St PAUL'S CATHOLIC COLLEGE

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
**to be read in conjunction with*
the Bosco Catholic Education Trust
Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

"'Dear friends, let us love one another, because love comes from God. Whoever loves is a child of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. "

1 John 4:7-8

This Policy has been approved and adopted by the Local Governing Committee

Approved:	For review:
September 2026	September 2027

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1. Glossary

For this document the following terminology should be considered:

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

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

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

Staff refers to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full time or part-time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

DSL refers to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the School.

Child includes everyone under the age of 18.

Parent refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example, step-parents, foster carers and adoptive parents.

Extra familial Harm - Contextual Safeguarding refers to our commitment to understanding wider environmental factors in a child's life that may be a threat to their safety and/or welfare.

Technology-Facilitated Abuse refers to abuse that is carried out through the use of digital technologies, including social media, messaging platforms, gaming systems and artificial intelligence. This includes online grooming, coercion, cyberbullying, creation or sharing of self-generated intimate images and videos, and AI-generated or manipulated images (deepfakes).

2. Introduction

At St Paul's Catholic College we are committed to safeguarding children and young people, and we expect everyone who works in our school to share this commitment.

Adults in our school take all welfare concerns seriously and encourage children and young people to talk to us about anything that worries them.

We will always act in the best interest of the child. We recognise that safeguarding practice must be child-centred. The wishes, feelings, lived experiences and voice of the child will be considered when making safeguarding decisions and planning support.

This document forms part of the integrated safeguarding portfolio and should be read alongside the:

- Bosco Catholic Education Trust (MAT): Trust Safeguarding Policy.
- Bosco Catholic Education Trust : Allegations and low levels concerns
- Bosco Catholic Education Trust : Behaviour for Learning Policy
- DfE, Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2026).
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023).
- Local Authority arrangements for safeguarding
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004.
- The Children and Social Work Act 2017.
- The Education Act 2002.

- Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984.

3. Key Staff and Contacts

School Based Contacts

Role	Contact details
Headteacher/Head of School	Mr Rob Carter
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mrs Sue Homer
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Ms Dominique Bell, Ms Laura Fradgley, Mr P Byrne, Mrs E Beresford, Mrs C Brownings, Mr M Gainey
eSafety Lead	Mr Dan Smith
Prevent Duty Lead	Mrs Sue Homer
Designated Teacher with responsibility for Young Carers	Mrs Sue Homer
Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children	Mrs Sue Homer
Nominated Safeguarding Governor	Mr Richard Goddard
All of the above can be contacted via the School office on 01444 873898	

Other Useful Contacts

Agency / Contact	Contact Details
Bosco Catholic Education Trust Board	
Juliette Bellingall, **Director Of Safeguarding, Trust Board**	jbellingall@boscocet.org.uk
David Cater **Chief Executive Officer**	dcarter@boscocet.org.uk
Bosco Catholic Education Trust Safeguarding Directorate	
Gemma Irvine **Bosco Designated Safeguarding Lead**	girvine@boscocet.org.uk
Local contacts	
Children's Social Care – IFD/SPOA [East Sussex]	01273337660
The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) East Sussex	EMAIL ESSCP.Contact@eastsussex.gov.uk CONTACT NUMBER 01273481544

Children's Social Care – IFD/SPOA [West Sussex]	01403 229900
The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) West Sussex	EMAIL LADO@westsussex.gov.uk CONTACT NUMBER 03302226450
NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line	0800 028 0285

4. Staff roles

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Our School DSL, Mrs Sue Homer is a substantive member of the school Senior Leadership Team.

During term time the DSL (or a deputy) will always be available (during school hours) for staff in the school to discuss any safeguarding concerns. [1]

St Paul's Catholic College will ensure that adequate and appropriate (DSL) cover arrangements are in place any out of hours/out of term activities, ensuring that the colleague concerned:

The DSL:

- Is a senior member of staff from the school's leadership team and therefore has the authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post including committing resources and supporting and directing other staff;
- takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection in the school
- is appropriately trained, with regular updates;
- ensures that they, and any deputies, have a complete safeguarding picture of the school
- acts as a source of support and expertise to the school community;
- has a working knowledge of local procedures and acts as a point of contact with the safeguarding partners;
- makes staff aware of training courses and the latest policies on safeguarding;
- keeps detailed written records of all concerns using CPOMS/My concern;
- refers cases of suspected abuse to children's social care or police as appropriate;
- ensures that children and families receive timely Early Help and/or Family Help support and works effectively with safeguarding partners to prevent needs from escalating.
- ensures that when a pupil leaves the school, their child protection file is passed to the new school (separately from the main pupil file and ensuring secure transit) and confirmation of receipt is obtained;
- attends and/or contributes to child protection conferences;
- coordinates the School contribution to child protection plans;
- develops effective links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies including the Local Safeguarding Partnership;
- ensures that the child protection policy and procedures are reviewed and updated

[1] availability could mean, via phone and or video call or other such media.

annually;

- maintains oversight of emerging safeguarding risks, including those arising from technology, artificial intelligence, harmful sexual behaviour and serious violence.
- has an awareness of the circumstances in which there is a requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult in line with PACE Code C 2019. - Section 12
- liaises with Bosco Designated Safeguarding Lead and headteacher/head of school (where the role is not carried out by the headteacher/head of school) as appropriate;
- makes the child protection policy available publicly, on the School website.
- undertakes training, as identified in this policy
- ensure that all staff receive the appropriate training, and keep it up to date
- maintains strong links with mental health agencies
- has an overview of all safeguarding concerns and follow the procedures set out in local guidance and in Keeping Children Safe in Education to ensure that appropriate action is taken in every case
- monitors all safeguarding concerns and escalates concerns that meet the threshold for statutory intervention or assessment.
- notifies children's social care if there are concerns over unexplained absences of a pupil, following the Child Missing in Education (CME) policy and local procedure
- takes lead responsibility for ensuring the understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place at the school

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Deputy DSL)

Our Deputy DSL are

- Ms Dominique Bell,
- Ms Laura Fradgley
- Mrs E Beresford
- Mrs C Brownings
- Mr P Byrne
- Mr M Gainey

- All DDSLs are trained to the same level as the DSL and, in the absence of the DSL, carries out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of pupils. In the event of the long-term absence of the DSL, a deputy will assume all of the functions above.

The appointment of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is clear within the post holders job description.

Bosco Catholic Education Trust

Bosco Catholic Education Trust's Designated Safeguarding Lead is Gemma Irvine.

Bosco Catholic Education Trust will ensure that:

- St Paul's Catholic College appoints a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who is a member of the senior leadership team and who has undertaken role-specific training;
- the DSL (and Deputy DSL) role is explicit in the role holder's job description and that safeguarding responsibilities are identified explicitly in the job/role descriptions of every member of staff and volunteer;
- the DSL, Deputy DSL or a member of the Bosco Catholic Education Trust Education Team is always available during school hours to discuss any safeguarding concerns and that the DSL or a Deputy DSL is always available at least via telephone or other media as above during any out of hours/out of term school activities;

- St Paul's Catholic College follows safer recruitment procedures that include statutory checks on the suitability of staff to work with children;
- a training curriculum is available that ensures all staff, including the headteacher/head of school, and volunteers receive appropriate and regular, safeguarding and child protection training and updates as required (at least annually). This includes ensuring that the DSL receives refresher training and regular updates as defined under the DSL's duties above;
- St Paul's Catholic College nominates an Executive leader to be responsible for liaising with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and other agencies in the event of an allegation being made against the headteacher/principal. [2]

The Headteacher/Head of School will:

- ensure that the child protection policy and procedures are understood and implemented by all staff;
- allocate sufficient time, training, support and resources, including cover arrangements when necessary, to enable the DSL and deputy/s to carry out their roles effectively, including the assessment of pupils and attendance at strategy discussions and other necessary meetings;
- support the designated teacher for looked after (and previously) looked after children to promote the educational achievement of any pupils who are looked after by the Local Authority and who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or who were adopted from state care outside England and Wales;
- ensure that all staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep looked after and previously looked after children safe;
- ensure that all staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with the whistleblowing procedures;
- ensure that the culture of the school supports the provision of effective pastoral care and early help;
- ensure that staff do everything they can to support social workers when Children's Social Care become involved;
- ensure that pupils are provided with opportunities throughout the curriculum to learn about safeguarding and how to keep themselves safe at all times, including when online, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum;
- ensure that the DSL (or Deputy) refer all allegations that a child has been harmed by, or that children may be at risk of harm from, a member of staff or volunteer to the Designated Officer in the Local Authority within one working day before any internal investigation;
- ensure that anyone who has harmed or may pose a risk of harm to a child is referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service, as advised by the LADO;
- ensure that relevant staff are made aware of disqualification under the childcare act 2006 and their obligations to disclose relevant information.

The Local Governing Committee will:

[2] The Chief Executive has been nominated for the 2026/27 academic year and has received appropriate guidance on undertaking such a role.

- identify a named individual to take responsibility for oversight of the school's safeguarding arrangements. This colleague will maintain regular contact with the DSL and will ensure that the Local Governing Committee receives regular reports about safeguarding activity at the school.
- ensure that the school safeguarding, recruitment and managing allegations procedures take into account the procedures and practice of the Local Authority, local safeguarding partnership and national guidance.

5. Allegations and Safeguarding concerns about staff or volunteers

When an allegation is made against a member of staff or a safeguarding concern is raised, our set procedures must be followed.

The full procedures for dealing with allegations against staff (including low-level concerns) can be found in the Bosco Catholic Education Trust 'Low Level concerns and Managing allegations against staff' policy.

Where a concern or allegation indicates that an adult has:

1. behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
2. possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
3. behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; or
4. behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children;

a referral will be made to the LADO, without delay.

The last bullet point above includes behaviour that may have happened outside of the school that might make an individual unsuitable to work with children; this is known as 'transferable risk'.

A "case manager" will lead any investigation. This will be either the headteacher/head of school, or, where the headteacher/head of school is the subject of an allegation, an Executive Director of Bosco Catholic Education Trust.

Both allegations that meet the harm threshold for a referral to the LADO and allegations/concerns that do not meet the harm threshold, referred to for the purposes of this policy as 'low level concerns', will be reported in writing to the headteacher/head of school.

Staff can report concerns using the 'Bosco low level concern form' or via direct communication with the Mr Rob Carter[3]. Confidential reports can be made to Mr Rob Carter

Allegations that meet the harm threshold for a referral to LADO

The harm thresholds are:

Has the adult…

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children;

[3] This form is available both online, BOSCO - Low level Concerns policy or via the School office.

Staff should share, **without delay,** any allegations/concerns that meet the harm threshold for a referral to the Designated Officer (LADO) with the Headteacher/Principal:

Name	Role	Contact Number
Mr Rob Carter	Headteacher/Principal	01444 873898

All allegations about adults that meet the harm threshold for a referral to LADO are reported to the Bosco Catholic Education Trust Safeguarding Directorate[4].

Allegations/safeguarding concerns that do not meet the harms threshold–referred to for the purposes of this policy as 'low level concerns'.

As part of our whole school approach to safeguarding, we promote an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of the school (including supply teachers, volunteers, and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- being over friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone, contrary to the school policy;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- humiliating pupils.
- creating, possessing, requesting or sharing inappropriate digital content relating to children, including manipulated or AI-generated imagery.

Low-level concerns about a member of staff should be reported, without delay, to the Head Teacher/Head of School).

Where a low-level concern is raised about the designated safeguarding lead, it should also be shared with the headteacher/principal or principal.

Allegations or low-level concerns relating to the Headteacher/Principal

If the allegation or concern relates to the Headteacher/Principal, it should be reported, without delay, to the Chief Executive of Bosco Catholic Education Trust

Name	Role	Contact Number
David Carter	Chief Executive, Bosco Catholic Education Trust	01444 221770

Concerns about the Chair of the Local Governing Committee, or about any member of the Bosco Catholic Education Trust Executive Team, should be directed to the Chief Executive, Bosco Catholic Education Trust .

[4] Contact details can be found in section 2 of this policy.

Staff Training

All staff will receive training to enable them to recognise the possible signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and to know what to do if they have a concern.

All staff will undertake training each year covering as a minimum:

- Signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect (including online safety)
- Local procedures for responding to concerns
- The school's behaviour policy
- Response to children that go missing in education
- Recognising and responding to concerns relating to Female Genital Mutilation.
- The staff code of conduct
- Allegations management
- Responding to child-on-child abuse.
- Filtering and Monitoring Systems used at St Paul's Catholic College
- serious violence and weapon-carrying indicators;
- technology-facilitated abuse;
- AI-generated imagery and deepfakes;
- misogyny and harmful sexual behaviour;
- current online safety threats

All staff will be made aware of the increased risk of abuse to certain groups, including children with special educational needs and disabilities, looked after children, previously looked after children, and young carers. Staff should also be made aware of risks associated with specific safeguarding issues including child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation, peer on peer abuse, sexual harassment and sexual violence in school, extremism, female genital mutilation and forced marriage; and will receive training in relation to keeping children safe online.

The DSL (and Deputy) will attend formal training every two years. That training will include up to date information about local safeguarding partnership inter-agency procedures.

In addition, the DSL will update their knowledge and skills at least annually to keep up with any developments relevant to their role and will be supported to access inter-agency training as part of their continuing professional development.

Safeguarding and child protection training will be provided to governors and trustees annually.

6. Safer recruitment

Our school complies with the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2026) and the Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSP) by carrying out the required checks and verifying the applicant's identity, qualifications and work history.

- At least one member of each recruitment panel will have completed safer recruitment training.
- The school obtains written confirmation from supply agencies or third-party organisations that agency staff or other individuals who may work in the school have been appropriately checked.
- Trainee teachers will be checked either by the School or by the training provider, from whom written confirmation will be obtained.

- The school maintains a single central record of recruitment checks undertaken.

The headteacher/head of school will ensure that relevant staff[5] are made aware of disqualification under the childcare act 2006 and their obligations to disclose relevant information.

Volunteers

All volunteers working within the school will be risk assessed and will undergo checks commensurate with their work, their contact with pupils and the supervision provided to them.

Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been appropriately checked be left unsupervised.

Third-Party staff (Contractors)

The school checks the identity of all contractors working on-site and requests DBS with barred list checks where required by statutory guidance. Contractors who have not undergone checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised whilst pupils are on-site.

Where the school directs a pupil to attend an Alternative Provision, we will seek written assurance from that provision, that the adults working with pupils have undergone the relevant safer recruitment checks.

Site security

Visitors to the school, including contractors, are asked to sign in and are given a ID badge, which confirms they have permission to be on site.

Parents who are simply delivering or collecting their children do not need to sign in.

All visitors are expected to observe the school safeguarding and health and safety regulations.

The headteacher/head of school will exercise professional judgement in determining whether any visitor should be escorted or supervised while on site.

The Single Central Record

Our Single Central Record[6] covers the following people: all staff, including teacher trainees, agency, third-party supply staff who work at the school, volunteers and School Councillors.

Our Single Central Record is recorded in such a way that allows for details of each individual school to be provided separately, and without delay, to those entitled to inspect that information, including by inspectors.

[5] Relevant staff are those working in childcare or a management role because they are: working with reception age children at any time; or working with children older than reception until age eight, outside School hours.

[6] Bosco Catholic Education Trust maintains a record of pre-appointment checks carried out in each school within the MAT, referred to in the Regulations as the register and more commonly known as the 'single central record'. This also includes members and trustees of the school trust.

7. Extended School and off-site arrangements

All extended and off-site activities are subject to a risk assessment to comply with health and safety and safeguarding regulations.

When extended activities are provided and managed by the school, our child protection policy and procedures are applicable.

If other organisations deliver services or activities on our premises, we will ensure that they have appropriate procedures in place, including rigorous recruitment procedures. This will involve verifying the existence of suitable safeguarding and child protection policies.

In cases where such arrangements are established, St Paul's Catholic College will also facilitate effective communication and collaboration between the provider and our school on safeguarding matters.

Safeguarding requirements will be incorporated into the transfer of control agreements, and failure to comply will lead to termination. We will consult the guidance on "Keeping Children Safe in Out-of-School Settings" to outline the expected safeguarding arrangements for these providers.

Whenever our pupils participate in off-site activities, such as day trips, residential visits, or work-related activities, we will ensure that robust child protection measures are in place.

8. Teaching our pupils about safeguarding

At St Paul's Catholic College pupils are taught about safeguarding, including online, through various teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum. Children are taught to recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it.

Curriculum coverage includes:

- online safety;
- AI literacy;
- misinformation;
- misogyny;
- consent;
- healthy relationships;
- harmful sexual behaviour;
- exploitation;
- serious violence

Safeguarding education is delivered through the PSHE, RSE, Computing and wider pastoral curriculum. Pupils are taught about healthy relationships, consent, online safety, digital resilience, artificial intelligence, exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour, misogyny, extremism, mental health, serious violence and how to seek help when worried about themselves or others.

9. Educational Outcomes

The DSL will work with the headteacher/head of school and relevant strategic leads, taking lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing, or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on children's attendance, engagement, and achievement at school. This includes:

- keeping an updated register of the cohort of children who have, or have had, a social worker, understanding their academic progress and attainment, and maintaining a culture of high aspirations for this cohort; and,
- supporting teaching staff to provide additional academic support or reasonable adjustments to help children who have, or have had, a social worker reach their potential, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there is still a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes.

Leaders will pay particular attention to educational outcomes for children experiencing exploitation, online harms, significant mental health needs and involvement with Family Help or statutory safeguarding services.

10. Extra-familial harms (aka. Contextual Safeguarding)

Leaders assesses the risks and issues in the wider community when considering the well-being and safety of its pupils. As a school we do have contextual concerns, including online environments and virtual spaces, like those faced by any other setting, such as sexual exploitation, online safety concerns or criminal exploitation. However, we have other unique community concerns that we also consider and ensure we address with our students.

St Paul's Catholic College is 6 form entry secondary school for pupils aged between 11 and 19. Our catchment area covers a wide area and thus our students come from a wide range of community backgrounds. Our students also can travel a long distance to get to school and use a range of transport.

We are located close to trainlines to London and so are acutely aware of related problems such as County Lines and exploitation as well as the dangers that trainlines themselves present.

11. Police and Criminal Evidence Act (1984) – Code C

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy) are aware of the requirement for children to have an appropriate adult when in contact with Police officers who suspect them of an offence.

PACE states that anyone who appears to be under 18, shall, in the absence of clear evidence that they are older, be treated as a child for the purposes

PACE also states that If at any time an officer has any reason to suspect that a person of any age may be vulnerable, then that person is entitled to be accompanied by an appropriate adult at any point.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) will communicate any vulnerabilities known by the school to any police officer who wishes to speak to a pupil about an offence they may suspect. This communication will be recorded on CPOMS/My Concern.

If having been informed of the vulnerabilities, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) does not feel that the officer is acting in accordance with PACE, they should ask to speak with a supervisor or contact 101 to escalate their concerns.

A person whom there are grounds to suspect of an offence must be cautioned[7] before being questioned about an offence[8], or asked further questions if the answers they give provide the grounds for suspicion, or when put to them the suspect's answers or silence, (i.e. failure or refusal to answer or answer satisfactorily) may be given in evidence to a court in a prosecution.

A police officer must not caution a juvenile or a vulnerable person unless the appropriate adult is present. If a child or a vulnerable person is cautioned in the absence of the appropriate adult, the caution must be repeated in the appropriate adult's presence.

The 'appropriate adult' means, in the case of a child:

1. the parent, guardian or, if the juvenile is in the care of a local authority or voluntary organisation, a person representing that authority or organisation.
2. a social worker of a local authority
3. failing these, some other responsible adult aged 18 or over who is not:
    a. a police officer;
    b. employed by the police;
    c. under the direction or control of the chief officer of a police force; or
    d. a person who provides services under contractual arrangements (but without being employed by the chief officer of a police force), to assist that force in relation to the discharge of its chief officer's functions,

Further information can be found in the Statutory guidance - PACE Code C 2019.

12. Filtering and Monitoring

Filtering and monitoring systems are essential to ensure the safeguarding and welfare of children at St Paul's Catholic College. We have a responsibility to take all reasonable measures to minimise pupils' exposure to risks associated with the institution's IT system.

In our school, we use the following system for filtering and monitoring internet use: Smoothwall

At St Paul's Catholic College, we recognize the importance of clear roles and responsibilities in managing filtering and monitoring systems. Therefore, we ensure that specific roles are identified and assigned to oversee these systems within our institution. **The school's eSafety lead is: Mr Dan Smith**

Emerging Technologies and Artificial Intelligence

The school recognises that emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), create both opportunities and safeguarding risks. Staff will receive training on identifying risks associated with AI-generated content, deepfakes, online exploitation, misinformation and inappropriate online interactions.

[7] The police caution is: *"You do not have to say anything. But it may harm your defence if you do not mention when questioned something which you later rely on in Court. Anything you do say may be given in evidence."*

[8] A person need not be cautioned if questions are for other necessary purposes, e.g.: (a) solely to establish their identity or ownership of any vehicle; to obtain information in accordance with any relevant statutory requirement; in furtherance of the proper and effective conduct of a search, e.g. to determine the need to search in the exercise of powers of stop and search or to seek co-operation while carrying out a search; or to seek verification of a written record.

Regular Review of Provision:

To maintain the effectiveness of our filtering and monitoring systems, we are committed to conducting at least annual reviews. These reviews allow us to assess the performance and suitability of our current provision and make necessary adjustments to ensure the continued protection of our students.

Blocking of Harmful and Inappropriate Content:

We prioritise the safety of our students by implementing measures to effectively block access to harmful and inappropriate content. It is our goal to strike a balance between maintaining a secure online environment and minimizing any disruptions to teaching and learning activities.

Effective Monitoring Strategies:

To proactively address potential risks and threats, we establish monitoring strategies that align with our safeguarding needs. These strategies will enable us to promptly identify and respond to any concerning online activities or content.

13. Child Protection Procedures

Children and Young People who may be particularly vulnerable

Some children may be at an increased risk of abuse. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur. To ensure that all our pupils receive equal protection, we will give special consideration to children who are:

- disabled or who have special educational needs
- Young Carers
- affected by parental substance misuse, domestic violence or parental mental health needs
- asylum seekers
- living away from home
- vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying
- living in temporary accommodation
- living transient lifestyles
- living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations
- homeless
- vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexuality
- at risk of sexual exploitation
- do not have English as a first language
- at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM)
- at risk of forced marriage
- within the court system
- have a family member in prison
- at risk of criminal exploitation
- at risk of being drawn into extremism

- children with attendance concerns or persistent absence;
- children who are questioning their gender identity;
- children vulnerable to online harms and exploitation.
- children vulnerable to serious violence, weapon carrying or criminal exploitation.

This list provides examples of additionally vulnerable groups and is not exhaustive. Special consideration includes the provision of safeguarding information and resources in community languages and accessible formats for children with communication needs.

Recognising abuse

To ensure that our pupils are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse and neglect.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, for example by hitting them, or by failing to act to prevent harm, for example by leaving a small child home alone.

Abuse may be committed by adult men or women and by other children and young people.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2026) refers to four categories of abuse. These are set out in Appendix 1 along with the indicators of abuse.

14. Specific Safeguarding and Child Protection Issues

Children with sexually harmful behaviour

Young people who display such behaviour may be victims of abuse themselves and the child protection procedures will be followed for both victim and perpetrator. Staff who become concerned about a pupil's sexual behaviour, including any known online sexual behaviour, must speak to the DSL as soon as possible.

Harmful sexual behaviour is most commonly identified in adolescent boys, but girls and younger children can also exhibit HSB.

In cases of self-generated intimate images and/or videos, including content generated, altered or manipulated through artificial intelligence technologies we follow the guidance given to schools and colleges through current UKCIS guidance.

Part 5. Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) contained detailed information on supporting children who display harmful sexual behaviours.

Children absent from education

Knowing where children are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of safeguarding. Absence can be an indicator of abuse and neglect and may also raise concerns about other safeguarding issues, including the criminal exploitation of children.

We monitor attendance carefully and address poor or irregular attendance without delay.

We will always follow up with parents/carers when pupils are not at school. This means we need to have a least two up to date contact numbers for parents/carers.

Parents should remember to update the school as soon as possible if the numbers change.

In response to the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) leaders have ensured that:

1. staff understand what to do when children do not attend regularly
2. appropriate policies, procedures and responses for pupils who go missing from education (especially on repeat occasions) are in place.
3. Staff know that travelling to conflict zones could be an indicator of FGM and forced marriage.
4. Procedures are in place to ensure that we always inform the local authority when we plan to take pupils off-roll or when they:
5. leave the school to be home educated
6. move away from the school location
7. remain medically unfit beyond compulsory school age
8. are in custody for four months or more (and will not return to school afterwards); or are permanently excluded

We will ensure that pupils who are expected to attend the school but fail to take up the place will be referred to the local authority.

When a pupil leaves, we will record the name of the pupil's new school and their expected start date.

Staff will monitor unauthorised absence and take appropriate action including notifying the Local Authority, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions and/or are missing for periods during the school day. Staff must be alert to signs of children at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

Parents should ensure that the school has at least two emergency contacts for each child.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment including child-on-child abuse

At St Paul's Catholic College we believe that all children have a right to attend and to learn in a safe environment.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment are never acceptable and it will not be tolerated at St Paul's Catholic College. The school recognises that misogynistic attitudes and behaviours can contribute to harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment, sexual violence and abuse. Such behaviours will be challenged and addressed through safeguarding systems, behaviour policies and curriculum provision.

Girls and young women are more frequently identified as those who are abused by their peers; however, anyone can be a victim of abuse and at St Paul's Catholic College, all victims will be reassured that they are being taken seriously, regardless of how long it has taken them to come forward and that they will be supported and kept safe.

Children can show signs or act in ways that they hope adults will notice and react to. In some cases, the victim may not make a direct report. For example, a friend may make a report or a member of staff may overhear a conversation that suggests a child has been harmed or a child's own behaviour might indicate that something is wrong.

St Paul's Catholic College recognises that how staff respond to a report can encourage or undermine the confidence of future victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment to report or come forward.

Staff are reminded that it is important to note that children may not find it easy to tell staff about their abuse verbally.

If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told.

It is especially important not to pass off any sexual violence or sexual harassment as "banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children.

Child on child abuse

St Paul's Catholic College recognises that pupils may become victims of abuse from other pupils.

This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to, bullying (including cyberbullying), gender-based violence/sexual assaults, consensual and non-consensual sharing of self-generated intimate images and/or videos, including AI-generated or manipulated imagery (deepfakes).

Staff will report instances of child-on-child abuse, sexual violence and harassment through the normal safeguarding concern process and recognise that support will be provided to both the alleged victim and abuser.

Staff will be made aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse. This is most likely to include, but not limited to, bullying (including cyberbullying), gender-based violence/sexual assaults and consensual and non-consensual sharing of self-generated intimate images and/or videos.

All staff will be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse).

This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying)
- physical abuse
- sexual violence
- sexual harassment
- harmful sexual behaviour
- misogynistic behaviour
- gender-based abuse
- upskirting
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of self-generated intimate images and/or videos
- AI-generated or manipulated intimate imagery
- initiation and hazing violence

Where we receive a report of child-on-child abuse, we will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) and of those outlined within the Child Protection Policy.

If a report is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the DSL will consider whether the child and/or the person who has made the allegation is in need of help or may have been abused by someone else and this is a 'cry for help'.

In such circumstances, the DSL will consider if a referral to children's social care may be appropriate.

If a report is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious leaders will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it as per the school's behaviour policy.

All staff will listen to and work with the young person, parents/carers and any multi-agency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that young person.

- Statements will be sought from both the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator and the school will do everything possible within the new context to establish the most truthful version of events.
- Unless there is a very strong reason not to engage parents, they will be contacted and the situation explained.
- Support will be offered to both the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator and consequences will be considered where appropriate in line with the behaviour policy.
- Where appropriate we will seek to support the pupils in understanding each other's point of view and offer additional sessions (face to face or remotely as required) to help them to overcome their situation.
- The process and outcomes will be recorded on CPOMs/My concern and appropriate timely referrals made as the need arises during the process. The process will be overseen by the DSL, though other colleagues will likely support the process.
- The incident will not be closed until both pupils agree that they are happy with the outcome. Until then, staff will continue to address the pupils' concerns as far as possible and work towards a resolution to address their concerns. We will agree with the pupils how often they feel able to review the situation but no longer than monthly.
- Where all those involved with an incident agree that the issues have been resolved; the case will remain open for at least a further six weeks to allow staff to seek pupil voice after a reasonable time has passed to ensure that the issues have not resurfaced or to seek to offer support if they have.

Serious Violence

Staff should be aware of indicators which may suggest that children are at risk from, or involved in, serious violence. Such indicators may include increased absence, exclusion, changes in friendships, possession of weapons, unexplained injuries, signs of exploitation, association with individuals or groups involved in violence, exploitation or weapon carrying. or concerning online activity. All concerns must be reported immediately to the DSL.

Children and the court system

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them, or for crimes they have witnessed. The families of children may also be subject to child arrangements processes through the family court system.

We recognise that both circumstances may be stressful for children and appropriate support will be provided in line with local and national guidance.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Sexual exploitation involves an individual or group of adults taking advantage of the vulnerability of an individual or groups of children or young people, and victims can be boys or girls. Children and young people are often unwittingly drawn into sexual exploitation through the offer of friendship and care, gifts, drugs and alcohol, and sometimes

accommodation. Sexual exploitation is a serious crime and can have a long-lasting adverse impact on a child's physical and emotional health. It may also be linked to child trafficking.

We include the risks of sexual exploitation in the PSHE and RSE curriculum.

A common feature of sexual exploitation is that the child often doesn't recognise the coercive nature of the relationship and doesn't see themselves as a victim. The child may initially resent what they perceive as interference by staff, but staff must act on their concerns, as they would for any other type of abuse.

All staff are made aware of the indicators of sexual exploitation and all concerns are reported immediately to the DSL.

Honour-Based Abuse

'Honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of HBA are abuse.

A forced marriage is a marriage in which a female (and sometimes a male) does not consent to the marriage but is coerced into it. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. It may also involve physical or sexual violence and abuse. In England and Wales, the practice is a criminal offence under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

A forced marriage is not the same as an arranged marriage. In an arranged marriage, which is common in several cultures, the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice of whether to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.

Children may be married at a very young age, and well below the age of consent in England. Staff will receive training and should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns raised by a pupil about being taken abroad and not being allowed to return to England.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is the collective name given to a range of procedures involving the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the practice is a criminal offence under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003. The practice can cause intense pain and distress and long-term health consequences, including difficulties in childbirth.

FGM is carried out on girls of any age, from young babies to older teenagers and adult women, so School staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators. Many such procedures are carried out abroad and staff should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns expressed by a female pupil about going on a long holiday during the summer vacation period.

Staff have a mandatory duty to personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. This should be done with the support of the DSL so that wider concerns for the child or young person are also considered. This will also enable leaders to support the staff member through this process.

Radicalisation and Extremism

As part of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, schools have a duty to 'prevent people being drawn into terrorism'. This has become known as the 'Prevent Duty'.

Where staff are concerned that children and young people are developing extremist views or show signs of becoming radicalized, they should discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead has received training about the Prevent Duty and tackling extremism and is able to support staff with any concerns they may have.

We use the curriculum to ensure that children and young people understand how people with extreme views share these with others, especially using the internet.

Staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may need help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy) making a Prevent referral.

We are committed to ensuring that our pupils are offered a broad and balanced curriculum that aims to prepare them for life in modern Britain. Teaching the school core values alongside the fundamental British Values supports quality teaching and learning, whilst making a positive contribution to the development of a fair, just and civil society.

Early indicators of radicalisation or extremism may include:

- showing sympathy for extremist causes
- glorifying violence, especially to other faiths or cultures
- making remarks or comments about being at extremist events or rallies
- evidence of possessing illegal or extremist literature
- advocating messages similar to illegal organisations or other extremist groups
- out of character changes in dress, behaviour and peer relationships (but there are also very powerful narratives, programmes and networks that young people can come across online, so involvement with particular groups may not be apparent.)
- secretive behaviour
- online searches or sharing extremist messages or social profiles
- intolerance of difference, including faith, culture, gender, race or sexuality
- graffiti, art work or writing that displays extremist themes
- attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others
- verbalising anti-Western or anti-British views
- advocating violence towards others

School staff receive training to help to identify signs of extremism.

Opportunities are provided through the curriculum to enable pupils to discuss issues of religion, ethnicity and culture and leaders follow the DfE advice *Promoting fundamental British Values as part of SMSC (spiritual, moral, social and cultural education) in Schools* (2014).

Private fostering arrangements

A private fostering arrangement occurs when someone other than a parent or a close relative care for a child for 28 days or more, with the agreement of the child's parents. It applies to children under the age of 16 or aged under 18 if the child is disabled. By law, a parent, private foster carer, or other persons involved in making a private fostering arrangement must notify children's services as soon as possible.

Where a member of staff becomes aware that a pupil may be in a private fostering arrangement, they will raise this with the DSL and the School should notify the Local Authority of the circumstances.

Looked after (and previously looked after) children

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse or neglect. Leaders ensure that staff have the necessary skills and understanding to keep looked after children safe. Appropriate staff have information about individual children's

looked after legal status and care arrangements, including the level of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after the child.

The designated teacher for looked after children and the DSL have details of the child's social worker and the name and contact details of the Local Authority's virtual head for children in care.

The designated teacher for Looked after and previously looked after children is **Mrs Sue Homer. Mrs Sue Homer** is a qualified teacher.

Work experience

We have detailed procedures to safeguard pupils undertaking work experience, including arrangements for checking people who provide placements and supervise pupils on work experience which are in accordance with the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026).

Children staying with host families

Leaders may make arrangements for pupils to stay with a host family during a foreign exchange trip or sports tour. Some overseas pupils may reside with host families during term time, and we will work with the Local Authority to check that such arrangements are safe and suitable. In such circumstances, we follow the guidance in Annex E of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) to ensure that hosting arrangements are as safe as possible.

Children with family members in prison

Children who have family members that are sent to prison are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. We recognise that these children may need support. Support will be provided in line with guidance from the National Information Centre on Children of Offenders and local agencies

Criminal exploitation of children and County Lines

County lines is the police term for urban gangs supplying drugs to suburban areas and market and coastal towns using dedicated mobile phone lines or "deal lines".

It involves child criminal exploitation (CCE) as gangs use children and vulnerable people to move drugs and money. Gangs establish a base in the market location, typically by taking over the homes of local vulnerable adults by force or coercion in a practice referred to as 'cuckooing'.

CCE is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence.

The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

County lines activity and the associated violence, drug-dealing and exploitation has a devastating impact on young people, vulnerable adults and local communities.

Staff are vigilant in respect of those pupils who might be most at risk and share concerns with the DSL.

Domestic abuse

Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long-lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Domestic abuse affecting young people can also occur within their relationships, as well as in the context of their home life.

Homelessness

Being homeless, or being at risk of becoming homeless, presents a real risk to a child's welfare.

In most cases, staff will be considering homelessness in the context of children who live with their families, and intervention will be on that basis. However, it should also be recognised in some cases 16- and 17-year olds could be living independently from their parents or guardians, for example through their exclusion from the family home, and will require a different level of intervention and support.

The DSL will be able to support pupils facing homelessness in supporting and signposting through appropriate agencies and support networks within the locality.

Children with a Social Worker

At St Paul's Catholic College we recognise that when a child has a social worker, it is an indicator that the child is more at risk than most pupils.

This may mean that they are more vulnerable to further harm, as well as facing educational barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and poor mental health.

We take these needs into account when making plans to support pupils who have a social worker.

Children and online

When children use the school's network to access the internet, they are protected from inappropriate content by our filtering and monitoring systems. However, pupils may be able to access the internet using their own data plan.

Where pupils are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place. This will be reviewed regularly to measure its effectiveness.

It is important that all staff who interact with children, including online, continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. Any such concerns should be dealt with as per the Child Protection Policy and where appropriate referrals should still be made to children's social care and as required, the police.

Staff should be aware that children may experience abuse entirely online and that online abuse can occur without geographical boundaries. Online risks may include exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour, coercion, radicalisation, financial exploitation and abuse facilitated by artificial intelligence technologies.

Online safety away from the school

Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in the MAT code of conduct.

St Paul's Catholic College will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

Below are some things to consider when delivering virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:

- No 1:1s, groups only
- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household.
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas, for example, not in bedrooms; and the background should be blurred.
- Consider whether the class should be recorded so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed.
- Live classes should be kept to a reasonable length of time, or the streaming may prevent the family 'getting on' with their day.
- Language must be professional and appropriate, including any family members in the background.
- Staff must only use platforms specified by senior managers and approved by our IT network manager / provider to communicate with pupils
- Staff should record, the length, time, date and attendance of any sessions held.

All colleagues that interact with children, including online, must continue to look out for signs a child may be at risk. Any such concerns will be dealt with as per the safeguarding and child protection policy and where appropriate referrals will continue to be made to children's social care and as required the police.

15. Taking action

Any child, in any family in any school, could become a victim of abuse. Staff should always maintain an attitude of "it could happen here".

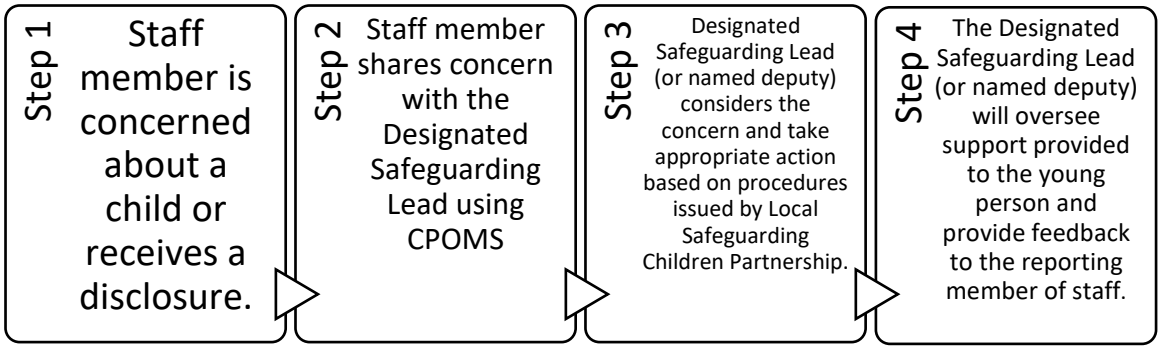
Key points for staff to remember for taking action are:

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, if necessary, call 999;
- report your concern as soon as possible to the DSL, definitely by the end of the day;
- do not start your investigation;
- Share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family;
- complete a record of concern in writing (to the DSL) via CPOMS (after having spoken to a member of the safeguarding team)
- seek support for yourself if you are distressed.

Any verbal conversations around safeguarding should be recorded in writing and shared with the DSL.

Staff should be familiar with *'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused'* as it contains excellent examples of the different types of safeguarding issues.

This step-by-step process should be used as a quick reference guide.



If the DSL is not available, staff should speak to a member of the Senior Leadership Team and/or take advice from local children's social care [9](KCSIE, 2026).

Staff can always seek advice and guidance from the Bosco Catholic Education Trust Designated Safeguarding Lead if they are unable to contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead, a Deputy, or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

If you are concerned about a pupil's welfare

There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a pupil may be at risk. The pupil's behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be bizarre, they may write stories or poetry that reveal confusion or distress, or physical signs may have been noticed. In these circumstances, staff will try to give the pupil the opportunity to talk and ask if they are OK or if they can help in any way.

Staff should use CPOMS to record these early concerns. If the pupil does reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below. Following an initial conversation with the pupil, if the member of staff has concerns, they should alert the DSL to their concern.

CPOMS is the single point for the delivery of concerns. Once staff record a concern on CPOMS, it will automatically alert the Designated Safeguarding Lead that a concern form has been raised.

If a pupil discloses to you

It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose that they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual; their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell; they may have lost all trust in adults; or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their fault. Sometimes they may not be aware that what is happening is abusive.

If a pupil talks to a member of staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing, the staff member will, at the appropriate time, let the pupil know that to help them they must pass the information on to the DSL. The point at which they tell the pupil this is a matter for professional judgement. During their conversations with the pupils', staff will:

- allow them to speak freely;
- remain calm and not over-react;
- give reassuring nods or words of comfort – 'I'm so sorry this has happened', 'I want to help', 'This isn't your fault', 'You are doing the right thing in talking to me';
- not be afraid of silences;
- under no circumstances ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings, or what does the pupil's mother think about it;

[9] Contact details available in section 1.

- at an appropriate time tell the pupil that to help them, the member of staff must pass the information on and explain to whom and why
- not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort;
- avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing earlier. Saying things such as 'I do wish you had told me about this when it started' may be interpreted by the child to mean that they have done something wrong;
- tell the pupil what will happen next;
- report verbally to the DSL even if the child has promised to do it by themselves;
- complete the record of concern form on CPOMS/My Concern and submit it for the attention of the DSL as soon as possible;
- seek support if the staff member feels distressed.

Notifying parents

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

Our focus is the safety and wellbeing of the pupil. Therefore, if we believe that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children's social care and/or the police before parents are contacted.

Referral to children's social care

The DSL will make a referral to children's social care if it is believed that a pupil is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm. The pupil (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being made unless to do so would increase the risk to the child.

In the above circumstance, contact should be made with West Sussex SPOA (01403 229900) of East Sussex SPOA (01323 464222) SPOA on INSERT NUMBER and/or the police (in an emergency on 999 or on 101) Emergency Out of Hours Social Work Service West Sussex 033 022 26664. and East Sussex 01273 335 905

Professionals can consult with a children's Social Worker in the Local Authority if they are unsure whether a Social Work Assessment is necessary and this can be done directly to the Locality Children's Team but if a referral is to be made, this should be done through the MASH.

Any member of staff may make a direct referral to children's social care if they genuinely believe independent action is necessary to protect a child.

Reporting directly to child protection agencies

Staff should follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, they may also share information directly with children's social care, police or the NSPCC if:

- the situation is an emergency and the designated safeguarding lead, their deputy, the Headteacher/Head of School and the Trust Safeguarding Team are all unavailable
- they are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the pupil's safety
- for any other reason, they make a judgement that direct referral is in the best interests of the child.

Escalating concerns

Staff need to be aware of those times when concerns may look as though they are not progressing to an outcome or some form of action. This may be indicated by:

- difficulty in getting hold of a DSL;
- staff not being satisfied with the decision of the DSL or headteacher/principal;
- staff aware that a colleague has not passed on a concern;
- external agencies not accepting a referral from a School when it is felt one is needed;
- staff not aware of what has happened to their concern because of a lack of feedback.

Staff must not close down a concern because they feel "stuck" or "they can't do any more". It is important to escalate concerns to DSLs, headteacher/principals, other senior staff or if necessary, to the CET Director of Safeguarding, Louis Donald.

If there are concerns about the work of an external agency staff the will follow the escalation steps outlined in the locally agreed procedures documents.

The important principle is not to allow a concern to be "closed down" without it having received the necessary attention, assessment and resolution.

16. Confidentiality and sharing information

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

Staff should only discuss concerns with the DSL (or Deputy in their absence). That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

However, following a number of cases where senior leaders failed to act upon concerns raised by staff, Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) emphasises that any member of staff can contact children's social care if they are concerned about a child.

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.

Information sharing is guided by the following principle - information is:

- necessary and proportionate
- relevant
- adequate
- accurate
- timely
- secure.

Information sharing decisions will be recorded, whether or not the decision is taken to share.

Child protection information will be stored within CPOMS, separately from the pupil's file.

The DSL will normally obtain consent from the pupil and/or parents to share sensitive information within the school or with outside agencies. Where there is good reason to do so, the DSL may share information without consent and will record the reason for not obtaining consent.

Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them.

If any member of staff receives a request from a pupil or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the headteacher/head of school to consider in line with the Trust Data Governance Policies.

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

'The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.' (Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2024)

'This includes allowing practitioners to share information without consent' (Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2024)

17. Early Help and Family Help Arrangments

Early Help and Family Help arrangements, (formally known as CAF)

The school recognises the importance of Early Help and local Family Help arrangements in supporting children and families at the earliest opportunity. Staff will work collaboratively with safeguarding partners to secure support before concerns escalate.

An Early Help and Family Help arrangement coordinated by a Lead Professional enables professionals to ensure that children, young people and families get the help they need.

An Early Help and Family Help arrangement will enable the needs of the child or young person and their family to be identified and the best services to be co-ordinated to meet their needs. The Lead Professional will organise a Family Support Meeting with the parent(s) young people and relevant services to co-ordinate the Family Support Plan.

Effective Early Help and Family Help relies upon local agencies working together and using the Early Help and Family Help arrangement to:

- Identify children and young people and their families who would benefit from early help;
- Undertake a Early Help and Family Help assessment of the need for early help; and
- Provide additional, targeted or enhanced early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focus on activity to significantly improve the outcomes for the child.

Before determining what services are to be provided for a particular child or young person, so far as is reasonably practicable and consistent with the child's welfare, professionals will consider the child or young person's perception of their circumstances and what they want to change, and any ideas they have about what will help.

Where parents or a young person do not consent to Early Help and Family Help arrangement or do not use the services offered, then the Lead Professional should make a judgement as to whether, without significant help, the needs of the child will escalate. If so, a referral into Local Authority MASH/SPOA may be necessary.

Where a child or young person or their family has very complex needs or the Early Help Family Support Plan has not resulted in the desired improvement outcomes for the child or young person, an assessment by a Local Authority Social Care may be appropriate and can be referred under the 'step-up procedures'.

A new Early Help and Family Help arrangement is not required if there is a recent assessment completed by Children's Social Care or a current multi-agency plan which can then be used to 'step-down services' to be delivered by Early Help.

18. Whistleblowing

If the options above have been explored fully and the concern still isn't being handled effectively and is therefore placing the child or young person at risk, you must continue to escalate your concerns by contacting the Bosco Designated Safeguarding Lead or by contacting the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line on 0800 028 0285.

19. Children's Mental Health

All staff will be made 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.

Safeguarding teams will work closely with appropriately trained professionals to support young people and will never attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem.

St Paul's Catholic College recognises, however, that staff 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, reporting the concern on CPOMS/My concern and speaking to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or a deputy.

Staff should be aware of the document: 'Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools'. Also, Public Health England has produced a range of resources to support teachers to promote positive health, wellbeing and resilience among young people including its guidance *Promoting Children and Young People's Emotional Health and Wellbeing*.

The DfE's guidance on mental health and behaviour in schools sets out how mental health issues can bring about changes in a young person's behaviour or emotional state which can be displayed in a range of different ways, and that can be an indication of an underlying problem.

This can include, for example, being fearful or withdrawn; aggressive or oppositional; or excessive 'clinginess'. The guidance sets out how mental health issues can bring about changes in a child's behaviour or emotional state which can be displayed in a range of different ways, all of which could be an indication of an underlying problem.

Support for pupils and pupils in the current circumstances can include existing provision in the School (although this may be delivered in different ways, for example over the phone) or from specialist staff or support services.

We will refer to the government's guidance and seek support from local partners to help us identify pupils who might benefit from additional support and to put this in place.

20. Appendix 1 – Four categories of abuse

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is a form of abuse which 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 (this used to be called Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy but is now more usually referred to as fabricated or induced illness).

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child 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 a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from 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, although it may occur alone.

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.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. 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, clothing and 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 care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Indicators of abuse

Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example, bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has been

inadequately supervised. The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they 'tell'. It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty.

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

It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns. It is not their responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused.

A child who is being abused, neglected or exploited may:

- have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries
- show signs of pain or discomfort
- keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather
- be concerned about changing for PE or swimming
- look unkempt and uncared for
- change their eating habits
- have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships
- appear fearful
- be reckless with regard to their own or other's safety
- self-harm
- frequently miss school, arrive late or leave the School for part of the day
- show signs of not wanting to go home
- display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn
- challenge authority
- become disinterested in their work
- be constantly tired or preoccupied
- be wary of physical contact
- be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol
- display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age
- acquire gifts such as money or a mobile phone from new 'friends'.

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw, and each small piece of information will help the DSL decide how to proceed.