

St John Vianney Catholic Primary School



Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

In line with

'Keeping Children Safe in Education' document

September 2021



Introduction

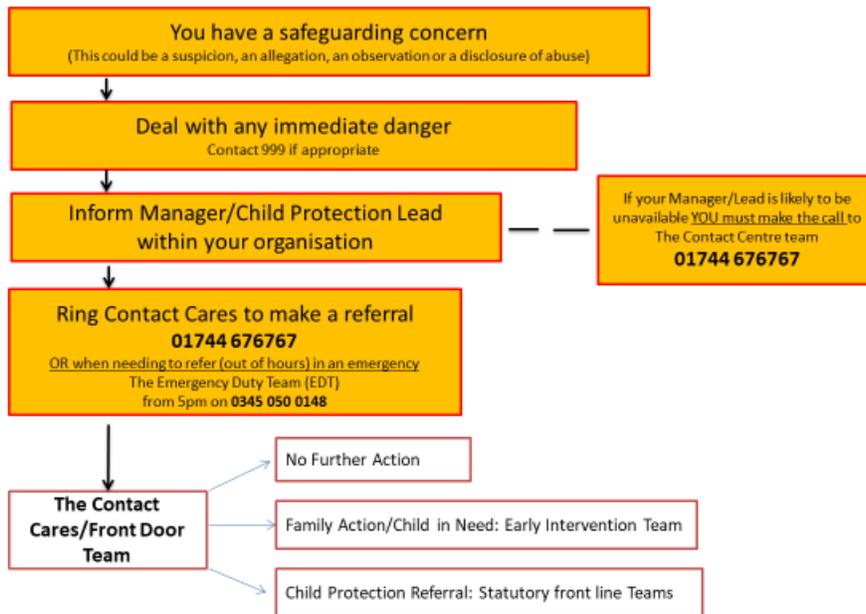
- 1.1 This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004; the Education Act 2002, and in line with government publications: 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' July 2018, 'What to do if You are Worried a Child is being abused' March 2015. The guidance also reflects, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' Sept 2021.
- 1.2 This policy should also be read in conjunction with St Helens' Threshold of Need Document/Procedure and St Helens' Escalation Policy.
 - 1.2.1 The Governing body takes seriously its responsibility under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 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.
- 1.3 We recognise that all adults, including temporary staff¹, volunteers and governors, have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm, and that the child's welfare is our paramount concern.
- 1.4 All staff believe that our school should provide a caring, positive safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child.
- 1.5 The aims of this policy are:
 - 1.5.1 To support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence.
 - 1.5.2 To provide an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued and respected, and feel confident, and know how to approach adults if they are in difficulties, believing they will be effectively listened to.
 - 1.5.3 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 possible cases of abuse. Staff training will be given yearly. (Reference Appendices 1 and 2).
 - 1.5.4 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.
 - 1.5.5 To emphasise the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff.
 - 1.5.6 To develop a structured procedure within the school which will be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse.
 - 1.5.7 To develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, especially the Police, Health and Social Care.
 - 1.5.8 To ensure that all staff working within our school who have substantial access to children have been checked as to their suitability, including verification of their identity, qualifications, and a satisfactory DBS check (according to guidance)², and a central record is kept to audit.

¹ Wherever the word "staff" is used, it covers ALL staff on site, including ancillary supply and self-employed staff, contractors, volunteers working with children etc, and governors

² Guidance regarding DBS checks recently updated by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements

St. Helens process for reporting concerns about children (Under 18)



Safeguarding Children Partnership Website:

<https://sthelenssafeguarding.org.uk/scp>



Important Contacts...

The Contact Cares/Front Door - **01744 676767**

EDT Emergency Duty Team ~ **0345 050 0148**

LADO –Line Manager/ Lead professional (Individual agencies)

01744 671252

Safeguarding Website- <https://sthelenssafeguarding.org.uk/scp>

NSPCC Helpline Free Text Message Number: **88858**

2.0 Safe School, Safe Staff

2.1 We will ensure that:

- 2.1.1 All members of the governing body understand and fulfil their responsibilities, namely to ensure that:
- there is a Safeguarding & Child Protection policy
 - the school is COVID-19 compliant and has an up-to-date risk assessment
 - the school operates safer recruitment procedures by ensuring that there is at least one person on every recruitment panel that has completed Safer Recruitment training
 - the school has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff and volunteers and to make a referral to the DBS if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns, or would have had they not resigned
 - a senior leader has Lead Designated Child Protection Officer (DCPO) responsibility
 - on appointment, the DCPOs undertake interagency training and also undertake DCPO 'new to role' and an 'update' course every 2 years
 - all other staff have Safeguarding training updated as appropriate
 - any weaknesses in Child Protection are remedied immediately
 - a member of the Governing Body is, usually the Chair, is nominated to liaise with the LA on Child Protection issues and in the event of an allegation of abuse made against the Head teacher
 - Safeguarding & Child Protection policies and procedures are reviewed annually and that the Safeguarding & Child Protection policy is available on the school website or by other means
 - The Governing Body considers how children may be taught about safeguarding. This may be part of a broad and balanced curriculum covering relevant issues through personal social health and economic education (PSHE) R.E. and through Relationships and Sex education (RSE)
- 2.1.2 The Lead DCPO, Mrs Anne-Louise Friar, is the Headteacher.
The Deputy DCPO is Mrs Julia Percy, the Deputy Headteacher.
The Operational Safeguarding Person is Mrs Philippa Crosby (EYFS Leader and class teacher).
The Pastoral Safeguarding Person is Mrs Michelle Clisby (Pastoral Leader).
These Officers have undertaken the relevant training and new staff members, upon appointment will undertake 'DCPO new to role' training followed by biannual updates.
- 2.1.3 The DCPO's who are involved in recruitment and at least one member of the governing body will also complete safer recruitment training, to be renewed every 3 years.
- 2.1.4 All members of staff and volunteers are provided with child protection awareness information at induction, including in their arrival pack, the school safeguarding policy, so that they know who to discuss a concern with.
- 2.1.5 All members of staff are trained in and receive regular updates in e-safety and reporting concerns.
- 2.1.6 All other staff and governors, have child protection awareness training, updated by the DCPO annually, to maintain their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse.
- 2.1.7 All members of staff, volunteers and governors know how to respond to a pupil who discloses abuse
- 2.1.8 All parents/carers are made aware of the responsibilities of staff members with regard to child protection procedures through publication of the school's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- 2.1.9 Our lettings policy will seek to ensure the suitability of adults working with children on school sites at any time.
- 2.1.10 Community users organising activities for children are aware of the school's child protection guidelines and procedures.

- 2.1.11 We will ensure that child protection type concerns or allegations against adults working in the school are referred to the LADO³ for advice, and that any member of staff found not suitable to work with children will be notified to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)⁴ for consideration for barring following resignation, dismissal, or when we cease to use their service as a result of a substantiated allegation, in the case of a volunteer.
- 2.2 Our procedures will be regularly reviewed and updated.
- 2.3 The name of the designated members of staff for Child Protection, the Designated Child Protection Officers, will be clearly visible in the school, with a statement explaining the school's role in referring and monitoring cases of suspected abuse.
- 2.4 All new members of staff will be given a copy of our safeguarding & child protection policy, with the DCPOs' names clearly displayed, as part of their induction.
- 2.5 The policy is available publicly whether on the school website or by other means. Parents/carers are made aware of this policy and their entitlement to have a copy of it via the school office/ newsletter / website.

³ LADO Local Authority Designated Officer for allegations against staff. AEO Area Education Officer

⁴ Contact the LADO for guidance in any case

3.0 Responsibilities

- 3.1 The designated DCPOs are responsible for:
 - 3.1.1 Referring a child if there are concerns about possible abuse, to the *Local Authority*, and acting as a focal point for staff to discuss concerns. Referrals should be made in writing using a professional referral form, following a telephone call to the Children's Duty Service.
 - 3.1.2 Keeping written records of concerns about a child even if there is no need to make an immediate referral.
 - 3.1.3 Ensuring that all such records are kept confidentially and securely and are separate from pupil records, until the child's 25th birthday, and are copied on to the child's next school or college.
 - 3.1.4 Ensure that a record is kept and witnessed of the disposal of individual's records.
 - 3.1.5 Children looked after records must be retained for 99 years.
 - 3.1.6 Liaising with other agencies and professionals.
 - 3.1.7 Ensuring that either they or the staff member attend case conferences, core groups, or other multi-agency planning meetings, contribute to assessments, and provide a report which has been shared with the parents.
 - 3.1.8 Ensuring that any pupil currently on a child protection plan who is absent in the educational setting without explanation is referred to their key worker's Social Care Team.
 - 3.1.9 Organising child protection induction, and update training every year, for all school staff.
 - 3.1.10 Providing, with the Headteacher, an annual report for the governing body, detailing any changes to the policy and procedures; training undertaken by the DCPO, and by all staff and governors; number and type of incidents/cases, and number of children on the child protection register (anonymised)⁵.

4.0 Supporting Children

- 4.1 We recognise that a child who is abused or witnesses violence may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame themselves, and find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self-worth.
- 4.2 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. All children are regularly informed about who they can turn to for help and/or to confidentially report abuse, safe in the knowledge that they will be taken seriously and can express their views and be reassured in a safe environment.
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 Our school will support all children by:
 - 4.4.1 Encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness, through the curriculum as well as our relationships, whilst not condoning aggression or bullying.
 - 4.4.2 Promoting a caring, safe and positive environment within the school.
 - 4.4.3 Liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children.

⁵ A model format for the Governors Annual Report is available from St Helens Governor Services

4.4.4 The School will consider the need for an Early Help Assessment⁶ (EHA) when it is identified that there are low level concerns or emerging needs. This process provides a way of recording support and interventions that have been provided by the school to the child / young person and also supports a referral for additional support that may be needed from more targeted services where a single agency has been unable to meet that need. An EHA can be arranged to ensure that a multi-agency action plan can be developed. It is important that the child and parent's voice are captured as part of this assessment and that they take ownership of the plan. This plan should be regularly reviewed normally up to 4 to 6 weeks until outcomes are achieved.

4.4.5 If at any point during the EHA process risk increases and the school becomes concerned that the child is or is likely to suffer significant harm then a referral will be made to Children's Social Care.

4.4.6 Notifying Social Care as soon as there is a significant concern.

4.4.7 Providing continuing support to a child about whom there have been concerns who leaves the school by ensuring that appropriate information is copied under confidential cover to the child's new setting and ensuring the school medical records are forwarded as a matter of priority.

4.4.8 **Operation Encompass** is an initiative in which Merseyside Police pledge to inform schools the very next day via a dedicated Safeguarding email if one of their pupils has experienced a domestic incident in their home the night before. By sharing information between the police and the schools, the authorities are able to provide greater emotional support to children aged 4 to 18 years who live and attend school in Merseyside. Every local authority in the county is part of the scheme together with Merseyside Police and key people in each school have been trained by officers from the force's family crime unit in how to record the police information and act on it. The named adults responsible at St John Vianney are Mrs Anne-Louise Friar, Mrs Julia Percy and Mrs Philippa Crosby. The aim is to give schools the information they need in order to look after that child's needs in the aftermath of what may be one of the most distressing things they will ever witness.

4.4.9 **Radicalisation.** All staff are made aware of new legislation in the yearly safeguarding training. Staff are guided to read part 1 of the Keeping Children Safe in Education document (September 2019) which informs of procedure in this area. In order for school to fulfil the Prevent duty, it is essential that staff are able to identify children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation, and know what to do when they are identified. Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation is seen as part of schools' wider safeguarding duty, and is similar in nature to protecting children from other harms (e.g. drugs, gangs, neglect, sexual exploitation), whether these come from within their family or are the product of outside influences. The Prevent duty builds on existing local partnership arrangements. For example the policies and procedures of Local Safeguarding Children Partnership Boards (SCPBs). The Prevent guidance refers to the importance of Prevent awareness training to equip staff to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas. Individual schools are best placed to assess the training needs of staff in the light of their assessment of the risk to pupils of being drawn into terrorism (i.e. high or low risk). School must ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in schools. School ensures that suitable filtering is in place.

4.4.10 Peer on Peer Abuse. Please see Appendix 3 for full peer on peer abuse policy.

⁶ The Early Help Assessment is St Helens' response to the statutory duty to cooperate (Children Act 2004) and it replaces the CAF process.

5.0 Confidentiality

- 5.1 We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential.
- 5.2 The Head teacher of DCPOs will disclose any information about a child to other members of staff on a need to know basis only.⁷
- 5.3 All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.
- 5.4 All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or wellbeing.
- 5.5 We will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to Social Care with their parents / carers unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm, or impede a criminal investigation.

6.0 Supporting Staff

- 6.1 We recognise that staff working in the school who have become involved with a child who has suffered harm, or appears to be likely to suffer harm may find the situation stressful and upsetting.
- 6.2 We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the DCPOs and to seek further support as appropriate.

7.0 Allegations against staff

⁷ Guidance about sharing information, can be found in the DfE booklet 'Information sharing guidance for practitioners and managers' DCSF-00807-2008 (archived)

- 7.1 All school staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents to be conducted in view of other adults.
- 7.2 All staff should be aware of Guidance on Behaviour Issues, and our own Behaviour policy.
- 7.3 Guidance about conduct and safe practice, including safe use of mobile phones by staff and volunteers will be given at induction.⁸
- 7.4 We understand that a pupil may make an allegation against a member of staff.
- 7.5 If such an allegation is made, or information is received which suggests that a person may be unsuitable to work with children, the member of staff receiving the allegation or aware of the information, will immediately inform the Headteacher.⁹
- 7.6 The Headteacher on all such occasions will discuss the content of the allegation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- 7.7 If the allegation made to a member of staff concerns the Headteacher, the person receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Chair of Governors who will consult as in 7.6 above, without notifying the Headteacher first.
- 7.8 The school will follow St Helens procedures for managing allegations against staff. Under no circumstances will we send a child home, pending such an investigation, unless this advice is given exceptionally, as a result of a consultation with the LADO.
- 7.9 Suspension of the member of staff, excluding the Headteacher, against whom an allegation has been made, needs careful consideration, and the Headteacher will seek the advice of the LADO and Personnel Consultant in making this decision.
- 7.10 In the event of an allegation against the Headteacher, the decision to suspend will be made by the Chair of Governors with advice as in 7.8 above.

8.0 Whistle-blowing/ Confidential Reporting

- 8.1 We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.
- 8.2 All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of child protection, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues. If it becomes necessary to consult outside the school, they should speak in the first instance, to the Area Education Officer / LADO following the Whistleblowing Policy.
- 8.3 Whistleblowing re the Head teacher should be made to the Chair of the Governing Body whose contact details are readily available to staff (contact the main office).

9.0 Physical Intervention

- 9.1 We acknowledge that staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, when a child is endangering him/herself or others, and that at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person.
- 9.2 Such events should be recorded and signed by a witness.
- 9.3 Staff have been trained in the *Team Teach* technique and this is updated every 3 years.
- 9.4 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.
- 9.5 We recognise that touch is appropriate in the context of working with children, and all staff have been given 'Safe Practice' guidance to ensure they are clear about professional boundaries.¹⁰

10.0 Anti-Bullying

- 10.1 Our school policy on anti-bullying is set out within the school behaviour policy and acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures. This includes all forms e.g. cyber, racist, homophobic and gender related bullying. We keep a record of known bullying incidents. All staff are aware that children with SEND and / or differences/perceived differences are more susceptible to being bullied / victims of child abuse. We keep a record of bullying incidents. If the bullying is deemed a serious crime, the police will be contacted.¹¹

11.0 Racist Incidents

- 11.1 We acknowledges that repeated racist incidents or a single serious incident may lead to consideration under child protection procedures. We will keep a record of racist incidents.

⁸ Refer to "Guidance for Safe Working Practice for the Protection of Children and Staff in Education Settings" on DfE website

⁹ Or Chair of Governors in the event of an allegation against the Head teacher

¹⁰ Guidance on Safer Working Practices is available on the DfE website

¹¹ See NPCC Policy document at

<https://www.npcc.police.uk/documents/Children%20and%20Young%20people/When%20to%20call%20the%20police%20guidance%20for%20schools%20and%20colleges.pdf>

12.0 Prevention

- 12.1 We recognise that the school plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our children by providing children with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection.
- 12.2 The school community will therefore:
 - 12.2.1 Work to establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are always listened to.
 - 12.2.2 Include regular consultation with children e.g. through safety questionnaires, participation in anti-bullying week, asking children to report whether they have had happy/sad lunchtimes/playtimes.
 - 12.2.3 Ensure that all children know there is an adult in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.
 - 12.2.4 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. In particular this will include anti-bullying work, e-safety, road safety, pedestrian and cycle training. Also focused work in Year 6 to prepare for transition to secondary school and more personal safety/independent travel.
 - 12.2.5 Ensure all staff are aware of school guidance for their use of mobile technology and have discussed safeguarding issues around the use of mobile technologies and their associated risks.

13.0 Health & Safety

- 13.1 Our Health & 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 and when undertaking school trips and visits.

14.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

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

- Termly safeguarding DCPOs team meeting
- Governing Body visits to the school
- SLT 'drop ins' and discussions with children and staff
- Pupil surveys and questionnaires
- Scrutiny of exclusion and attendance data
- Scrutiny of the range of risk assessments
- Scrutiny of GB minutes
- Logs of bullying/racist/behaviour incidents for SLT and GB to monitor
- Review of parental concerns and parent questionnaires
- Review of the use of intervention strategies

This policy also links to our policies on:

Behaviour

Code of Conduct

Whistleblowing / Confidential reporting policy

Health & Safety

Allegations against staff

Attendance

PSHE / includes RSE

Teaching and Learning

Administration of medicines

Drugs Education

Sex and Relationships Education

Physical intervention

E Safety, including staff use of mobile phones

Risk Assessment

Recruitment and Selection

Intimate Care

Policy Date:	September 2021
Governing Body Approval:	September 2021
Policy Review Date:	September 2022

Signed by:

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Anne-Louise Friar

01/09/2021

Headteacher

Date:

Denise Liptrot

07/09/2021

Chair of governors

Date:

Appendix One

Recognising signs of child abuse

Categories of Abuse:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse (including Domestic Abuse)
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect

Signs of Abuse in Children:

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

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

Risk Indicators

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

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

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

In an abusive relationship the child may:

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

The parent or carer may:

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

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

Recognising Physical Abuse

The following are often regarded as indicators of concern:

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

Bruising

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

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

Bite Marks

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

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

Burns and Scalds

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

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

Fractures

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

Non-mobile children rarely sustain fractures.

There are grounds for concern if:

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

Scars

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

Recognising Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse may be difficult to recognise, as the signs are usually behavioural rather than physical.

The manifestations of emotional abuse might also indicate the presence of other kinds of abuse.

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

The following may be indicators of emotional abuse:

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

Recognising Signs of Sexual Abuse

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

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

Some behavioural indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

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

Some physical indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

- Pain or itching of genital area

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

Sexual Abuse by Young People

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

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

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

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

Assessment

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

- **Equality** – consider differentials of physical, cognitive and emotional development, power and control and authority, passive and assertive tendencies
- **Consent** – agreement including all the following:
 - Understanding that is proposed based on age, maturity, development level, functioning and experience
 - Knowledge of society’s standards for what is being proposed
 - Awareness of potential consequences and alternatives
 - Assumption that agreements or disagreements will be respected equally
 - Voluntary decision
 - Mental competence
- **Coercion** – the young perpetrator who abuses may use techniques like bribing, manipulation and emotional threats of secondary gains and losses that is loss of love, friendship, etc. Some may use physical force, brutality or the threat of these regardless of victim resistance.

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

as a guide.

Recognising Neglect

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

Indicators include:

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

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Child Sexual Exploitation

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

Signs include:

- underage sexual activity
- inappropriate sexual or sexualised behaviour
- sexually risky behaviour, 'swapping' sex
- repeat sexually transmitted infections
- in girls, repeat pregnancy, abortions, miscarriage
- receiving unexplained gifts or gifts from unknown sources
- having multiple mobile phones and worrying about losing contact via mobile
- having unaffordable new things (clothes, mobile) or expensive habits (alcohol, drugs)
- changes in the way they dress
- going to hotels or other unusual locations to meet friends
- seen at known places of concern
- moving around the country, appearing in new towns or cities, not knowing where they are getting in/out of different cars driven by unknown adults
- having older boyfriends or girlfriends
- contact with known perpetrators
- involved in abusive relationships, intimidated and fearful of certain people or situations
- hanging out with groups of older people, or anti-social groups, or with other vulnerable peers
- associating with other young people involved in sexual exploitation
- recruiting other young people to exploitative situations
- truancy, exclusion, disengagement with school, opting out of education altogether
- unexplained changes in behaviour or personality (chaotic, aggressive, sexual)
- mood swings, volatile behaviour, emotional distress
- self-harming, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, overdosing, eating disorders
- drug or alcohol misuse
- getting involved in crime
- police involvement, police records
- involved in gangs, gang fights, gang membership
- injuries from physical assault, physical restraint, sexual assault.

Appendix Two

Forced Marriage (FM)

This is an entirely separate issue from arranged marriage. It is a human rights abuse and falls within the Crown Prosecution Service definition of domestic violence. Young men and women can be at risk in affected ethnic groups. Whistle-blowing may come from younger siblings. Other indicators may be detected by changes in adolescent behaviours. Never attempt to intervene directly as a school or through a third party,

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

It is essential that staff are aware of FGM practices and the need to look for signs, symptoms and other indicators of FGM.

What is FGM?

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

4 types of procedure:

Type 1 Clitoridectomy – partial/total removal of clitoris

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

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

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

Why is it carried out?

Belief that:

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

- Is cosmetically desirable
- Mistakenly believed to make childbirth easier

Is FGM legal?

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

Circumstances and occurrences that may point to FGM happening

- Child talking about getting ready for a special ceremony
- Family taking a long trip abroad
- Child's family being from one of the 'at risk' communities for FGM (Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Sierra Leon, Egypt, Nigeria, Eritrea as well as non-African 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

Signs that may indicate a child has undergone FGM:

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

The 'One Chance' rule

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

Key contacts

Role	Name	Contact number	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mrs Anne-Louise Friar	01744 678570	stjohnvianneysafeguarding@sthelens.org.uk
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)	Mrs Julia Percy	01744 678570	stjohnvianneysafeguarding@sthelens.org.uk
Operational Safeguarding	Mrs Philippa Crosby	01744 678570	stjohnvianneysafeguarding@sthelens.org.uk
Pastoral Safeguarding	Mrs Michelle Clisby	01744 678570	stjohnvianneysafeguarding@sthelens.org.uk
Headteacher	Mrs Anne-Louise Friar	01744 678570	stjohnvianney@sthelens.org.uk
SENCO	Mrs Lisa Nagy	01744 678570	stjohnvianney@sthelens.org.uk
Designated Teacher for Looked After Children	Mrs Lisa Nagy	01744 678570	stjohnvianney@sthelens.org.uk
Chair of Governors	Mrs Denise Liptrot	c/o 01744 678570	stjohnvianney@sthelens.org.uk
Safeguarding Governor	Mrs Denise Liptrot	c/o 01744 678570	stjohnvianney@sthelens.org.uk

Appendix 3



St John Vianney Catholic Primary School

Peer-on-peer Abuse Policy

Date policy last reviewed: September
2021

Signed by:

Anne-Louise Friar

01/09/2021

Headteacher

Date:

Denise Liptrot

07/09/2021

Chair of governors

Date:

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Statement of intent

St John Vianney Catholic Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every pupil, both inside and outside of the school premises, and is aware that abuse against children can be inflicted by other children. We implement a whole-school preventative approach to managing peer-on-peer abuse, ensuring that the wellbeing of pupils is at the forefront of all action taken.

This policy sets out a clear and consistent framework for delivering this promise, in line with safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance.

It will be achieved by:

- Creating a culture of mutual respect amongst pupils, irrespective of protected characteristics.
- Teaching pupils about behaviour that is acceptable and unacceptable.
- Identifying and making provision for any pupil that has been subject to abuse.
- Ensuring that members of the governing board, the headteacher and staff members understand their responsibilities under safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance, are alert to the signs of peer-on-peer abuse, and know to refer concerns to the DSL.

The DSL is: Mrs Anne-Louise Friar. In the absence of the DSL, child protection matters will be dealt with by: Mrs Julia Percy.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Equality Act 2010
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019
- DfE (2021) 'Keeping children safe in education 2021'

The policy also has regard to the following non-statutory guidance:

- DfE (2015) 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused'
- DfE (2018) 'Information sharing'
- DfE (2021) 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges'
- DfE (2020) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behavioural Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Exclusion Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Data Breach and Data Protection Policies

Definitions

“Peer-on-peer abuse” is defined, for the purposes of this policy, as any form of abuse inflicted by one child or a group of children, i.e. individuals under the age of 18, against another child or group of children. This policy covers peer-on-peer abuse both in and outside of school and both in person and online.

“Harmful sexual behaviour” is defined as any sexual behaviour which:

- Does not observe and respect any individuals on the receiving end of the behaviour, e.g. touching someone without their consent.
- Is inappropriate for the age or stage of development of the pupil.
- Is problematic, abusive or violent.

The policy will use the following terms to describe pupils involved in peer-on-peer abuse:

- **Victim(s)** – the individual(s) against whom the abuse has, or has allegedly, been inflicted.
- **Perpetrator(s)** – the individual(s) exhibiting abusive behaviour against their peers.
- **Alleged perpetrator(s)** – individual(s) against whom a report of abusive behaviour has been made, where guilt has not yet been ascertained.

Note: The use of the word 'alleged' does not mean that the pupil in question is not guilty of peer-on-peer abuse, that the school does not believe the allegation, or that the allegation will not be taken seriously. Staff will remember

that the school has a legal duty of care to all perpetrators and alleged perpetrators who are pupils at the school, including a requirement to ensure they can access their education. Staff will think very carefully about terminology when speaking in front of pupils. Victims will be reassured that use of the term 'alleged perpetrator' is not an attempt to discredit their allegation.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board has a duty to:

- Ensure that the school complies with its duties under the above child protection and safeguarding legislation.
- Guarantee that the policies, procedures and training opportunities in the school are effective and comply with the law at all times.
- Guarantee that the school contributes to multi-agency working in line with the statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'.
- Confirm that the school's arrangements for handling peer-on-peer abuse take into account the procedures and practices of the LA as part of the inter-agency safeguarding procedures.
- Appoint a member of staff from the SLT to the role of DSL as an explicit part of the role-holder's job description.
- Appoint one or more deputy DSL(s) to provide support to the DSL and ensure that they are trained to the same standard as the DSL, and that the role is explicit in their job description(s).
- Make sure that pupils are taught about peer-on-peer abuse, including online (including when they are online at home), through teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Ensure that staff members are appropriately trained to support pupils to be themselves at school, e.g. if they are LGBTQ+.
- Ensure the school has clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible risk of harm in pupils, including clear routes to escalate concerns and clear referral and accountability systems.
- Guarantee that there are procedures in place to handle pupils' allegations against other pupils.
- Ensure that appropriate disciplinary procedures are in place, as well as policies pertaining to the behaviour of pupils.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation in relation to peer-on-peer abuse.
- Make sure that pupils' wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide to protect individual pupils.
- Guarantee that there are systems in place for pupils to express their views and give feedback.

The headteacher has a duty to:

- Safeguard pupils' wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession.
- Ensure that the policies and procedures adopted by the governing board, particularly concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect, are followed by staff members.
- Provide staff, upon induction, with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, part one and, where appropriate, Annex A of the 'Keeping children safe in education' (KCSIE) guidance, the Behavioural Policy, the Children Missing from Education Policy, online safety training, and the identity of the DSL and any deputies.
- Ensure staff receive training on recognising indicators of abuse and handling disclosures or concerns about a pupil.

The DSL has a duty to:

- Understand and keep up-to-date with local safeguarding arrangements.
- Act as the main point of contact with the three safeguarding partners and the child death review partner.
- Make the necessary child protection referrals to appropriate agencies.
- Understand when they should consider calling the police, in line with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) guidance.
- Liaise with the headteacher to inform them of safeguarding issues and ongoing enquiries.
- Liaise with the deputy DSL(s) to ensure effective safeguarding outcomes.
- Act as a source of support for pupils who have been abused by, or who have abused, other pupils.
- Leading the school in taking a preventative approach to peer-on-peer abuse.

Other staff members have a responsibility to:

- Safeguard pupils' wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.
- Provide a safe environment in which pupils can learn.
- Act in accordance with school procedures with the aim of eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation in relation to peer-on-peer abuse.
- Maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned.
- Be aware of the signs of abuse.
- Be aware of the early help process and understand their role in it.
- Be aware of and understand the procedure to follow in the event that a child confides they are being abused by a peer.
- Support social workers in making decisions about individual children, in collaboration with the DSL.
- Maintain appropriate levels of confidentiality when dealing with individual cases, and always act in the best interest of the child.

Types of peer-on-peer abuse

Staff will familiarise themselves with the forms that peer-on-peer abuse can take, including:

Physical abuse

A form of abuse which may involve actions such as hitting, throwing, burning, drowning and poisoning, or otherwise causing physical harm to another child.

Sexual abuse

A form of abuse involving sexual activity between children – sexual abuse, for the purposes of this policy, is divided into two categories: sexual violence and sexual harassment.

“Sexual violence” encompasses the definitions provided in the Sexual Offences Act 2003, including rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault, i.e. non-consensual sexual touching, and causing another child to engage in sexual activity without consent, e.g. forcing someone to touch themselves sexually.

“Sexual harassment” refers to any sexual behaviour that could violate another child's dignity, make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated, and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment, including:

- Sexualised jokes, taunting or comments.
- Physical behaviour, e.g. deliberately brushing against someone.
- Online sexual harassment, including

- Upskirting
- Sexualised online bullying
- Unwanted sexual comments and messages, including on social media.
- Sexual threats or coercion.

The “sharing of sexualised imagery” can also constitute sexual harassment – this refers to the consensual and non-consensual sharing between pupils of sexually explicit content, including that which depicts:

- Another child posing nude or semi-nude
- Another child touching themselves in a sexual way
- Any sexual activity involving another child
- Someone hurting another child sexually

Staff will be aware that children creating, possessing, and distributing indecent imagery of other children is a criminal offence, even where the imagery is created, possessed, and distributed with the permission of the child depicted, or by the child themselves. Incidents of sharing sexualised imagery will be handled in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Bullying

Many kinds of behaviour can be considered bullying, and bullying can be related to almost anything.

Bullying is acted out through the following mediums:

- Verbally
- Physically
- Emotionally
- Online (cyberbullying)

Bullying will generally be handled in line with the Anti-bullying Policy; however, particularly severe instances will be handled in line with this policy and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Online abuse

This involves the use of technology and the internet in order to harass, threaten or intimidate another child. Instances of online abuse will be managed in line with this policy, the Online Safety Policy and the Anti-bullying Policy.

Discriminatory behaviour

Discriminatory behaviour encompasses abuse inflicted on a pupil because of their protected characteristics, e.g. religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, culture, or SEND. Discriminatory behaviour is never acceptable, and all cases will be handled in line with this policy and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Intimate partner abuse

This involves a romantic partnership between children in which one or both partners are emotionally, physically or sexually abusive to the other. This could include:

- Repetitive insults
- Controlling behaviour, e.g. preventing a child from socialising with others or deliberately isolating them from sources of support.
- Sexual harassment.

- Threats of physical or sexual abuse.

The school will manage intimate partner abuse in the same way as a case of abuse between any other children, i.e. via the processes outlined in [section 9](#) of this policy, and in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

A whole-school approach to peer-on-peer abuse

The school will continue to involve all members of the school community, including the governing board, staff, pupils, parents and other stakeholders, in creating a whole-school approach to peer-on-peer abuse.

The governing board will ensure that keeping children safe and protected from harm, including peer-on-peer abuse, is central to all policies and procedures implemented across the school. The school will ensure that procedures for handling peer-on-peer abuse are transparent, clear and understandable, and are readily accessible to any member of the school community who wishes to access them.

The school will implement a contextual approach to safeguarding pupils against peer-on-peer abuse, and will ensure that all procedures take into account incidents of peer-on-peer abuse that occur outside of school or online.

The headteacher will ensure that all staff receive adequate training on handling peer-on-peer abuse.

School culture

The school prioritises cultivating a safe and respectful environment amongst pupils, and ensures that all pupils are aware that the school adopts a **zero-tolerance stance** on peer-on-peer abuse of any kind.

The school promotes respectful interactions amongst pupils, and all staff model appropriate and respectful behaviour. Staff will take care to avoid normalising harmful behaviour, particularly harmful sexual behaviour, e.g. by refraining from the use of phrases such as 'boys will be boys' or describing such behaviour as 'just having a laugh' or 'part of growing up'.

The school will ensure that wider societal factors that exacerbate the problem of peer-on-peer abuse are reflected in its approach to creating a preventative culture. This means that individuals who are more likely to be abused, e.g. girls or LGBTQ+ pupils, or who are at increased risk of acting as a perpetrator in abusive situations, e.g. due to abusive home situations or anger management issues, are given additional support from an early stage.

The school manages all early help and intervention for pupils showing early signs of harmful behaviour, or early signs of being the victim of harmful behaviour, in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Curriculum

The school maintains the position that education surrounding respectful and healthy attitudes and behaviour towards others is the best way to combat peer-on-peer abuse in the school. All staff, not just teaching staff, are responsible for passing this knowledge on to pupils.

In order to prevent peer-on-peer abuse and address the wider societal factors that can influence behaviour, the school will educate pupils about abuse, its forms and the importance of discussing any concerns and respecting others through the curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

The school will also ensure that pupils are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. Such content will be age and stage of development specific, and tackle issues such as the following:

- Healthy relationships
- Respectful behaviour
- Stereotyping and equality
- LGBTQ+ identities and relationships
- Body confidence and self-esteem
- Prejudiced behaviour
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment is always wrong
- Addressing cultures of sexual harassment

Pupils will be allowed an open forum to talk about concerns and sexual behaviour. They are taught how to raise concerns and make a report, including concerns about their friends or peers, and how a report will be handled.

The curriculum will ensure that pupils of all ages are taught about and understand the concept of consent and its importance in an age-appropriate way.

Channels for reporting abuse

Pupils will be able to report incidents of peer-on-peer abuse or concerns about the behaviour of their peers through the following channels:

- Disclosing to the DSL or any member of staff at any time; this will then be reported immediately to the DSL, Mrs Anne-Louise Friar, or a member of the safeguarding team (Mrs Julia Percy, Mrs Philippa Crosby, Mrs Michelle Clisby).
- Through the confidential 'Whisper' tool from KAB'S (being introduced to children in 2021-22). Reports are automatically sent to Mrs Friar's email for scrutiny.

All channels for reporting abuse will be promoted and publicised throughout the school, and all pupils will be made aware of how, and to whom, to report incidents of abuse. The school will also ensure pupils are aware of the type of behaviour that should be reported, ranging from criminal behaviour, e.g. rape or sexual assault, to everyday harassment, e.g. sexualised jokes or inappropriate comments, to ensure that victims do not view their experience as 'not serious enough' to report.

The school will maintain a culture that promotes reporting abuse, whether the individual reporting is the victim, a bystander, or a friend or relative of the victim. Staff will address any incidents of pupils equating reporting abuse to 'snitching' or being a 'tell-tale', and will convey to these pupils how important it is to report abuse to help tackle the wider problem of peer-on-peer abuse in schools.

Protecting pupils with increased vulnerability to peer-on-peer abuse

The school is aware that, while peer-on-peer abuse can be perpetrated by, and against, anyone, there are certain groups of pupils who are at an increased risk of being on the receiving end of peer-on-peer abuse.

Staff will be careful to acknowledge the increased risk certain pupils face while refraining from making assumptions about the nature of any reported, witnessed or suspected abuse. Staff will be aware that pupils who are generally at increased risk of abuse can also be perpetrators of abuse.

The school will ensure that action is taken, where possible, before major concerns arise; therefore, incidents of low-level abuse related to the characteristics of the below groups will be handled in line with early help procedures, which are laid out within the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and the Reporting Low-level Safeguarding Concerns Policy.

Girls

Staff will be aware that girls are more likely to be on the receiving end of peer-on-peer sexual abuse than their male counterparts, and that sexual violence and harassment against girls is very common and accounts for the majority of cases.

Taking into account that sexual harassment against girls is widespread in society, and largely based in gender inequality, the school will aim to encourage gender equality in all aspects of its operations. The school will aim to promote and nurture healthy attitudes and relationships amongst pupils of all genders, e.g. by challenging and working to deconstruct gender stereotypes in school.

Staff will challenge any incidents of misogynistic language or gender-based abuse, whether of a sexualised nature or not, as holding misogynistic viewpoints can make a pupil more likely to commit sexualised violence in the future.

LGBTQ+ pupils

Staff will be aware that pupils who are LGBTQ+, or are perceived to be LGBTQ+ whether they are or not, are more likely to be targeted by their peers, e.g. for discriminatory bullying.

The school holds a zero-tolerance policy towards pupils using homophobic, biphobic or transphobic language, regardless of whether or not the language is being directed at another individual. Every staff member is individually responsible for challenging such behaviour and making clear to all pupils that any abuse towards pupils who are LGBTQ+, or who are perceived to be, is unacceptable.

Pupils with SEND

Staff will be aware that pupils with SEND are at increased risk of peer-on-peer abuse. The school will ensure that there are mechanisms in place to support pupils with SEND in reporting abuse, with due regard paid to the fact that these pupils may face additional barriers to reporting abuse and that spotting signs of abuse in these pupils may be harder.

Staff will avoid assuming that changes in the behaviour of pupils with SEND are as a result of their needs or disability, and will report any concerns to the DSL. The DSL and the SENCO will collaborate in the handling of instances of abuse towards pupils with SEND to ensure that barriers to communication can be effectively managed.

Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) pupils

Staff will be aware that minority ethnic pupils, particularly black pupils, may be less likely to report abuse committed against them, and may be more likely to be misidentified as perpetrators of abuse.

The school holds a zero-tolerance policy towards pupils using racist language, regardless of whether the language is being directed at another individual. Every staff member is individually responsible for challenging such behaviour and making clear to all pupils that any abuse towards pupils from BAME backgrounds is unacceptable.

Staff will also be aware that BAME girls, BAME pupils with SEND, or BAME LGBTQ+, or perceived LGBTQ+ pupils, are likely to face increased abuse due to the intersection of these identities. Staff will be vigilant with regard to these pupils and the ways in which other pupils behave towards them, in order to ensure any incidents or potential incidents can be handled as soon as they occur.

Staff identifying and reporting concerns

Staff will receive safeguarding training as part of their induction, and annual refresher training. This training will include guidance on how to recognise indicators of peer-on-peer abuse of all kinds, and how to distinguish between behaviour, particularly sexual behaviour, that is developmentally appropriate and that which is harmful.

When identifying pupils at risk of potential harm or who have been harmed by their peers, staff members will look out for a number of indicators including, but not limited to, the following:

- Injuries in unusual places, such as bite marks on the neck, that are also inconsistent with their age
- Lack of concentration and acting withdrawn
- Knowledge ahead of their age, e.g. sexual knowledge
- Use of explicit language
- Fear of abandonment
- Depression and low self-esteem
- Changes to their social group, e.g. spending time with older pupils, or social isolation
- Alcohol or substance misuse

Where a pupil is displaying signs of being impacted by peer-on-peer abuse, or perpetrating peer-on-peer abuse, staff will report this to the DSL as soon as is reasonably practical.

Staff will challenge all instances of abusive or harmful behaviour displayed by pupils that they witness or are reported to them. Staff will not wait for concerns or situations between pupils to escalate before intervening; minor or singular instances of abusive behaviour will still be brought to the attention of the DSL and the pupil will always be spoken to about their behaviour and disciplined, where appropriate, in line with the Behavioural Policy.

Staff will enforce the school's policy that no known and substantiated incident of abusive or harmful behaviour between pupils will occur without consequences for the perpetrator(s), although these consequences will be decided on a case-by-case basis and will take into account the views of any victims involved, the context of the behaviour and the severity of the incident.

Staff will be aware that just because a victim of abusive behaviour does not report the behaviour or react to the behaviour negatively, this does not mean that the behaviour is not still harmful; some pupils will be uncomfortable challenging their peers on inappropriate behaviour, or may not be aware themselves that the behaviour is abusive. Staff have a responsibility to ensure that both the perpetrator(s), or alleged perpetrator(s), and the victim(s) understand that such behaviour inflicted by or against them was unacceptable; failing to challenge a pupil on unacceptable behaviour can normalise that behaviour not just for the pupil in question, but for all pupils who see the behaviour going unchallenged.

Staff will remain aware that downplaying abusive behaviour can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour throughout the school and, as such, will treat all displays or reports of abusive behaviour with the utmost severity and sensitivity in order to reinforce to all pupils that such behaviour will not be tolerated, and to prevent further instances of this behaviour in the future.

Handling allegations of abuse against pupils

Staff will always, when handling an incident of alleged abuse, take the report of the victim seriously, reassure them, support them and work to keep them safe. Victims will never be made to feel like they are causing a problem, be made to feel ashamed, or have their experience minimised by staff at the school. Staff will be aware of the

importance of not downplaying any reports of abuse; however, will ensure that they remain sympathetic, and observant of the duty of care, to both the alleged perpetrator(s) and victim(s).

If a friend of a victim makes a report or a member of staff overhears a conversation, staff will take action – they will never assume that someone else will deal with it, or wait for a disclosure. The basic principles remain the same as when a victim reports an incident; however, staff will consider why the victim has not chosen to make a report themselves and the discussion will be handled sensitively and with the help of children's social care where necessary. If staff are in any doubt, they will speak to the DSL.

Where an alleged incident took place away from the school or online but involved pupils from the school, the school's duty to safeguard pupils remains the same and the incident will be treated equally as seriously and investigated in the same way as an incident that took place in school.

All staff will be trained to handle disclosures, in line with the safeguarding policy and associated annual safeguarding refresher training.

The DSL will be informed of any allegations of abuse against pupils with SEND. They will record the incident in writing and, working with the SENCO, decide what course of action is necessary, with the best interests of the pupil in mind at all times.

Confidentiality

The school will only engage staff and agencies required to support the victim and/or be involved in any investigation. If a victim asks the school not to tell anyone about the disclosure, the school cannot make this promise. Even without the victim's consent, the information may still be lawfully shared if it is in the public interest and protects children from harm.

The DSL will consider the following when making confidentiality decisions:

- Parents will be informed unless it will place the victim at greater risk.
- If a pupil is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger or has been harmed, a referral will be made to children's social care.
- Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault are crimes – reports containing any such crimes will be passed to the police.

The DSL will weigh the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and others. If a referral is made against the victim's wishes, it will be done so extremely carefully and the reasons for referral will be explained to the victim. Appropriate specialist support will always be offered.

Anonymity

There are legal requirements for anonymity where a case is progressing through the criminal justice system. The school will do all it can to protect the anonymity of children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment. It will carefully consider, based on the nature of the report, which staff will be informed and what support will be in place for the children involved. When deciding on the steps to take, the school will consider the role of social media in potentially exposing victims' identities and facilitating the spread of rumours.

Risk assessment

The DSL or a deputy will make an immediate risk and needs assessment any time there is a report of sexual violence. For reports of sexual harassment, a risk assessment will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Risk

assessments are not intended to replace the detailed assessments of experts, and for incidents of sexual violence it is likely that a professional risk assessment by a social worker or sexual violence specialist will be required.

Risk assessments will consider:

- The victim.
- The alleged perpetrator.
- Other pupils at the school, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them.

Risk assessments will be recorded (either on paper or electronically) and kept under review in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy.

Taking action following a disclosure

The DSL or a deputy will decide the school's initial response, taking into consideration:

- The victim's wishes.
- The nature of the incident.
- The ages and developmental stages of the pupils involved.
- Any power imbalance between the pupils.
- Whether the incident is a one-off or part of a pattern.
- Any ongoing risks.
- Any related issues and the wider context, such as whether there are wider environmental factors in a pupil's life that threaten their safety and/or welfare.
- The best interests of the pupil.
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment are always unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Immediate consideration will be given as to how to support the victim, alleged perpetrator and any other pupils involved.

For reports of rape and assault by penetration, the alleged perpetrator will be removed from any classes shared with the victim whilst the school establishes the facts. The school will consider how to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator apart on school premises, and on transport where applicable. These actions will not be seen as a judgement of guilt on the alleged perpetrator.

For reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment, the proximity of the victim and alleged perpetrator and the suitability of shared classes, premises and transport will be considered immediately. In all cases, the initial report will be carefully evaluated and the wishes of the victim, nature of the allegations and requirement to protect all children will be taken into consideration.

Where a pupil is found to have been involved in harmful sexual behaviour, e.g. non-consensually sharing indecent imagery of another pupil, the school will help the pupil to move forward from the incident by supporting them in adopting more positive behaviour patterns and attitudes.

Managing the report

The decision of when to inform the alleged perpetrator of a report will be made on a case-by-case basis. If a report is being referred to children's social care or the police, the school will speak to the relevant agency to discuss informing the alleged perpetrator.

There are four likely outcomes when managing reports of sexual violence or sexual harassment:

- Managing internally.
- Providing early help.
- Referring to children's social care.
- Reporting to the police.

Whatever outcome is chosen, it will be underpinned by the principle that sexual violence and sexual harassment are never acceptable and will not be tolerated. All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons behind decisions will be recorded either on paper or electronically.

The following situations are statutorily clear and do not allow for contrary decisions:

- The age of consent is 16.
- A child under the age of 16 can **never** consent to sexual activity.
- Sexual intercourse without consent is **always** rape.
- Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault are defined in law.
- Creating and sharing sexual photos and videos of children under 18 is illegal – including children making and sending images and videos of themselves.

Managing internally

In some cases, e.g. one-off incidents, the school may decide to handle the incident internally through behaviour and bullying policies and by providing pastoral support.

Providing early help

The school may decide that statutory interventions are not required, but that pupils may benefit from early help – providing support as soon as a problem emerges. This approach can be particularly useful in addressing non-violent harmful sexual behaviour and may prevent the escalation of sexual violence.

Referral to children's social care

If a pupil has been harmed, is at risk of harm or is in immediate danger, the school will make a referral to children's social care. Parents will be informed unless there is a compelling reason not to do so (if referral will place the victim at risk). This decision will be made in consultation with children's social care.

The school will not wait for the outcome of an investigation before protecting the victim and other children.

The DSL will work closely with children's social care to ensure that the school's actions do not jeopardise any investigation. Any related risk assessment will be used to inform all decisions. If children's social care decide that a statutory investigation is not appropriate, the school will consider referring the incident again if they believe the pupil to be in immediate danger or at risk of harm. If the school agrees with the decision made by children's social care, they will consider the use of other support mechanisms such as early help, pastoral support and specialist support.

Reporting to the police

Reports of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault will be passed on to the police – even if the alleged perpetrator is under 10 years of age. Generally, this will be in parallel with referral to children’s social care. The DSL and deputies will follow the local process for referral.

Parents will be informed unless there is a compelling reason not to do so. Where parents are not informed, it is essential for the school to support the pupil with any decision they take, in unison with children’s social care and any appropriate specialist agencies.

The DSL and governing board will agree what information will be disclosed to staff and others, in particular the alleged perpetrator and their parents. They will also discuss the best way to protect the victim and their anonymity. The DSL will be aware of local arrangements and specialist units that investigate child abuse.

In some cases, it may become clear that the police will not take further action, for whatever reason. In these circumstances, the school will continue to engage with specialist support for the victim as required.

Bail conditions

Pupils against whom further action is taken by the police may be released under bail conditions or ‘released under investigation’ (RUI) in circumstances that do not warrant the application of bail. Where this occurs and the perpetrator returns to school, the school’s primary focus will be conducting an assessment of the risk the perpetrator poses to the victim or other pupils and staff at the school, both physically and in terms of trauma or emotional stress, and implementing any mitigating measures necessary to reduce the harm caused.

The school will work with children’s social care and the police to support the victim, alleged perpetrator and other pupils (especially witnesses) during criminal investigations. The school will seek advice from the police to ensure they meet their safeguarding responsibilities.

The school will liaise with police investigators to develop a balanced set of arrangements whereby both the alleged perpetrator and the victim can continue to receive a suitable education without compromising any ongoing investigations or the emotional state of the victim.

Managing delays in the criminal justice system

The school will not wait for the outcome (or even the start) of criminal proceedings before protecting the victim, alleged perpetrator and other children. The associated risk assessment will be used to inform any decisions made. The DSL will work closely with the police to ensure the school does not jeopardise any criminal proceedings, and to obtain help and support as necessary.

The end of the criminal process

Risk assessments will be updated if the alleged perpetrator receives a caution or is convicted. If the perpetrator remains in the same school as the victim, the school will set out clear expectations regarding the perpetrator, including their behaviour and any restrictions deemed reasonable and proportionate with regards to the perpetrator’s timetable. The school will ensure that the victim and perpetrator remain protected from bullying and harassment (including online).

Where an alleged perpetrator is found not guilty or a case is classed as requiring “no further action”, the school will offer support to the victim and alleged perpetrator for as long as is necessary. The victim is likely to be traumatised and the fact that an allegation cannot be substantiated does not necessarily mean that it was unfounded. The

school will discuss decisions with the victim and offer support. The alleged perpetrator is also likely to require ongoing support, as they have also been through a difficult and upsetting experience.

The headteacher will carefully consider, on a case-by-case basis, whether allowing the victim and the alleged perpetrator to share classes or attend the same activities is conducive to either party's effective education, and will implement alternative arrangements, in consultation with the DSL (and SENCO where the victim or alleged perpetrator has SEND), where necessary.

Ongoing support for the victim

Any decisions regarding safeguarding and supporting the victim will be made with the following considerations in mind:

- The terminology the school uses to describe the victim
- The age and developmental stage of the victim
- The needs and wishes of the victim
- Whether the victim wishes to continue in their normal routine
- The victim will not be made to feel ashamed about making a report
- What a proportionate response looks like

Victims may not disclose the whole picture immediately and they may be more comfortable talking about the incident on a piecemeal basis; therefore, a dialogue will be kept open and the victim can choose to appoint a designated trusted adult.

Victims may struggle in a normal classroom environment. Whilst it is important not to isolate the victim, the victim may wish to be withdrawn from lessons and activities at times. This will only happen when the victim wants it to, not because it makes it easier to manage the situation. The school will provide a physical space for victims to withdraw to.

Victims may require support for a long period of time and the school will be prepared to offer long-term support in liaison with relevant agencies. Everything possible will be done to prevent the victim from bullying and harassment as a result of any report they have made. If the victim is unable to remain in the school, alternative provision or a move to another school will be considered – this will only be considered at the request of the victim and following discussion with their parents. If the victim does move to another school, the DSL will inform the school of any ongoing support needs and transfer the child protection file.

Ongoing support for the alleged perpetrator

Any decisions made regarding the support required for an alleged perpetrator will be made with the following considerations in mind:

- The terminology the school uses to describe the alleged perpetrator
- The balance of safeguarding the victim and providing the alleged perpetrator with education and support
- The reasons why the alleged perpetrator may have abused the victim – and the support necessary
- Their age and developmental stage
- What a proportionate response looks like
- Whether the behaviour is a symptom of their own abuse or exposure to abusive practices and/or materials
- What the outcome of the investigation was

When making a decision, advice will be taken from children's social care, specialist sexual violence services and the police as appropriate. If the alleged perpetrator moves to another school (for any reason), the DSL will inform the destination school of any ongoing support needs and transfer the child protection file.

If the reported abuse is found to have taken place, the school will work with professionals as required to understand why the abuse took place and provide a high level of support to help the pupil understand and overcome the reasons for their behaviour and reduce the likelihood of them abusing again.

Disciplining the alleged perpetrator

Disciplinary action can be taken whilst investigations are ongoing and the fact that investigations are ongoing does not prevent the school reaching its own conclusion and imposing an appropriate penalty.

The school will make such decisions on a case-by-case basis, with the DSL taking a leading role. The school will take into consideration whether any action would prejudice an investigation and/or subsequent prosecution. The police and children's social care will be consulted where necessary. The school will also consider whether circumstances make it unreasonable or irrational for the school to make a decision about what happened while an investigation is considering the same facts.

Disciplinary action and support can take place at the same time. The school will be clear whether action taken is disciplinary, supportive or both.

Shared classes

Once the DSL has decided to progress a report, they will again consider whether the victim and alleged perpetrator will be separated in classes, on school premises and on school transport – balancing the school's duty to educate against its duty to safeguard. The best interests of pupils will always come first.

Where there is a criminal investigation into rape or assault by penetration, the alleged perpetrator will be removed from classes with the victim and potential contact on school premises and transport will be prevented.

Where a criminal investigation into rape or assault by penetration leads to a conviction or caution, in all but the most exceptional circumstances, this will constitute a serious breach of discipline and result in the view that allowing the perpetrator to remain in the school would harm the education or welfare of the victim and potentially other pupils.

Where a criminal investigation into sexual assault leads to a conviction or caution, the school will consider suitable sanctions and permanent exclusion. If the perpetrator remains at the school, the school will keep the victim and perpetrator in separate classes and manage potential contact on school premises and transport. The nature of the conviction or caution, alongside the wishes of the victim, will inform any discussions made.

Where a report of sexual assault does not lead to a police investigation, this does not mean that the offence did not happen or that the victim has lied. Both the victim and alleged perpetrator will be affected and appropriate support will be provided. Considerations regarding sharing classes and potential contact will be made on a case-by-case basis.

In all cases, the school will record its decisions and be able to justify them. The needs and wishes of the victim will always be at the heart of the process.

Working with parents

In most sexual violence cases, the school will work with the parents of both the victim and alleged perpetrator. For cases of sexual harassment, these decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis.

The school will meet the victim's parents with the victim present to discuss the arrangements being put in place to safeguard the victim, and to understand their wishes in terms of support arrangements and the progression of the report.

Schools will also meet with the parents of the alleged perpetrator to discuss arrangements that will impact their child, such as moving them out of classes with the victim. Reasons behind decisions will be explained and the support being made available will be discussed. The DSL or a deputy will attend such meetings, with agencies invited as necessary.

Clear policies regarding how the school will handle reports of sexual violence and how victims and alleged perpetrators will be supported will be made available to parents.

Safeguarding other children

Children who have witnessed sexual violence, especially rape and assault by penetration, will be provided with support. It is likely that children will "take sides" following a report, and the school will do everything in its power to protect the victim, alleged perpetrator and witnesses from bullying and harassment.

The school will keep in mind that contact may be made between the victim and alleged perpetrator, and that harassment from friends of both parties could take place via social media, and will do everything in its power to prevent such activity.

As part of the school's risk assessment following a report, transport arrangements will be considered, as it is a potentially vulnerable place for both the victim and alleged perpetrator. Schools will consider any additional support that can be put in place.

Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed annually by the DSL (Headteacher) and the safeguarding team. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff. All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with all processes and procedures outlined in this policy as part of their induction programme. The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2022.

