appointed to take lead responsibility.

In particular the Governing Body must ensure:

- The school has policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in their care.
- Safe recruitment procedures are in place.
- Appointment of a Designated Person who is a senior member of the school leadership team.
- Relevant safeguarding children training for school staff/volunteers is provided.
- The school has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against a member of staff or volunteers working in the school.
- Deficiencies or weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements are remedied without delay
- The school has a lead governor responsible for Child Protection.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures are reviewed annually and information provided to the local authority about them and about how the above duties have been discharged
- Parents are aware that a Child Protection Policy is in place and available to see on request.
- The Designated Person for Child Protection is properly trained and has time to carry out their duties.

The Designated Person for Child Protection is Mrs Debbie Moore.

The Deputy Designated Person for Child Protection is Mrs Maria McLaughlin.

The Lead Governor with responsibility for Child Protection is Mrs Hannah Said.

## The Designated Teacher

The role of the Designated Person is to:

- Keep up to date with knowledge to enable them to fulfil their role, including attending any relevant training, at least every two years.
- Ensure that all staff, including non-teaching staff, are aware of school procedures.
- Ensure that all staff who work with children undertake appropriate training to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding children effectively and that this is kept up to date by refresher training at three yearly intervals.
- Ensure that new staff receive a safeguarding children induction within 7 working days of commencement of their contract.
- Ensure that temporary staff and volunteers are made aware of the school's arrangements for safeguarding children within 7 working days of their commencement of work.
- Ensure that the school operates within the legislative framework and recommended guidance.
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of the HSCB Inter-agency Child Protection and Safeguarding Children Procedures.
- Ensure that the Headteacher (if not the Designated person for Child Protection) is kept fully informed of any concerns.
- Develop effective working relationships with other agencies and services.
- Decide upon the appropriate level of response to specific concerns about a child e.g. discuss with parents, offer an assessment under the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) or refer to Children, Schools and Families social care.
- Liaise and work with Children's Services, Safeguarding and Specialist Services over suspected cases of child abuse.
- Meet with the Education Welfare officer to monitor children at risk.
- Ensure that accurate safeguarding records relating to individual children are kept separate from the academic file in a secure place, marked 'Strictly Confidential'.
- Ensure that if a child leaves the school, their child protection file is copied and forwarded to the Designated Person in the new school. The originals should be retained until the 'child' reaches the age of 50.
- Ensure that detailed and accurate written records of concerns about a child are kept even if there is no need to make an immediate referral.
- Attend case conferences, or ensure that the appropriate member of staff attends and is aware of the purpose and procedure for a Child Protection Conference.
- Ensure that a report is prepared for conference and to participate in core groups as is required.
- Ensure that the school effectively monitors children, about whom there are concerns, including notifying Children's Services, Safeguarding and Specialist Services when there is an unexplained absence of more than two days for a child who is the subject of a child protection plan.
- Act as a source of support and advice to staff within school on all child protection concerns.

- Discuss with new parents the role of the DSP and the role of safeguarding in the school. Make parents aware of the safeguarding procedures used and how to access the child protection policy.
- Provide an annual report for the Governing Body detailing any changes to the policy and procedures, training undertaken by the Designated Person, deputy Designated Person, all staff and governors, number and type of incidents/cases, number of hours spent on child protection issues and number of children referred to Social Care and on the Child Protection Register.

### **School Procedures**

- Our school procedures for safeguarding children will be in line with Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board procedures and 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'.
- The deputy Designated Person will act in the absence of the Designated Person for Child Protection.
- If a disclosure is made and the Headteacher, Designated Person and Deputy Designated Person are not present at school, they must be contacted immediately.
- If any member of staff is concerned about a child he or she must inform the Designated Person immediately.
- Notes should be made about any concerns as quickly as possible.
- The Designated Person will seek advice initially from the Safeguarding Team or Social Care.
- If a referral is made to Social Services, the Designated Person will ensure that a written report of the concerns is sent to the Social Worker dealing with the case within 48 hours.
- Particular attention will be paid to the attendance, academic progress and physical, social and emotional development of any child who has been identified as at risk or who has been placed on the Child Protection Register.
- The designated Person will inform Social Care of any significant change affecting any child on the Child Protection Register.
- 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.
- The Designated Person will undertake training every two years and the whole school every three years.

### **When to be Concerned**

All staff and volunteers should be aware that the main categories of abuse are:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

Staff should be concerned about a pupil:

- When a child has frequent or unusual injuries not normally associated with the explanation offered.
- When a child regularly has unexplained injuries.
- Exhibits significant changes in behaviour, performance or attitude
- Indulges in sexual behaviour which is unusually explicit and/or inappropriate to his or her age
- Discloses an experience in which he or she may have been significantly harmed
- Appears frightened of the parent/s or other household members e.g. siblings or others outside of the home
- Appears wary of adults and displays 'frozen watchfulness'

Further details of possible injury, signs of abuse etc can be seen in the Polices Folder, in the First Aid Cupboard or on the Herts Grid under Model Policies for Child Protection.

### **Dealing with a Disclosure**

If a pupil discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the member of staff should

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Accept what is being said.
- Allow the child to talk freely.
- Reassure the child but not make promises which it might not be possible to keep.
- Not promise confidentiality. You have a duty to report the incident to the Designated Person and it may be necessary to inform Social Care.
- Reassure him or her that what has happened is not his or her fault.
- Stress that it was the right thing to tell.
- Listen, rather than ask direct or leading questions e.g. What did he/she do next? Did he touch your private parts?
- Ask open questions e.g. Anything else to tell me? And?
- Not criticise the perpetrator.
- Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told.
- Make a written record (see Record Keeping).
- Pass the information to the Designated Person without delay.

### **Record Keeping**

When abuse is disclosed or suspected, the member of staff should:

- Make some brief notes as soon as possible after the conversation, recording exact words used by the child.
- Record the date, time, place and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child
- Use proforma diagrams in SEN folder to indicate the position of any bruising or other injury. Record statements and observations rather than interpretations or assumptions.

All records need to be given to the Designated Senior Person promptly. No copies

should be retained by the member of staff or volunteer.

- These notes must not be destroyed, even if a more detailed report is written later. They may be needed by the Court.
- The Designated Senior Person will ensure that all safeguarding records are managed in accordance with the Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005

Data protection means that parents/former pupils have the right to see their school records. Although child protection information is exempt from this requirement, if a parent or former pupil asked to see notes registering any child protection concerns, then it is likely that a Local Authority would be obliged to show them, unless the case had involved a criminal prosecution, care order or other legal prohibition. An exception might be made if to release the information would cause individual harm to the parent or former pupil. Therefore, it is vital that all information written about children, or allegations made by children is kept to objective comments, verbatim accounts and factual information.

## Diversity

Although no culture sanctions extreme harm to a child, cultural variations in child rearing patterns do exist. A balanced assessment must incorporate a cultural perspective but guard against being over-sensitive to cultural issues at the expense of promoting the safety and well-being of the child.

*'Fear of being accused of racism can stop people acting when they otherwise would. Fear of being thought unsympathetic to someone of the same race can change responses.'*

*'Every organisation concerned with the welfare and protection of children should have mechanisms in place to ensure equal access to services of the same quality, and that each child, irrespective of colour or background, should be treated as an individual requiring appropriate care.'*

*(Victoria Climbié Inquiry Report)*

Research also shows that children with special needs are at an increased risk of abuse. There are fewer signs and indicators and more possible explanations. Children with communication difficulties may be especially vulnerable.

Some children and young people may be more vulnerable to abuse due to particular circumstances such as:

- Young women subject to honour based violence (where, for instance, they have transgressed the expectations of them as young women in their family and community)
- Children at risk of harm from abuse linked to a belief in spirit possession on the part of their parent, carer or wider community
- Girls at risk of genital mutilation (usually being taken back to their country of origin for this procedure to be carried out)
- Children being trafficked into other families from abroad

- Girls and / or boys at risk of being forced into marriage

## **Speaking to Parents**

All parents are made aware of the school's Child Protection Policy, through reference to it in our prospectus, website and home/school agreement. A notice about this, the name of the Designated Person, Deputy Designated Person and a statement explaining the school's role in referring and monitoring cases of suspected abuse is displayed in our school entrance.

Where concerns are raised, the Designated Person must explain to parents that the school has a duty of care to refer to Social Care if they believe that the child or other children may be at risk of significant harm.

There are situations when seeking consent should be avoided:

- In cases of sexual abuse, where evidence could be destroyed.
- Where the risk of violence to the child or others may result.
- Where a child may be coerced into withdrawing a statement.
- Where the sharing of information with parents is best managed jointly.

The Designated Person should seek advice from Social Care and keep a record of advice given.

## **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 him/herself, 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 recognise that there may be other groups of children and young people who are particularly vulnerable, e.g. those with disabilities, young carers and children living with substance abuse.

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

## **Our school will support all pupils by:**

- Encouraging the development of self esteem and resilience in every aspect of school life including through the curriculum.
- Promoting a caring, safe and positive environment within the school.
- Liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children.
- Notifying Social Care as soon as there is a significant concern.
- Ensuring that a named teacher is designated for Looked After Children and that an up to date list of children is regularly reviewed and updated.

- Notifying Social Care when a young child or person attending the school is privately fostered.
- Notifying the Education Welfare Officer (following notification to the Designated or Deputy Designated Person) of the absence of two days, without satisfactory explanation, of a pupil currently subject to a child protection plan.

### **Support for Staff**

Dealing with Child Protection is always difficult and stressful. Members of staff should consider seeking support for themselves, initially from the Designated Person. Further support can also be provided by the Headteacher or another trusted colleague, occupational health, and/or a representative of a professional body or trade union, as appropriate. We adhere to safe working practices and have a code of conduct for staff at our school.

### **Confidentiality**

- We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential.
- The headteacher or Designated Person 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.
- All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secret that which might compromise the child's safety or well being or that of another child.
- We will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to Social Care with 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 the Safeguarding Team or Social Care on this point.

### **Allegations involving a Member of Staff**

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 be conducted in view of other adults or children.

Where an allegation is made against an adult, immediate advice must be sought. The headteacher or the most senior teacher if the headteacher is not present must be informed immediately. The headteacher will discuss the content of the allegation with the Safeguarding Manager. The Headteacher will also notify the Chair of Governors.

If the allegation concerns the headteacher the person receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Deputy headteacher who will inform the Chair of Governors. He/she will consult the Safeguarding Team. The school will follow the County procedures for managing allegations against staff.

The school must retain allegations of a child protection nature against a member of staff until the staff member concerned reaches the age of 100. Records of allegations must be kept securely on school premises.

### **Recruitment of Staff**

Safer recruitment procedures will be followed. All staff and volunteers will be carefully selected and vetted to try to ensure they do not pose a risk to children. All references will be checked and verified. Those staff and volunteers having contact with children will be checked through the Criminal Records Bureau at the appropriate level. All staff and volunteers will receive information and basic training in safe conduct and what to do if they have concerns about a child. This will include information on recognising where there are concerns about a child, where to get advice and what to do if no one seems to have taken their concerns seriously.

### **Temporary Staff**

Temporary staff will be provided with a leaflet detailing school procedures regarding child protection and the name of the Designated Person for Child Protection and Deputy Designated Person for Child Protection.

### **Other Policies**

Our policy on the prevention and management of bullying is set out in a separate policy and acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

Our policy on racist incidents is set out in a separate policy and acknowledges that repeated racist incidents or a single serious incident may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

Our policy on physical intervention/positive handling by staff is set out separately, as part of our Behaviour Policy. It complies with DCSF Guidance, 'The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils' November 2007. This policy states that staff should only ever use physical intervention to stop a child or young person committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others, damaging property or acting in a way that is counter to maintaining good order and discipline at the school and that at all times it must be the minimal force necessary.

- Such events should be recorded and signed by a witness.
- Staff who are likely to need to use physical intervention should be appropriately trained.
- Physical intervention of a nature, which causes injury or distress to a child, may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures.

Our Health and Safety policy, set out in a separate document, reflects the consideration we give to the protection of our children both physically within the

school environment and, for example, in relation to internet use and when away from the school when undertaking school trips and visits.

Our Child Protection Policy will be monitored and evaluated at the beginning of every academic year by all staff, with the responsibility for this to be held by the Designated Person for Child Protection.

Policy written: September 2012

Agreed by Governors: September 2012

Reviewed: Annually