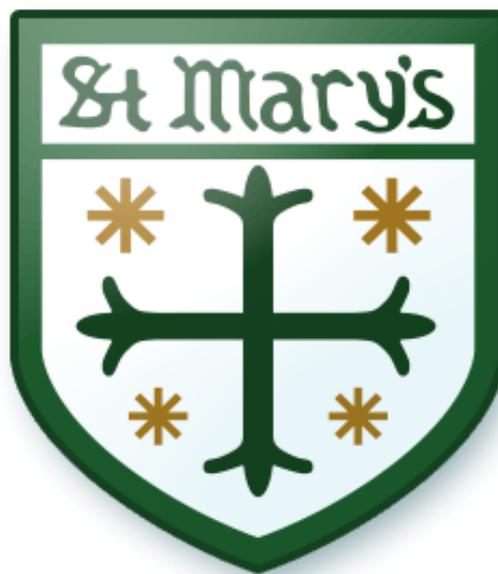


St. Mary's Catholic Primary School Chiswick

*"Living and learning, inspired by our faith"*

**SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**



September 2020

*Dr R Sankar*

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Chair of Governors

Next Review Date: September 2021

## **1. Rationale**

- 1.1. The overall aim of St Mary's School is to care for and nurture our children both spiritually and academically
- 1.2. Our school is concerned about the welfare and safety of its pupils and works to create a culture of security to enable them to feel valued, listened to and to know that their wishes and feelings are respected.
- 1.3. This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by:
  - Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013)
  - The Children Act (1989)
  - Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (2000)
  - Education Act (2002)
  - What to do if you are worried a Child is being Abused (2006)
  - Keeping children Safe in Education April (2014)
  - Children Act (2004)
  - Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (2007)

## **2. Statutory Framework**

- 2.1. 'Working Together' requires all schools to follow the procedures for protecting children from abuse which are laid down by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB). Schools are also expected to ensure that they have appropriate procedures in place to enable them to respond appropriately if they believe that a child has been, or is currently, at risk of being abused. These procedures should also cover circumstances where there is an allegation involving a member of the school's staff.
- 2.2. The Department for Education (DfE: Keeping Children Safe in Education) states that:
  - Staff should be alert to the signs and symptoms of abuse and know to whom they report any concerns
  - All schools should have a Designated Safeguarding Lead with responsibility for coordinating action within school and liaising with agencies. This role is currently incorporated into the Headteacher's post (Miss. J. Harte)
  - Designated Persons should have appropriate training in the form of level 3 safeguarding and Safer Recruitment training specific to this role.
  - Schools should have procedures for handling suspected cases of abuse, including where a member of staff is involved.

## **3. Aims**

- 3.1. The aims of this policy are to:
  - support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and resilience
  - provide an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued and respected, feel confident and know how to approach adults if they are in difficulties

- raise the awareness of all teaching and non-teaching staff of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting cases of abuse
- provide an environment where staff and pupils can talk freely about concerns and know that they will be listened to and appropriate action will be taken
- provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm, and ensure we, the school, contribute to assessments of need and support plans for those children
- acknowledge the need for effective and appropriate communication between all members of staff in relation to safeguarding pupils
- develop a structured procedure within the school; this will be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse
- develop effective working relationships with all other agencies involved in safeguarding children
- ensure that all adults within our school who have access to children have been checked as to their suitability.

#### **4. Role of Governing Body**

4.1. The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring that:

- The school has policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in their care
- The school reviews these policies annually
- Parents are aware that a Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection is in place and available to see on request
- The Designated Person for Child Protection is properly trained and has time to carry out their duties
- The school has procedures for safer recruitment
- The school has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against member of staff or volunteers working in the school
- The school has a lead governor responsible for Child Protection: the Chair of the Governing Body.

#### **5. The Designated Person**

5.1. The role of the Designated Person is to:

- Ensure that the Child Protection Code of Practice and the Education department Policy and Procedure are followed
- Ensure that all staff, including non-teaching staff, are aware of these procedures
- Ensure that all staff have training every three years to enable them to know when and to whom they must pass their concerns
- Develop an effective working relationship with other agencies
- Make referrals where child abuse is likely to occur, or is suspected or disclosed, to Social Care
- Ensure that detailed and accurate written records of concerns about a child are kept even if there is no need to make an immediate referral
- Ensure that all records are kept confidentially and securely and are separate from

- pupil records
- Ensure that if a child leaves the school their child protection file is copied and forwarded to the Designated Person in the new school. The originals should be retained until the 'child' reaches the age of 50.
- Attend case conferences, or ensure that the appropriate member of staff attends and is aware of the purpose and procedure for a Child Protection Conference
- Ensure that a report is prepared for any such conference and to participate in core groups as is required
- Ensure that any absence of two days, without satisfactory explanation, of a pupil currently on the Child Protection Register is referred to the School Education Welfare Officer and/or Social Care
- Meet with the Education Welfare Officer to monitor children at risk
- Act as a source of support and advice to staff within schools on all child protection concerns
- Provide, with the Head Teacher, an annual report for the Governing Body detailing any changes to the policy and procedures, training undertaken by the Designated Person, deputy Designated Person, all staff and governors, number and type of incidents/cases, number of hours spent on child protection issues and number of children referred to Social Care and on the Child Protection Register
- Keep up to date with knowledge to enable them to fulfil their role, including attending any relevant training, at least every two years, provided by the Hounslow Safeguarding Children's Board or the Safeguarding Team.

## **6. School Procedures**

- 6.1. Our school procedures for safeguarding children will be in line with Local Safeguarding Children's Board procedures and 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'.
- 6.2. The deputy Designated Person, being the Chair of the Governing Body, will act in the absence of the Designated Person for Child Protection.
- 6.3. If a disclosure is made and the Head Teacher, Designated Person and Deputy Designated Person are not present at school, they must be contacted immediately.
- 6.4. If any member of staff is concerned about a child he or she must inform the Designated Person immediately.
- 6.5. Notes should be made about any concerns as quickly as possible.
- 6.6. The Designated Person will seek advice initially from the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) or Social Care.
- 6.7. Particular attention will be given to the attendance, academic progress and physical, social and emotional development of any child who has been identified as at risk or who has been placed on the Child Protection Register.
- 6.8. The designated Person will inform Social Care of any significant change affecting any child on the Child Protection Register.
- 6.9. The name of the Designated Person will be clearly shown in the school, with a statement explaining the school's role in referring and monitoring cases of suspected abuse.
- 6.10. Our Designated Person will undertake training every two years and the whole

school every three years.

- 6.11. Any disclosures made in the Breakfast and Afterschool Club to be referred to the Designated Person for Child Protection on the mobile number given to all Club Supervisors.

## **7. When to Be Concerned**

- 7.1. When a child has frequent or unusual injuries, not normally associated with the explanation offered.
- 7.2. When a child exhibits unusual behaviour, his or her progress at school alters dramatically or attitude changes.
- 7.3. When a child indulges in sexual behaviour, either verbal or non-verbal, that is unusually explicit or inappropriate to his or her age.

## **8. Dealing with a Disclosure**

- 8.1. If a child discloses that he or she has been abused, the member of staff should:
  - listen to what the child says without displaying shock or disbelief
  - take what the child says seriously'; keep an open mind
  - accept what is being said
  - allow the child to talk freely
  - reassure the child but not make promises which may not be possible to keep
  - reassure the child – it is not his or her fault; stress that it is right to tell
  - listen; do not ask direct or leading questions, such as, what did he/she do next? Did he touch your private parts?
  - ask open questions e.g. anything else to tell me? And?
  - do not criticise the perpetrator – the child may still love him or her
  - do not promise confidentiality: You have a duty to report the incident to the Designated Person and it may be necessary to inform Social Care
  - explain what you have to do next, which initially would be to speak to the Designated officer who will be able to support you.

## **9. Record Keeping**

- 9.1. Where abuse is disclosed or suspected the member of staff should:
  - make brief notes as soon as possible recording exact words used by the child
  - record dates and times
  - draw a diagram to indicate any marks or injuries observed.
- 9.2. These notes must not be destroyed, even if a more detailed report is written later. They may be needed by the Court.
- 9.3. Data protection means that parents/former pupils have the right to see their school records. Although child protection information is exempt from this requirement, if a parent or former pupil asked to see notes registering any child protection concerns, then it is likely that a Local Authority would be obliged to show them, unless the case had involved a criminal prosecution, care order or other legal prohibition. An exception might be made if to release the information would cause individual harm to the parent or former pupil. Therefore, it is vital

that all information written about children, or allegations made by children is kept to objective comments, verbatim accounts and factual information.

## **10. The Referral Process**

10.1. When a clear disclosure is reported to the Designated Person, a referral must be made immediately. Where there are concerns raised, the Designated Person may choose to seek advice (LADO) and they will decide whether it is appropriate to refer. This decision may be made following discussion with the Education Safeguarding Team. Referral can be made over the telephone but should be followed up in writing using the Common Referral Form.

## **11. Diversity**

11.1. Although no culture sanctions extreme harm to a child, cultural variations in child rearing patterns do exist. A balanced assessment must incorporate a cultural perspective but guard against being over-sensitive to cultural issues at the expense of promoting the safety and well-being of the child.

11.2. 'Fear of being accused of racism can stop people acting when they otherwise would. Fear of being thought unsympathetic to someone of the same race can change responses. Every organisation concerned with the welfare and protection of children should have mechanisms in place to ensure equal access to services of the same quality, and that each child, irrespective of colour or background, should be treated as an individual requiring appropriate care.' - (Victoria Climbié Inquiry Report).

11.3. Research also shows that children with special needs are at an increased risk of abuse. There are fewer signs and indicators and more possible explanations. Children with communication difficulties may be especially vulnerable.

11.4. Some children and young people may be more vulnerable to abuse due to particular circumstances such as:

- young women subject to honour-based violence (where, for instance, they have transgressed the expectations of them as young women in their family and community)
- children at risk of harm from abuse linked to a belief in spirit possession on the part of their parent, carer or wider community
- girls at risk of genital mutilation (usually being taken back to their country of origin for this procedure to be carried out)
- children being trafficked into other families from abroad
- girls and/or boys at risk of being forced into marriage.

## **12. Speaking to Parents**

12.1. All parents are made aware of the school's Child Protection Policy, through reference to it in, website and Home School Agreement. A notice about this, the name of the Designated Person, Deputy Designated Person and a statement explaining the school's role in referring and monitoring cases of suspected abuse is displayed in our school entrance. Where concerns are raised, the Designated

Person must explain to parents that the school has a duty of care to refer to Social Care if they believe that the child or other children may be at risk of significant harm.

- 12.2. There are situations when seeking consent should be avoided:
  - In cases of sexual abuse, where evidence could be destroyed.
  - Where the risk of violence to the child or others may result.
  - Where a child may be coerced into withdrawing a statement.
  - Where the sharing of information with parents is best managed jointly.
- 12.3. The Designated Person should seek advice from Social Care and keep record of advice given.

### **13. Supporting Children**

- 13.1. We recognise that a child who is abused, who witnesses violence, or who lives in a violent environment may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame him/herself, and find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of self-worth.
- 13.2. We recognise that the school may provide the only stability in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm. We recognise that there may be other groups of children and young people who are particularly vulnerable, e.g. those with disabilities, young carers and children living with substance abuse.
- 13.3. We accept that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn.
- 13.4. Our school will support all pupils by:
  - encouraging the development of self-esteem and resilience in every aspect of school life including through the curriculum
  - promoting a caring, safe and positive environment within the school
  - liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in the safeguarding of children
  - notifying Social Care as soon as there is a significant concern
  - ensuring that a named teacher is designated for 'Looked After Children' and that an up to date list of children is regularly reviewed and updated
  - notifying Social Care when a young child or person attending the school is privately fostered
  - notifying the Education Welfare Officer (following notification to the Designated or Deputy Designated Person) of the absence of two days, without satisfactory explanation, of a pupil currently subject to a child protection plan.

### **14. Support for Staff**

- 14.1. Dealing with Child Protection is always difficult and stressful. Members of staff should consider seeking support for themselves, initially from the Designated Person or another trusted colleague, occupational health, and/or a representative of a professional body or trade union, as appropriate. We adhere to safe working practices and have a code of conduct for staff at our school.

### **15. Confidentiality**

- 15.1. We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential.
- 15.2. The Head teacher or Designated Person will disclose personal information about a

pupil to other members of staff on a need to know basis only.

- 15.3. However, all staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.
- 15.4. All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secret that which might compromise the child's safety or well-being or that of another child.
- 15.5. We will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to Social Care with parents/carers unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm, or impede a criminal investigation. If in doubt, we will consult with the Safeguarding Team or Social Care on this point.

## **16. Allegations Involving a Member of Staff**

- 16.1. All school staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents be conducted in view of other adults or children.
- 16.2. Where an allegation is made against a member of staff, immediate advice must be sought from the DSL. The Head teacher or the most senior teacher if the Head teacher is not present must be informed immediately. The Head teacher will discuss the content of the allegation with the LADO. The Head teacher will also notify the Chair of Governors.
- 16.3. If the allegation concerns the Head teacher the person receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Chair of Governors. He/she will consult the LADO. The school will follow the LSCB procedures for managing allegations against staff.
- 16.4. The school must retain allegations of a child protection nature against a member of staff until the staff member concerned reaches the age of 100.

## **17. Recruitment of staff**

- 17.1. Safer recruitment procedures as set by the Department of Education will be followed as set out by the Department for Education. All staff and volunteers will be carefully selected and vetted to try to ensure they do not pose a risk to children. All references will be checked and verified. Those staff and volunteers having contact with children will be checked through the Criminal Records Bureau at the appropriate level. All staff and volunteers will receive information and basic training in safe conduct and what to do if they have concerns about a child. This will include information on recognising where there are concerns about a child, where to get advice and what to do if no one seems to have taken their concerns seriously.

## **18. Other Policies**

- 18.1. Our policy on the prevention and management of bullying is set out in our separate Behaviour Policy and acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures. Our policy on racist incidents is set out in a separate policy and acknowledges that repeated racist incidents or a single serious incident may lead to consideration under

child protection procedures.

- 18.2. Our policy on physical intervention/positive handling by staff is set out separately, as part of our Behaviour Policy.
- 18.3. It complies with DfE Guidance, 'The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils' November 2007. This policy states that staff should only ever use physical intervention to stop a child or young person committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others, damaging property or acting in a way that is counter to maintaining good order and discipline at the school and that at all times it must be the minimal force necessary:
  - Such events should be recorded and signed by a witness.
  - Staff who are likely to need to use physical intervention, should be appropriately trained.
  - Physical intervention of a nature, which causes injury or distress to a child, may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures.
- 18.4. Our Health and Safety policy, set out in a separate document, reflects the consideration we give to the protection of our children both physically within the school environment and, for example, in relation to internet use and when away from the school when undertaking school trips and visits.
- 18.5. Our Child Protection Policy will be monitored and evaluated at the beginning of every academic year by all staff, with the responsibility for this to be held by the Designated Person for Child Protection.

#### **19. Monitoring and Evaluating this Policy**

- 19.1. This policy will be monitored and reviewed annually