



St Mary's Catholic Academy Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Version: 2.8
Adopted: Autumn Term 2021
Next Revision Date: Autumn Term 2022

Named personnel with designated responsibility for Child Protection within the Academy

Organisation	Position	Academic Year 2021/22
Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust	Chair of BEBCMAT	Liz Kelly
Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust	Designated Director	Julie McLeod
Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust	CEO	Mrs Helen O'Neill
St Mary's Catholic Academy	Lead Designated Person	Mrs Jane Leigh
	ASDL	Miss Amy Leck
	Other Designated People	Mr Paul Gillespie Mr Philip Brown Mr Simon Eccles

Policy Review dates

Version	Review Date	Changes made	By whom	Date Shared with staff
2.8	September 2021	November 2021	SEC	November 2021

Key Contacts:

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Out of Hours	477600

The Blackpool Safeguarding Children Board:

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- Chair of Academy Board, Liz Kelly
- OFSTED - 03001233152
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INTRODUCTION

Respecting the uniqueness of each person is central to the caring nature of St Mary's Catholic Academy and a reflection of the Gospel message of love. Based on this expression the Academy accepts its responsibilities and duties in relation to Child Protection issues. The Academy recognises that promoting children's well-being and safeguarding them from significant harm depends crucially upon effective information sharing, collaboration and understanding between agencies and professionals.

As staff within the Academy have regular contact with children we are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour or failure to develop and it is more likely that a child may disclose to them. Parents should be aware, therefore, that where it appears to a member of staff that a child may have been abused or is in danger of abuse, the Academy is required by Law to report their concerns to the Children and Young People's Department. Blackpool has clear procedures that the Academy supports and follows in reacting to issues of concern relating to the protection of children.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- i) Sections 175 and 157 of the Education Act 2002, implemented June 2004
- ii) 'What To Do If You Are Worried A Child is Being Abused' (DfE March 2015)
- iii) 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (DfE September 2021)
- iv) 'Working together to safeguard children (DfE February 2019)
- v) 'Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings' (Safer recruitment consortium September 2019)
- vi) 'Revised Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales' (DfE March 2019),
- vii) 'The Prevent Duty: Departmental Advice for schools and childcare providers' (DfE June 2015),
- viii) 'The Use of Social Media for online radicalisation' (DfE July 2015),
- viv) 'Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers' (DfE July 2018)
- x) 'Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation' (DfE April 2016 – updated 2021)

In accordance with the above procedures, we carry out an annual audit of our Safeguarding provision (S175 Safeguarding Audit, which is a requirement of the Education Act 2002 & 2006) a copy of which is sent to the Blackpool Safeguarding Children's Board.

A "Child" or "Pupil" as written in this policy is a child until 18.

A "Child" as written in this policy is of statutory school age.

This policy applies to all adults working in or on behalf of St Mary's.

"Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child." *Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE September 2021.*

ACADEMY COMMITMENT

St Mary's Catholic Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all of its pupils. Each pupil's welfare is of paramount importance. We recognise that some children *may* be especially vulnerable to abuse e.g. those with Special Educational Needs or those living in adverse circumstances. We recognise that children who are abused or neglected may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world in a positive way. Whilst at school, their behaviour may be challenging. We recognise that some children who have experienced abuse may harm others. We will always take a considered and sensitive approach in order that we can support all of our pupils.

Child Protection Policy

St Mary's Catholic Academy fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection.

Safeguarding arrangements at this Academy are underpinned by five key principles:

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: all Staff / anyone who has contact with a child or young person including Directors and volunteers should play their full part in keeping children and vulnerable adults safe;
- We will aim to protect children using national, local and school child protection procedures;
- We aim to work in partnership and have an important role in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements as set out by Working Together 2018;
- That all Staff/anyone who has contact with a child or young person including Directors and volunteers have a clear understanding regarding abuse and neglect in all forms; including how to identify, respond and report. This also includes knowledge in the process for allegations against professionals. Staff, (Directors and Volunteers) should feel confident that they can report all matters of Safeguarding in the School or College where the information will be dealt with swiftly and securely, following the correct procedures with the safety and wellbeing of the children in mind at all times.
- That we operate a child-centred approach demonstrating a clear understanding of the needs, wishes, views and voices of children.

Our policy applies to all staff, directors and volunteers working in the Academy.

There are four main elements to our policy:

- Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe.
- Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
- Supporting any pupil who has been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan.
- Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop, including a commitment to protect pupils from exposure to extremist views and the risk of radicalisation through adopting the government's "PREVENT" strategy.

We recognise that because of the day to day contact with children, Academy staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. The Headteacher will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and know that they will be listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the school who they can approach if they are worried.
- Include opportunities in the PSHE curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.
- Ensure that staff are aware of their responsibilities to safeguarding through a culture of vigilance.

We also recognise that because of the day to day contact with children, Academy staff are well placed to protect pupils from extremist views and to spot the early signs of radicalisation. The Headteacher will therefore ensure that:

- A broad curriculum is in place to deliver the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
- Appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place in relation to the PREVENT strategy by working in partnership with other agencies and communities as required.
- There are systems in place for keeping pupils safe from extremist material when accessing the internet in our school by using effective filtering and usage policies.

We recognise that children who have been abused or witnessed violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The Academy may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When in an academy environment their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. St Mary's Catholic Academy will endeavour to support the pupil through:

- The content of the curriculum.

- The academy ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued.
- The academy's behaviour policy which is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the academy. The academy will ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.
- Liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as social services, Child and Adult Mental Health Service, education welfare service and educational psychology service.
- Ensuring that, where a pupil with a child protection plan leaves, his/her information is transferred to the new school immediately and that the child's social worker is informed.

As staff and pupils work increasingly on line the Academy recognises the need to ensure that pupils are safe whilst online and protected whilst in school from the risks associated with the online world. This will be achieved by:

- ensuring appropriate filters and appropriate monitoring systems are in place whilst being careful that "over blocking" does not lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what children can be taught with regards to online teaching and safeguarding.
- ensuring children are taught about safeguarding, including online, through teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Banning the use of mobile devices in school unless under direct supervision of a member of staff.

Staff should recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. This may take on any of the main forms of abuse outlined in this policy. The Academy will seek to ensure that instances of peer on peer / child on child abuse are dealt with through its pastoral system, behaviour for learning policy and child protection processes where required. Victims and perpetrators of such abuse will receive support from pastoral staff and where necessary outside agencies.

Policy Review

The Directors are responsible for:

- a) ensuring the annual review of this policy.
- b) ensuring that the list of key contacts on the cover sheet is kept up to date.

A. PROVIDING A SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Safe Recruitment and Selection

The Academy pays full regard to DfE guidance on Safer Recruitment found within 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (DfE September 2021). Safer recruitment practices are set out in the Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust 'Safer Recruitment Policy and Procedures' which can be found at:

<https://www.bebcmat.co.uk/bebcmat/index.php/policies-df>

Safe Practice

The Academy has adopted: 'Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings' (Safer recruitment consortium October 2019). The Head teacher ensures that all staff undertake Safe Practice training based on the contents of the previously mentioned document as part of their induction and complete a refresher on an annual basis at the start of each year. This is to ensure that staff are safe and aware of behaviours which should be avoided.

Safe working practice ensures that pupils are safe and that all staff:

- are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions;
- work in an open and transparent way;
- discuss and/or take advice from school management over any incident which may give rise to concern;
- record any incidents or decisions made;
- apply the same professional standards regardless of gender or sexuality;
- are aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.

Safe practice for staff in relation to social media

The widespread availability and use of social media applications bring opportunities to understand, engage, and communicate in new and exciting ways. It is important that staff are able to use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly. However, it is also important to ensure that staff balance this with their duties to the Academy, the community, their legal responsibilities and our reputation. For example, our use of social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The purpose of this section of the policy is to:

- Protect St Mary's from legal risks.
- Ensure that the reputation of St Mary's, its staff and directors is protected.
- Safeguard all children.
- Ensure that any users are able clearly to distinguish where information provided via social media is legitimately representative of the academy.

Staff should be aware that any breach of this section of the policy pertaining to social media may lead to disciplinary action being taken against the staff member/s involved in line with the Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure which can be found at:

<https://www.bebcmat.co.uk/bebcmat/index.php/policies-df>

Personal use of social media by staff:

Social networking applications include, but are not limited to: Blogs, Online discussion forums, Collaborative spaces, Media sharing services, 'Microblogging' applications, and online gaming environments. Examples include Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, Windows Live Messenger, YouTube, Flickr, Xbox Live, Blogger, Tumblr, Last.fm, and comment streams on public websites such as newspaper sites. Many of the principles of this policy also apply to other types of online presence such as virtual worlds. All members of staff should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, are still subject to copyright, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and other legislation. They must also operate in line with the Trust's and/or each academy's policies on Equalities, Child Protection and ICT. Within this policy there is a distinction between use of academy-sanctioned social media for

professional educational purposes, and personal use of social media.

Staff will not invite, accept or engage in communications with parents or children from the academy community (unless they are family members) in any personal social media whilst in employment within any of the academies within the Trust. Any communication received from children on any personal social media sites must be reported to the designated person for Safeguarding or Headteacher. If any member of staff is aware of any inappropriate communications involving any child in any social media, these must immediately be reported as above. Members of the academy staff are strongly advised to set all privacy settings to the highest possible levels on all personal social media accounts.

- All email communication between staff and members of the academy community on academy business must be made from an official academy email account.
- Staff should not use personal email accounts or mobile phones to make contact with pupils, nor should any such contact be accepted, except in circumstances given prior approval by the Headteacher.
- Staff are advised to avoid posts or comments that refer to specific, individual matters related to the Trust or its academies and members of its community on any social media accounts.
- Staff are also advised to consider the reputation of the Trust and its academies in any posts or comments related to the Trust or academy on any social media accounts.
- Staff should not accept any current pupil of any age or any ex-pupil of the academies under the age of 18 as a friend, follower, subscriber or similar on any personal social media account.

Academy sanctioned use of social media by staff:

There are many legitimate uses of social media within the curriculum and to support student learning. For example, several A-level courses require the use of blogs for assessment. There are also many possibilities for using social media to enhance and develop students' learning. When using social media for educational purposes, the following practices must be observed:

- Staff should set up a distinct and dedicated social media site or account for educational purposes. This should be entirely separate from any personal social media accounts held by that member of staff, and should be linked to an official academy email account.
- The URL and identity of the site should be agreed with the appropriate line manager or member of the SLT before access is permitted for pupils.
- The content of any academy sanctioned social media site should be solely professional and should reflect well on the academy and Trust.
- Staff must not publish photographs of children without the written consent of parents /carers, identify by name any children featured in photographs, or allow personally identifying information to be published on academy social media accounts.
- Care must be taken that any links to external sites from the account are appropriate and safe.
- Any inappropriate comments on or abuse of academy-sanctioned social media should immediately be removed and reported to a member of SLT
- Staff should not engage with any direct messaging of pupils through social media where the message is not public.
- All social media accounts created for educational purposes should include a link to the ICT Acceptable Use Policy on the academy's website. This will indicate that the account is officially sanctioned by the academy.

Partnership with Parents

St Mary's Catholic Academy shares a purpose with parents to keep children safe from harm and to have their welfare promoted.

We are committed to working with parents positively, openly and honestly. We ensure that all parents are treated with respect, dignity and courtesy. We respect parents' rights to privacy and confidentiality and will not share sensitive information unless we have permission or it is necessary to do so in order to protect a child.

The academy will share with parents any concerns we may have about their child unless to do so may place a child at risk of harm (see B3 – "Action by Senior Designated Person")

We encourage parents to discuss any concerns they may have with either their class teacher, teaching assistant, form tutor, pastoral manager or head of year.

We make parents aware of our policy and guidance through each academy's school prospectus and on each academy website.

Parents are made aware that they can view this policy on request.

Partnerships with others

The Academy recognises that it is essential to establish positive and effective working relationships with other agencies. Each academy has an integrated team of professionals based in school and this enables more effective information sharing. In addition, the Trust's academies have strong relationships with the LA, Blackpool Safeguarding Board, Social Care, Police, Health, Connect, the Hub, Youth Advocacy, Surestart, YOT, etc.

Opportunities to teach safeguarding

The Trust recognises that children should be taught about safeguarding, including online safety as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum. This includes covering relevant issues through Health, Relationships and Sex Education (HRSE), through Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education. The Headteacher will review the Academy's curriculum each year to ensure it covers the relevant material at an age appropriate level.

The Designated safeguarding lead needs to be aware of defined curriculum content, timetabling for delivery and ensure their is clear communication/awareness with teachers on the potential impact for students. This should include sharing information which leads to additional support or teacher awareness for pupils with a particular protected characteristic which means they may be at greater risk.

School Training and Staff Induction

The academy's staff with designated responsibility for Child Protection and the Headteacher should undertake advanced child protection training, LSCB Blackpool training and refresher training at two yearly intervals. All other staff, including support staff, should undertake appropriate Level 1 training to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for child protection effectively, which is kept up to date by refresher training annually. This will include training staff so that they are aware of the principles of early help. In addition to this all staff will receive training as part of induction and then as an annual refresher in safer working practice. All staff who have regular contact with children will also receive training in the Prevent strategy as part of induction.

All staff (including temporary staff and volunteers) are provided with the Trust's Child Protection policy and informed of child protection arrangements on induction.

Support, Advice and Guidance for Staff

Staff will be supported by the designated persons with responsibility for child protection within each academy (see table page 2).

The designated persons responsible for child protection will be supported by the nominated director and will also offer each other mutual support.

Additional support is always available from the Local Authority (see key contacts on page 1).

Related School Policies

Related Policies – Behaviour for Learning Policy; Safer Recruitment Policy and Procedures.

Children Missing from Education

All staff should be aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. St Mary's Catholic Academy follows Blackpool's guidance for Children Missing from Education and the Statutory Guidance – Children Missing Education September 2016. All parents are contacted on the first and subsequent days of any absence. Students who have poor attendance or regularly miss school are monitored using the schools behaviour for learning policy with a staged approach to support and intervention leading to support from the pupil welfare office and use of the legal system for extreme cases.

Student Information

In order to keep children safe and provide appropriate care for them each academy requires parents/carers to support us in providing accurate and up to date information regarding:

- Names and contact details of persons with whom the child normally lives.
- Names and contact details of all persons with parental responsibility (if different from above).
- Emergency contact details (if different from above). All students must have at least two emergency contacts available on our system.
- Details of any persons authorised to collect the child from school (if different from above).
- Any relevant court orders in place including those which affect any person's access to the child (e.g. Residence Order, Contact Order, Care Order, Injunctions etc).
- If the child is or has been subject to a Child Protection Plan.
- Name and contact detail of G.P.
- Any other factors which may impact on the safety and welfare of the child.

The academy will collate, store and agree access to this information in line with recommended guidance in relation to GDPR and Keeping Children Safe in Education Guidance Paragraph 84 DFE 2021.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Directors

- ensures the Trust has effective policies and procedures in place and monitors each academy's compliance with them
- ensures that a senior member of each academy's leadership team is designated to take lead responsibility for child protection and the prevent strategy and ensures that staff undertake appropriate training
- ensures the Trust has a nominated director responsible for child protection including the PREVENT strategy.
- remedies, without delay, any deficiencies or weaknesses regarding child protection and prevent arrangements
- nominates a director to be responsible for liaising with the LA and /or partner agencies in the event of allegations of abuse being made against the Head teacher
- seeks assurance that, where services or activities are provided on Trust premises by another body, the body concerned has appropriate policies and procedures in place in regard to safeguarding children, child protection and prevent duties and liaises with the relevant academy on these matters where appropriate.
- reviews its policies and procedures annually
- provides annual information to the LA about how the above duties have been discharged

Headteacher

- ensures that the policies and procedures adopted by the directors are fully implemented, and followed by all staff
- ensures that sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable the designated person and other staff to discharge their responsibilities,
- ensures the child protection policy is updated and reviewed annually and works with the directors regarding this
- ensures that all staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice in regard to children, and such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner in accordance with agreed whistle blowing policies

The Headteacher will follow the procedures set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), Blackpool, and take account of guidance issued by the Department for Education to:

- Ensure St Mary's Catholic Academy has a designated senior person for safeguarding and child protection, including the PREVENT strategy, from the academy leadership team, who has received appropriate training and support for this role. The designated safeguarding lead should take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. Any deputy designated safeguarding leads should be trained to the same standard as the designated lead. The ultimate responsibility however for safeguarding and child protection remains with the designated safeguarding lead.

- Ensure that all Staff / anyone who has contact with a child or young person including Directors and volunteers are appropriately trained; this includes, receiving regular updates and undertaking annual whole school training in safeguarding.
- Ensure every member of staff, volunteer and director knows the name of the designated senior person responsible for child protection and the PREVENT strategy and their role within the academy.
- Ensure every member of staff knows how to report a concern, who to go to within the Academy; including how /who to report to at the relevant agencies;
- Ensure all staff and volunteers are prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. In the first instance, staff should discuss early help requirements with the designated safeguarding lead. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment. Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of children who are vulnerable to radicalisation and for referring any concerns to the designated teacher responsible for the PREVENT strategy.
- Ensure that all employees/volunteers meet the Academy's expectation of adhering to the safeguarding/child protection and PREVENT procedures, accessing child protection and PREVENT training and acting at all times in the best interests of the child.
- Ensure that all staff sign a copy of Appendix A of "Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE September 2021).
- Ensure that all staff read and sign a copy of the Staff Code of Conduct which forms Appendix 1 of this document at each revision of this policy, or on entry the trust.
- Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection and for the PREVENT strategy by setting out its obligations in the Academy's prospectus.
- Notify social services if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days for a pupil who has a child protection plan.
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection and PREVENT matters, including attendance at case conferences and CHANNEL meetings.
- Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
- Ensure all records are kept securely; separate from the main pupil file, and in locked locations.
- Develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.
- Ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed.

Senior Person with Lead Responsibility for Child Protection and Prevent

- ensures that all staff have access to and understand the Trust's Child Protection Policy
- ensures that all staff have induction training
- keeps detailed accurate secure records
- obtains access to resources
- attends appropriate training
- ensures parents have access to the Trust's Child Protection Policy
- ensures that, where children leave the school, their child protection file is copied and promptly transferred, separately from the main pupil file

All staff and volunteers

- fully comply with the Trust's policies and procedures
- attend appropriate training
- inform the designated person of any concerns
- be aware of the issues faced with Private Fostering and have an understanding of host families (Annex A KCSIE may 2016) and recognising they have a duty to notify the designated person who will liaise with the local Children's Social Care department if it is thought or known that a child or young person may be Privately Fostered or subject to a host family arrangement which is unclear or ambiguous;
- sign Appendix A of "Keeping Children Safe in Education" (DfE 2021) and the Staff Code of Conduct.

B. IDENTIFYING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO MAY BE SUFFERING SIGNIFICANT HARM

Teachers and other adults in school are well placed to observe any physical, emotional or behavioural signs which could give rise to concerns 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. The governing body facilitate a whole school approach to safeguarding.

Children who may require early help

All Staff (Director and Volunteers) working within the School should be alert to the potential need for early help for children, considering following the procedures identified for initiating early help using the Thresholds Document for a child who:

- Is disabled and has specific additional needs;
- Has special educational needs;
- Requires mental health support;
- Is a young carer;
- Is a privately fostered child;
- Has returned home to their family from care;
- Is showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour;
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health, domestic violence; and/or
- Is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect;
- Is showing signs of displaying behaviour or views that are considered to be extreme;
- Is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves;
- Not attending school or are at risk of exclusion from school;
- Frequently going missing/goes missing from care or from home;
- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, exploitation, radicalised and CCE;
- Not in education, training or employment after the age of 16 (NEET);
- Parent/Carer expressed interest to educate at home.

These children are therefore more vulnerable; this Academy will identify who their vulnerable children are, ensuring all Staff and Volunteers know the processes to secure advice, help and support where needed.

Children potentially at greater risk of harm

The Academy will give due regard to Children who are potentially at greater risk of harm. The designated safeguarding lead will ensure that staff are aware of students who may be identified as belonging to one of these categories and advise on how best to support their needs. Also the DSL will reassure victims they will be taken seriously, supported and kept safe. These children include those who:

Children who need a social worker

Where children need a social worker, this will inform decisions about safeguarding (for example, responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks) and about promoting welfare (for example, considering the provision of pastoral and/or academic support, alongside action by statutory services).

Children requiring mental health support

The Academy has an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of its pupils. 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. The designated safeguarding lead will ensure there are clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible mental health problems, and routes to escalate and a clear referral and accountability systems.

Looked after children and previously looked after children

The Headteacher should ensure that relevant staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked after children safe. In particular, they should ensure that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to a child's looked after legal status (whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents, or on an interim or full care order) and the child's contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility. They should also have information about the child's care arrangements and the

levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after him/her. The designated safeguarding lead should have details of the child's social worker and the name of the virtual school head in the authority that looks after the child. A previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable and all staff should have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe. When dealing with looked after children and previously looked after children, it is important that all agencies work together and prompt action is taken when necessary to safeguard these children, who are a particularly vulnerable group. The Headteacher will appoint a designated teacher to work with local authorities to promote the educational achievement of registered pupils who are looked after.

Care Leavers

Local authorities have on-going responsibilities to young people who cease to be looked after and become care leavers. The Academy's designated safeguarding lead will ensure they have details of the local authority Personal Advisor appointed to guide and support the care leaver, and should liaise with them as necessary regarding any issues of concern affecting the care leaver.

Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Children with special educational needs (SEN) disabilities and health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges including:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- being more prone to peer group isolation than other children;
- the potential for children with SEN and disabilities being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

SEND students at St Mary's will receive further pastoral support from a named link person within the Academy's SEND team. The Designated safeguarding lead will ensure that training for these staff raises their awareness of these potential safeguarding challenges.

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 (Section 31.9 of the Children Act 1989 as amended by the Adoption and Children Act 2002).

Child Abuse

In relation to children safeguarding and promoting their welfare 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
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

There are four types of child abuse as defined in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2021) which is defined in the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education Statutory Guidance 2021' as:

- **Physical Abuse** - may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning/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.
- **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 cyber bullying), 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.

- **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 or 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** 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. It may include a failure to:
 - Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter.
 - 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.
 - Respond to a child's basic emotional needs

Signs of abuse

Physical Abuse

Most children will collect cuts and bruises and injuries, and these should always be interpreted in the context of the child's medical / social history, developmental stage and the explanation given. Most accidental bruises are seen over bony parts of the body, e.g. elbows, knees, shins, and are often on the front of the body. Some children, however, will have bruising that is more than likely inflicted rather than accidental.

Important indicators of physical abuse are bruises or injuries that are either unexplained or inconsistent with the explanation given; these can often be visible on the 'soft' parts of the body where accidental injuries are unlikely, e.g. cheeks, abdomen, back and buttocks. A delay in seeking medical treatment when it is obviously necessary is also a cause for concern.

The physical signs of abuse may include:

- Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body
- Multiple bruises- in clusters, often on the upper arm, outside of the thigh
- Cigarette burns
- Human bite marks
- Broken bones
- Scalds, with upward splash marks.
- Multiple burns with a clearly demarcated edge.

Changes in behaviour that can also indicate physical abuse:

- Fear of parents being approached for an explanation
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- Flinching when approached or touched
- Reluctance to get changed, for example in hot weather
- Depression
- Withdrawn behaviour
- Running away from home.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse can be difficult to identify as there are often no outward physical signs. Indications may be a developmental delay due to a failure to thrive and grow, however, children who appear well-cared for may nevertheless be emotionally abused by being taunted, put down or belittled. They may receive little or no love,

affection or attention from their parents or carers. Emotional abuse can also take the form of children not being allowed to mix or play with other children.

Changes in behaviour which can indicate emotional abuse include:

- Neurotic behaviour e.g. sulking, hair twisting, rocking
- Being unable to play
- Fear of making mistakes
- Sudden speech disorders
- Self-harm
- Fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour
- Developmental delay in terms of emotional progress.

Sexual Abuse

It is recognised that there is underreporting of sexual abuse with in the family. School / College all staff and volunteers should play a crucial role in identifying / reporting any concerns that they may have through, for example, the observation and play of younger children and understanding the indicators of behaviour in older children which may be underlining of such abuse.

All Staff and volunteers should be aware that adults, who may be men, women or other children, who use children to meet their own sexual, needs abuse both girls and boys of all ages. Indications of sexual abuse may be physical or from the child's behaviour. In all cases, children who tell about sexual abuse do so because they want it to stop. It is important, therefore, that they are listened to and taken seriously.

The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

- Pain or itching in the genital area
- Bruising or bleeding near genital area
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Vaginal discharge or infection
- Stomach pains
- Discomfort when walking or sitting down
- Pregnancy.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse include:

- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- Having nightmares
- Running away from home
- Sexual knowledge which is beyond their age, or developmental level
- Sexual drawings or language
- Bedwetting
- Eating problems such as overeating or anorexia
- Self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
- Saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about
- Substance or drug abuse
- Suddenly having unexplained sources of money
- Not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- Acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults.

Neglect

It can be difficult to recognise neglect, however its effects can be long term and damaging for children.

The physical signs of neglect may include:

- Being constantly dirty or 'smelly'.
- Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children.
- Losing weight, or being constantly underweight.
- Inappropriate or dirty clothing.

Neglect may be indicated by changes in behaviour which may include:

- Mentioning being left alone or unsupervised.
- Not having many friends.

- Complaining of being tired all the time.
- Not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments.

Bullying and forms of bullying on and off line including prejudice based and Cyber Bullying is also abusive which will include at least one, if not two, three or all four, of the defined categories of abuse. The Academy's anti-bullying procedures are available in the Behaviour for Learning Policy which can be found at: <https://www.bebcmat.co.uk/bebcmat/index.php/policies-df>

Specific Safeguarding Issues

There are specific issues that have become critical in Safeguarding that Schools and Colleges will endeavour to ensure their Staff, (Directors and Volunteers) are familiar with; having processes in place to identify, report, monitor and which are included within teaching:

- Bullying including cyber bullying
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and child criminal exploitation as defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021
- Domestic Violence
- Drugs
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Faith abuse
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Forced Marriage
- Gangs and Youth Violence
- Gender based violence/Violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- Hate
- Mental Health
- Private Fostering
- Preventing Radicalisation
- On line abuse/Sharing of needs and semi-nudes
- Teenage Relationship abuse
- Trafficking
- Missing children and vulnerable adults
- Child sexual abuse within the family
- Poor parenting, particularly in relation to babies and young children

The PREVENT strategy

From 1 July 2015 all schools are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". This duty is known as the Prevent duty. It applies to a wide range of public-facing bodies.

What is Radicalism?

Radicalism refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism. Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation is seen as part of the Trust and its academies' wider safeguarding duties, and is similar in nature to protecting children from other forms of harm and abuse. During the process of radicalisation it is possible to intervene to prevent vulnerable people being radicalised. There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. It can happen in many different ways and settings. Specific background factors may contribute to vulnerability which are often combined with specific influences such as family, friends or online, and with specific needs for which an extremist or terrorist group may appear to provide an answer. The internet and the use of social media in particular has become a major factor in the radicalisation of young people.

What is Extremism?

Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.

Tackling radicalisation and extremism

The Academy will ensure all staff including governors and volunteers adhere to their duties in the Prevent guidance 2015 to prevent radicalisation. The HT and CEO will:

- Establish or use existing mechanisms for understanding the risk of extremism;
- Ensure staff understand the risk and build capabilities to deal with issues arising
- Communicate the importance of the duty;
- Ensure all Staff (directors and volunteers) implement the duty.

This Academy will respond to any concern about Prevent as a Safeguarding concern and will report in the usual way using local Safeguarding Procedures. We will seek to work in partnership, undertaking risk assessments where appropriate and proportionate to risk, building our children's resilience to radicalisation. We will make referrals into CHANNEL where the risk is identified and the pupil/student may need de radicalisation.

The Academy is committed to providing effective filtering and monitoring systems, this will include monitoring the activities of children when on-line in the school/college and actions taken relevant to the activity.

The Academy will record any concerns, keeping records which will be treated as a Child Protection Record, storing them as appropriate.

St Mary's Catholic Academy recognises that it is essential that staff are able to identify children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation, and know what to do when they are identified. Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation should be seen as part of each academy's wider safeguarding duties, and is similar in nature to protecting children from other harms, whether these come from within their family or are the product of outside influences. We can also build pupils' resilience to radicalisation by promoting fundamental British values and enabling them to challenge extremist views. All staff are instructed to challenge extremist and radical views. It is important to emphasise that the Prevent duty is not intended to stop pupils debating controversial issues. On the contrary, in older years within primary academies and within our high school year groups we will always provide a safe space in which children, young people and staff can understand the risks associated with terrorism and develop the knowledge and skills to be able to challenge extremist arguments. In early years we can emphasise this in daily work such as assisting the children's personal, social and emotional development and understanding of the world.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

CSE and CCE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. 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. Children may also become trapped as they or families may be threatened with violence. They may be coerced or entrapped into debt or weapons. 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.

Risk factors may include;

- Going missing
- Engagement in offending
- Disengagement from education
- Using drugs or alcohol
- Unexplained gifts/money
- Repeat concerns about sexual health
- Decline in emotional wellbeing

All suspected or actual cases of CSE and CCE are a Safeguarding concern in which Child Protection procedures will be followed; this will include a referral to the police. If any staff are concerned about a pupil, they will refer to the Safeguarding Designated Lead/s within the Academy. Children involved in CCE need to be treated as victims, even though they may commit crimes. Some children also may not realise they have been exploited, for example they may believe they are in a romantic relationship.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

“If a teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of Female Genital Mutilation appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must report this to the police.” Teachers must personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless the teacher has a good reason not to, they should also still consider and discuss any such case with the school or college’s designated safeguarding lead and involve children’s social care as appropriate. The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases (i.e. where the teacher does not discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) or in cases where the woman is 18 or over. In these cases, teachers should follow local safeguarding procedures.” (Keeping children safe DfE 2018). Based on advice in “Multi agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation (April 2016) the Trust and its academies have a duty under section 5C (1) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 in:

- identifying when a girl or young woman may be at risk of FGM and responding appropriately;
- identifying when a girl or woman has had FGM and responding appropriately;
- and implementing measures that can prevent and ultimately help end the practice of FGM.

FGM is illegal in the UK and is an unacceptable practice and is a form of child abuse. FGM is a procedure where the female genital organs are injured or changed and there is no medical reason for this. It is frequently a very traumatic and violent act for the victim and can cause harm in many ways.

The Trust is committed to:

- Ensuring each academy has a lead person whose role includes responsibility for FGM (this will often be the designated safeguarding lead) who has the relevant experience, expertise and knowledge. Their role should include ensuring that cases of FGM are handled, monitored and recorded properly;
- Ensuring there is a member of the organisation who has undertaken additional training and can be approached to discuss and direct difficult cases (this may be the ‘lead person’ mentioned above);
- Training staff to understand their role in protecting those who have undergone or are at risk of abuse, including FGM;
- Ensuring staff know to whom they should refer cases within their organisation and when to refer cases to other agencies;
- Ensuring staff understand the importance of timely information sharing both internally and with other agencies.
- Raising pupil awareness through including FGM in appropriate parts of the PSHE curriculum.

Safeguarding and PREVENT Information for pupils

The Trust is committed to ensuring that pupils are aware of behaviour towards them that is not acceptable, including FGM and how they can keep themselves safe. We inform pupils of whom they might talk to, both in and out of school, their right to be listened to and heard and what steps can be taken to protect them from harm. Each academy’s PSHE programme has a strong emphasis on helping pupils learn how to keep safe.

As part of its PREVENT commitment the Trust’s academies can build pupils’ resilience to radicalisation by providing a safe environment for debating controversial issues and helping them to understand how they can influence and participate in decision-making. Each academy develops pupils’ resilience in a number of different ways across the curriculum including through the PHSE programme of study, whole school and class assemblies, educational visits, drama workshops, debating, philosophy, and citizenship activities such as school council.

A wide range of information is made available to pupils both on each academy’s Home Page and on posters around academy buildings which advertise the help offered by the NSPCC, Childline, the Hub, Connect, etc.

Each academy consults with and listens to pupils through various methods, including the School Council, Student Voice surveys, Senior Prefect and Prefect meetings, peer support schemes, pastoral drop-ins, health drop-ins, etc.

We make pupils aware of these arrangements by information on posters around school, in assemblies, during

morning tutorials and in PSHE lessons.

Peer on Peer / Child on Child abuse

St Mary's recognises that some children abuse other children or their peers; therefore, the reasons for this are complex and are often multi-faceted. We understand that we need as a school to have clear mechanisms and procedures in place to identify and report incidents or concerns. We aim to reduce this behaviour and any related incidents with an expectation to eliminate this conduct in the Academy.

Peer on peer abuse is a Safeguarding concern and will require a discussion with the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will seek advice from agencies and professionals including reference to the Safeguarding procedures as outlined by the local authority. This will may a referral into the Police and Social Care. The Academy will consider and may apply the disciplinary procedure. The Academy will offer support to a victim.

We recognise peer on peer abuse can take some of these forms;

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers;
- 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;
- 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).

We will pay adherence to the guidance- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment in Schools/Colleges between children (May 2018) and have a strategy in the Academy to identify, report and respond to any issues/incidents raised. We aim to challenge this type of abuse. We also aim to use approaches in the curriculum to address and tackle peer on peer abuse.

All staff, volunteers and trainees should recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers.

This can take a number of different forms including sexual violence and harassment, including rape and sexual assault; causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent; physical abuse such as hitting, biting or causing physical harm through any other means; sexting (sharing of nude and semi-nude images); upskirting; initiating/hazing type violence and rituals (used as a way of initiating a person into a group).

There is a zero-tolerance approach to peer-on peer abuse. It is essential that all staff challenge inappropriate behaviours between peers. 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 young people and, in worst case scenarios, lead to a culture that normalises abuse leading to children and young people accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

Peer-on-peer abuse can happen both inside and outside of school or Academy and online. Even if there are no reported cases of peer-on-peer abuse, this doesn't mean it's not happening within the Academy. It is important that staff report any concerns about peer-on-peer abuse direct to the DSL.

All staff have appropriate knowledge of part 5 (Child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment) of the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' statutory guidance.

Work to prevent sexual harassment, online sexual abuse and sexual violence operates through a culture-led, whole-Academy approach that includes an effective behaviour policies, pastoral support and a carefully planned relationships, sex and health education curriculum.

Students are supported to report concerns about harmful sexual behaviour and all concerns are taken seriously and dealt with swiftly and appropriately and that pupils are confident that this is the case

When dealing with reports of peer-on-peer sexual harassment, sexual violence and sexual abuse:

- all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.
- staff never promise confidentiality as it is extremely likely that a concern of sexual harassment or abuse will have to be shared further.
- all reports/concerns of peer-on-peer sexual harassment, sexual violence and sexual abuse are recorded on Safeguard.

Serious violence:

All staff should be aware of indicators, which may signal that 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.

All staff should be aware of the associated risks and understand the measures in place to manage these. The Academy will pay adherence to the guidance provided in the [Home Office's Preventing youth violence and gang involvement](#) and its Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance.

The sending of indecent images from one person to another through Digital Media Devices

This Academy accepts that this is a Safeguarding concern and one that is increasing which requires a robust response. We will seek advice from agencies and professionals acknowledging that there are both national and local guidance that we need to adhere to in order to tackle the concerns and work in partnership with our agencies.

We will refer to:

["Sharing of needs and semi-nudes in Schools & Colleges: Responding to incidents & safeguarding young people" UK Council for child internet safety](#)

[The DfE guidance 2018 on Searching Screening and Confiscation Advice for Schools](#)

The criminal exploitation of children: County Lines

Signs which may indicate criminal exploitation:

- Persistently going missing from school or home and / or being found out-of-area;
- Unexplained acquisition of money, clothes, or mobile phones
- Excessive receipt of texts /phone calls
- Relationships with controlling /older individuals or groups
- Leaving home / care without explanation
- Suspicion of physical assault /unexplained injuries
- Parental concerns
- Carrying weapons
- Significant decline in school results / performance
- Gang association or isolation from peers or social networks
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being

Criminal exploitation of children is a Safeguarding concern and will require a discussion with the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will seek advice from agencies and professionals; including, reference to the Safeguarding procedures as outlined by the local authority. This will mean a referral into the Police and Social Care. The school/college will offer support to a victim.

Carrying knives/offensive Weapons & Gang Culture

Bringing and carrying a knife/offensive weapon onto school/college premises is a criminal offence and immediate action will be taken by calling the police and informing the informed. The guidance on Searching, Screening and Confiscation for Head teachers, schools and Governors, January 2018 will be consulted and the school/college will consider and may apply the disciplinary procedure.

If a member of staff suspects a pupil/student being involved in gang culture, this is a safeguarding concern and will require a discussion with the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will seek advice from agencies and professionals including reference to the Safeguarding procedures as outlined by the local authority. The pupil/student may be an exploited child and victim to which the school/college will offer support.

C. TRUST PROCEDURES

Child Protection:

All staff follow the LSCB Child Protection Procedures which are consistent with 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018' and 'What To Do If You Are Worried A Child is Being Abused 2015'

It is **not** the responsibility of the academy 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. If staff members have any concerns about a child they will need to decide what action to take. Where possible, there should be a conversation with the designated safeguarding lead to agree a course of action, although any staff member can make a referral to children's social care. Other options could include referral to specialist services or early help services and should be made in accordance with the referral threshold set by the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Accordingly all concerns regarding the welfare of pupils will be recorded and discussed with a designated person with responsibility for child protection (or any other senior member of staff in the absence of the designated persons) prior to any discussion with parents. However, abuse will not be tolerated as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour and an unsafe environment for pupils.

If a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral should be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately. Anyone can make a referral. Where referrals are not made by the designated safeguarding lead, the designated safeguarding lead should be informed as soon as possible that a referral has been made.

1. Staff will 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 known to be indicators of abuse or neglect
- any significant changes in a child's presentation, including non-attendance
- any hint or disclosure of abuse from any person
- any concerns regarding person(s) who may pose a risk to children (e.g. living in a household with children present)
- staff should not disclose information to anyone else other than the DSL unless told to do so.
- a staff member should report a concern or allegation directly to the local authority Designated Officer if they believe there is a conflict of interest in reporting to the Headteacher.

2. Responding to Disclosure

Disclosures or information may be received from pupils, parents or other members of the public. The Trust 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 and the school will make specific arrangements to ensure that pupils with communication difficulties are enabled to express themselves to an appropriate member of staff.

Such information cannot remain confidential and staff will immediately communicate what they have been told to the designated person in the form of a signed, dated, written statement.

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 academy 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
- promptly share their concerns with the designated safeguarding lead and follow up all conversations in writing.
- In the event of the absence of the DSL the deputy DSL should be contacted.
- If a member of staff is made aware either by disclosure or visual evidence of an act of FGM on a girl under the age of 18 years the teacher must report to the Police directly.

3. Action by the Designated Person (or other senior person in their absence)

Following any information raising concern, the designated person will consider:

- any urgent medical needs of the child
- making an enquiry to see if the child has a Child Protection Plan
- discussing the matter with other agencies involved with the family
- consulting with appropriate persons e.g. ESW service, Social Care, previous school/schools, etc
- the child's wishes in light of their age and understanding

Then decide:

- wherever possible, to talk to parents, unless to do so may place a child at risk of significant harm, impede any police investigation and/or place the member of staff or others at risk
- whether to make a formal referral to social care and if this needs to be undertaken immediately because a child may be at immediate risk
- not to make a referral at this stage
- if further monitoring is necessary
- if it would be appropriate to make a referral for other services

All information and actions taken, including the reasons for any decisions made, will be fully documented. All referrals to social care will be accompanied by a standard referral form.

4. Action following a Child Protection referral

The designated person or other appropriate member of staff will:

- make regular contact with Social Care
- wherever possible, contribute to the Strategy Discussion
- provide a report for, attend and contribute to any subsequent Child Protection Conference
- if the child or children are placed on the Child Protection Register, contribute to the Child Protection Plan and attend Core Group Meetings and Review Child Protection Conferences and provide a chronology
- where possible, share all reports with parents prior to meetings
- where in disagreement with a decision made e.g. not to apply Child Protection Procedures or not to convene a Child Protection Conference, discuss this with a senior member of E.S.W. staff to agree how to proceed

5. Recording and Monitoring

Accurate records will be made as soon as practicable and will clearly distinguish between observation, fact, opinion and hypothesis. All records will be signed and dated, any information given will be recorded verbatim where possible and a note made of the location and description of any injuries seen.

All C.P. documents will be retained in a 'Child Protection' file, separate from the child's main file. This will be locked away and only accessible to the Head teacher and designated persons for child protection. These records will be

copied and transferred to any school or setting the child moves to, clearly marked 'Child Protection, Confidential, for attention of Designated Person Child Protection.' Original copies will be retained until the child's 25th birthday.

All safeguarding information will be treated as confidential and will follow the guidance set out in the DfE guidance 'Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services'. (DfE July 2018)

6. GDPR

Relevant staff will have due regard to the data protection principles, which allow them to share personal information, as provided for in the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR. Relevant staff should be confident of the processing conditions under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR which allow them to store and share information for safeguarding purposes, including information which is sensitive and personal, and should be treated as 'special category personal data'. Schools should not under the GDPR as supplemented by the Data Protection Act 2018 provide pupils' education data where the serious harm test under that legislation is met. Therefore, in a situation where a child is in a refuge, this could mean that schools can withhold education data under the GDPR; they should do so where the serious harm test is satisfied.

7. Supporting the Child and Partnership with Parents

- The Trust recognises that the child's welfare is paramount, however good child protection practice and outcome relies on a positive, open and honest working partnership with parents
- Whilst we may, on occasion, need to make referrals without consultation with parents, we will make every effort to maintain a positive working relationship with them whilst fulfilling our duties to protect any child
- We will provide a secure, caring, supportive and protective relationship for the child
- Children will be given a proper explanation (appropriate to age and understanding) of what action is being taken on their behalf and why
- We will endeavour always to preserve the privacy, dignity and right to confidentiality of the child. The Designated Person will determine which members of staff "need to know" personal information and what they "need to know" for the purpose of supporting and protecting the child.

8. Dealing with incidents involving the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes.

The following section of the policy is based on advice found in the UKCIS document "*Sharing of needs and semi-nudes in schools and colleges; Responding to incidents and safeguarding young people*" UKCIS 2016. In the event of a member of staff discovering, or having disclosed to them, an issue regarding the possession by a student of unsuitable material involving another child or pupil, e.g. images or video on a mobile phone or laptop, the following guidelines should be adhered to:

- The incident should be referred to the DSL as soon as possible
- The DSL should hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff
- There should be subsequent interviews with the young people involved (if appropriate)
- Parents should be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put the young person at risk of harm
- At any point in the process if there is a concern a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately.

Following a disclosure the DSL should consider:

- Whether there is an immediate risk to a young person or young people
- If a referral should be made to the police and/or children's social care
- If it is necessary to view the imagery in order to safeguard the young person – in most cases, imagery should not be viewed
- What further information is required to decide on the best response
- Whether the imagery has been shared widely and via what services and/or platforms. This may be unknown.
- Whether immediate action should be taken to delete or remove images from devices or online services
- Any relevant facts about the young people involved which would influence risk assessment
- If there is a need to contact another school, college, setting or individual
- Whether to contact parents or carers of the pupils involved - in most cases parents should be involved

An immediate referral to police and/or children's social care should be made if at this initial stage:

- The incident involves an adult

- There is reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example owing to special educational needs)
- What you know about the imagery suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person's developmental stage, or are violent
- The imagery involves sexual acts and any pupil in the imagery is under 13
- You have reason to believe a pupil or pupils is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of the imagery, for example, the young person is presenting as suicidal or self-harming

For issues of this nature discovered in our primary academies and for pupils under the age of 13 issues of this nature will always be reported to the police. If none of the above conditions apply and the child involved is over 13 then the DSL may decide to respond to the incident without involving the police or children's social care (The DSL can choose to escalate the incident at any time if further information/concerns come to light). The decision to respond to the incident without involving the police or children's social care would be made in cases when the DSL is confident that they have enough information to assess the risks to pupils involved and the risks can be managed within the academy's pastoral support and disciplinary framework and if appropriate local network of support. The decision should be made by the DSL with input from the Head teacher and input from other members of staff if appropriate. The decision must be recorded within child protection files in line with academy policy. If a decision is taken to not involve the police then it should be based on consideration of the best interests of the young people involved. This should take into account proportionality as well as the welfare and protection of the young people. The decision should be reviewed throughout the process of responding to the incident.

9. PREVENT strategy:

If a member of the community, a child, a member of staff or a member of the academy community raises a concern that relates to the Prevent Duty e.g. a child at risk of radicalisation, or exhibiting extremist type behaviour, the Trust will take this matter seriously and will follow Child Protection procedures. Staff and visitors to the schools must refer all concerns about pupils who show signs of vulnerability or radicalisation to the Designated Person using the usual methods for reporting other safeguarding concerns. When there are significant concerns about a pupil, a referral will be made to the appropriate body including a referral to channel.

10. Channel

Channel is a voluntary, confidential support programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Proven referrals may be passed to a multi-agency Channel panel, which will discuss the individual referred to determine whether they are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and consider the appropriate support required. A representative from the school or college may be asked to attend the Channel panel to help with this assessment. An individual's engagement with the programme is entirely voluntary at all stages.

The designated safeguarding lead should consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the school or college in advance of a child leaving. For example, information that would allow the new school or college to continue supporting victims of abuse or those who are currently receiving support through the 'Channel' programme, and have that support in place for when the child arrives.

Statutory guidance on Channel is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/channel-and-prevent-multi-agency-panel-pmap-guidance>

11. Honour based abuse including FGM

So-called 'honour-based' abuse 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 so called HBV are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. If staff have a concern regarding a child that might be at risk of HBV they should contact the DSL immediately.

Female genital mutilation is one form of HBV which is covered by specific legislation.

In the event of staff becoming concerned that a pupil has been subjected to FGM or a child discloses FGM to a member of staff then the same protocol should be followed as set out on page 17 of this document.

12. Whistleblowing

All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school or college's safeguarding regime and know that such concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team. The Academy Whistleblowing Procedures are outlined in the BEBCMAT Whistleblowing Policy which can be found at: <https://www.bebcmat.co.uk/bebcmat/index.php/policies-df>

Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels may be open to them. The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm, Monday to Friday and email: help@nspcc.org.uk

C. ALLEGATIONS REGARDING PERSON(S) WORKING IN OR ON BEHALF OF AN ACADEMY

These procedures should be used in respect of all cases in which it is alleged that such a person has:

- a. behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child
- b. possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or
- c. has behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.
(DfES 2005)

Where such an allegation is made against any person working in or on behalf of the school, we will apply the same principles as in the rest of this document and we will always follow the LSCB procedures <http://panlancashirescb.proceduresonline.com/index.htm> (Chapter 10 “Child Protection in Specific Circumstances” section 10.17 “Allegations against staff and Volunteers who work with Children and Young People”), L.A. Personnel Guidance (Sec. 22 Personnel Manual), DfE and NEOST guidance. Detailed records will be made to include decisions, actions taken, and reasons for these. All records will be retained securely by the Head teacher.

Whilst we acknowledge such allegations, (as all others), may be false, malicious or misplaced, we also acknowledge they may be founded. It is, therefore, essential that all allegations are investigated properly and in line with agreed procedures.

Initial Action

- The person who has received an allegation or witnessed an event will immediately inform the Head teacher and make a record
- In the event that an allegation is made against the Head teacher the matter will be reported to the Executive Director who will proceed as the ‘Head teacher’ as follows:
 - The Head teacher will take steps, where necessary, to secure the immediate safety of children and any urgent medical needs
 - The member of staff will not be approached at this stage unless it is necessary to address the **immediate** safety of children
 - The Head teacher may need to clarify any information regarding the allegation, however no person will be interviewed at this stage
 - The Head teacher will consult with Safeguarding Officer/LADO (see Key Contacts, page 1) in order to determine if it is appropriate for the allegation to be dealt with by school or if there needs to be a referral to social care and/or the police for investigation
 - Consideration will be given throughout to the support and information needs of pupils, parents and staff
- The Head teacher will inform the Executive Director of any allegation.
- These procedures apply to any adult working in the academy including supply staff, volunteers and contractors and will be followed through in full.

References

Working together to safeguard children February 2019 Statutory Guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2021 Statutory Guidance

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/912592/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_Sep_2021.pdf

Preventing youth violence and gang involvement Practical advice for schools and colleges

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/418131/Preventing_youth_violence_and_gang_involvement_v3_March2015.pdf

What to do if you are worried a child is being abused March 2015

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What_to_do_if_you_are_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf

Children missing education 2016

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf

Prevent duty Guidance for England and Wales July 2015

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/445977/3799_Revised_Prevent_Duty_Guidance_England_Wales_V2-Interactive.pdf

The Prevent duty – Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers August 2015

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/439598/prevent-duty-departmental-advice-v6.pdf

The use of Social Media for online radicalisation July 2015

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/440450/How_social_media_is_used_to_encourage_travel_to_Syria_and_Iraq.pdf

Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation October 2018

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/800306/6-1914-HO-Multi_Agency_Statutory_Guidance.pdf

Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges, May 2018.

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Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services July 2018

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721581/Information_sharing_advice_practitioners_safeguarding_services.pdf

UKCIS guidance:

“Sharing of needs and semi-nudes in schools and colleges; Responding to incidents and safeguarding young people”
UKCIS 2016

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/759007/6-2939_SP_NCA_Sharing_of_needs_and_semi-nudes_In_Schools_FINAL_Update_Jan17.pdf

Appendix 1: FGM new duty for teachers regarding FGM



Home Office

New duty for health and social care professionals and teachers to report female genital mutilation (FGM) to the police

What is the new duty?

On 31 October 2015 a new duty was introduced that requires health and social care professionals and teachers to report 'known' cases of FGM in girls aged under 18 to the police.

For example, if a doctor sees that a girl aged under 18 has had FGM they will need to make a report to the police. Or, if a girl tells her teacher that she has had FGM, the teacher will need to report this to the police.

What will happen after the case has been reported to the police?

FGM is a serious crime and the police will need to investigate each reported case appropriately. The police will work with social care professionals to make sure that the girl is safe and her needs are put first.

Why is it being introduced?

When a girl has undergone FGM, a serious crime has taken place so it is very important that the police are involved as soon as possible. This will make sure that a proper investigation can take place.

The purpose of the new duty is to help make sure that professionals have the confidence to confront FGM and to help increase the number of referrals to the police so that cases can be investigated appropriately.

What the new duty won't do

It doesn't mean that police will take action without consulting appropriately with social care professionals and other relevant professionals.

It won't require professionals to report cases to the police where they suspect FGM may have been carried out or think a girl may be at risk. The duty also doesn't apply to women aged 18 or over. Professionals will follow existing safeguarding procedures in these cases.

Summary: Mandatory reporting of FGM*

Duty applies to regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales.

Requires these professionals to make a report to the police if, in the course of their professional duties, they:

- are informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her; or
- observe physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 and have no reason to believe that the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth.

*Introduced in Section 5B of the FGM Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015.