

# St Charles Catholic Primary School



## Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

**Date policy adopted by Governors: September 2025**  
**Date policy to be reviewed: Autumn 2026**

# **St Charles School Policies**

## **Safeguarding and Child Protection**

(See also Anti-Bullying Policy, Behaviour and Expectations Policy, Safer Recruitment Policy and E-Safety Policy)

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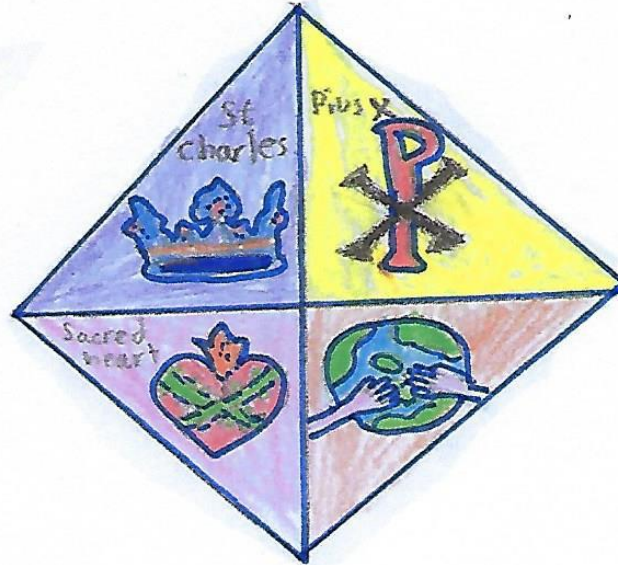
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St Charles Catholic Primary school

# Our Mission Statement

✠ *Love God, Love your Neighbour* ✠



(Design by Claudia 5A - 2020)

*Through God's love, and with guidance from the Holy Spirit, we, the Community of St Charles, share our Catholic faith together. We seek to nurture in our children an understanding of the importance of Christian values and a deep love and lifelong commitment to God.*

*We value the unique strengths and gifts of the children entrusted to us and strive to provide an excellent education, so that through our teaching the children may realise their full potential.*

*In partnership with our families, Governors and Parish, and inspired by our faith, we support the children of St Charles. We encourage them to shine, to have pride in their achievements, to show concern for others and contribute to society as responsible citizens.*

## **Our Aims**

- *To appreciate that we are all uniquely created and loved by God.*
  - *To deepen each child's understanding of the Catholic faith.*
- *To nurture in the children an understanding of Christian values and how these help shape our lives and the lives of others.*
  - *To understand the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation.*
- *To work in partnership with parents and Parish to create a Christian atmosphere enriched through prayer.*
  - *To provide an excellent education so children learn and achieve their potential.*
  - *To respect and care for one another in a happy, welcoming and nurturing community.*
- *To ensure children care and respect others, develop an understanding of the world and contribute to society as responsible citizens.*

## **Introduction**

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 the government publication: 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2013. The guidance also reflects, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2023 and The Prevent Duty 2015 .

The staff and Governing Body of St Charles Catholic Primary School place the highest priority on the responsibilities they have to actively contribute to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils, in accordance with Section 175 of the Education Act 2002.

The Governing Body and staff are committed to providing a safe and stimulating environment which promotes the social, physical and moral development of pupils regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or disability. All reasonable measures are taken to ensure that the risks of harm to pupils' welfare are minimised. Disclosures and allegations of abuse or neglect made by pupils will always be taken seriously and acted upon promptly.

### ***Forms of Child abuse:***

- Physical abuse involves the hitting, shaking or other treatment of a child that can cause actual bodily harm.
- Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child into sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware what is happening. This includes non-contact situations, such as showing children pornography.
- Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of children, such as frightening them, or putting them in positions of danger. It is also an abuse to convey to children the feeling that they are worthless or unloved.
- Children are abused also if they are neglected. This could involve failure to provide proper food and warmth, but it might also be failure to see the emotional well-being of the child.
- Exploitation. Abuse might not just occur in the home, but it may also occur outside of the home environment, even online. Exploitation can include instances where a child or young person may be groomed to become involved in sexual or criminal activity.

### ***Mental and Physical health.***

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children with mental and physical health concerns is defined as:

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

The Local Authority (LA), Head Teacher and Governing Body of St Charles will ensure that Disclosure and Barring (DBS) checks are completed on all adults who have regular or the potential to have unsupervised access to pupils and all staff are up to date, and will ensure the maintenance of a single central record.

The Governing Body, staff and volunteers are committed to fostering an ethos which:

- listens to and values all pupils;
- encourages and supports parents/carers and works in partnership with them;
- ensures all staff and volunteers are aware of signs and symptoms of abuse, know the correct procedure for referring concerns or allegations and receive appropriate training to enable them to carry out these requirements;
- promotes the importance of effective partnership working with other agencies.

The atmosphere within St Charles School is one that encourages all children to do their best. We respect our children and provide opportunities that enable them to make decisions for themselves.

We recognise that abuse, neglect and exploitation can result in underachievement. We strive to ensure that all our children make good educational progress.

Our teaching of personal, social and health education and citizenship, as part of the national curriculum, helps to develop appropriate attitudes in our children, and makes them aware of the impact of their decisions on others. We also teach them how to recognise different risks in different situations, and how to behave in response to them. The Year 6 'Relationships Conference' runs each year and is positively commended on by pupils, staff and parents. Other subjects, such as ICT and RE, are also used to teach children about keeping themselves safe and what they should do if they feel anxious or scared about a situation they find themselves in. Children are encouraged to speak to **any** member of staff they feel comfortable telling.

### **Aims of this policy**

To ensure that safeguarding and child protection procedures are in place which must be followed by all school staff in cases of concern regarding safeguarding or child protection, in accordance with national guidance and LA locally agreed procedures.

To raise the awareness of both teaching and non-teaching staff of their role in safeguarding and child protection and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible threats to the welfare of pupils including abuse. This also includes Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) (See appendix 8).

To support pupils' development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence.

To emphasise the need for good levels of communication between all members of staff.

To promote effective working relationships with other agencies, including the Police and Family Services.

To understand procedure so an investigation can be take place as soon as possible and support put in place as appropriate.

### **Protected Characteristics**

The Equality Act 2010 aims to prevent discrimination. It is illegal to discriminate against people based on nine protected characteristics:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race:
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

No form of discrimination is tolerated at St Charles Catholic Primary School, but it is particularly important that children are taught about these protected characteristic groups and the importance of showing respect to people within these groups. We also ensure that our curriculum is planned and delivered in order that children learn about these protected characteristics in an age-appropriate manner.

## **The Role of the School Designated Lead (SDL)**

The School Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) (Paula Byrne) is the first point of contact for any member of the school staff who has a concern about the safety and wellbeing of a pupil. The DSL is also responsible for online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place.

The DSL deputy (Fred Fowle) is the first point of contact in the absence of the DSL to avoid any unnecessary delays in responding to a child/young person's needs.

The DSL and Deputy are required to undertake child protection training every two years with an annual update. S/he should supplement this training by attending workshops which are provided by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

The DSL should;

- have the skills and ability to identify signs of abuse.
- know how to refer concerns to the appropriate investigating agencies.
- Maintain detailed and accurate written records of child protection concerns and ensure they are kept secure.
- Offer support, advice and give a level of expertise to all members of the school staff team.
- Ensure that all staff have access to and understand the school Child Protection Policy and the "Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016" document.
- Ensure child protection training is part of the induction for all new staff in the school and that they are also linked into any relevant training.

- Be responsible with the Head teacher for the annual review and update of the School Safeguarding Policy and the presentation of this to the Governing Body.
- Ensure that a copy of the School Child Protection Policy is available for any parents who request to see it.
- Contribute to the Child Protection Conference and Core Group processes by either attending or ensuring the relevant member of staff attends. Provide written reports as required in an appropriate and timely manner.
- Ensure that the Head teacher is updated on a regular basis about all issues and child protection investigations.
- Ensure that relevant safeguarding files are copied and forwarded appropriately when a child/young person transfers to another school.
- Be part of the team who review and monitor any causes of concern relating to pupils which are raised in school.

## **The Role of the Governing Body Including Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Governing Body will ensure that the school has identified a designated senior member of staff for safeguarding and child protection, and a deputy. (Paula Byrne and Fred Fowle)

The Governing Body will identify a nominated member of the Governing Body for safeguarding and child protection. (Sonia Lueiro)

The nominated Governing Body member for safeguarding and child protection, in liaison with the designated senior member of staff, will ensure that the school has an effective safeguarding and child protection policy and clear procedures in place, and that these are known to all members of staff (including supply staff) and volunteers. Newly appointed staff should read and be familiar with the policy and procedures as part of their induction training. In addition to this all staff are made aware of the 'code of conduct' expected of staff as set out in the School's Behaviour and Expectations Policy and also in the School's Staff Handbook.

The Governing Body will receive a report at each meeting from the Head Teacher or designated safeguarding officer on: any changes to the safeguarding and child protection policy or procedures; training undertaken by the designated senior person, other staff, volunteers and Governing Body members; the number of child protection incidents/cases (without detail or name); and how safeguarding issues are addressed through the curriculum. The report will highlight good practice and any gaps/weaknesses and measures to address and improve current policy, procedures and practice where necessary.

In consultation with the LA, the Governing Body will review and update (if appropriate) the safeguarding and child protection policy on an annual basis and ensure a copy is sent to the LA's designated officer.

The Governing Body ensures that 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.

## **Procedures for Safeguarding and Child Protection Referrals**

Staff are asked to read and to understand Part 1 of “Keeping Children Safe in Education” 2025. However, the School understands that this is not enough and that mechanisms must be in place to help staff not just to understand but to be able to discharge their role and responsibilities. This is achieved with annual training for **all** staff, a thorough induction programme for new staff and with effective leadership. *(See Training)*.

Any member of staff, volunteer or visitor to the school who receives a disclosure of abuse or suspects that abuse may have occurred **must report it immediately** to the designated senior member of staff for safeguarding and child protection, (Paula Byrne– Head of School). After discussing the matter, the member of staff will be asked to make an accurate record on CPOMS and may also be asked to use one or more of the following forms. This must be done within 24 hours of the disclosure.

***Skin Map Record Sheet (Appendix 3)***  
***Record of Concern Reporting Sheet (Appendix 4)***

The report must include details of:

- what they have observed and when;
- injuries;
- times when any observations / discussions took place;
- explanations given by the child / adult; recording their and your exact words.
- action taken.

All forms must be completed and dated by the member of staff reporting the concern and then given to the Child Protection Officer to be securely filed.

Staff should refer to the ‘Guidance for Staff’ sheets which give guidance on identifying children at risk and what to do if a child discloses information. *(See appendices 1& 2)*

**Every member of staff has an individual responsibility for safeguarding and child protection.** Where there is concern about a pupil’s welfare and the designated senior person (also Head of School) is not available the Assistant Head should be informed. Should the Assistant Head also be unavailable, then another member of the School Leadership Team should be informed.

The designated senior member of staff for safeguarding and child protection must decide whether or not there are sufficient grounds for suspecting significant harm. If so they must contact Children’s Social Care and make a clear statement of:

- the known facts;
- any suspicions or allegations;
- whether or not there has been any contact with the child’s family;

If the DSL feels unsure about what the child has said or what has been said, he can phone Children’s Social Care to discuss concerns. To do so will not constitute a child abuse referral and may well help to clarify a situation.

Telephone referrals to Family and Children Services will be confirmed in writing within 48 hours, using the inter-agency referral form.

The designated senior member of staff for safeguarding and child protection will discuss their concerns with parents/carers and advise them of a referral to Family and Children Services, except in circumstances where there is a concern about sexual abuse or where there are concerns that contacting the parents will place the child at increased risk of harm.

Where he is in any doubt, the designated senior member of staff will discuss with appropriate members of staff, or contact Family and Children Support and Child Protection Advisers within Family and Children Services. Under no circumstances should the situation be left to drift beyond the day that the concern is first raised.

The designated senior person for child protection will assist the investigating agencies to make enquiries into concerns about a pupil's welfare. This will include ensuring that the school is represented at multi-agency meetings including Child Protection Conferences and that reports/information about the child are provided as required. In preparation for these meetings the Designated Child Protection Officer will ask staff to complete an Information request form (See *Appendix 6*).

The designated senior person for safeguarding and child protection will be responsible for co-ordinating action and liaising with other agencies and support services over child protection and other safeguarding issues.

**Confidentiality must be maintained and information relating to individual pupils/families shared with staff on a strictly need to know basis.**

It is understood that concerns about significant harm may arise about children who already have an allocated social worker. In these circumstances the allocated social worker (or the duty social worker if the allocated social worker is unavailable) will be contacted by the designated senior officer. This will include ensuring the allocated social worker is informed where a pupil who is the subject of a Child Protection Plan is absent from the school and where it has not been possible to contact the parents/carers in line with "first day call back" concerning pupil absence.

Where pupils are "looked after" any absence will be followed up by the school contacting the carers (Foster Carers, or key worker in the residential children's home) and the allocated social worker.

**Identifying children who may be suffering significant harm**

Teachers and other adults in school are well placed to observe any physical, emotional or behavioural signs which indicate that a child may be suffering significant harm. The relationships between staff, pupils, parents and the public which foster respect, confidence and trust can lead to disclosures of abuse, and/or school staff being alerted to concerns.

All forms of abuse must be investigated immediately so that help and support can be put in place as soon as possible.

**Definitions**

As in the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, a **child** is anyone who has not yet reached his/her 18th birthday. **Harm** means ill-treatment or impairment of health and development, including, for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another; **Development** means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development; **Health** includes physical and mental health; **Ill-treatment** includes sexual abuse and other forms of ill-treatment which are not physical.

**Abuse and Neglect** are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them, or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

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

**Sexual Abuse** Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The 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 outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. Safeguarding Policy 2015  
Ms J. Lorimer

**Emotional Abuse** Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

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

- provide adequate food and clothing, shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caretakers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs. (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010) Safeguarding Policy 2015 Ms J. Lorimer

## **Domestic Abuse**

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.

Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

## **CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING**

All staff should be aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school and/or can occur between children outside of these environments. This includes on-line abuse. All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and serious youth violence.

It is **not** the responsibility of the school staff to investigate welfare concerns or determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation. All staff, however, have a duty to recognise concerns and maintain an open mind. Accordingly, all concerns regarding the welfare of pupils will be recorded and discussed with the designated senior person with responsibility for child protection (or another senior member of staff in the absence of the designated person) prior to any discussion with parents.

All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking and or alcohol misuse, deliberately missing education and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos can be signs that children are at risk.

## **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation**

### **Definition**

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce,

manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CSE and CCE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation.

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. In some cases, the abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increased status) of the perpetrator or facilitator. The abuse 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. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual and it should be noted exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online.

### **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)**

Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others.

Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence, or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or begin to carry a knife for a sense of protection from harm from others. As children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves, their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised by adults and professionals, (particularly older children), and they are not treated as victims despite the harm they have experienced. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to.

It is important to note that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys. The indicators may not be the same, however professionals should be aware that girls are at risk of criminal exploitation too. It is also important to note that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or nonpenetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet.

CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence, and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge e.g. through others sharing videos or images of them on social media.

CSE can affect any child, who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex. Some children may not realise they are being exploited e.g. they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.

### **Staff must immediately report:**

- any suspicion that a child is injured, marked, or bruised in a way which is not readily attributable to the normal knocks or scrapes received in play
- any explanation given which appears inconsistent or suspicious
- any behaviours which give rise to suspicions that a child may have suffered harm (e.g. worrying drawings or play)
- any concerns that a child may be suffering from inadequate care, ill treatment, or emotional maltreatment
- any concerns that a child is presenting signs or symptoms of abuse or neglect
- any significant changes in a child's presentation, including non-attendance
- any hint or disclosure of abuse from any child
- any concerns regarding person(s) who may pose a risk to children (e.g. living in a household with children present)

### **Responding to Disclosure**

Disclosures or information may be received from pupils, parents or other members of the public. School recognises that those who disclose such information may do so with difficulty, having chosen carefully to whom they will speak. Accordingly, all staff will handle disclosures with sensitivity. Cause for Concern forms (Appendix 4) should be handed in immediately to DSL upon completion.

Such information cannot remain confidential and staff will immediately communicate what they have been told to the designated person and make a contemporaneous record.

### **Principles**

Staff will not investigate but will, wherever possible, elicit enough information to pass on to the designated person in order that s/he can make an informed decision of what to do next.

Staff will:

- listen to and take seriously any disclosure or information that a child may be at risk of harm
- try to ensure that the person disclosing does not have to speak to another member of school staff
- clarify the information
- try to keep questions to a minimum and of an 'open' nature e.g. 'Can you tell me what happened?' rather than 'Did x hit you?'
- try not to show signs of shock, horror or surprise
- not express feelings or judgements regarding any person alleged to have harmed the child
- explain sensitively to the person that they have a responsibility to refer the information to the senior designated person
- reassure and support the person as far as possible
- explain that only those who 'need to know' will be told
- explain what will happen next and that the person will be involved as appropriate

## **What to do if you are concerned.**

If a child makes an allegation or disclosure of abuse against an adult or other child or young person, it is important that you:

- Stay calm and listen carefully.
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Do not investigate or ask leading questions.
- Let them know that you will need to tell someone else.
- Do not promise to keep what they have told you a secret.
- Inform your Senior Designated Person as soon as possible.
- Make a written record of the allegation, disclosure or incident which you must sign, date and record your position.

## **Early Help Assessment - Vulnerable children**

What do we mean by Early Help Assessment?

Early Help Assessment means taking action to support a child, young person or their family early in the life of a problem, as soon as it emerges. It can be required at any stage in a child's life from pre-birth to adulthood, and applies to any problem or need that the family cannot deal with or meet on their own. It also applies to all children and young people, with any form of need.

Early Help requires that agencies should work together as soon as a problem emerges or a need is identified to ensure the child gets the right response, and the right services, from the right people at the right time. The School's aim is to meet need early and avoid a problem escalating or the need increasing.

Early Help is provided to prevent or reduce the need for specialist interventions unless they are absolutely the correct response to meet the need and resolve the problem.

Early Help can be provided in the most complex of circumstances as well as the simplest. Early help means responding promptly if a child is at immediate risk of harm (or has other significant or complex needs) as much as it means responding to a need which only requires advice or guidance.

When such children have been identified by the School they are discussed at a half-termly 'Teams around the School' (TATS) meeting. This group consists of representatives from the School, (DSL, Head, SENCO, CCS Play therapist) and outside agencies (NHS School Nurse, CAMHS and LA Early Help). The group decides on the best course of action and which services are best equipped to be working with the family.

It is essential that ALL staff are able to identify and monitor vulnerable children in the School and to know when they may need early interventions. This includes children who frequently miss/go missing from education, home or care. Have experienced multiple suspensions and are at risk of being permanently excluded from school. Has a parent or carer in custody or is affected by parental offending. It is generally accepted that children with SEN and disabilities are potentially more vulnerable to be abused or neglected. Staff, therefore, should be particularly aware of these children in the School.

## **Whistle Blowing**

If you are concerned that a member of staff (including supply staff) or an adult in a position of trust poses a danger to a child or young person or that they might be abusing a child or young person you should report your concerns to the Head of School/Executive Head. Where those concerns relate to the Head of School/Executive Head, this should be reported to the Chair of Governors using the schools Whistle blowing policy.

**NSPCC Whistle-Blowing helpline number is 0800 028 0285**

## **Staff Conduct Towards Children**

We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.

If teachers suspect that a child may be a victim of abuse, they should not try to investigate, but should immediately inform the Designated Child Protection Officer and Head teacher about their concerns. Staff must not keep to themselves any information about abuse which a child gives them. They are required by law to pass this information on.

All staff and volunteers should be aware of their duty to raise concerns, should they exist, about the management of safeguarding and child protection, which may include the actions of colleagues. Any such concerns should be raised with the Executive Head Teacher or Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Any member of staff may raise concerns directly with Family and Children Services if they feel an allegation has not been investigated appropriately and in line with the School's procedures as set out in this policy.

Local procedures, and the Government guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children, Appendix 5: Procedures for Managing Allegations against People who Work with Children' and DCSF Guidance 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education, Chapter 5: Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and other Staff' and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2020) will be followed.

Any concerns/allegations about adults who work in the school will be taken seriously and be dealt with immediately by the Head Teacher. He/she, after consultation with the Chair of Governors and, should it be deemed necessary, the Diocesan Child protection Officer, may contact and consult with the designated senior officer for safeguarding and child protection within Schools Directorate, Hilary Shaw/Di Donaldson, Principal Education Welfare Officers (telephone no. 020 7598 4876). The LA Designated Officer (LADO), Head of Family Services Performance Audit and Review **must** be informed. The LADO will record the consultation and will advise on the action to be taken. (Note: if the LADO is not available, there must be no delay in seeking advice from a Family Support and Child Protection Adviser.)

Due recognition will be paid to the stress caused by such an allegation and an appropriate approach adopted to balance the needs of the pupil and support for the member of staff whilst ensuring that the wellbeing of the child is always paramount.

If a member of staff wishes to raise a safeguarding concern relating to the conduct of the Head of School/Executive Head or to refer a matter where an allegation has been made about the Head of school/Executive Head, the member of staff concerned should discuss the matter with an alternative member of the Senior Leadership team in the school. Then contact should be made with either the PEWO (above) or the Local Authority Designated Officer (see paragraph 4.4). The PEWO will inform relevant senior officers within Schools Directorate.

In order to minimise the risk of harm to pupils and of accusations being made against staff as a result of their daily contact with pupils, members of the Governing Body should ensure, through the Head of school/Executive Head, that all staff are aware of safe working practice and are provided with and adhere to guidance and training on effective behaviour management. This is revisited at the beginning of every term as part of a whole staff training day.

## **Supply Staff**

Concerns about supply staff, raised by staff or parents should be processed in the same way as all other members of staff. Any concerns must be reported to the DSL as soon as possible. Upon arrival at the school all supply staff are expected to read and sign the guidance and acknowledgement sheet (See appendix 5). They must also read the Covid-19 advice and expectation of the School sheet (See appendix 6). Both of these documents are found in the main office.

## **Positive Handling and Using Reasonable Force To Restrain Pupils**

What is positive handling?

Positive handling is the positive application of force with the intention of protecting the child from harming themselves/others or seriously damaging property. Positive handling should avert danger by preventing or deflecting a child's action or perhaps by removing a physical object, which could be used to harm him/herself or others. It is only needed if a child appears to be unable to exercise self-control of emotions and behaviour. Relevant staff at St Charles have had Positive Handling training and will be called upon should the need arise.

There may be times when adults, in the course of their school duties, have to intervene physically in order to restrain a child. The Education Act 1996 allows all teachers to use reasonable force to prevent a pupil from:

- committing a criminal offence
- injuring themselves or others
- damaging property
- acting in a way that is counter to maintaining good order and discipline at the school.

### ***What Is Reasonable Force?***

- The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.
- Force is usually used either to control or restrain. This can range from guiding a pupil to safety by the arm through to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a student needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.

- 'Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.
- As mentioned above, schools generally use force to control pupils and to restrain them. Control means either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of a classroom.
- Restraint means to hold back physically or to bring a pupil under control. It is typically used in more extreme circumstances, for example when two pupils are fighting and refuse to separate without physical intervention.
- School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury, but in extreme cases it may not always be possible to avoid injuring the pupil.

### ***Who can use Reasonable Force?***

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force. (Section 93, Education and Inspections Act 2006)

This power applies to any member of staff at the school. It can also apply to people whom the head of School/Executive Head has temporarily put in charge of pupils such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit.

### ***When can Reasonable Force be used?***

- Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder
- in a school, force is used for two main purposes – to control pupils or to restrain them
- the decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances.

The following list is not exhaustive but provides some examples of situations where reasonable force can and cannot be used.

#### ***Schools can use Reasonable Force to:***

- remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so
- prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit
- prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others
- prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

#### **Schools cannot:**

- use force as a punishment - it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

## ***Application of force - types of control and restraint***

If a member of staff decides to physically intervene there are several forms that this could take. It might involve staff:

- physically interposing between students
- blocking a student's path
- holding
- pushing
- pulling
- leading a student by the hand or arm
- a student away by placing a hand in the centre of the back; or, (in extreme circumstances) using more restrictive holds.

As a staff, we recognise that further advice may be needed on the issue of 'restrictive holds', however we accept that we should not act in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury to the child. **Advice from the LEA suggests that it is best to restrain the child as an 'enveloping process', preventing the child moving arms and legs and that it is sometimes helpful to restrain from behind.**

Staff should **not attempt** any of the following:

- holding a student around the neck, or by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict a student's ability to breathe
- slapping, punching or kicking a student
- twisting or forcing limbs against a joint
- tripping up a student
- holding or pulling by hair or ear
- holding a pupil face down on the ground
- touching or holding a student in a way that might be considered indecent.

### **Informing Parents when Reasonable Force has been used on their child.**

The School will always inform parents when there has been a need to use reasonable force to restrain their child.

### **Pupils complaints about Reasonable Force being used upon them.**

- All complaints about the use of force will be thoroughly, speedily and appropriately investigated.
- Where a member of staff has acted within the law – that is, they have used reasonable force in order to prevent injury, damage to property or disorder – this will provide a defence to any criminal prosecution or other civil or public law action.
- When a complaint is made the onus is on the person making the complaint to prove that his/her allegations are true – it is not for the member of staff to show that he/she has acted reasonably.
- Suspension will not be an automatic response when a member of staff has been accused of using excessive force. The School will refer to the "Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and Other Staff" guidance where an allegation of using excessive force is

made against a teacher. This guidance makes clear that a person must not be suspended automatically, or without careful thought.

- The School will consider carefully whether the circumstances of the case warrant a person being suspended until the allegation is resolved or whether alternative arrangements are more appropriate.
- If a decision is taken to suspend a teacher, the school will ensure that the member of staff has access to a named contact who can provide support.
- The School's Governing body will always consider whether a teacher has acted within the law when reaching a decision on whether or not to take disciplinary action against the teacher.
- As employers, schools and local authorities have a duty of care towards their employees. It is important that the Schools provides appropriate pastoral care to any member of staff who is subject to a formal allegation following a use of force incident.

### **Alternatives to using physical force to control or restrain pupils.**

The School would always hope that we could avoid using physical force to control or restrain students.

As a staff, we always try to defuse a potentially difficult situation or try to support a student so that difficult situations do not arise.

Our whole school approach to managing pupil behaviour allows us to control student behaviour, even very difficult and challenging behaviour, without the need for aggressive confrontation.

With certain students, whose behaviour is difficult, we try to ensure that all staff are aware of potential problem areas and also know of agreed strategies to deal with these as part of our whole school approach to managing pupil behaviour.

### **Other physical contact with children.**

It is not illegal to touch a pupil. There are occasions when physical contact, other than reasonable force, with a pupil is proper and necessary.

Examples of where touching a pupil might be proper or necessary:

- holding the hand of the child at the front/back of the line when going to assembly or when walking together around the school
- when comforting a distressed pupil
- when a pupil is being congratulated or praised
- to demonstrate how to use a musical instrument
- to demonstrate exercises or techniques during PE lessons or sports coaching
- to give first aid.

### **Supporting Children**

**(See also Anti-Bullying Policy and Behaviour and Expectations policy)**

*Staff of the school will support all pupils by:*

- implementing the agreed Behaviour and Expectations Policy and the Anti-Bullying Policy;
- encouraging the development of self-esteem and resilience in every aspect of school life whilst never condoning aggression or bullying;
- taking active steps to prevent bullying and discrimination; promoting a caring, safe and positive environment;
- liaising and working together with all other agencies, in line with agreed procedures;
- report to the Child Protection Officer or the Head Teacher any concerns they have about the safety of any child in their care.

## **Child on Child abuse**

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

All staff should understand, that even if there are no reports in the 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 deputy).

It is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children, many of which are listed below, 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 on child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children;
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse);
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party;
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery);
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm; and

- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

All staff should be clear as to the School policy and procedures with regard to child on child abuse and the important role they have to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it.

## **Context and Definition**

Peer (child) abuse is behaviour by an individual or group, intending to physically, sexually or emotionally hurt others. All staff should recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. All staff should be aware of safeguarding issues from peer abuse including:

- bullying (including online bullying)
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- sexual violence and sexual harassment
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

This abuse can:

Be motivated by perceived differences e.g. on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or other differences

- Result in significant, long lasting and traumatic isolation, intimidation or violence to the victim; vulnerable adults are at particular risk of harm Children or young people who harm others may have additional or complex needs e.g.:

- Significant disruption in their own lives
- Exposure to domestic abuse or witnessing or suffering abuse
- Educational under-achievement
- Involved in crime

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is the first priority of any education setting, but emotional bullying can sometimes be more damaging than physical. School staff, alongside their Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or Deputy, have to make their own judgements about each specific case and should use this policy guidance to help.

## **Recognising child on child abuse**

An assessment of an incident between children should be completed and consider:

- Chronological and developmental ages of everyone involved
- Difference in their power or authority in relation to age, race, gender, physical, emotional or intellectual vulnerability
- All alleged physical and verbal aspects of the behaviour and incident
- Whether the behaviour involved inappropriate sexual knowledge or motivation

- What was the degree of physical aggression, intimidation, threatening behaviour or bribery?
- The effect on the victim
- Any attempts to ensure the behaviour and incident is kept a secret
- The child or young person's motivation or reason for the behaviour, if they admit that it occurred
- Whether this was a one-off incident, or longer in duration It is important to deal with a situation of child on child abuse immediately and sensitively. It is necessary to gather the information as soon as possible to get the true facts. It is equally important to deal with it sensitively and think about the language used and the impact of that language on both the children and the parents when they become involved. Avoid language that may create a 'blame' culture and leave a child labelled. Staff will talk to the children in a calm and consistent manner. Staff will not be prejudiced, judgmental, dismissive or irresponsible in dealing with such sensitive matters.

## **Taking Action**

All staff should reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

- Always take complaints seriously
- Gain a statement of facts from the pupil(s)
- Assess needs of victim and alleged perpetrator
- Consider referral to Police or Social Care • Contribute to multi-agency assessments
- Convene a risk management meeting
- Record all incidents and all action taken 7.2. Recording sexualised behaviour
- Be clear, explicit and non-avoidant, and avoid vague statements or euphemisms
- Record as soon as possible, as you can quickly forget or confuse detail
- Follow the prompts on your safeguarding and child protection recording form
- Use proper names for body parts but record exactly any language or vocabulary used by the child. Use the child's exact words in quotation marks.
- Note where and when the incident happened and whether anyone else was around.

## **Gather the Facts**

Speak to all the young people involved separately, gain a statement of facts from them and use consistent language and open questions for each account. Ask the young people to tell you what happened. Use open questions, 'where, when, why, who'. (What happened? Who observed the incident? What was seen? What was heard? Did anyone intervene?). Do not interrogate or ask leading questions.

Consider the Intent Has this been a deliberate or contrived situation for a young person to be able to harm another?

## **Decide on your next course of action**

If you believe any young person to be at risk of significant harm you must report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately; they will follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. If MASH and the police intend to pursue this further, they may ask to interview the young

people in school or they may ask for parents to come to school to be spoken to. It is important to be prepared for every situation and the potential time it may take.

### Informing parents/carers

The best way to inform parents/carers is face to face. Although this may be time consuming, the nature of the incident and the type of harm/abuse a young person may be suffering can cause fear and anxiety to parents/carers whether their child is the child who was harmed or who harmed another.

### **After care**

It is important that following the incident the young people involved continue to feel supported and receive help even if they have stated that they are managing the incident. Sometimes the feelings of remorse, regret or unhappiness may occur at a much later stage than the incident. It is important to ensure that the young people do not engage in any further harmful behaviour either towards someone else or to themselves as a way of coping (e.g. self-harm). For this reason, regular reviews with the young people following the incident(s) are imperative.

## **Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children**

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. It can occur online and offline (both physically and verbally). It is more likely that girls will be the victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment and more likely it will be perpetrated by boys. Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will find the experience stressful and distressing. This will affect their educational attainment. Staff will share any concerns about or knowledge of such incidents immediately with the DSL with a view to ensuring that support systems are in place for victims (and alleged perpetrators). We take these incidents seriously and ensure that victims are protected, offered appropriate support and every effort is made to ensure their education is not disrupted. Where necessary, we will work with relevant external agencies to address the issue, which may include a referral to MASH and reporting to the Police. Further information is available in 'Part 5: Child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment' of DfE guidance "[Keeping children safe in education](#)".

## **Children with SEND**

We acknowledge that children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. We are aware that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. This can include assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration; children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying- without outwardly showing any signs; and communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers. Training is provided on a regular basis by the LADO or the designated Safeguard Lead where this aspect of safeguarding and how to recognise these signs are covered.

If a pupil discloses that they have witnessed domestic abuse or it is suspected that they may be living in a household which is affected by family violence, this will be referred to the Designated

Safeguarding Lead as a safeguarding issue. The School will ensure that appropriate pastoral care as well as academic support is provided for the child/ren.

The School also acknowledges the additional need for support and protection of children who are vulnerable by virtue of homelessness, refugee/asylum seeker status, the effects of substance abuse within the family, those who are young carers, mid-year admissions, pupils who are excluded from school and pupils where English is an additional language, particularly for very young children, using a translator if necessary.

### **Safeguarding children with Mental Health concerns**

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 their child protection policy and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

### **Anti-Bullying**

Our school policy on anti-bullying is set out in a separate document 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.

### **Racist Incidents**

Our policy on racist incidents is set out separately (See Anti-bullying Policy), and acknowledges that repeated racist incidents or a single serious incident may lead to consideration under child protection procedures. We keep a record of racist incidents.

### **Health and Safety**

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.

## **Preventing Radicalisation and Extremism. (See also Prevent Policy)**

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

Extremism is defined as the holding of extreme political or religious views.

The Governing Body of St Charles School has a zero tolerance approach to extremist behaviour for all school community members. We rely on our strong values to steer our work and ensure the pastoral care of our children protects them from exposure to negative influences.

St Charles School is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all its children. As a school we recognise that safeguarding against radicalisation is no different from safeguarding against any other vulnerability. At St Charles School all staff are expected to uphold and promote the fundamental principles of British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

- Children are encouraged to adopt and live out our Core Christian Values. These complement the key “British Values” of tolerance, respect, understanding, compassion and harmonious living.
- Children are helped to understand the importance of democracy and freedom of speech, through the SEAL (Social, emotional aspects of learning) assemblies and through the elected School Council members.
- Children are taught how to keep themselves safe, in school and when using the internet.
- Children participate in local community events so that they appreciate and value their neighbours and friends who may not share our faith background.
- Children’s wellbeing, confidence and resilience is promoted through our planned curriculum and extra curricular learning opportunities.
- Children are supported in making good choices from a very young age, so they understand the impact and consequences of their actions on others.

## **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, cauterising and scraping the genital area.

(See Appendix 8)

## **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.

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.

## **Honour Based Violence**

Honour based violence' is a crime or incident, which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community'. It is important to be alert to signs of distress and indications such as self-harm, absence from school and truancy, infections resulting from female genital mutilation, isolation from peers, being monitored by family, not participating in school activities, unreasonable restrictions at home. Where it is suspected that a child/young person is at risk from Honour based violence St Charles Primary School will report those concerns to the appropriate agency in order to prevent this form of abuse taking place.

## **Looked After Children – (See also separate policy)**

As part of the arrangements for monitoring the effectiveness of the role, governing bodies should, as a minimum, receive an annual report from the designated teacher. The report should enable the governing body to make overall judgements about the designated teacher role in the context of wider school planning in relation to:

- any workload issues arising as a result of the number of looked after children on roll at the school and the number of local authorities which are involved;
- levels of progress made by looked after children who are currently or have been on roll within the past twelve months in relation to all children at the school (i.e. educational, social and emotional progress);
- whether the pattern of attendance and exclusions for looked after children is different to that of all children;
- any process or planning issues arising from personal education plans (PEPs);
- whether any are identified as gifted and talented and how those needs are being met; whether any have special educational needs (SEN) and whether those needs are being met through statements or School Action or School Action Plus.

***(Taken from 'The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after children Statutory guidance for school governing bodies' – dcsf)***

### **The role of virtual school heads**

The roles of the Virtual School Heads have been extended to include a non-statutory responsibility to promote the educational achievement of all children in kinship care, working closely with the school attended by LAC.

### **Alternative provision**

If a pupil needs to attend an alternative provision setting, the school will obtain written information from the alternative provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at their establishment.

This includes written confirmation that the alternative provider will inform St Mary's as the commissioning school of any arrangements that may put the child at risk (i.e., staff changes), so that we can ensure itself that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on new staff."

The school will ensure that we are informed at all times where a child is based during school hours, including having records of the address of the AP and any satellite sites that a child may attend.

Reviews of the placement will be frequent in order to have reassurance that the child is regularly attending and the placement is safe and meets the child's needs.

If a safeguarding concern arises, the placement will be immediately reviewed and terminated if necessary.

### **Children who are Absent from Education**

Children being absent from education for unexplainable and/or persistent absences can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. It is important that the school responds quickly to persistently absent pupils and children missing education. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

At St Charles we have half termly attendance meetings with the Executive Head, Head of School, Assistant Head and the School administrator to identify pupils with low attendance and who may be at risk. Data is critinsed to identify genuine concerns and trends. Letters and/or meetings are held with parents of such children and data shared with Governors.

Administration staff and teachers know to report immediate concerns to the DSL.

### **The Role of the Curriculum**

Our curriculum promotes respect, tolerance and diversity. Children are encouraged to express themselves through discussions, debates and consultations. The RE (Religious Education), PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) and Citizenship provision is embedded across the curriculum, and underpins the ethos of our school. Children learn about all major faiths and visit places of worship wherever possible. They are also taught about how to stay safe when using the internet.

### **The school community will therefore:**

Work to establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk and are always listened to.

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.

Ensure that all children know there is an adult in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.

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.

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.

## **Online Safety**

The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues. Child sexual exploitation; radicalisation; sexual predation: technology often provides the platform that facilitates harm. An effective approach to online safety empowers a school or college to protect and educate the whole school or college community in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any incident where appropriate. The Governors and the Senior Leadership Team regularly review the effectiveness of school filters and monitoring systems as we recognise the importance of safeguarding children from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material, and we understand that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues.

Our approach to online safety is based on addressing the following 4 categories of risk:

**Content** – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, such as pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation and extremism, this also includes misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories our pupils may be harmed by.

**Contact** – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users, such as peer-to-peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes

**Conduct** – personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, such as making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography), sharing other explicit images and online bullying;

**Commerce** – risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams

The following key measures have been adopted to help ensure that our pupils are not exposed to unsuitable material:

- Our internet access is purchased from the LGFL/SENSO which provides a service designed for pupils including a filtering system intended to prevent access to material inappropriate for children;
- Children using the internet will normally be working in the classroom or Computer Suite, during lesson time and will be supervised by an adult (usually the class teacher) at all times;
- Staff will check that the sites pre-selected for pupil use are appropriate to the age and maturity of pupils;
- Staff will be particularly vigilant when pupils are undertaking their own search and will check that the children are following the agreed search plan;
- Pupils will be taught to use e-mail and the internet responsibly in order to reduce the risk to themselves and others;
- A copy of 'Rules for Responsible ICT Use' is posted near every computer system in the school.
- The ICT co-ordinator will monitor the effectiveness of internet access strategies;
- The SLT will ensure that the policy is implemented effectively;
- Methods to quantify and minimise the risk of pupils being exposed to inappropriate material will be reviewed on a regular basis in consultation with colleagues from other schools and advice from the LA, our Internet Service Provider and the DfE.

To date the above measures have been highly effective. However, due to the international scale and linked nature of information available via the internet, it is not possible to guarantee that particular types of material will never appear on a computer screen.

**Neither the school nor The Bi-borough Local Authority can accept liability for the material accessed, or any consequences thereof.**

A most important element of our Rules for Responsible Internet Use is that pupils will be taught to tell a teacher **immediately** if they encounter any material that makes them feel uncomfortable. If there is an incident in which a pupil is exposed to offensive or upsetting material the school will wish to respond to the situation quickly and on a number of levels. Responsibility for handling incidents involving children will be taken by the ICT Co-ordinator and the Child Protection Officer in consultation with the Head Teacher and the pupil's class teacher. All the teaching staff will be made aware of the incident.

- If one or more pupils discover (view) inappropriate material our first priority will be to give them appropriate support. The pupil's parents/carers will be informed and given an explanation of the course of action the school has taken. The school aims to work with parents/carers and pupils to resolve any issue;

- If staff or pupils discover unsuitable sites the ICT co-ordinator will be informed. The ICT co-ordinator will report the URL (address) and content to the Internet Service Provider and the LA; if it is thought that the material is illegal, after consultation with the ISP and LA, the site will be referred to the Internet Watch Foundation and the police.
- St Charles follows the LA's advice not to use Google as a search engine. This particular resource is more difficult to filter. Alternative search engines are used.
- At St Charles pupils are not allowed to access the YouTube Website as inappropriate material can be accessed. Teachers, however, may use the site as part of their teaching but care must be taken to ensure pupils are not exposed to the inappropriate material.

Pupils are expected to play their part in reducing the risk of viewing inappropriate material by obeying the Rules of Responsible Internet Use which have been designed to help protect them from exposure to internet sites carrying offensive material. If pupils abuse the privileges of access to the internet or use of e-mail facilities by failing to follow the rules they have been taught or failing to follow the agreed search plan when given the privilege of undertaking their own internet search, then sanctions consistent with our School Behaviour and Expectations Policy will be applied. This may involve informing the parents/carers. Teachers or the Coordinator may also consider whether access to the internet should be denied for a period of time.

Parental permission is required before pupils are permitted to use the internet. Parental permission is also required before a child's image can be used on the school website or other forms of media available to the public, ie, newspaper articles proclaiming school sports achievements.

Pupils are required to sign an E-Safety Agreement Form stating that they promise to keep the rules as stated in the 'Rules for Responsible ICT use'.

All parental permissions and pupils agreement forms are held in a school register and kept by the Coordinator. A parental permission class list is available in each class for easy reference.

As part of the logging on process all pupils are required to read and accept the School's Safe User agreement. Failure to do so will result in the PC closing logging off.

## **Filtering and Monitoring**

The DSL has the responsibility to manage the School's filtering and monitoring system

The School uses the London Grid For Learning (LGFL)/SENSO for its filter system. The School has effective monitoring strategies in place and the DSL/Deputy regularly monitor the filtering system to ensure its effectiveness and reliability. Data gathered after monitoring is presented to Governor's at least annually.

All staff are aware of their responsibility with regard to monitoring and filtering.

The School takes great care to block harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning

## **Record Keeping**

Any member of staff or volunteer receiving a disclosure of abuse, or noticing possible abuse, must make a verbal report and then a written report on CPOMS, informing all appropriate members of staff, including the DSL. Reports should note what was seen or said (recording the pupil's [or other person's] own words as far as possible) and giving the date, time and location. Information should be recorded in non-judgmental, non-emotive terms. All records must be dated and signed. The School's safeguarding Reporting Sheets (*See appendices 3-4*) should be used.

All hand-written records must be retained by the DSL, even if they are subsequently typed up in a more formal report.

All records relating to child protection concerns must be kept in a secure place and will remain confidential. They do not form part of the pupil's educational records and are not required to be disclosed to parents/carers. Any requests from parents'/carers' solicitors to have records disclosed to them **must** be passed to the LA's Legal Services Department for advice.

Files relating to concerns about pupils will include a chronology of incidents and subsequent actions/outcomes.

Staff must ensure that they monitor closely the welfare, progress and attendance of pupil's subject to a Child Protection Plan and that they provide information as required by the social worker and the Education Welfare Service.

If a pupil who is the subject of a Child Protection Plan is absent from the school, the normal procedure of a first day call to the home will be followed and the social worker must be informed immediately if no response is received or if no adequate reason is given for the absence.

Where a child moves to another school, the designated senior person for safeguarding and child protection must inform the receiving school immediately by telephone that child protection records exist. The original records must be passed on either by hand or sent by recorded delivery. All existing CPOMS records will also be transferred. In such cases duplicate records must be retained. Duplicate records should be kept securely for ten years.

## **Volunteers**

Any parent or other person/organisation engaged by the school to work in a voluntary capacity with pupils will be subject to all reasonable vetting procedures and Criminal Records Checks.

Under no circumstances a volunteer in respect of whom no checks have been obtained will be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

Volunteers who on an unsupervised basis teach or look after children regularly, or provide personal care on a one-off basis in our school are deemed to be in regulated activity. We will obtain an enhanced DBS certificate (which will include barred list information) for all volunteers who are new to working in regulated activity. Existing volunteers in regulated activity do not have to be re-checked if they have already had a DBS check (which includes barred list information). However, we may conduct a repeat DBS check (which will include barred list information) on any such volunteer should we have any concerns.

All Volunteers will receive an induction which will include safeguarding policies and procedures.

The law has removed supervised volunteers from regulated activity. There is no legal requirement to obtain DBS certificate for volunteers who are not in regulated activity and who are supervised regularly and on ongoing day to day basis by a person who is in regulated activity, but an enhanced DBS check without a barred list check may be requested following a risk assessment.

Further information on checks on volunteers can be found in Part three of the DfE guidance "[Keeping children safe in education](#)".

Volunteers will be subject to the same code of conduct as paid employees of the school.

## **Staff Induction**

All new staff and volunteers receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training at induction (including online safety which includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring)

Inductions are provided by a senior leader and include reference to the following policies,

- child protection policy
- behaviour policy
- staff behaviour policy
- safeguarding response to children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions and/or prolonged periods and
- role of the designated safeguarding lead (including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies).

Copies of these policies can be made available.

## **Staff Training**

All staff receive safeguarding and child protection updates (via email, messaging, staff meetings and Insets), as required, and at least annually, to continue to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. Comprehensive safeguard training, including online safety, (including an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring) are delivered each year as a twilight inset so all staff can attend.

The designated senior person will be expected to attend training events organised by the LA or the Local Safeguarding Children Board every 2 years with an update at least yearly. This person must have inter-agency training and receive 'refresher' training annually.

All members of staff must develop their understanding of the signs and indicators of abuse and access training on an annual basis. *Next training session at St Charles us due in November 2023.*

Staff attendance at required training will be monitored and recorded by the Head Teacher/Designated senior member of staff. The records will be made available to the Governing Body annually.

## **Parental Involvement**

The school is committed to helping parents/carers understand its responsibility for the welfare of all pupils.

Parents/carers will be made aware of the school's safeguarding and child protection policy, its behaviour and expectations policy and its approach to the prevention of bullying and discrimination as part of information given to them about the school and pre-admission meetings with parents of pupils being taken on roll.

As previously outlined, where possible, concerns about pupils should be discussed with parents/carers in the first instance and the designated senior person should advise parents/carers of the need to make referrals to Family Services, unless to do so would place the pupil at increased risk of significant harm, or in cases where there are concerns about possible sexual abuse.

## **Expectations of Parents to help to ensure child safety.**

The School gate will open at 8.50am each morning and close at 9am. Parents are not permitted to enter the School premises unless they are visiting the school Office. The gates will open again at 3.10pm before the School bell rings at 3.20pm to end the school day. Parents are permitted to collect their child from the exit door nearest to their child's class. Parents are not permitted to enter the building without an invitation or a pre-arranged meeting.

Children attending the Breakfast Club should be accompanied to the dining hall by an adult and handed over to a member of staff on duty. They must not be left at the gate.

No adults are allowed to wait for children on the school premises at any time. If a child is attending an after school club, parents/carer must still wait outside the school gate or return when the club ends. The Head of school or another member of staff will be on duty at the gate at 8.50am and 3.10pm.

Children are not allowed to leave the school during the day unless accompanied by a parent/carer. During these occasions parents/carers must report to the school office and sign them out and, upon their return, sign them in again. They must then wait in the school office for the child to be sent for.

In the interests of safeguarding children all parents/carers who wish to deliver something to their child during the day, such as a PE kit or lunch box, must leave it with a member of staff in the office. They will ensure it gets to their child. Parents/carers must not enter the school during the day.

No child should wait on the school premises after 3.20 p.m. unless the Head of School has been notified. There is no after school supervision so a parent must collect his/her child or children promptly by 3.20pm. If a child is constantly collected late then the Local Education Authority's Educational Welfare Officer will be informed.

Children who have not been collected by 3.20pm will be brought to the school office and wait to be collected.

If a child is participating in an after school club their parent/guardian must wait for them outside the main gate and not on the school grounds. The adult supervising them will bring them to the gate at the end of the session. This is in the interest of child safety.

Parents should refrain from parking or waiting on the yellow zig-zag line directly outside either the main pedestrian gate or the large double car park gates next to the Convent. These areas are designated for the use of the emergency services and must be kept clear at all times. For the same reason parents/guardians should not double park outside the school. In addition to compromising health and safety parents are reminded that these actions are also illegal.

All visitors to the school should report to the office and electronically sign in. They will be given a visitor's sticker displaying their photo. This should be displayed at all times. Before leaving the premises all visitors must electronically sign out. Any official identification must be presented at the office. Visitors failing to do this will be denied access.

If a parent notices a stranger or an adult behaving in a suspicious manner on the school site, they should inform a member of staff immediately.

Any child arriving late must ensure that they have been registered by the class teacher or by the admin staff in the office. This will help to ensure their safety in the event of a fire.

The parent/carer of a child failing to turn up to school by 9.30am and where the school has not been informed of their absence will receive a 'Groupcall' text. Parents must respond to this text immediately by phoning the school to explain their child's absence.

During Assemblies, etc. parents/carers are expected to abide by the School's policy of not sharing images of children other than their own on social media, such as Facebook. All parents are asked to sign an agreement form to this effect.

## **Extended Schools and Before and After School Activities**

Where the School premises is hired or rented out to organisations or individuals (for example to community groups, sports associations, and service providers to run community or extra-curricular activities) it is the School's responsibility to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to keep children safe. This includes after school clubs.

When services or activities are provided by the school, the School's own arrangements for child protection will apply. Where services or activities are provided separately, the School will seek assurance that the provider concerned has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place and ensure that there are arrangements in place for the provider to liaise with the School on these matters where appropriate. This applies regardless of whether or not the children are on the school roll.

The governing body will also ensure safeguarding requirements are included in any transfer of control agreement (i.e. lease or hire agreement), as a condition of use and occupation of the premises; and that failure to comply with this would lead to termination of the agreement.

# **St Charles Catholic School-Safeguarding** (Appendix 1) **Guidance on what to do if a child discloses information**

***If a child volunteer's information about abuse to a member of staff, it may be done obliquely, rather than directly, e.g. through role play etc. The role of the member of staff or volunteer hearing this is to listen but not undertake an investigation of the potential abuse. That is the role of the child protection agencies.***

When a child confides in you:

## **Things you should do:**

- give the child undivided attention;
- show concern, support and warmth but don't show emotions, distress or negative reaction; be re-assuring (you can say 'that must have been sad/hard for you'; 'it's right to tell someone because you need help' 'ask if the child has told his/her parents if the alleged abuse is outside the home or the other parent if one parent is implicated)
- listen carefully;
- allow the child to tell what s/he wants to say but do not ask unnecessary questions or details except to be clear that the child is indicating abuse or neglect. It is important to know what the child is saying and if the child is hurt or might be in need of medical attention
- deal with the allegation in such a way that the child does not have to repeat the information to different people within the school; It is important to know if an incident has happened recently and whom the child is saying has hurt her/him
- make careful records of what was said, straight away, record the time, date, place and people who were present, as well as what was said, using child's own language and colloquialisms. Use the School's reporting sheets.
- do not malign the character of the alleged perpetrator.

## **Things you should not do:**

- jump to conclusions;
- try to get the child to 'disclose';
- ask for lots of details about the alleged event(s);
- speculate or accuse anybody yourself;
- make promises you can't keep, such as total confidentiality;
- pre-empt or prejudice an investigation by leading the child with *closed* questions.

## **Initial Responses to child**

### ***Do say:***

'Thank you for telling me'

'I am sorry it has happened to you'

'I am going to help you, and will tell you what I am going to do'

'You are not to blame'

### ***Do not say:***

'It will be all right soon'

Anything which you will not be able to fulfil

# **St Charles Catholic School-Safeguarding** (Appendix 2) **Guidance On How To Identify Child Abuse**

## **Child abuse - possible indicators**

***Although these signs do not necessarily indicate that a child has been abused, they may help staff to recognise that something is wrong.***

### **Sexual abuse:**

- Being overly affectionate or knowledgeable in a sexual way inappropriate to the child's age
- Medical problems such as chronic itching, pain in the genitals, venereal diseases
- Other extreme reactions, such as depression, self-mutilation, suicide attempts, running away, overdoses, anorexia
- Personality changes such as becoming insecure or clinging
- Regressing to younger behaviour patterns such as thumb sucking or bringing out discarded cuddly toys
- Sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating
- Being isolated or withdrawn
- Inability to concentrate
- Lack of trust or fear of someone they know well, such as not wanting to be alone with a babysitter or child minder
- Starting to wet again, day or night/nightmares
- Become worried about clothing being removed
- Suddenly drawing sexually explicit pictures
- Trying to be 'ultra-good' or perfect; overreacting to criticism.

### **Physical abuse**

- Unexplained recurrent injuries or burns
- Improbable excuses or refusal to explain injuries
- Wearing clothes to cover injuries, even in hot weather
- Refusal to undress for gym
- Bald patches
- Chronic running away
- Fear of medical help or examination
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Aggression towards others
- Fear of physical contact - shrinking back if touched
- Admitting that they are punished, but the punishment is excessive (such as a child being beaten every night to 'make him study')
- Fear of suspected abuser being contacted.

### **Emotional abuse**

- Physical, mental and emotional development lags
- Sudden speech disorders
- Continual self-depreciation (“I’m stupid, ugly, worthless, etc”)
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Extreme fear of any new situation
- Inappropriate response to pain (“I deserve this”)
- Neurotic behaviour (rocking, hair twisting, self-mutilation)
- Extremes of passivity or aggression.

### **Neglect**

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Poor state of clothing
- Emaciation
- Untreated medical problems
- No social relationships
- Compulsive scavenging
- Destructive tendencies

### **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

- Cultural identity – An initiation into womanhood
- Gender Identity – Moving from girl to woman – enhancing femininity
- Sexual control – reduce the woman’s desire for sex
- Hygiene/cleanliness – un mutilated women are regarded as unclean
- Low level of integration into UK society
- Mother or sister who has undergone FGM
- Girls who are withdrawn from PSHE
- A visiting female elder from the country of origin
- Being taken on a long holiday to the family’s country of origin
- Talk about a ‘special’ event or procedure to ‘become a woman’

Note: A child may be subjected to a combination of different kinds of abuse.  
It is also possible that a child may show no outward signs and hide what is happening from everyone.

**St Charles Catholic School-Safeguarding**  
**Suspected Child Abuse Reporting Sheet**

(Appendix 3)

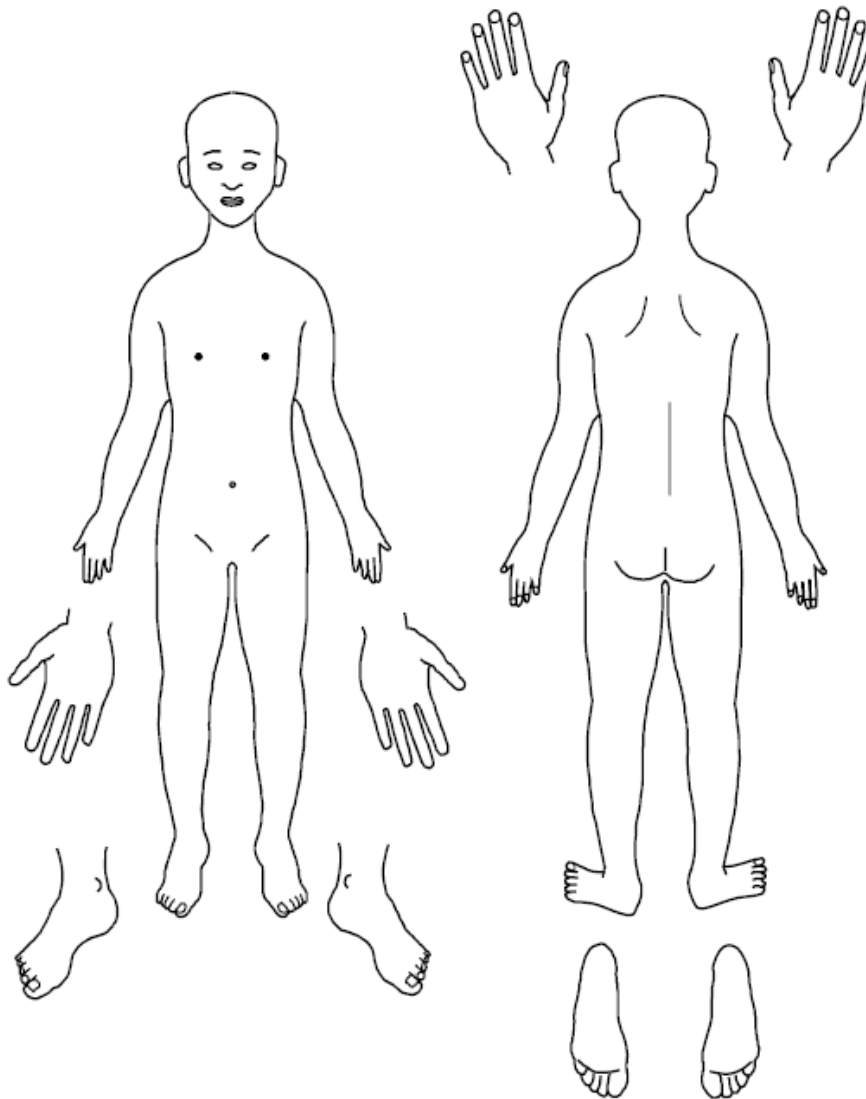
**Confidential**

Name of child \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher completing form \_\_\_\_\_

**Skin Map 1**

On the skin maps below mark the location/s of any suspicious markings observed and use the box for additional information.



**Skin Map 2**



**Any additional information.**

**This completed form should be given to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection.**

## St Charles School - Child Protection and Safeguarding

### RECORD OF CONCERN



Child's Name:
Child's Class/Teacher:
Date and Time of Concern:

Give a full account of the concern: (What was said, observed, reported and by whom)

Give a full account of your response: (What you said/did following the concern)

Your signature/Time/Date of Recording:

Your Position in the School:

Action and Response of DSL or deputies:

Name:

Date:

(Please use the other side of this sheet if required)

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Pupil Information Request Form for Family Services

(Appendix 6)

**Confidential**



Class:	Date:
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Class Teacher:	Designated Safeguard Lead: Paula Byrne
Reported to:	FS Area:
Attendance:	Punctuality:
Academic Strengths/Interests:	
Academic Weaknesses	
Current Assessments:	
How does the child get on with other children?	
How does the child get on with other adults?	
Any Behaviour Issues:	
How supportive are the Parents?	
How does the child present at School?	
Any Concerns with Homework?	
Have you noticed anything 'out of character' recently?	
Other Relevant Information:	

## **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)** (Appendix 8)

### **Definition of FGM:**

“Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) comprises of all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural or non-therapeutic reasons.”

(World Health Organisation-1997)

### **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, cauterising and scraping the genital area.

### **Who is at risk?**

UK communities that are most at risk of FGM include Kenyans, Somalis, Sudanese, Sierra Leoneans, Egyptians, Nigerians and Eritreans. However women from non-African communities that are at risk of FGM include Yemeni, Kurdish, Indonesian and Pakistani women.”

### **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?**

Yes! FGM is considered child abuse in the UK and a grave violation of the human rights of girls and women. In all circumstances where FGM is practised on a child it is a violation of the child’s right to life, their right to their bodily integrity, as well as their right to health. The

UK Government has signed a number of international human rights laws against FGM, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

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

**Indications that a child is at risk of FGM:**

- The family comes from a community that is known to practice FGM - especially if there are elderly women present.
- In conversation a child may talk about FGM.
- A child may express anxiety about a special ceremony.
- The child may talk or have anxieties about forthcoming holidays to their country of origin.
- Parent/Guardian requests permission for authorised absence for overseas travel or you are aware that absence is required for vaccinations.
- If a woman has already undergone FGM – and it comes to the attention of any professional, consideration needs to be given to any Child Protection implications e.g. for younger siblings, extended family members and a referral made to Social Care or the Police if appropriate.

**Procedures School has in place:**

1. A robust attendance policy that does not authorise holidays, extended or otherwise.
2. FGM training for Child Protection leads and disseminated training for all staff at the front line dealing with the children.
3. PSHE and Relationship and Sex Education delivered to KS2 children with a discussion about FGM with Year 6 girls.

If we have concerns that children in our school community are at risk or victims of Female Genital Mutilation you must report it to the Child Protection Officer immediately.