

# **St Alban's Catholic High School**



## **Child Protection Policy**

Named personnel with designated responsibility for Safeguarding:

Date	Designated Safeguarding Lead	Deputy Designated Senior person	Nominated Governor	Chair of Governors
2021/22 onwards	Jason Horne	Helen Arthur Carolyn Land Laura Lawrence	Austine Adigwe	Joanna McCall

**Approved by Full Governing Body on: 27 September 2021**

**Recommission Date: September 2022**

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## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

St. Alban's Catholic High School values young people and children as being a vital part of the school community and desires to see them grow, mature and be challenged in a healthy and safe environment.

### **Section 1 Purposes**

The purpose of St. Alban's Catholic High School's children and young people's curriculum is to offer the children a safe and welcoming environment with activities where the children can grow and learn.

#### **Aims**

- To provide activities for children and young people to help them develop from childhood into adulthood and to provide support for them
- To enable the children to express themselves
- To assist the children in integrating into the community
- To help children/young people appreciate the diversity of their cultures

### **Section 2 Categories of Abuse**

#### **Physical abuse**

- Physical abuse may involve:
  - Hitting/ punching or the use of an object to inflict injury
  - Shaking
  - Throwing
  - Poisoning
  - Burning or scalding
  - Drowning
  - Suffocating
  - FGM

Whilst all staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) with regard to any concerns about female genital mutilation (FGM), there is a specific legal duty on teachers. If a teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act

of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must report this to the police.

- Self Harm
- Or otherwise causing physical harm to a child
- Physical abuse may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child

### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. Emotional abuse might involve the following:

- Conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person (high criticism/low warmth)
- Not allowing the child opportunities to express their views
- Ridicule
- Developmentally inappropriate expectations.
- Limitation of exploration and learning
- Preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction
- Being exposed to the serious ill-treatment of another. For example, domestic violence
- Serious bullying (including cyber bullying)
- Inducing feelings of fear or danger
- Exploitation or corruption

### **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities. These activities may involve:

- Physical contact including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching directly or through clothing.

It may also include:

- Involving children in looking at, or being connected in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual acts, being encouraged to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming another child in preparation for abuse

### **Child Sexual Exploitation:**

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact: it can also occur through the use of technology. Like all forms of child sex abuse, child sexual exploitation:

- can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex;
- can still be abuse even if the sexual activity appears consensual;
- can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity;
- can take place in person or via technology, or a combination of both;

- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence
- may occur without the child or young person's immediate knowledge (e.g. through others copying videos or images they have created and posted on social media)
- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse
- is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the abuse. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources

Some of the following signs may be indicators of child sexual exploitation:

- children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation
- children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends
- children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant
- children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being
- children who misuse drugs and alcohol
- children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late
- children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education

### **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health and/or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Neglect may involve a parent or carer persistently failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical, sexual and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs

### **Specific Child Protection Issues**

All staff should have an awareness of child protection issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking, alcohol abuse, deliberately missing education and sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) put children in danger.

### **Peer on Peer Abuse**

All staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via **peer on peer abuse**. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying)
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- sexual violence and sexual harassment
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery)
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as peer on peer abuse). And that it can happen both inside and outside of school and online. It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of peer on peer abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports.

All staff should understand, that even if there are no reports in school it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such it is important if staff have any concerns regarding peer on peer abuse they should speak to their designated safeguarding lead (or alternate).

It is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers, many of which are listed above, that are actually abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as “just banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys” can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

### **Child criminal exploitation: county lines**

Criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity: drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns. Key to identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes, when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism should be considered. Like other forms of abuse and exploitation, county lines exploitation:

- can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years
- can affect any vulnerable adult over the age of 18 years
- can still be exploitation even if the activity appears consensual
- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and is often accompanied by violence or threats of violence
- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and young people or adults
- is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources

### **Serious violence**

All staff should be aware of the indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation (see paragraphs 33-35 Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021).

All staff should be aware of the range of risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence, such as being male, having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school, having experienced child maltreatment and having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery. Advice for schools and colleges is provided in

the Home Office's Preventing youth violence and gang involvement and its Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance.

### **Domestic abuse**

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is: Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result. Domestic abuse affecting young people can also occur within their personal relationships, as well as in the context of their home life.

### **Operation Encompass**

Encompass operates in the majority of police forces across England. It helps police and schools work together to provide emotional and practical help to children. The system ensures that when police are called to an incident of domestic abuse, where there are children in the household who have experienced the domestic incident, the police will inform the key adult (usually the designated safeguarding lead) in school before the child or children arrive at school the following day.

This ensures that the school has up to date relevant information about the child's circumstances and can enable support to be given to the child according to their needs. Police forces not signed up to operation encompass will have their own arrangements in place.

### **National Domestic Abuse Helpline**

Refuge runs the National Domestic Abuse Helpline, which can be called free of charge and in confidence, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247. Its website provides guidance and support for potential victims, as well as those who are worried about friends and loved ones. It also has a form through which a safe time from the team for a call can be booked.

### **Preventing radicalisation**

Children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk should be a part of St Alban's safeguarding approach.

There is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Background factors combined with specific influences such as family and friends may contribute to a child's vulnerability. Similarly, radicalisation can occur through many different methods (such as social media) and settings (such as the internet).

However, it is possible to protect vulnerable people from extremist ideology and intervene to prevent those at risk of radicalisation being radicalised. As with other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) making a referral to the Channel programme.

## **The Prevent duty**

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

The Prevent duty should be seen as part of schools’ and colleges’ wider safeguarding obligations. Designated safeguarding leads and other senior leaders should familiarise themselves with the revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales, especially paragraphs 57-76 which are specifically concerned with schools (and also covers childcare). The guidance is set out in terms of four general themes: Risk assessment, working in partnership, staff training, and IT policies.

## **Mental Health**

All staff should also be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children’s experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following the child protection policy and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

The DfE has published advice and guidance on Preventing and Tackling Bullying, and Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools. In addition, Public Health England has produced a range of resources to support secondary school teachers to promote positive health, wellbeing and resilience among young people including its guidance Promoting children and young people’s emotional health and wellbeing. Its resources include social media, forming positive relationships, smoking and alcohol.

## **Section 3     What school staff should do if they have concerns about a child?**

Staff working with children should maintain an attitude of ‘it could happen here’ where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff should always act in the best interests of the child.

Staff should not assume a colleague or another professional will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe.

If staff have any concerns about a child’s welfare, they should act on them immediately. They should follow their school’s child protection policy and speak to the designated safeguarding

lead (or alternate). In the absence of the designated safeguarding lead staff should speak to a member of the school senior leadership team.

The designated safeguarding lead (or alternate) will generally lead on next steps, including who else, if anyone, in the school should be informed and whether to pass a concern to children's social care and/or the police. In some instances, staff may be expected to support the children's social care assessment process. If this is the case, the designated safeguarding lead (or alternate) will support them.

#### **Section 4 Registration Procedure**

1. Each child and young person should be formally registered within the school. The information includes an information/consent form which their parent/guardian must complete. These forms have vital information about health and emergency contacts and should be kept securely and this information will be stored within the SIMS database.

2. Attendance register: a register should be kept for each session.

Attendance registers should be taken by staff for each teaching session. This is completed electronically via the SIMS registration module. Students who are deemed absent are followed up by the attendance officer who monitors attendance patterns across the school and intervenes appropriately where necessary.

#### **Section 5 Child Protection Representative: Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**

St. Alban's has appointed a child protection representative. If any member of staff has any child safety concerns, they should discuss them with the DSL or one of the second designates. The DSL will take on the following responsibilities:

- Ensuring that the policy is being put into practice
- Being the first point of contact for child protection issues
- Keeping a record of any concerns expressed about child protection issues
- Bringing any child protection concerns to the notice of the Management Committee and contacting the Local Authority if appropriate
- Ensuring that paid staff and volunteers are given appropriate supervision
- Ensuring that everyone involved with the organisation is aware of the identity of the Child Protection Representative.

The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that it is meeting its aims.

#### **Section 6 Trips/Outings**

1. When organising a trip/outing make sure a trip/outing pack is completed. This includes details about the trip and a section for parents/carers to give their consent. These packs must be returned to the school trip coordinator before the event takes place and must be brought on the trip with the completed group information/consent forms. (If a group information/consent form has not already been completed for a child or young person, then it will need to be completed).

2. Ensure that there is adequate insurance for the work and activities.

#### **Personal/Personnel Safety**

- A group of children or young people taking place in an activity should be supervised by a trained instructor or teacher at all times. There may be times during a trip where



students are afforded certain free times. Adequate steps must be put in place to adequately safeguard the students. For example, students must stay within a designated area to allow passive supervision, students must not be on their own and should be with at least one other person etc, Students must inform staff of where they will be etc

- Avoid being alone with an individual child or young person for a long time. If there is a need to be alone with a child or young person (e.g. first aid or he/she is distressed) make sure that another worker knows where you are and why.
- At no time should a volunteer or worker from any external organisation arrange to meet a young person away from the activity without someone else being there. The exception to this will be if the person in question has been through the relevant checks i.e. DBS certificate etc and is recorded on the schools single central record as an approved person

## **Section 7 Child Safety**

1. Make sure that the area you are using for activities is fit for the purpose, e.g. remove furniture/litter, which could cause injury in energetic games.
2. Make sure that all staff and assistants know
  - Where the emergency phone is and how to operate it
  - Where the first aid kit is
  - Who is responsible for First Aid and how to record accidents or injuries in the incident book
  - What to do in the event of a fire or other emergency
3. Once a term there should be a fire practice
4. Do not let children go home without an adult unless the parent has specifically said they may do so. Never let a child go with another adult unless the parent has informed you that this will happen. This is monitored through communication via the main school office who maintain records of how pupils usually travel to and from school

Under normal circumstances, staff should only give a lift home to a young person from group activities if the parents of the young person have specifically asked for them to do so. (If staff are asked to give a young person or child a lift home, they are not obliged to do so, it is left to their discretion).

In the case of trips or outings, it should be made clear if staff cars will be used and where the children or young people will be returned to. Staff need to ensure that they have adequate business cover included in their insurance and inform the office so that their records can be updated

## **Section 8 New Staff**

Teaching staff and support staff are by far the most valuable resource the group has for working with young people. When recruiting and selecting paid workers and volunteers the following steps will be taken:

- Completion of an application form
- An interview by three people from the staff/governors, who will take the final decision
- Identifying reasons for gaps in employment, and other inconsistencies in the application
- Checking of the applicants' identity (passport, driving license, etc)

- Taking up references prior to the person starting work
- Ensuring criminal record checks have been carried out through relevant local agencies approved by the Disclosure and Barring Service
- Taking appropriate advice before employing someone with a criminal record;

## **Training**

It is a great benefit if staff undertake regular training for child protection and safeguarding.

The school can undertake its own in-house training via the schools choice training for trainers programme. The main safeguarding team are all T4T trained and therefore are in a position to lead staff training for Safeguarding and Child Protection, and Online Safety. Formal training takes place every two years, however annual updates should be given with regular training for the Prevent duty or reminders of good practice in staff meetings etc.

For detailed guidance for what staff should or shouldn't do, see section 5.3 'Response to Disclosure' in the Safeguarding policy.

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Signed by J McCall, Chair of Governors:

Date:

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