



St Thomas More Catholic Academy

St Thomas More Catholic Academy Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

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St Thomas More Catholic Academy

All Saints Catholic Collegiate

United in Faith, Love and Learning

Mission Statement

Christ is at the centre of our community, where everyone is known and loved.

In fulfilling our Mission we are a school of prayer. We live as community of love, peace and reconciliation, valuing everyone's dignity as a child of God to promote and celebrate the growth and achievement of the whole person.

INTRODUCTION

At St Thomas More Catholic Academy, we recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all students. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected, valued and listened to. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support and protection. We will always promote and prioritise the safety and welfare needs of our children and we are committed to providing the right help, support and intervention at the right time. This policy applies to all staff and volunteers working in or on behalf of our school.

TERMINOLOGY

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child protection refers to the processes undertaken to protect children who have been identified as suffering, or being at risk of suffering significant harm.

Harm is ill treatment or impairment of health and development, including impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another.

Significant harm is the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in the family in the best interests of the child. Section 31 of the Children Act 1989 states 'where the question of whether harm suffered by a child is significant turns on the child's health or development, their health or development shall be compared with that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child.'

Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years to teenage years.

Child refers to anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

Parent refers to birth parents or adoptive parents i.e. those with parental responsibility. It is recognised, however, that other adults may be in a parenting role, for example step parents and foster carers.

Staff refers to all those working for or on behalf of the school, including paid and unpaid staff, full time or part time staff, temporary, casual, agency staff, self-employed people and contractors.

DSL refers to the schools Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Deputy DSL refers to the schools Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads.

LSBC refers to Local Safeguarding Children Board.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on Local Authorities (in relation to their education functions) and governing bodies of maintained schools and FE institutions, to exercise their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students at a school, and students under 18 years of age attending education institutions. The same duty applies to independent schools (which include Academies and free schools) by virtue of section 157 of the same act.

Our safeguarding policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by:-

- **Children Act 1989 and 2004;**
- **Education Act 2002**
- **Childcare Act 2006**
- **What to do if You're Worried a Child is Being Abused 2015.**
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016**
- **Working together to Safeguard children 2015.**
- **Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Board policies and procedures**

POLICY PRINCIPLES

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility; everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play.
- All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to support and protection.
- We recognise the importance of providing an environment within our school that will help children feel safe and respected. We recognise the importance of enabling children to talk openly and to feel confident that they will be listened to.
- We believe that our school should provide a caring, positive, and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child.
- The Directors and Academy Committee takes seriously its responsibility under the Education Act 2002 and the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, 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.
- All staff have an equal responsibility to act without delay, on any concern or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm.

- We will work with parents to build an understanding of the school's responsibilities to ensure the welfare of all children, including the need for referrals to other agencies in some situations.
- Representatives of the whole-school community of students, parents, staff, Directors and Academy Representatives will be involved in policy development and review
- This policy will be reviewed annually, unless an incident or new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim review.
- This policy is one of a series in the school's integrated safeguarding portfolio, and should be read alongside other relevant policies.

POLICY AIMS

The aims of this policy are:-

- To promote and prioritise the safety and welfare needs of our children.
- To support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence.
- To provide an environment in which children feel safe, secure, valued, respected, listened to, and confident to approach trusted adults if they are in difficulties.
- To raise the awareness of all teaching and non-teaching staff of the need to safeguard children and to provide direction regarding their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse and neglect.
- To work within a structured procedure within the school and collegiate which will be followed by all members of the school/ MAC community (Local Academy Representatives and Directors) in cases of suspected abuse or neglect, ensuring that such concerns and referrals are handled sensitively, professionally and in ways which best support the needs of the child.
- 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 packages for those children.
- To emphasise the need for excellent levels of communication between all members of staff, students and their families.
- To develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, especially Health, Police and Social Care.
- To ensure that all staff working within our schools who have substantial access to children have been appropriately checked to ensure they are safe to do so.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy

The school's lead person with overall responsibility for child protection and safeguarding is the Designated Safeguarding Lead. We also have a deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure there is appropriate cover for this role at all times.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead's responsibilities are described in Appendix 1.

Nominated Academy Representative and Directors of the Academy

The school has a nominated Academy Representative responsible for safeguarding to champion good practice and to liaise with the Headteacher. The Directors of the Academy are collectively responsible for ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are fully embedded within the school's ethos and reflected in the school's day-to-day practice.

The responsibilities of the nominated Academy Representative and Directors of the Academy are described in Appendix 2.

Headteacher

The Headteacher will ensure that all policies and procedures are fully implemented and sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable staff members to discharge their safeguarding responsibilities. They will also act as case manager for dealing with allegations of abuse made against school staff members.

The Headteacher/ Head of School responsibilities are described in Appendix 3.

All Staff

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All staff know how to recognise signs and symptoms of abuse, how to respond to students who disclose abuse and what to do if they are concerned about a child.

Staff have read and understand the school's safeguarding policy, staff code of conduct and other guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues.

All staff have received safeguarding training appropriate for their role, and approved by the LSCB.

For training information, see Appendix 4.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN

We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence are likely to have low self-esteem and may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helpless, humiliated and some sense of blame. Our school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in their lives.

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.

Our school will support all students by:-

- Encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness, through the curriculum as well as developing positive relationships, whilst not condoning aggression or bullying.
- Supporting the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence;
- Promoting a caring, safe and positive environment within the school.
- Ensuring that child protection is included in the curriculum to help children stay safe, recognise when they do not feel safe and identify who they might or can talk to;
- Providing students with a number of appropriate adults to approach if they are in difficulties;
- Ensuring repeated hate incidents, e.g. racist, homophobic or gender- or disability-based bullying, are considered under child protection procedures
- 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.
- Monitoring children who have been identified as having welfare or protection concerns, maintaining appropriate records and providing effective support.

In addition, we will always follow best practice guidelines which include:-

- Treating all students with respect
- Involving students in decisions that affect them
- Encouraging positive and safe behaviour among students
- Being a good listener
- Being alert to changes in students' behaviour
- Recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse
- Being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some students lead to an increased risk of abuse.
- Maintaining an attitude of "it could happen here," and therefore always exercising professional curiosity when carrying out our work.
- Setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately.

Physical intervention

A 'no touch' approach can be impractical, particularly for those staff working with younger children. When physical contact is made with a child, this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration, and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background.

A general culture of 'limited touch' should be adapted, where appropriate, to the individual requirements of each child.

Regarding physical intervention where a child is at risk of endangering him/herself or others, this should only be as a very last resort, and at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury. The DSL must be informed of any such incident, the incident must be recorded and signed by a witness. The incident must be shared with parents.

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.

RECOGNISING ABUSE

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse a child by inflicting harm, for example by hitting them, or neglect them by failing to provide for their basic needs or to act to prevent harm. There are four categories of abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and neglect.

Physical abuse

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

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child, such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only for meeting the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious 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, although it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, indecent material; watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing or shelter, including exclusion from home or abandonment; failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; failure to ensure adequate supervision, including the use of inadequate care-takers; or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

Indicators of abuse – what you might see

Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example, bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has been inadequately supervised. The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they 'tell'. It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty.

For these reasons it is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the designated person.

A child who is being abused or neglected may:

- Have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries
- Show signs of pain or discomfort
- Keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather
- Be concerned about changing for PE or swimming
- Look unkempt and uncared for
- Change their eating habits
- Have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships
- Appear fearful
- Be reckless with regard to their own or other's safety
- Self-harm
- Frequently miss school or arrive late
- Poor attendance
- Show signs of not wanting to go home
- Display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn

- Challenge authority
- Become disinterested in their school work
- Be constantly tired or preoccupied
- Be wary of physical contact
- Reluctant to go home after school
- Be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol
- Display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age.

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw, and each small piece of information will help the DSL to decide how to proceed. It is very important that you report your concerns – you do not need ‘absolute proof’ that the child is at risk.

CHILDREN WHO MAY BE PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE

Some children may have an increased risk of abuse. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur.

To ensure that all of our students are safe and receive equal protection, we will apply extra vigilance to children who are:

- Disabled or have special educational needs
- Living in homes where there is domestic abuse
- Affected by parental substance misuse
- Affected by parental mental ill health
- Living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations
- Living away from home or in private fostering arrangements
- Vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying (including online)
- Living in temporary accommodation
- Living in families with transient lifestyles
- Vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion or sexuality
- At risk of forced marriage or female genital mutilation
- At risk of sexual exploitation or trafficking
- At risk of extremism or radicalisation

Private Fostering

The Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Procedure and the Statement of Purpose for Private Fostering can be found on this website under **Procedures Section D11**.

Ofsted have produced a framework for the inspection of Local Authority private fostering services. In January 2014, Ofsted published a report called ['Private fostering: better information, better understanding'](#).

From a safeguarding perspective, the report's findings gave much cause for concern. Many private fostering arrangements are 'hidden' and, it appears, are rarely brought to the attention of local authorities, even though there it is an offence not to inform them. The penalty for non-reporting is a maximum £5,000 fine, but it seems that convictions are extremely rare.

The legislation governing private fostering is the 'Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005' and came into force following the death of [Victoria Climbié](#) in 2000. Victoria was privately fostered by her great aunt.

Given the 'hidden' nature of much private fostering, local authorities have a duty to raise awareness of the need to notify the local Children's Services department.

What is private fostering?

Private fostering is when a child under the age of 16 (or 18 for a disabled young person) is cared for by an adult who does not have parental responsibility and is not a close family relative*. The arrangement has to be in place for more than 28 days. (*Close family relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt' and includes half-siblings and step-parents; it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins.)

Why are children in private foster care?

Most frequently, young people are in private foster care for the following reasons:

- children from other countries sent to live in the UK with extended family
- host families for language schools
- parental ill-health
- where parents who have moved away, but the child stays behind (eg. to stay at the same school to finish exams)
- teenagers estranged from their families

The Ofsted report into Private Fostering also refers to these reasons:

- children brought from outside the UK with a view to adoption
- children at independent boarding schools who do not return home for holidays and are placed with host families
- trafficked children

The Duty to refer to the Local Authority

Each party involved in the private fostering arrangement has a legal duty to inform the relevant local authority at least six weeks before the arrangement is due to start. Not to do so is a criminal offence.

Once the notification has been made to the authority, Children's Services have a duty to visit and speak to the child, the parent and the foster carer; and everyone in the foster carer's household. Children's services will then undertake a range of suitability checks including DBS checks on everyone in the household over the age of 16.

Other professionals, for example GPs surgeries and schools, also have a duty to report to the local authority where they are aware or suspect that a child is subject to a private fostering arrangement.

Note that although schools have a duty to inform the local authority, there is no duty for anyone, including the private foster carer or social workers to inform the school. However, it should be clear who has parental responsibility.

Are children in private foster care defined as 'Looked After Children'?

No. The term 'Looked After Children' means children who are looked after by the local authority. Privately fostered children are outside the care of the local authority.

Schools should not therefore code children in private foster care as 'LAC'.

How do local authorities monitor the welfare of children in private fostering ?

The local authority must visit each privately fostered child at least every six weeks in the first year of the arrangement; and at least every twelve weeks in the second and subsequent year. In some areas schools are visited as part of this process to discuss the child with teachers.

The private foster carer has a duty to inform the local authority of any substantive changes to the arrangement or within the household.

Should schools be told about a private fostering arrangement?

There is no duty for schools to be given information about a child who is privately fostered by the family, carer or the local authority. There is however a duty on schools to inform children's services where they become aware of such an arrangement.

Gang Violence and Exploitation

The Home Office has (13 January 2016) published its refreshed gangs strategy: "[Ending gang violence and exploitation](#)". St Thomas More continues to work closely with Staffordshire Police and other relevant agencies to identify and support any affected young people, as well as to pro-actively prevent gang involvement where possible.

The strategy is particularly focused on the 52 local areas in which the Ending Gang and Youth Violence (EGYV) programme operates which Newcastle and SOT are part of. The aim of the EGYV programme has been to reduce violence, and to achieve this through supporting a change in the way that public services respond to gang and youth violence.

EGYV has generated a greater understanding of the way in which gangs operate and the way in which they are adapting to try to combat law enforcement efforts to close them down.

Street gangs are becoming less visible in public, and more fluid in the way they organise. A key gang tactic is to exploit vulnerable people, but this problem is often hidden. This change is one of the main drivers behind this Home Office document which prioritises both reducing gang related violence and preventing the exploitation of vulnerable people by gangs by setting six new priorities.

Six new priorities

All six priorities require a continuing multi-agency response and are described briefly in turn below.

1: Tackle county lines – the exploitation of vulnerable people by a hard core of gang members to sell drug

Gang members are moving into drugs markets outside the urban areas where they usually live and operate, because they are unknown to the local police, there is less competition locally from rival gangs, and non-metropolitan police forces tend to have less experience of addressing this type of activity. The exploitation of vulnerable people is central to county lines. For example, young people are groomed and/or coerced into moving or selling drugs,

2: Protect vulnerable locations – places where vulnerable young people can be targeted, including pupil referral units and residential children’s care homes

Looked After Children and those children known to children’s social care or youth offending teams are at risk of being exploited and used by gangs. Children not known to services are, however, also used by gangs in an effort to evade detection.

There is evidence that residential children’s care homes and pupil referral units are being targeted with reports of gang members waiting outside schools to meet children and take them to participate in criminal activities before returning them in time to avoid them being reported missing or raising suspicion.

3: Reduce violence and knife crime – including improving the way national and local partners use tools and powers.

The Home Office states its commitment to continue to prioritise the reduction of gang related violence including tackling knife crime; emphasising the importance of local partnerships to do so.

4: Safeguard gang-associated women and girls – including strengthening local practices.

The Home Office says that EGYV has given them a better understanding of a previously hidden cohort of vulnerable women and that local areas are now better able to identify and support vulnerable gang-associated girls. The priority is that vulnerable girls and young women are identified and receive appropriate help and interventions.

5: Promote early intervention

The Home Office flags up the importance of using evidence from the Early Intervention Foundation to identify and support vulnerable children and young people (including identifying mental health problems). Intervening early can stop young people from becoming involved in gang and youth violence in the first place. Local areas have developed more effective preventative programmes which the Home Office is keen to spread.

6: Promote meaningful alternatives to gangs such as education, training and employment

It is essential that those involved in gangs or at risk of becoming involved are able to find a meaningful alternative, such as education, training and employment. The Home Office is working with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to support those at risk of gang

involvement and exploitation into employment, education and training via a number of different programmes including the Youth Engagement Fund.

ANTI - BULLYING

Each school within the collegiate has an Anti-Bullying Policy which is set out in a separate document. This policy relates to all forms of bullying including cyber, racist, homophobic and gender related bullying.

The subject of bullying is addressed at regular intervals in the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum and anti-bullying assemblies, in addition to the school/ school council working closely with the LA and PCSOs.

If the bullying is particularly serious, or the anti-bullying procedures are deemed to be ineffective, the Headteacher and the DSL will consider implementing child protection procedures.

To allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection and disciplinary procedures. **All** staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse. This is most likely to include, but not limited to: bullying (including cyber bullying), gender based violence/sexual assaults and sexting. Staff should refer any incidents of peer on peer abuse to the DSL/Assistant DSLs. Further information is available in the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

At St Thomas More we believe that all children have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm by adults in the school and other students. In most instances, the conduct of students towards each other will be covered by the school's Behaviour for Learning policy. Some allegations may be of such a serious nature that they may raise safeguarding concerns. These allegations are most likely to include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. It is also likely that incidents dealt with under this policy will involve older students and their behaviour towards younger students or those who are vulnerable.

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

The allegation:

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

Examples of safeguarding issues against a student could include:

Physical Abuse

- violence, particularly pre-planned
- forcing others to use drugs or alcohol

Emotional Abuse

- blackmail or extortion
- threats and intimidation

Sexual Abuse

- indecent exposure, indecent touching or serious sexual assaults
- forcing others to watch pornography or take part in sexting

Sexual Exploitation

- encouraging other children to attend inappropriate parties
- photographing or videoing other children performing indecent acts

In areas where gangs are prevalent, older students may attempt to recruit younger students using any or all of the above methods. Young people suffering from sexual exploitation themselves may be forced to recruit other young people under threat of violence.

When an allegation is made by a student against another student, members of staff should consider whether the complaint raises a safeguarding concern. If there is a safeguarding concern the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) should be informed. A factual record should be made of the allegation, but no attempt at this stage should be made to investigate the circumstances. The DSL may contact social services to discuss the case. It is possible that social services are already aware of safeguarding concerns around this young person. The DSL will follow through the outcomes of the discussion and make a social services referral where appropriate. The DSL will make a record of the concern, the discussion and any outcome and keep a copy in the files of both students' files. If the allegation indicates a potential criminal offence has taken place, the police should be contacted at the earliest opportunity and parents informed (of both the student being complained about and the alleged victim). It may be appropriate to exclude the student being complained about for a period of time according to the school's behaviour policy and procedures.

Where neither social services nor the police accept the complaint, a thorough school investigation should take place into the matter using the school's usual disciplinary procedures. In situations where the school considers a safeguarding risk is present, a risk assessment should be prepared along with a preventative, supervision plan. The plan should be monitored and a date set for a follow-up evaluation with everyone concerned.

Youth Produced Sexual Imagery

The school responds to incidents of youth produced sexual imagery in line with the UK Council For Child Internet Safety document "Sexting In Schools And Colleges: Responding To Incidents And Safeguarding Young People."

All incidents involving youth produced sexual imagery should be responded to in line with the school's Child Protection And Safeguarding Policy.

When an incident involving youth produced sexual imagery is reported:

- The incident should be referred to the DSL as soon as possible.

- 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
- 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

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 police may, however, need to be involved in cases to ensure thorough investigation including collection of all evidence (for example, through multi-agency checks).

Even when the police are involved, however, a criminal justice response and formal sanction against a young person would only be considered proportionate in certain circumstances.

The school will consider the initial evidence and aim to establish:

- Whether there is an immediate risk to a young person or young people
- If a referral should be made to the police and/or children's social care
- If it is necessary to view the imagery in order to safeguard the young person – in most cases, imagery should not be viewed
- What further information is required to decide on the best response
- Whether the imagery has been shared widely and via what services and/or platforms. This may be unknown.
- Whether immediate action should be taken to delete or remove images from devices or online services
- Any relevant facts about the 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 students involved - in most cases parents should be involved

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 student in the imagery is under 13
5. You have reason to believe a student is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of the imagery, for example, the young person is presenting as suicidal or self-harming

If none of the above apply then the 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).

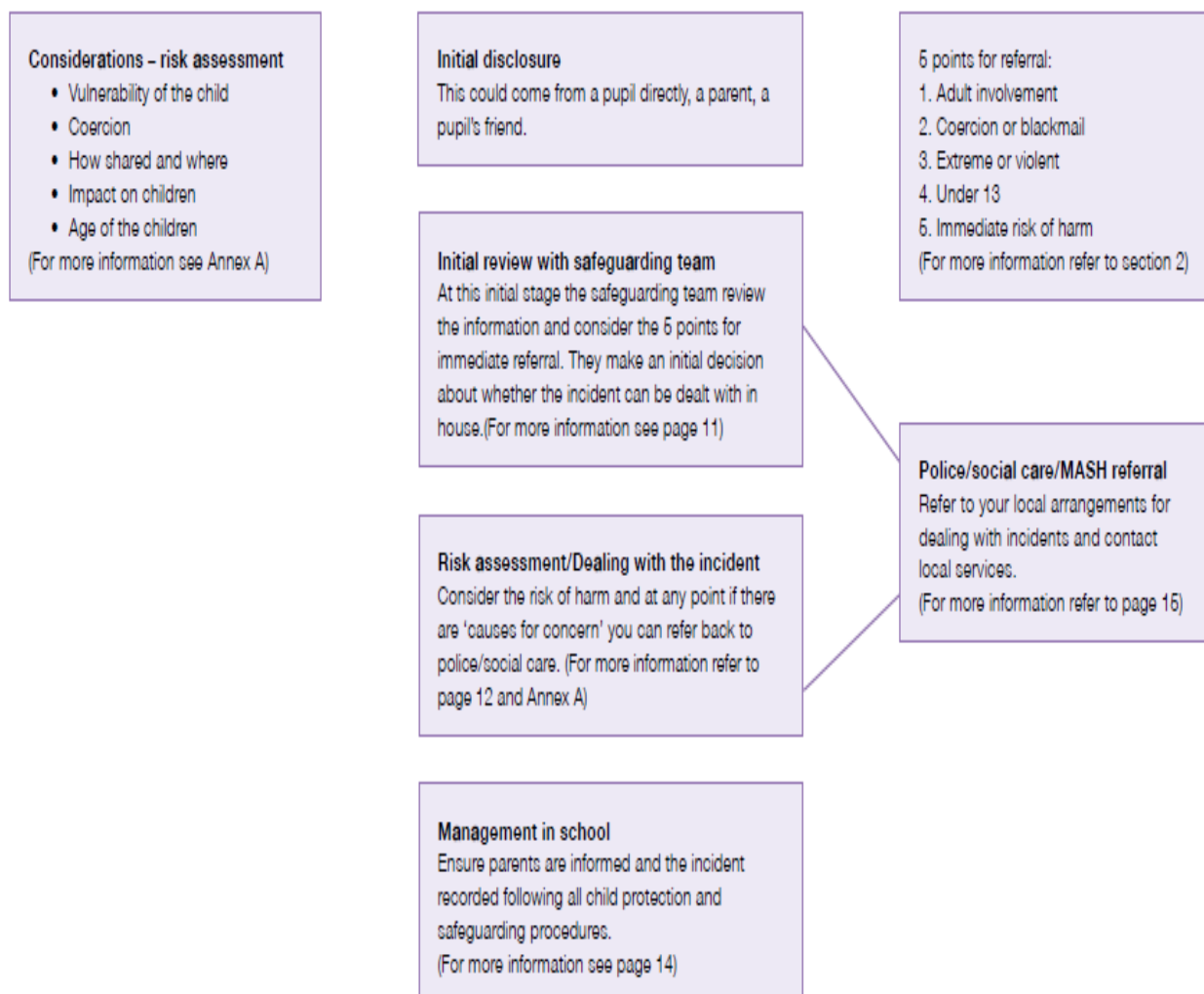
The decision to respond to the incident without involving the police or children's social care would be made in cases when the DSL is confident that they have enough information to assess the risks to students involved and the risks can be managed within the school's pastoral support and disciplinary framework, and if appropriate, local network of support.

The decision will be in line with the school's child protection procedures and based on consideration of the best interests of the young people involved. This will take into account proportionality as well as the welfare and protection of the young people. The decision will be reviewed throughout the process of responding to the incident.

If a young person has shared imagery consensually, such as when in a romantic relationship, or as a joke, and there is no intended malice, it is usually appropriate for the school to manage the incident directly. In contrast any incidents with aggravating factors, for example, a young person sharing someone else’s imagery without consent and with malicious intent, will generally be referred to police and/or children’s social care.

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

Flowchart for responding to incidents



E - SAFETY

Most of our students will use mobile phones and computers at some time. However, we know that some adults will use these technologies to harm children. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails, to enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, webcam photography or face-to-face meetings. The school’s e-safety policy explains how we try to keep students safe in school. Cyber-bullying by students, via texts and emails, will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures.

Our E-safety coordinator is Mr Jason Cartlidge.

Chatrooms and social networking sites are the more obvious sources of inappropriate and harmful behaviour and students are not allowed to access these sites in school. Some students will undoubtedly be 'chatting' on mobiles or social networking sites at home. The Student Planner contains child friendly E- Safety information to help parents and students understand the possible risks and how to stay safe when on line.

Further information is contained within the e-safety policy.

Photography and Images

The vast majority of people who take or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely innocent, understandable and acceptable reasons. Sadly, some people abuse children through taking or using images.

To protect students we will:

- Seek parental consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications)
- Ensure students are appropriately dressed
- Encourage students to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them
- Include safeguarding across the curriculum, including PSHE, opportunities which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm and to know to whom they should turn for help.
- Ensure all staff are aware of school guidance for their use of mobile phones.

Working with Parents

If we become aware that a child may be accessing materials inappropriate to their age, (for example, Facebook;) sending inappropriate e-mails, texts or images; or playing on games that are unsuitable (for example, games which have an 18 certificate;) we will contact parents to discuss our concerns and to raise parents awareness about the potential risk to their children.

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (for example food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts, money or in some cases simply affection) as a result of engaging in sexual activities. Sexual exploitation can take many forms ranging from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for affection or gifts, to serious organised crime by gangs and groups.

What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power in the relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim which increases as the exploitative relationship develops. Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying including cyberbullying and grooming. However, it also important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse.

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.

- Underage sexual activity
- Inappropriate sexual or sexualised behaviour
- Sexually risky behaviour, 'swapping' sex
- 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 phone
- 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 record
- Involved in gangs, gang fights, gang membership
- Injuries from physical assault, physical restraint, sexual assault.

See LSCB procedure – www.safeguardingchildren.stoke.gov.uk - procedures

CHILDREN DISPLAYING SEXUALLY HARMFUL BEHAVIOUR

The management of children displaying sexually harmful behaviour is complex and the school will work with other relevant agencies to maintain the safety of the whole school community. Children and young people who display such behaviour may be victims of abuse themselves and the child protection procedures will be followed for both victim and perpetrator.

See LSCB procedure – www.safeguardingchildren.stoke.gov.uk – procedures

SO-CALLED HONOUR BASED VIOLENCE

So-called 'honour-based' violence (HBV) 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 HBV 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 HBV, or already having suffered HBV.

Indicators

There are a range of potential indicators that a child may be at risk of HBV. Guidance on the warning signs that FGM or forced marriage may be about to take place, or may have already taken place, can be found on pages 38-41 of the Multi agency statutory guidance on FGM (pages 59-61 focus on the role of schools and colleges) and pages 13-14 of the Multi-agency guidelines: Handling case of forced marriage.

Actions

If staff have a concern regarding a child that might be at risk of HBV they should report this to the DSL (Mrs Stubbs) or the Assistant DSLs (Mrs Staton/Miss Whitmore)

CHART OF POTENTIAL WARNING SIGNS OR INDICATORS

| | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| These indicators are not intended to be an exhaustive list. | | | |
| EDUCATION | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence and persistent absence. • Request for extended leave of absence and failure to return from visits to country of origin. • Fear about forthcoming school holidays | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveillance by siblings or cousins at school. • Decline in behaviour, engagement, performance or punctuality. • Poor exam results. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being withdrawn from school by those with parental responsibility. • Removal from a day centre of a person with a physical or learning disability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not allowed to attend extra-curricular activities • Sudden announcement of engagement to a stranger • Prevented from going on to further/higher education |

FORCED MARRIAGE

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. Disclosures may come from younger siblings, from friends or from the child themselves.

Children should be given the opportunity to talk but staff should never attempt to intervene directly with the family. Any concerns should be passed without delay to the DSL.

See LSCB procedure – www.safeguardingchildren.stoke.gov.uk – procedures

FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM)

Female Genital Mutilation involves procedures that intentionally, permanently alter/injure the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It is illegal in this country.

All staff must be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon **teachers** along with regulated health and social care professionals in England and Wales, to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining students, but the same definition of what is meant by “to discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out” is used for all professionals to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies.

Signs that may indicate FGM is planned:

- 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 (examples include Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Sierra Leon, Egypt, Nigeria, Eritrea as well as non-African communities 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
- Child talks about a big celebration in this country

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

See LSCB procedure – www.safeguardingchildren.stoke.gov.uk - procedures

RADICALISATION AND EXTREMISM

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, places a duty upon schools and other agencies to have due regard to preventing people from being drawn into terrorism (“the Prevent Duty”).

The current threat from terrorism in the United Kingdom may include the exploitation of vulnerable people, to involve them in terrorism or in activity in support of terrorism. The normalisation of extreme views may also make children and young people vulnerable to future manipulation and exploitation. Schools within our collegiate are clear that this exploitation and radicalisation should be viewed as a safeguarding concern.

All staff should be fully engaged in being vigilant about radicalisation; they should overcome professional disbelief that such issues will not happen here and ensure that we work alongside other professional bodies and agencies to ensure that our students are safe from harm.

We emphasise that there is no place for extremist views of any kind in our school, whether from internal sources – students, staff or governors, or external sources - school community, external agencies or individuals.

Radicalisation is defined as the act or process of making a person more radical or favouring of extreme or fundamental changes in political, economic or social conditions, institutions or habits of the mind.

There are a number of behaviours which may indicate a child is at risk of being radicalised or exposed to extreme views. These include:

- Spending increasing time in the company of other suspected extremists.
- Changing their style of dress or personal appearance to accord with the group.
- Day-to-day behaviour becoming increasingly centred on an extremist ideology, group or cause.
- Loss of interest in other friends and activities not associated with the extremist ideology, group or cause.
- Possession of materials or symbols associated with an extremist cause.
- Attempts to recruit others to the group/cause.
- Communications with others that suggests identification with a group, cause or ideology.
- Using insulting to derogatory names for another group.
- Increase in prejudice-related incidents committed by that person – these may include;
 - Physical or verbal assault
 - Provocative behaviour
 - Damage to property
 - Derogatory name calling
- Possession of prejudice-related materials
- Prejudice related ridicule or name calling
- Inappropriate forms of address
- Refusal to co-operate
- Attempts to recruit to prejudice-related organisations
- Condoning or supporting violence towards others.

The role of the curriculum in preventing Radicalisation and Extremism

Our curriculum is broad and balanced, promoting respect, tolerance and diversity. Children are encouraged to share their views and recognise that they are entitled to have their own different beliefs which should not be used to influence others.

Our PSHE provision is embedded across the curriculum and we strive to equip our students with confidence, self-belief, respect and tolerance as well as setting high standards and expectations for themselves. We actively promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our students, in line with Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC in Schools DfE 2014

If staff become aware that a child is vulnerable to being radicalised or exposed to extreme views, (including peer pressure, influence from other people or the internet, bullying, crime and anti-social behaviour, family tensions, race/hate crime, lack of self-esteem or identity, prejudicial behaviour and personal or political grievances;) this will be reported directly to the DSL.

The DSL will liaise with other appropriate agencies, and make referrals directly to the police if deemed necessary, at prevent@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk

CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION (CME)

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. St Thomas More Catholic Academy will follow the school's procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

The school will inform the local authority of any student who is going to be removed from the admission register where the student:

- has been taken out of school by their parents and the school has received written notification from the parent they are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education;
- has ceased to attend school and no longer lives within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- has been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age;
- are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- have been permanently excluded.

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

Dealing with Disclosures

It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose that they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual, their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell, they may have lost all trust in adults, or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault.

If a child talks to you about any risks to their safety or wellbeing you will need to let them know that you must pass the information on – you are not allowed to keep secrets. The point at which you do this is a matter for professional judgement. If you jump in immediately the child may think that you do not want to listen, if you leave it until the very end of the conversation, they may feel that you have misled them into revealing more than they would have otherwise.

Remember that the child is likely to have chosen **you** to disclose to for a reason.

During your conversation with the student:-

- Allow them to speak freely
- Remain calm and do not over react – the student may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting or shocking you
- Give reassuring nods or words of comfort – ‘I want to help’, ‘This isn’t your fault’, ‘You are doing the right thing in talking to me’.
- Do not be afraid of silences – remember how hard this must be for the child
- Under no circumstances ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings too, or what does the student’s mother think about all this
- You may, if necessary ask open questions – (TED Questions – see below)
- At an appropriate time, tell the student that in order to help them you must pass the information on.
- Avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing earlier. Saying ‘I do wish you had told me about this when it started’ or ‘I can’t believe what I’m hearing’ may be your way of being supportive but the child may interpret it that they have done something wrong
- Tell the child what will happen next. They may wish to go with you to see the designated person. However, they should not be required to repeat their disclosure to other school staff, as this in itself can be distressing.
- Make the decision as to whether a child should return to class, spend some time out - what would the child prefer?
- Report verbally to the DSL (or in their absence, the deputy DSL)
- Record your conversation as soon as possible, on a Record of Concern Form – an example can be found at Appendix 6.
- Seek support if you feel distressed.

Dealing with Concerns

It may be that you don’t have a disclosure from a child, but you are concerned. Concerns may come from something you see or hear - from the child, their family members, from professionals or from others.

If you have a concern, no matter how small it may seem, you must pass the information onto your DSL (or Deputy DSL, in their absence) without delay.

- Your concern can be passed on verbally but must be recorded as soon as possible, on a record of concern form (Appendix 6.)
- Do not start your own investigation. You are not responsible for investigating but may need to ask open questions to ascertain more information
- Professional curiosity can be exercised by using “Ted Questions” (see below.)
- Share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family – information should be taken to the DSL without delay, and advice from them

TED Questions

Whilst you must not investigate, you may have to ask the child some questions to clarify what has happened. How you do this is important.

Do not ask leading questions, as answers from a child who was asked a leading question may not be able to be used as evidence in Court.

Ted Questions can be used with all ages, and are open questions that can help to ascertain what has happened. The information you pass on will therefore enable your DSL to make a decision as to whether an intervention is required.

- **Tell Me** – Tell me what happened
- **Explain** – Explain to me what happened next
- **Describe** – Describe what you saw /did / happened

Record keeping

Good record keeping is vital. Records should be factual, accurate, relevant, up to date and auditable. They should support monitoring, risk-assessment and planning for children and enable informed and timely decisions about any appropriate actions to be taken.

Sometimes a “one off” serious incident, concern or disclosure may occur and you will have no doubt that this must be immediately recorded and reported to the DSL, who will, without delay, refer to social care.

Most often however, it is the accumulation of a number of small incidents, events or observations that provide the evidence of harm being caused to a child.

It is vital therefore that any concern you have for a child’s welfare, however small, is recorded and passed to the DSL.

All concerns must be recorded on the Record of Concern form – This form is available in the staffroom, the Pastoral offices and in Mrs Stubbs’ office, and can be found at Appendix 6.

Record of Concern forms may be shared with others, for example at child protection conferences. In exceptional cases, they may be submitted as evidence in court proceedings or at a serious case review.

Records must be:-

- Legible
- Dated
- Signed
- Relevant
- Distinguishing between fact, allegation, observation and opinion
- Using straight forward language, avoiding jargon or abbreviations
- Using the child's own words wherever possible
- Written at the time of the concern
- Indicate what action you have taken
- Stored safely
- Kept confidential (ie – passed only to the DSL or Deputy, who will make the decision as to whether this information needs to be shared with another agency in order to protect the child)

Remember that other people might also be concerned about the child, and your record will help to build a bigger picture, so you should provide as much information as you can.

Referral to children's social care

The DSL or Deputy will make a referral to children's social care, if it is believed that a child is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm (Children's Act section 47;) or is a child in need (Children's Act section 17). They will use the Guide to Levels of Need to help them assess if this statutory threshold has been met (LSCB website).

In the absence of the DSL or Deputy DSL, if a child protection concern arises, someone else in school must make the referral and therefore information should be reported to a member of the senior leadership team or Mrs. A. Staton/Miss Whitemore. There should be no delays in making child protection referrals. **If the DSL and/or Deputy DSL are unavailable, any member of staff can report to the Safeguarding Referrals Team (SRT) on 01782 235100**

- To make a child protection referral, follow the flow chart at Appendix 7.
- If you need advice or support, contact your locality social worker.
- Telephone numbers can be found on page 1 of this document.

Notifying parents

The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a child with their parents. This must be handled sensitively and the DSL will make contact with the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure.

However, if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the situation, then advice will first be sought from social care.

Early Help

Where a concern does not meet the threshold for a referral into social care, the child and family may still benefit from co-ordinated support from more than one agency (for example education, health, housing etc.)

In this case, the DSL, Early Help Champion or member of the Pastoral team should discuss with the family the possibility of an Early Help Assessment. This assessment should identify what help the child and family require in order to prevent issues escalating to a point where social care intervention is required.

The early help assessment should be undertaken by a lead professional - the professional who has the best relationship with the family, (a teacher, special educational needs co-ordinator, family support worker, health visitor, for example).

Confidentiality and sharing information

The Data Protection Act does not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child.

However, child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the child and staff involved but also to ensure that information being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

Staff should only discuss concerns with the DSL, Headteacher or chair of the Academy Committee (depending on who is the subject of the concern). That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

Child protection records may be exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. If any member of staff receives a request from a student or parent to see child protection records, they should refer the request to the Headteacher.

EXTENDED SCHOOL AND OFF - SITE ARRANGEMENTS

Where extended school activities are provided by and managed by the school, our own Safeguarding Policy and procedures apply. If other organisations provide services or activities on our site, we will check that they have appropriate procedures in place, including safer recruitment procedures.

SAFER RECRUITMENT

Our school has robust recruitment and vetting procedures, in line with statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016, to help prevent unsuitable people from working with children.

Our job advertisements and application packs make explicit reference to the school's commitment to safeguarding children, including compliance with disclosure and barring regulations and clear statements in the job description and person specification about the staff member's safeguarding responsibilities.

All staff members who have contact with children, young people and families will have appropriate pre-employment checks.

At least one member on every short listing and interview panel will have completed safer recruitment training.

We maintain a single central record of employment checks which is accurate and up to date.

MANAGING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF

Our school takes seriously all allegations of abuse made against staff members, including volunteers, and will investigate them in line with the statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016 and LSCB procedure – Managing Allegations against Staff and Volunteers working with Children and Young People.

The procedure applies to all adults working in the school or providing a service in or on behalf of the school to our students, either within or outside school premises. The allegations management procedure will be used in all cases where it is alleged that a staff member has:-

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child; or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates that they would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children.

Allegations may arise in a number of ways, for example a report from a child, a complaint from a parent, or a concern raised by another adult within the school. An allegation may arise regarding someone's behaviour or actions within their job, within a voluntary activity, within their family or with regards to their private life. If an allegation or concern arises about a staff member outside of their work with children, and this may present a risk to children for whom the staff member is responsible, the principles within this policy still apply. Therefore, all school staff should take care not to place themselves in vulnerable situations with a child.

- All Staff should be aware of the school's own Behaviour for Learning policy.
- All staff must adhere to the 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
- Anyone who has concerns about, or has received an allegation about, the behaviour of a staff member must report the concerns immediately to the Headteacher. In the absence of the Headteacher, or if the Headteacher is the subject of the allegation, concerns must be reported to the Chair of the Academy Trust. If both the Headteacher and the Chair of the Academy Trust are unavailable, the allegation must be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

- The Headteacher (or Chair, if as above;) on all such occasions will discuss the content of the allegation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- If the allegation made to a member of staff concerns the Headteacher, the person receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Chair of the Academy Committee who will consult with the LADO, without notifying the Headteacher first.
- The person against whom the allegation has been made will be told at the earliest opportunity, following consultation with the LADO.
- Suspension of a member of staff is not automatic, and will only be considered as a last resort. The Headteacher will seek the advice of the LADO and Personnel Consultant in making this decision.
- The school will follow the guidance, as stated in 'Working Together To Safeguard Children (2015: updated February 2017)':
 - *"Employers have a duty of care to their employees. They should ensure they provide effective support for anyone facing an allegation and provide the employee with a named contact if they are suspended. It is essential that any allegation of abuse made against a teacher or other member of staff or volunteer in a school or college is dealt with very quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the child and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation."*
 - *"Employers have a duty of care to their employees. They should act to manage and minimise the stress inherent in the allegations process. Support for the individual is vital to fulfilling this duty. Individuals should be informed of concerns or allegations as soon as possible and given an explanation of the likely course of action, unless there is an objection by the children's social care services or the police. The individual should be advised to contact their trade union representative, if they have one, or a colleague for support. They should also be given access to welfare counselling or medical advice where this is provided by the employer."*
- A nominated link person will liaise with the person against whom the allegation has been made, and appropriate support be made available.
- In the event of an allegation against the Headteacher, the decision to suspend will be made by the Board of Directors and Chair of the Academy Committee with advice from the LADO.
- The LADO will coordinate and have over-sight of individual cases to ensure that cases are dealt with in a thorough, fair, consistent and timely manner.
- In the event that a member of staff is dismissed because of the way they have behaved towards a child, a referral will be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- From May 2016 all referrals to LADO will go through the Safeguarding Referral Team (SRT) on 235100

- Please refer to “**Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Board: PROCEDURES FOR CHILDREN IN SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES MANAGING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (LADO)**”
http://webapps.stoke.gov.uk/uploadedfiles/D01_LADO_Procedure_June_2016.pdf

CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING (WHISTLE BLOWING)

The school adheres to the local authority Confidential Reporting policy and procedure.

This policy is designed to cover concerns that staff have about the conduct of individuals in a position of trust within the organisation which could be detrimental to the safety or wellbeing of children and young people and where staff, for whatever reason feel unable to raise them under the organisations procedures around dealing with such allegation.

Confidential Reporting policy includes, but is not confined to:-

- Unprofessional behaviour
- Bullying or humiliation by staff
- Any form of abuse (physical, sexual emotional or neglect)
- Serious breaches of the school’s code of conduct
- Personal contact with children which is contrary to the organisation’s policies and codes of conduct.
- Any form of racial abuse
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour
- Knowledge about individual’s personal circumstances which may indicate they could pose a risk to children.
- Practice that falls short of normally accepted standards

DISQUALIFICATION UNDER THE CHILDCARE ACT 2006

The Department for Education (DfE) issued statutory guidance in 2015, detailing the requirement for childcare disqualification checks to be carried out on relevant staff working in schools. These checks arise from the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 and the Childcare Act 2006.

The Regulations prohibit anyone who is disqualified themselves under the Regulations, or who lives in the same household as a disqualified person, from working in a relevant setting, including in schools.

Who are relevant staff?

The following categories of staff in nursery, primary or secondary school settings are covered by the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009.

| | In School Hours | Outside School Hours * |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| Reception age or younger | Covered | Covered |
| Older than reception age until age 8 | Not Covered | Covered |

| | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| 8 years or older | Not Covered | Not Covered |
| * Outside school hours does not include extra-curricular activities e.g. choir or sports teams but does include breakfast clubs, lunchtime supervision or before/after school provision | | |

Who is not covered?

The following groups of staff are **not covered** by the guidance:

- Those who only provide education, childcare or supervised activity during school hours to children above reception age
- Those who provide child care or activities out of school hours to children aged 8 or over
- Those with no involvement in the management of relevant provision
- Staff in roles which do not provide childcare e.g. cleaners, caretakers, drivers, transport escorts, catering and office staff
- Staff employed in health care provision e.g. speech therapists, educational psychologists
- School Governors

Who is disqualified?

A person is disqualified if any of the following apply:-

- They have been cautioned for, or convicted of certain violent or sexual criminal offences against adults and any offences against children;
- They are the subject of an Order, direction or similar in respect of childcare, including orders made in respect of their own children
- That have had registration refused or cancelled in relation to childcare of children's homes or have been disqualified from private fostering;
- They live in the same household where another person who is disqualified lives or works (disqualification 'by association'). This means that the householder has an order, restriction, conviction, caution etc. set out in the Legislation; see below.

Disqualification by Association

School staff are disqualified from working in a school when they 'live or work in the same household' as someone who is barred from working with children or young people, even if they would not otherwise be disqualified. In such circumstances, the staff member must inform the Headteacher and provide the relevant details.

The Headteacher will seek advice from and if satisfied that an individual falls within the disqualification criteria, Ofsted (disqualification@ofsted.gov.uk) will be informed.

The staff member will be informed that Ofsted has been notified. The implications of disqualification will be explained.

Waiver of disqualification

Staff members may choose to apply to Ofsted for a waiver.

Whilst waiting for a waiver decision, the school may consider redeploying the staff member away from the relevant age group (with a risk assessment) to a temporary alternative job role or adjust their role.

Where this is not possible, paid leave or suspension should be used as a last resort whilst the waiver is considered.

If a member of staff chooses not to apply for a waiver or a waiver is declined, the school will need to consider whether permanent redeployment can be accommodated or whether dismissal is appropriate.

Schools within the collegiate will:-

- Ask for this information as part of applicants' pre-employment checks when appointing new staff.
- Ask existing staff whether anyone they live with is disqualified from working with children or young people.
- Possibly ask staff to complete and sign a declaration that they do not meet the 'disqualification by association' criteria
- Seek advice and from HR, if we become aware that a member of staff lives in a household with a disqualified person
- Discuss and explain the options above with the individual.
- Inform Ofsted within 14 days

Further information can be found at:-

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/528473/Disqualification_under_the_childcare_act_June2016.pdf

APPENDIX 1 – Designated Safeguarding Leads Responsibilities

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and/or deputies) are responsible for:-

- Ensuring that children receive the right help and support at the right time. Where concerns do not meet the threshold for social care intervention, Early Help will be offered in an attempt to prevent concerns from escalating.
- Acting as the first point of contact for staff to discuss concerns.
- Referring a child, if there are concerns about possible abuse or neglect, to the Local Authority
- Keeping written records of concerns about a child even if there is no need to make an immediate referral
- Ensuring that all such records are kept confidentially and securely and are separate from student records, until the child's 25th birthday, and are copied on to the child's next school or college.
- Ensuring that an indication of the existence of the additional file in above is marked on the student records.
- Liaising with other agencies and professionals.
- Ensuring that either they or an appropriate staff member attend child protection conferences, core groups, early help meetings, or other multi-agency planning meetings, contribute to assessments, and provide a report which has been shared with the parents.
- Ensuring that any child currently with a child protection plan who is absent in the educational setting without explanation for two days is referred to their social worker's Social Care Team.
- Organising child protection induction for new staff and volunteers, and update training every 3 years, for all school staff.
- Keep a record of staff attendance at child protection training
- Providing, with the Headteacher, an annual report for the governing body, detailing any changes to the policy and procedures; training undertaken by the DSL, and by all staff and governors; number and type of incidents/cases, and number of children on the child protection register (anonymised)
- Ensures that all staff sign to indicate that they have read and understood the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and the Staff Code of Conduct
- Ensures that the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is updated annually
- Liaise with the nominated academy representative and Headteacher (where the role is not carried out by the Headteacher) as appropriate

APPENDIX 2 - Directors & Academy Representatives Responsibilities

The Directors and Academy Representatives ensure that the school has:

- A DSL for child protection (and deputy) who is a member of the senior leadership team and who has undertaken training in inter-agency working, in addition to basic child protection training, regularly
- A Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and procedures that are consistent with LSCB requirements, reviewed annually and made available to parents on request
- Procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against members of staff including allegations made against the Headteacher, in line with LSCB procedure – Managing Allegations Against Adults Working with Children and Young People.
- Safer recruitment procedures that include the requirement for appropriate checks
- A Whistle Blowing Policy that all staff are familiar with
- A Staff Code of Conduct (in line with Safer Working Practices for Adults Working with Children and Young People; LSCB)
- A training strategy that ensures all staff, including the Headteacher, receive child protection training, with refresher training at three-yearly intervals. The DSL should receive safeguarding training at two-yearly intervals
- Arrangements to ensure that all temporary staff and volunteers are made aware of the school's arrangements for child protection.
- The Academy Representatives nominate a member (normally the chair) to be responsible for liaising with the local authority and other agencies in the event of an allegation being made against the Headteacher.

The Headteacher will:-

- Ensure that the Safeguarding Policy and procedures and the staff Code of Conduct are implemented and followed by all staff
- Allocate sufficient time and resources to enable the DSL and deputies to carry out their roles effectively, including the assessment of students and attendance at strategy discussions and other necessary meetings
- Ensure that all staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with the whistleblowing procedures
- Ensure that students' safety and welfare is addressed through the curriculum.
- Ensure that children are offered the right help at the right time, including "Early Help" where concerns do not meet the threshold for social care intervention.
- Ensure that staff are adequately supported to deal with safeguarding concerns.
- Ensure that staff who are the subject of an allegation are afforded adequate support.

APPENDIX 4 – Induction, Training and Development

All new members of staff, including newly-qualified teachers and teaching assistants, will be given induction that includes basic child protection training on how to recognise signs of abuse, how to respond to any concerns, e-safety and familiarisation with the child protection policy and other related policies.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputies will undergo updated LSCB approved child protection training every two years.

All staff members of the school and appropriate academy representatives will undergo LSCB approved child protection training (whole-school training) every three years.

Staff members who miss the whole-school training will be required to undertake other relevant training to make up for it, e.g. by joining another school's whole-school training or an LSCB open session.

We will ensure that staff members provided by other agencies and third parties, e.g. supply teachers, have received appropriate child protection training commensurate with their roles before starting work. They will be given the opportunity to take part in whole-school training if it takes place during their period of work for the school. They will also receive the school's Visiting Staff Leaflet (appendix 5)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will provide an annual briefing to the school on any changes to child protection legislation and procedures and relevant learning from local and national serious case reviews.

The school will maintain accurate records of staff induction and training.

It is important that all staff have training to enable them to:-

- identify when "Early Help" is an appropriate intervention
- recognise the possible signs of abuse and neglect
- know how to deal with a disclosure
- understand how to exercise professional curiosity
- know what to do if they have a concern
- know how to make a referral

APPENDIX 5 – Visiting Staff

Visiting staff child protection information leaflet

WELCOME TO: St Thomas More Catholic Academy

School Statement

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all students. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children received effective support, protection and justice. While working in our school we expect you to take care of our students and follow our procedures.

Key facts about child abuse

Abuse and neglect can happen to any child, boy or girl, of any race, culture, ethnicity or sexuality. Disabled children and children with SEN are particularly vulnerable.

Many children are unable to disclose what is happening to them and rely on us to interpret their behaviour and spot signs of abuse.

A student may:

- Have a bruise, burn or injury that seems suspicious
- Show signs of pain or discomfort
- Be unnaturally passive or withdrawn
- Be unpredictable and challenging
- Seem anxious, fearful or distressed
- Provide an unlikely explanation for their injury or their behaviour

If you are concerned for a child's health, welfare or safety in any way you must speak to the designated safeguarding lead, (DSL) Mrs Stubbs or (Deputy DSLs) Miss Whitmore or Mrs Staton, or a senior member of staff before you leave the school site.

Do not question the student or try to secure evidence. Your responsibility is to report your concern, not to investigate.

If a student tells you something that suggests they are at risk or harm, allow them to tell you as much as they wish and let them know that you must pass the information on to the DSL/DCPO.

If you become concerned about a student's immediate safety, notify the nearest member of staff and tell them why you are concerned.

If you have any questions or wish to see our Child Protection And Safeguarding Policy, please contact the DSL, Mrs Stubbs or Deputy DSLs Miss Whitmore or Mrs Staton.

Any adult concerned about an allegation of abuse by a member of staff should speak to the Headteacher.

Managing Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers

This guidance applies to when there is an allegation or concern that any person who works with children, in connection with their employment, voluntary or personal activity, 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 are unsuitable to work with children.

Please refer to “Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Board: PROCEDURES FOR CHILDREN IN SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES MANAGING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (LADO)”.

http://webapps.stoke.gov.uk/uploadedfiles/D01_LADO_Procedure_June_2016.pdf

The Designated Safeguarding Lead for Child Protection is Mrs J Stubbs

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads for Child Protection are Mrs Staton and Miss Whitmore

Safeguarding environments

All organisations should be proactive in reducing the risk of child abuse taking place within their services by promoting an environment that safeguards children. A safeguarding environment is one where:

- Children and staff can express their concerns; where staff/volunteers are encouraged to challenge poor practice constructively; and where ‘whistle blowing’ procedures can be engaged without fear.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures are accessible to all and there is access to skilled advice, both internal and external to the organisation.
- Large organisations may have access or input from human resources professionals to assist in developing their internal procedures, policies and practices relating to safeguarding children and young people. This human resources professional can also be used to advise the named senior officer when an allegation is made against an adult.
- There are safe recruitment and effective termination of employment practices.
- All staff/volunteers receive appropriate training in child protection - signs, symptoms and referral procedures, which includes how to recognise and respond to allegations against staff.
- Staff/volunteers understand what constitutes safe practice. (This can be supported by a code of practice to guide the work that is relevant to the particular agency/organisation, see Guidance on Safer Working Practices.) In particular, they are aware of behaviours that are likely to result in criminal, child protection or disciplinary action.
- Concerns expressed by staff/volunteers are taken seriously and responded to at the earliest stage.
- Risk assessments following allegations are undertaken to reduce the likelihood of repetition.

Staff should also ensure that they avoid any situation which could leave them exposed to a false allegation made by a student or young person.

APPENDIX 6 – Record of Concern Form



Record of Concern

| | | | | | |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|---|------------------------------|--|
| Family name of child/young person | | First name(s) | | Alias / also known as | |
| Nature of concern (Brief outline, record in detail below) | | Date that concern was raised | | | |
| | | Time that concern was raised | | | |
| Name of person raising concern | | | Relationship to child/young person | | |
| Who have you passed this information to? | | | On what date and time? | | |
| <p>Detail of concern (Please include as much detailed information in this section as possible. Remember - the quality of your information will inform the level of intervention initiated.)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Remember to sign this form over the page.....</p> | | | | | |

[Empty rectangular box for notes or details]

Action Taken:

[Empty rectangular box for describing actions taken]

| | | | | | |
|----------------------------|--|-------------|--|-------------|--|
| Signature of person | | Date | | Time | |
|----------------------------|--|-------------|--|-------------|--|

APPENDIX 7

If you are concerned about the welfare of a child...



Discuss with your Designated Safeguarding Lead

If your DSL and deputies are absent, go to next box.



It is clear that these concerns meet the threshold for a safeguarding referral into Social care?

NO

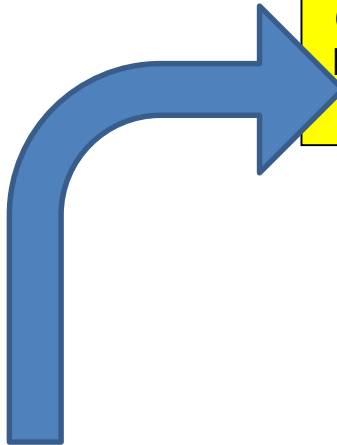


Contact the locality social worker for support/advice on thresholds and levels of need



Concerns meet the threshold to refer into social care?

YES



Contact Safeguarding Referral Team – 01782 235100



Make telephone referral



Confirm referral by submitting MARF



NO

Locality social worker will help you to identify services to support families who do not meet the threshold for a social care referral, but who may benefit from some additional support – Early Help

