



## **Safeguarding Policy**

**\*to be read in conjunction with the school's Child Protection Policy\***

## **INTRODUCTION**

St Thomas More Catholic School recognises its legal duty to safeguard and protect pupils from abuse as defined in the Children Act 2004 and section 175 of the Education Act 2002. Keeping Children Safe in Education – Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges was updated in July 2015. The overall intention and purpose behind the school's safeguarding policy is underpinned by the fundamental principle of the 1989 Children Act:

'the welfare of the child is the paramount concern'

Our school takes seriously its responsibilities to protect and safeguard the interests of all children. We recognise that effective child protection requires sound procedures, good inter-agency co-operation and a workforce that is competent and confident in responding to child protection situations. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Our policy applies to all pupils, staff, parents, governors, volunteers and visitors.

## **WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING?**

\* From the 'Working Together to Safeguard Children Document'\*  
(Updated 2013)

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in school refers to the process of protecting children from abuse and neglect as well as helping children to develop socially and emotionally and enabling these children to have optimum life chances ready to enter adulthood successfully.

Everyone in our school shares an objective to keep pupils safe by:

- Providing a safe environment for the pupils to learn in.
- Promoting a school environment, in which every pupil feels valued and able to individually communicate their wishes and feelings successfully.
- Recognising and responding to pupils in need of support and/or protection.

We believe it is our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all our pupils and we will endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where they are respected and valued. We will be alert to signs of abuse and maltreatment and will follow our procedures to ensure pupils and staff receive effective support, protection and justice.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of our safeguarding policy is to ensure every pupil is safe and protected from harm. This means we will always work to:

- Protect our pupils from maltreatment
- Prevent impairment of our pupil's health and development
- Ensure that our pupils grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Undertake a role as to enable our pupils to have the best possible life chances

Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. The Teacher Standards 2012 states that teachers, including headteachers, should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties. This policy will provide staff, governors, volunteers, visitors and parents with specific guidance about expected behaviour and explains our legal responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils in our school.

## **AIMS**

The safeguarding policy aims to provide clear direction to all adults and others about expected codes of behaviour in dealing with child protection issues. The policy also aims to make explicit the school's commitment to the development of good practice and sound procedures.

We aim:

- To ensure that pupils within our school feel safe at all times
- To identify pupils who may be in need of extra help or who are suffering, or who are likely to suffer, significant harm
- To ensure that all stakeholders are safe and feel that they are able to put the welfare of the pupils first without concern that there will be any negative consequences attached to their actions
- To ensure that all adults who have contact with pupils in school have been properly vetted and cleared as suitable to work and support pupils in our care/charge
- To ensure that all adults who have contact with children in school have been trained to undertake their safeguarding responsibilities effectively

## **UNDERPINNING VALUES**

- A child's welfare is paramount. Each child has a right to be protected from harm and exploitation and to have their welfare safeguarded.
- Each child is unique. Action taken by all organisations should be child-centred, taking account of a child's cultural, ethnic and religious background, their gender, their sexual orientation, their individual ability and any special needs.
- Children, parents and other carers should be made aware of their responsibilities and their rights, together with advice about the power of professionals to intervene in their family circumstances.
- Each child has a right to be consulted about actions to be taken by others on his/her behalf. The concerns of children and their families should be listened to and due consideration given to their understanding, wishes and feelings.
- Individual family members must be involved in decisions affecting them. They must be treated with courtesy and respect and with due regard given to working with them in a spirit of partnership in safeguarding children's welfare.
- Open-mindedness and honesty must guide each stage of assessment and of operational practice. The strengths of individual family members, as well as their needs, should be given due consideration.
- Personal information is usually confidential. It should only be shared with the permission of the individual concerned unless the disclosure of confidential personal information is necessary in order to protect a child. In all circumstances, information must be confined to those people directly involved in the professional network of each individual child and on a strict 'need to know' basis.
- Professionals should be made aware of the effects of outside intervention upon children, upon family life and the impact and implications of what they say and do.
- Explanations by professionals to children, their families and other carers should be plainly stated and jargon-free. Unavoidable technical and professional terminology should be explained in simple terms.
- Sound professional practice is based upon positive inter-agency collaboration, evidence-based research and effective supervision and evaluation.
- Early intervention in providing support services under Section 17 of the Children Act (1989) is an important principle of practice in inter-agency arrangements for safeguarding the welfare of children.

## **PROCEDURES**

These procedures provide a framework to ensure all practice in the area of child protection and safeguarding is consistent.

- When new staff, volunteers or regular visitors join our school they will be informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place. They will be given a copy of our school's safeguarding leaflet which provides a brief summary of the procedure and identifies key personnel. They will also be made aware of the safeguarding policy.

- Every new member of staff or volunteer will have an induction period that will include essential safeguarding information. This programme will include basic safeguarding information relating to signs and symptoms of abuse, how to manage a disclosure from a pupil, how to record any issues of confidentiality. The induction period will also remind staff and volunteers of their responsibility to safeguard all pupils at our school and the remit of the role of the Senior Designated Professional.
- New staff who have not had any child protection/safeguarding training and staff who have had training more than three years ago will be given a brief introduction to safeguarding and will then be trained with the rest of the staff at least every three years.

## **TRAINING**

Every member of staff will undertake appropriate safeguarding training approximately every three years. We will encourage all of our staff to keep up-to-date with the most recent local and national safeguarding advice and guidance. Any information which comes directly into school will be brought to the attention of staff via the briefing or bulletin and distributed accordingly. All staff have access to a copy of the Keeping Children Safe in Education – Information for all School and College Staff (July 2015) document. Staff with specific responsibility for safeguarding children will receive inter-agency training at a level suitable to their role and responsibilities, updated as required. The training will also include child protection and safe working practice. The Senior Designated teacher (**Mrs Theresa Ryan**) and the Headteacher (**Mr Brendan Hickey**) should be used as a first point of contact for concerns and queries regarding any safeguarding issue in our school. Our Business Manager (**Mrs Sue Waldron**) will advise on safeguarding issues related to a safer working practice.

## **SUPPORTING STAFF**

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

In order to reduce the risk of allegations being made against staff, and ensure that staff are competent, confident and safe to work with children, they will be made aware of safer working practice guidance and will be given opportunities in training to develop their understanding of what constitutes safe and unsafe behaviour.

## **SAFER AND FAIR RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF STAFF**

The school has a written recruitment and selection policy statement and procedures linking explicitly to this policy. The statement is included in all job advertisements, publicity material, recruitment websites and candidate information packs.

The recruitment process is robust in seeking to establish the commitment of candidates to support the school's measures to safeguard children and to clear, reject or identify people who might abuse children or are otherwise unsuited to work with them.

When recruiting new members of staff the school will follow the guidance provided in the Keeping Children Safe in Education – Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges (July 2015) which replaced Safeguarding Children: Safer Recruitment in Education. The school ensures that DBS checks are undertaken, that references are taken up and obtained and that qualifications are verified.

## **ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF**

We understand that a pupil may make an allegation against a member of staff. If such an allegation is made, the member of staff receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Headteacher, unless the allegation concerns the Headteacher, in which case the Chair of Governors will be informed immediately.

The Headteacher (or Chair of Governors) on all such occasions will discuss the content of the allegation with the LA's Senior Advisor for Safeguarding Children in Education.

The school will follow the LA procedures for managing allegations against staff, a copy of which is available in school.

### **PROTECTING STAFF AGAINST ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE**

Staff should seek to keep personal contact with children under review and seek to minimise the risk of any situation arising in which misunderstandings could occur.

The following sensible precautions should be taken when staff are working alone with children. They should:

- Work in a room where there is a glass panel in the door or leave the door open;
- Make sure that other adults visit the room occasionally;
- Avoid working in isolation with children unless thought has gone into safeguards.

Staff must not:

- Give out personal mobile phone numbers or private e-mail addresses;
- Give pupils lifts home in their own transport (except when agreed with parents and cleared by the Headteacher)
- Arrange to meet pupils outside of school hours (except when agreed with parents and cleared by the Headteacher)
- Chat to students on the social networking sites.

Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 it is a criminal offence for anyone working in an education setting to have a sexual relationship with a pupil even when the pupil is over the age of consent.

Any physical force or restraint against pupils should be carried out and documented in accordance with the relevant Physical Restraint Policy. If it is necessary to use physical action to prevent a child from injury to themselves or others parents should be informed.

### **SITE SECURITY**

We aim to provide a secure school site but recognise that the site is only as secure as the people who use it. Therefore all people on the site are expected to adhere to the rules which govern it. The school ensures that:

- Visitors must only enter through the main entrance and must sign in at the reception. They will be given a visitor's badge;
- The security cameras are in good working order and undergo regular maintenance;
- Relevant safety notices are displayed prominently;
- There are security locks on vulnerable entrances;
- Pupils do not leave school during school hours but those with permission to do so must sign out;
- Adults collecting pupils have parental responsibility or confirmed permission;
- Individual pupils who need to go home unescorted during school hours do so with parental knowledge and consent and are required to confirm their arrival at home by contacting the school within a specified period of time
- All staff and pupils know the procedure if intruders are on site.

If a pupil leaves the school premises without permission the parents or carers, and if necessary the police, will be informed of the situation. If vulnerable pupils fail to arrive in school by 9.30 a.m. parents or carers will be notified and the agreed procedure followed.

### **MANAGING A DISCLOSURE**

The procedure to follow if a child discloses directly to a member of staff is clearly explained in our Child Protection Policy. This policy outlines roles and responsibilities of all involved.

## **PREVENT DUTY**

From 1 July 2015 schools are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”.

This school aims to safeguard children from radicalisation and extremism by:

- Training appropriate staff to be 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 whether this comes from within their family or is the product of outside influences.
- Building pupils’ resilience to radicalisation by promoting fundamental Christian/Human/British values and enabling them to challenge extremist views.
- Providing a safe space in which children, young people and staff can understand the risks associated with terrorism and develop the knowledge and skills to be able to challenge extremist arguments.

## **OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES**

The Governing Body’s legal responsibility for safeguarding the welfare of children goes beyond basic child protection procedures. The duty is now to ensure that safeguarding permeates all activity and functions. To underpin the values and ethos of our school and our intent to ensure our pupils are appropriately safeguarded the following policies or documents also form part of our safeguarding philosophy:

- Acceptable Use of ICT Policy
- Managing Allegations of Abuse Against Staff
- Anti-bullying
- Attendance
- Behaviour
- Child Protection
- Critical Incident Management Plan
- Confidential Reporting Code for Schools Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Disability and Equality Scheme
- Drugs Policy
- Equality Statement
- Flu Pandemic Policy
- Governors’ Statement of Behaviour Principles
- Health and Safety
- Inclusion Policy
- Off-Site Visits Policy
- Physical Intervention Policy and Procedure
- PSHE Curriculum
- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

Safeguarding is led and promoted by the Headteacher, the Deputy Headteacher and the Business Manager.

The safeguarding practice of the school is monitored by the Governors Pupil Welfare Committee. The group meets three times a year and is informed of issues related to safeguarding, particularly those related to child protection. The Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed annually and revised accordingly as we acknowledge that it is an on-going process.