



St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2021-22

Updates in red

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in Keeping children safe in education (2021) as:

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

Child protection is part of this definition and refers to activities undertaken to prevent children from suffering, or being likely to suffer, significant harm

This policy was:

Approved by Browne Jacobson: 10th September 2021

Adopted by St Thomas Aquinas Trust Board of Directors: 14th September 2021

Signature: Sarah Noon (Chair the Trust Board)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Noon".

This policy will be reviewed by the Director of safeguarding of St Thomas Aquinas on or before September 2022

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1 Our strong safeguarding culture and commitment

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

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

We will always act in the best interests of the child.

1.1 Why it is important

1.1.1 Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and it is the duty of St Thomas Aquinas Trust and St Mary's stakeholders to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This is our core safeguarding principle.

1.1.2 In adhering to this principle we focus on providing a safe and welcoming environment for all of our children regardless of age, ability, culture, race, language, religion, gender identity or sexual identity. All of our children have equal rights to support and protection.

1.1.3 One of the cornerstones of our safeguarding culture is this policy and the procedures contained within it. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and governors, all of whom are trained upon its contents and on their safeguarding duties. We update this policy at least annually to reflect changes to law, statutory guidance and best practice.

1.1.4 This policy should be read alongside our other safeguarding policies, listed in this policy.

1.2 What it means for our pupils

1.2.1 We work with our local safeguarding partners to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. This includes providing a co-ordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified and contributing to inter-agency plans which provide additional support to the child.

1.2.2 All of our staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may indicate that a child is at risk of harm. Any pupils or staff involved in a child protection or safeguarding issue will receive appropriate support.

1.2.3 Our strong safeguarding culture ensures that we treat all pupils with respect and involve them in decisions that affect them. We encourage positive, respectful and safe behaviour among pupils and we set a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately.

1.2.4 Identifying safeguarding and child protection concerns often begin with recognising changes in pupils' behaviour and knowing that these changes may be signs of abuse, neglect or exploitation. Challenging behaviour and signs of mental health issues may be indicators of abuse. Our staff are trained to recognise the link between a child's behaviour and a potential safeguarding issue.

1.2.5 All of our staff will reassure children that their concerns and disclosures will be taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

1.2.6 Our staff are aware that safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside of the school and/or can occur outside of the school. This was highlighted as contextual safeguarding in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018). Extra-familial

harms take a variety of different forms making children vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual and criminal exploitation and serious youth violence. All staff, especially DSLs understand the importance of considering wider environmental factors in a child's life outside their families that may be a threat to their safety and/or welfare. St Mary's assesses the risks and issues in the wider community when considering the wellbeing and safety of our pupils.

1.3. Safeguarding legislation and guidance

The following safeguarding legislation and guidance has been considered when drafting this policy:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021)
- Working Together to Safeguarding Children (2018, reviewed, Dec 2020)
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (2015)
- The Teacher Standards (2012)
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Section 157 of the Education Act (2002)
- Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people (May 2019)
- Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people addendum (April 2020)
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation (2018)
- The Data Protection Act (2018) and the General Data Protection Regulation (2018)
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges (2020)
- The Domestic Abuse Act (2021)
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations (2014)
- Early years foundation stage statutory framework (EYFS);

This policy adheres to all relevant safeguarding statutory guidance and legislation.

2 Definitions

Safeguarding 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 safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

'Child Protection' is the intervention that occurs when a child or children are at risk of, or are suffering, significant harm.

'Child' refers to anyone under the age of 18.

'Parent' refers to birth parents and other adults in a parenting role, for example adoptive parents, stepparents and foster carers.

'Staff' or 'members of staff' refers to all paid or unpaid adults working in or on behalf of the school. This includes (but it not limited to) all teaching, non-teaching, support, supply, peripatetic and contract staff, volunteers, governors and trustees.

'The Trust' refers to St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust

3 Scope

This policy applies to all members of staff working in or on behalf of the school.

This policy will not duplicate content from Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) unless necessary. It should be understood that the school will adhere to this document at all times and refer to it as the benchmark for all safeguarding practice.

4 Roles and responsibilities

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is:

Miss Jordan Head teacher

Contact details: email: safeguarding@stmarys-rc.leics.sch.uk

The deputy DSL(s) are:

Mrs Rutledge (Deputy Headteacher), Karen Richardson (SENCO)

Contact details: email: safeguarding@stmarys-rc.leics.sch.uk

The Designated teacher for looked after and previously looked after children is:

Miss Jordan Head teacher

Contact details: email: safeguarding@stmarys-rc.leics.sch.uk

The Chair of Governors is:

Jane Monaghan

Contact details: email: JMonaghan@stmarys-rc.leics.sch.uk

The Safeguarding Governor is:

____Jane Monaghan

Contact details: email: jmonaghan@stmarys-rc.leics.sch.uk

The Headteacher is:

Miss P Jordan

Contact details: email: Office@stmarys-rc.leics.sch.uk

4.1 Roles and responsibilities: The Trust Board will:

- facilitate a whole-school approach to safeguarding, ensuring that safeguarding and child protection are at the fore front and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy
- appoint a safeguarding lead Director for the Trust;
- adopt a Trust-wide Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, bearing in mind local variance where the Trust spans more than one Local Authority area;
- ensure the single central record (SCR) is maintained for all Trust based and cross-school appointments;
- ensure that at least one director on any recruitment panel has up to date safeguarding training;
- ensure that all senior leaders are trained in safer recruitment;
- ensure that governors who undertake recruitment are trained in safer recruitment;
- monitor safeguarding practice across the Trust and take appropriate action where safeguarding practice is falling short of the standards expected;
- ; and
- ensure that each academy has appointed a designated teacher to support Looked After Children.

4.2 Roles and responsibilities: The CEO and Executive Team will:

- make arrangements for safeguarding audits to be conducted by independent personnel;
- Report to the Board (at least annually) on the procedures in place for safeguarding and matters as they arise;
- monitor compliance with legislation (including the single central record) and report any failings to The Board;
- Identify training needs and report to The Board;
- Liaise with the Trust Board to ensure that all senior leaders are trained in safer recruitment; monitor safeguarding practice across the Trust and take appropriate action where safeguarding practice is falling short of the standards expected; and ensure that each academy has appointed a designated teacher to support Looked After Children.

4.3 Roles and responsibilities: The Local Governing Body will:

- ensure that governors who undertake recruitment are trained in safer recruitment;
- appoint a designated governor for safeguarding;
- monitor systems for safeguarding pupils and report finding to The Board;
- ensure the governing body receive safeguarding training, and the safeguarding governor attends appropriate training on their strategic responsibilities in order to

provide appropriate challenge and support and discharge their responsibilities effectively;

- ensure the Chair of Governors receives appropriate training in managing allegations or concerns against staff;
- ensure new staff receive safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) at induction, and all staff undertake appropriate, up to date training (including online) at least annually, along with regular briefings and e-bulletins;
- ensure any deficiencies or weaknesses brought to the attention of the local governing body will be rectified without delay;
- ensure there are clear systems and processes in place to identify and respond to potential mental health problems of children, including routes to escalate, clear referral and accountability systems;
- ensure there are robust systems in place to respond to children who go missing from education;
- ensure the school has implemented an effective IT filtering and monitoring system;
- there is a whole-school approach to online safety, including the use of mobile technology in the school is appointed
- Liaise with the Headteacher to ensure that a member of the senior leadership team is appointed to the role of designated safeguarding lead (DSL); and
- the DSL is supported to exercise the school's duty in relation to safeguarding and child protection to provide information to the local authority by completing and returning the annual report in a timely manner.

The safeguarding governor

4.3.1 The role of the safeguarding governor is to provide support and challenge to the DSL and the leadership of the school on how they manage safeguarding so that the safety and wellbeing of the children can continuously improve. The role includes:

- understanding the Governance Handbook;
- understanding the requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021;
- supporting and challenging the DSL on the standards of safeguarding at the school;
- confirming that consistent and compliant safeguarding practice takes place across the school; and
- reporting to the local governing body about the standard of safeguarding in the school.

4.3.2 The DSL and the safeguarding governor meet on a regular basis to discuss safeguarding issues and to agree steps to continuously improve safeguarding practices in the school.

4.4 Roles and responsibilities of the Headteacher/Principal

The Headteacher of St Mary's will ensure that:

- there is a member of the school's senior leadership team appointed to the role of designated safeguarding lead (DSL), to take lead responsibility for child protection and wider safeguarding (including online safety) and this role is explicitly detailed in their job description; in addition, a deputy designated safeguarding lead (DDSL) or leads are appointed, trained to the same standard as the DSL and the role made explicit in their job description;
- they safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties as outlined in the Teaching Standards (2012);

- all policies and procedures are fully implemented and followed by all staff;
- the Trust's annually updated Safeguarding and Child Protection policy is available publically via the school website;
- **ensure safeguarding requirements will be included in any lease or hire agreement as a condition of use of school premises for extended school activities.**
- the relevant staffing ratios are met, where applicable;
- each child in EYFS is assigned a key person;
- As required by the EYFS Framework we have a policy which covers the safe use of mobile phones and cameras. **Our ICT policy states that only the school tablets will be used and not mobile phones.**
- sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable the DSL and other staff to discharge their responsibilities; including taking part in strategy discussions, inter-agency meetings and contributing to the assessment of children;
- they and at least one member of the governing body has undertaken Safer Recruitment Training (which is refreshed no later than every 5 years) and in addition, members of the senior leadership team and any other staff involved in the recruitment process;
- there is a culture of safer recruitment to prevent anyone who poses a risk of harm to children from working in the school, through ensuring references are sought and statutory pre-appointment checks are carried out;
- children are taught about keeping themselves safe, including online safety, so that they can recognise when they are at risk and how to get help when they need it;
- there is a culture of vigilance where all staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice in relation to children and such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner; the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline number (0800 028 02850) is shared with staff and displayed publicly for staff;
- allegations of abuse or concerns that a member of staff, supply teacher, contractor or volunteer may pose a risk of harm to children or young people are reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), **where the threshold is met, and procedures for dealing with low level concerns are in place;**
- all staff act in the best interests of the child and are made aware that they have an individual responsibility to pass on safeguarding concerns promptly to the DSL, or directly to children's social care or the police;
- children's social care (from the host local authority or the placing local authority) can access the school to consider whether to conduct, or to conduct a Section 47 or Section 17 assessment; and
- all staff understand Early Help and are aware that they should identify children who may benefit from Early Help intervention.

4.5 Roles and responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The designated safeguarding lead takes **lead responsibility** for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) in the school. During term time, they or a deputy are always available for staff in the school to discuss any safeguarding concerns. The DSL promotes a culture of safeguarding and acts in the best interests of the child. The DSL and deputies have undergone training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out their role. This training is updated every two years, in addition to regular updates through, for example, safeguarding bulletins/newsletters e-bulletins, and DSL forums. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- **Managing referrals** – to the local authority children’s social care, to the Channel Programme, to the Disclosure and Barring Service for staff dismissed for safeguarding concerns (as required), to the Police where a crime may have been committed
- **Working with others** – to act as a source of support and advice, to act as a point of contact for the safeguarding partners, to liaise with the headteacher or principal about issues especially to do with ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations, to liaise with staff when deciding to make a referral to relevant agencies so that children’s needs are considered holistically, to liaise with the senior mental health lead, to promote supportive engagement with parents and carers, to take the lead in promoting educational outcomes for children in need and those with a social worker, to liaise with the Governing Body and the Local Authority on any deficiencies brought to the attention of the Governing Body and how these should be rectified without delay
- **Information sharing and managing safeguarding files** – keeping a confidential, secure and up to date file for each child, including a clear and comprehensive summary, detailing how the concern was followed up and resolved, with a note of actions, decisions and the outcome, sharing information as required to safeguard children and transferring records and other relevant information to the new school within 5 days or in advance if necessary
- **Raising Awareness** – ensuring each member of staff and volunteer understands the child protection policy which is reviewed at least annually, making it available publicly, ensuring staff have access to relevant training and induction, promoting educational outcomes by sharing relevant information about vulnerable children
- **Training, knowledge and skills** – to undergo DSL training every two years (updating at least annually via bulletins etc.) and to attend Prevent awareness training, in order to understand assessment and referral processes, to contribute effectively to child protection conferences including the importance of sharing information, to understand the lasting impact that adversity and trauma can have on children and how to respond to this, to be alert to children with specific needs eg SEND, those with health conditions and young carers, to understand the unique risks associated with online safety
- **Providing support to staff** – to help them feel confident on welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters, to provide support in the referral process if required and to help them to understand that safeguarding and educational outcomes are linked
- **Understanding the views of children** – encouraging a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings in measures taken to protect them and understanding the difficulties children may have in approaching staff about their circumstances
- **Holding and sharing information** – sharing with safeguarding partners, other agencies and professionals and transferring records between schools and colleges in accordance with data protection legislation, keeping detailed, accurate and secure written records and understanding the purpose of this
- **The deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)**

4.6 Roles and responsibilities of all staff

School staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify safeguarding concerns and signs of abuse early. All staff in the school have a responsibility to:

- provide a safe environment where children can learn;
- be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help;

- be aware of safeguarding issues that put children at risk of harm and behaviours associated with these risks;
- follow the school referral process to raise concerns about the safety and wellbeing of children;
- support social workers and other agencies following a referral as required; and
- fulfil their statutory duty under the Prevent Duty, Teachers (which includes Headteachers) should safeguard children’s wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties (Teachers Standards 2012).
Adhering to the expectations set out in the Teachers Standards, teachers should manage behaviour effectively and have a clear understanding of the needs of all children to ensure a good and safe learning environment.

5 Staff Safeguarding CPD

Our staff receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection CPD which is regularly updated, at least annually. In addition, all staff receive safeguarding and child protection updates on a regular basis to ensure they are up to date and empowered to provide exceptional safeguarding to our pupils and maintain a culture of vigilance.

New staff, governors and volunteers receive a briefing during their induction which covers (among other safeguarding issues) this Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, the school’s safeguarding response to children who go missing from education, information about the Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies and how to report and record concerns. Staff are provided with copies of the following:

- **Part 1 and Annex B, of Keeping Children Safe in Education, for staff who work directly with children, and Annex A for staff who do not work directly with children;**
- The Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- The staff Code of Conduct; and
- The Behaviour Policy;

6 Children who may be particularly vulnerable

Some children are at greater risk of abuse. This increased risk can be caused by many factors including social exclusion, isolation, discrimination and prejudice. To ensure that all of our pupils receive equal protection, we give special consideration to children who:

- are vulnerable because of their race, ethnicity, religion, disability, gender identity or sexuality;
- have special educational needs or disabilities;
- may have language or communication barriers;
- are vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying;
- are at risk of sexual or criminal exploitation, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, or being drawn into extremism;
- live in chaotic or unsupportive home situations;
- live transient lifestyles or live away from home or in temporary accommodation;
- frequently go missing from home or care;
- are affected by parental substance abuse, domestic abuse or parental mental health needs, or are misusing substances themselves;
- have mental health needs;

- have returned home from care;
- are young carers;
- have family members in prison;
- are in the court system;
- are privately fostered; and
- are children who need a social worker.

school name recognises that some children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. The experience of abuse and trauma can leave children vulnerable to further harm and educational disadvantage.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will hold information about social workers working with children in the school.

The information will inform decisions about safeguarding and about promoting welfare.

7 Children with special educational needs and disabilities

7.1 Children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children, which can include:

- 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;
- additional vulnerability to other forms of peer-on-peer abuse; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

7.2 Our staff are trained to be aware of and identify these additional barriers to ensure this group of children are appropriately safeguarded.

8 Children missing education

8.1 Knowing where children are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of safeguarding. Children missing education, particularly repeatedly, can be an indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation, child criminal exploitation, mental health problems, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Our staff are alert to these risks.

8.2 At St Mary's we closely monitor attendance, absence and exclusions and will always follow up with parents/carers when pupils fail to attend school. We request that parents ensure that the school has at least two emergency contacts for their child and remember to update the school as soon as possible if the numbers change. The DSL will take appropriate action including notifying the local authority, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions and/or are missing for periods during the school day.

8.3 We work with the Local Authority and refer cases where children are missing from education.

8.4 We adhere to the statutory guidance Children Missing Education (September 2016)

8.5 All staff are made aware of the school's safeguarding response to children who go missing from education as part of their induction.

8.6 The following procedures will be followed for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children: If a pupil is regularly not collected after school, the school will work with social care to address the problem. One way to do this would be to agree an appropriate deadline for the family to collect the child from school. After the deadline, if the child is not collected, the school would shut, and the child would be handed over to social services. If there is a persistent failure to collect, a formal referral to social services will be made.

9 Mental health

9.1 Schools have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils. We recognise that safeguarding includes preventing the impairment of children's mental health or development.

9.2 All staff are aware that mental health problems can be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Staff are also aware that where children have suffered adverse childhood experiences those experiences can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education. Staff are not expected or trained to diagnose mental health conditions or issues but may notice behaviours that may be of concern.

9.3 Where staff are concerned that a child's mental health is also a safeguarding concern, they will discuss it with the DSL/designated mental health lead.

10 Peer on peer/child on child abuse

10.1 Peer on peer abuse – children harming other children - is unacceptable and will be taken seriously; it will not be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', just having a laugh,' 'boys being boys' or 'part of growing up'. This may be experienced by both boys and girls; however girls are more likely to be the victims and boys the perpetrators. Allegations will be dealt with in the same manner, regardless of whether they are made by boys or girls. Children will be encouraged to report all incidents of peer-on-peer abuse, wherever it may have happened, to a trusted adult in school. We recognise the importance of ensuring pupils feel safe and comfortable to come forward and report any concerns/allegations. To achieve this, we will put systems in place for pupils to confidently report abuse and ensure our reporting systems are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for pupils. They will be given assurance that they will always be taken seriously and never given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting their concern or made to feel ashamed.

10.1.2 Where there is a safeguarding concern, we will take the child's wishes and feelings into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide.

10.1.2 All staff are clear about the school's zero tolerance to such abuse and the expectation that 'we must assume it is happening', even if there are no reports.

10.1.3 Peer on peer abuse can take many forms, including:

- **physical abuse** such as shaking, hitting, biting, kicking or hair pulling;
- **bullying**, including cyberbullying, prejudiced -based and discriminatory bullying;

- **sexual violence and harassment** such as rape and sexual assault or sexual comments and inappropriate sexual language, **misogynistic** remarks or jokes;
- **up skirting**, where someone takes a picture under a person's clothing without their permission and knowledge, for the purposes of sexual gratification or to cause harm, distress or alarm;
- **consensual and non-consensual** sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (previously referred to as sexting or youth produced imagery) including pressuring others to share sexual content;
- **abuse in intimate personal relationships** (also known as teenage relationship abuse) – such as a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual or emotional abuse;
- **causing someone to engage in sexual behaviour without consent**, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party; and
- **initiation/hazing** type violence and rituals– used to induct newcomers by subjecting them to potentially humiliating or abusing trials with the aim of creating a bond

10.2 Minimising risk

We take the following steps to minimise or prevent the risk of peer-on-peer abuse:

- training for staff to ensure that they understand what peer on peer abuse is, how to recognise signs and symptoms of peer-on-peer abuse and how to raise concerns with the DSL.
- fostering an open and honest environment where children feel safe and confident to share their concerns and worries;
- promoting a supportive environment by using assemblies and the wider curriculum, e.g. RSHE, to define acceptable and unacceptable behaviour (including online), to educate and reinforce our messages through stories, role play, current affairs and other suitable activities;
- **putting in place clear procedures to control the use of mobile phones in school; and**
- **ensuring that the school is well supervised, especially in areas where children might be vulnerable. We will work with our children to identify locations around the school site that are less visible and may present more risk to pupils.**

10.3.1 All allegations of peer-on-peer abuse should be passed to the DSL immediately who will investigate and manage the allegation as follows:

- **Gather information** - children and staff will be spoken with immediately to gather relevant information;
- **Decide on action** - if it is believed that any child is at risk of significant harm, a referral will be made to children's social care. The DSL will then work with children's social care to decide on next steps, which may include contacting the police. In other cases, we may follow our behaviour policy alongside this Safeguarding and Child Protection policy;
- **Inform parents** - we will usually discuss concerns with the parents. However, our focus is the safety and wellbeing of the pupil and so if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to a child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children's social care and/or the police before parents are contacted.
- **Record** – all concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions will be recorded in writing, kept confidential and stored securely on CPOMs. The record will include a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern, details of how the decision was followed up and resolved and a note of the action taken,

decisions reached and the outcome. Support plans for the victim, the alleged perpetrator(s) and any other children involved, will record the support provided and the key adults involved in offering support. A risk assessment will be undertaken by the DSL in order to minimize the risk of further harm and to ensure the safety of all

- 10.3.2 Where allegations of a sexual nature are made, the school will follow the statutory guidance set out in Part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 and the document Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children in schools and colleges (July 2021). In cases of consensual or non-consensual sharing of sexual imagery, we follow DfE guidance given to schools and colleges: 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people' (Dec 2020). Our school also refers to the LSCPB procedures which are written with particular reference to sexually abusive and inappropriate behaviours.

Supporting those involved

- 10.3.3 The support required for the pupil who has been harmed will depend on their particular circumstance and the nature of the abuse. The support we provide could include counselling and mentoring or some restorative justice work.
- 10.3.4 Support may also be required for the pupil that caused harm. We will seek to understand why the pupil acted in this way and consider what support may be required to help the pupil and/or change behaviours. The consequences for the harm caused or intended will be addressed.

Information sharing

- 10.3.4 In the event that a victim or a perpetrator of peer-on-peer abuse moves to a new school or setting, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will share the appropriate information to ensure that the child/children involved and those at a new setting are safeguarded and supported appropriately.

11 Serious violence

All staff are made aware of indicators that children are at risk from or are involved with serious violent crime. These include increased absence, 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,

signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts could also indicate that children have been approached by or are involved with individuals associated with criminal gangs.

All staff are made aware of the range of risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence, such as being male, excluded from school, having experienced maltreatment and having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery.

Any concerns about serious violence should be referred to the DSL immediately.

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

- 12.1 Both CCE and CSE are forms of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or for

financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. This power imbalance can be due to a range of factors, including age; gender; sexual identity; cognitive ability; physical strength; status and access to economic or other resources. Victims of CCE and CSE may have been criminally and sexually exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE and CSE do not always involve physical contact; it can also occur using technology.

12.1.2 The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. They can be one-off occurrences or a series of incidents over time and may or may not involve force or violence. Exploitation can be physical and take place online.

12.2 Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

12.2.1 CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shop lifting or pickpocketing; being forced or manipulated into vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others.

12.2.2 Children can become trapped by this exploitation as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or trap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or carry a knife for a sense of protection.

12.2.3 Children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to.

12.2.4 It is important to note that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys, and both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at a higher risk of sexual exploitation.

12.2.5 **CCE indicators** can include children who:

- (a) appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- (b) associate with other young people involved in exploitation
- (c) suffer from changes in emotional well-being
- (d) misuse drugs or alcohol
- (e) go missing for periods of time or regular return home late
- (f) regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education

12.3 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

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

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

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

12.3.4 Sexual exploitation is a serious crime and can have long lasting adverse impact on a child's physical and emotional health. It may also be linked to child trafficking. Our staff follow guidance and procedures as outlined in Safeguarding children and young people from sexual exploitation, in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

12.3.5 **CSE indicators:** The above can also be indicators of CSE, as can children who:

- have older boyfriends
- suffer sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant

12.3.6 We include the risks of criminal and sexual exploitation in our PSHE and RSE curriculum. It is often the case that the child does not recognise the exploitive nature of the relationship and does not recognise themselves as a victim.

12.3.2. Victims of criminal and sexual exploitation can be boys or girls and it can have an adverse impact on a child's physical and emotional health.

12.3.3 All staff are aware of the indicators that children are at risk of or are experiencing CCE or CSE. Staff must always act on any concerns that a child is suffering from or is at risk of criminal or sexual exploitation by reporting concerns immediately to the DSL.

12.3.4 The school will work with the police to foster positive relationships and share intelligence or information about CCE or CSE that the school may receive.

13 County Lines

13.1 County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs around the country using dedicated mobile phone lines. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money, with offenders often using coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

13.2 County lines exploitation can occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child. This power imbalance can be due to the same range of factors set out in paragraph 12.1 on child criminal exploitation.

13.3 Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations, including schools. Indicators of county lines include those indicators set out at 12.3 of this policy, with the main indicator being missing episodes from home and/or school. **Additional indicators that may be present where a child is criminally exploited into county lines include children who:**

- go missing and are subsequently found in areas away from home;
- have been victim or perpetrator of serious violence (e.g. knife crime)
- are involved in receiving requests for drugs via a phone line, moving drugs, handing over or collecting money for drugs;

- are exposed to techniques such as ‘plugging’, where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection;
- are found in accommodation with which they have no connection or in a hotel room where there is drug activity;
- owe a ‘debt bond’ to their exploiters;
- have their bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing.

13.4 All staff are aware of indicators that children are at risk from or experiencing child criminal exploitation (CCE). The main indicator is increased absence or going missing from home/care, during which time the child may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs or money.

13.5 Where necessary, searching, screening and confiscation will be used to safeguard children. The school will defer to the guidance document and operate within the school behavior policy.

14 Modern Slavery and Trafficking

14.1. Modern slavery is defined as the recruitment, movement, harbouring or receiving of children, women or men through the use of force, coercion, abuse of vulnerability, deception or other means for the purpose of exploitation. Even if a victim consents and is willing to be moved, trafficking could still be taking place. It involves either the threat of harm or actual harm to the person themselves or their family.

14.2 Children may be trafficked for:

- sexual abuse
- forced marriage
- domestic servitude
- forced labour
- criminal activity

14.3 Signs a child may be a victim of modern slavery/trafficking includes (but is not limited to):

- **Physical appearance** – poor physical condition, malnourishment, untreated injuries, and looking neglected;
- **Isolation** – victims may not be allowed out on their own and may appear to be under the control or influence of people accompanying them, with the absence of a parent or legal guardian. They may not interact and be unfamiliar in their local community;
- **Poor living conditions** – victims may be living in dirty, cramped or overcrowded accommodation, with multiple children living and working at the same address/premises;
- **Personal belongings** – few possessions, wearing the same clothes each day, and no identification documents; and
- **Reluctant to seek help** – victims may avoid eye contact, appear frightened or hesitant to approach people and have lack of trust or concern about making a report through fear of being deported or fear of violence on their family.

14.4 Many children are trafficked into the UK from abroad, but children may also be trafficked around the UK. The number of British children identified as potential victims of modern slavery has more than doubled in a year, prompting concerns about child exploitation by county lines drugs gangs. As is the case with all safeguarding concerns, staff must refer immediately to the DSL any concern they have that a child may be a victim of trafficking.

15 Sharing nudes and semi-nudes

15.1 Sharing photos, videos and live streams online is part of daily life for many children and young people, enabling them to share their experiences, connect with friends and record their lives. Sharing nudes and semi-nudes means the sending or posting online of nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams by young people under the age of 18. This could be via social media, gaming platforms, chat apps or forums, or carried out offline between devices via services like Apple's AirDrop.

15.2 the term 'nudes' is used as it is most commonly recognised by young people and more appropriately covers all types of image sharing incidents. Alternative terms used in education may include 'dick pics' or 'pics'. Other terms used in education include 'sexting', 'youth produced sexual imagery' and 'youth involved sexual imagery';

15.3 The motives for taking and sharing nudes and semi-nudes are not always sexually or criminally motivated. Such images may be created and shared consensually by young people who are in a relationship. It is also possible for a young person in a consensual relationship to be coerced into sharing an image with their partner. Incidents may also occur where:

- children and young people find nudes and semi-nudes online and share them, claiming to be from a peer;
- children and young people digitally manipulate an image of a young person into an existing nude online;

15.3 All incidents involving nude or semi-nude images will be managed as follows:

- The incident will be referred to the DSL immediately and the DSL will discuss it with the appropriate staff. If necessary, the DSL may also interview the children involved; this may include requesting the child to describe the image in order to ascertain whether a child has been or is at risk of being harmed;
- Searching, screening and confiscation will be used as appropriate;
- Parents will be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put a child 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 we will refer the matter to the police and/or children's social care.
- The school will have regard to the updated advice for managing incidences of sharing nudes and semi-nudes (UKCIS Dec 2020) when managing these issues ¹

¹ For further guidance, see ['Sharing nudes and semi-nudes'](#), UKCIS.

16 Online safety

The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues; technology often provides the platform that facilitates harm such as child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and sexual predation. It is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. As well as educating children about online risks, we have appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place to limit the risk of children being exposed to inappropriate content, subjected to harmful online interaction with other users and to ensure their own personal online behaviour does not put them at risk.

Online safety risks can be categorised into four areas of risk:

content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content such as pornography, fake news, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, racist or radical and extremist views;

contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users such as peer to peer pressure and adults posing as children or young adults to groom or exploit children;

conduct: personal online behavior that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm such as making, sending and receiving explicit images, sharing other explicit images and online bullying;

Commerce: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing or financial scams.

- 16.1 St Mary's will make all reasonable endeavours to limit children's exposure to the above risks, including teaching children how to stay safe online. Where children may be asked to learn online at home, the school will follow advice provided by the DfE to schools and colleges to do so safely: [safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers](#) and [guidance on safeguarding and remote education](#)
- 16.2 The school will consider a whole school approach to online safety. This will include a clear policy on the use of mobile technology in the school. Many children have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via 3G, 4G and 5G in particular and the school will carefully consider how this is managed on our premises.
- 16.3 The school has effective filtering and monitoring systems in place to protect children and staff when using the school IT equipment. This is checked in fortnightly checks from the CMAT ITC technician. The children cannot access certain programmes such as Youtube, as the pupil laptops have stronger filters than the teacher laptops, which children do not have access to. Filters are set to a suitable level for pupils.
- 16.4 In line with DfE recommendation, St Mary's will inform parents/carers about specific support and resources to keep their children safe online.
- 16.5 All staff are aware of online risks and should report any concerns to the DSL. **See Annex 2 for further details**

17 Domestic Abuse

- 17.1 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduces a legal definition of domestic abuse and recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse.
- 17.2 Domestic abuse is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse, between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. It includes people who have been or are married, are or have been civil partners, have agreed to marry one another or each have or have had a parental relationship in relation to the same child. It can include psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse.
- 17.3 Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside the home.
- 17.4 Children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic violence in their home life. Experiencing domestic abuse and exposure to it can have a serious emotional and psychological impact on children, and in some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result. The pattern of abuse by coercive control abuse creates high levels of anxiety and fear. This has a significant impact on children and young people, both directly as victims in their own right, and indirectly due to the impact the abuse has on the parent being abused. Children may also be forced to participate in controlling or coercive behaviour towards the parent who is being abused.
- 17.5 Where police have been called to a domestic abuse incident where children are resident in the household and/or witnessed that incident, the police will notify the Operation Encompass Team at the local authority, who will inform the DSL the following morning. This ensures that the school has up to date safeguarding information about the child and can offer discrete support.
- 17.6 Through the RSHE programme **St Mary's** will teach children and young people about healthy relationships to build understanding and resilience against abuse of this nature.
- 17.7 All staff are aware of the impact domestic abuse can have on a child. If any of our staff are concerned that a child has witnessed domestic abuse and violence, they will report their concerns immediately to the DSL.

18 Honour-Based Abuse

- 18.1 So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses actions taken 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 HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be managed and escalated as such.
- 18.2 Abuse committed in the context of preserving 'honour' often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. Our staff are aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors and we take them into consideration when deciding what safeguarding action to take.
- 18.3 If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of HBA or has suffered from HBA, they must contact the designated safeguarding lead as a matter of urgency.

18.2 Female Genital Mutilation

- 18.2.1 FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.
- 18.2.2 FGM is carried out on females of any age, from babies to teenagers to women. Our staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators, including concerns expressed by girls about going on a long holiday during the summer break, **a visiting female elder (staff should not assume that FGM only happens outside the UK), a mother or sister who has undergone FGM, low level of integration into UK society or talk of a special procedure or celebration to become a woman.**
- 18.2.3 In their response to FGM, St Mary's takes into account the updated government guidance, 'multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation' 2020. If any professional suspects that a girl has undergone FGM their designated safeguarding lead must be informed and an immediate referral should be made to the local authority's children's social care department.
- 18.2.4 If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of FGM, they will follow the school's safeguarding protocols and inform the designated safeguarding lead without delay. Where there is an imminent or serious risk, an emergency response by the designated safeguarding lead may be required, either an urgent referral to social services and/or potentially contacting the police.
- 18.2.5 Under the FGM mandatory reporting duty, teachers also have a legal duty to report to the police where they discover that FGM has been carried out on a child under 18. In such circumstances, teachers must personally report the matter to the police as well as informing the DSL.

18.3 Forced Marriage

- 18.3.1 A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure or abuse. Forced marriage is illegal.
- 18.3.2 Our staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators, which may include being taken abroad and not being allowed to return to the UK.
- 18.3.3 Forced marriage is not the same as arranged marriage, which is common in many cultures.
- 18.3.4 If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of forced marriage, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead immediately.

19 Radicalisation and Extremism

- 19.1 Extremism is defined as 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. Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

- 19.2 Children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Whilst Islamist fundamentalism is the most widely publicised, extremism and radicalisation can occur in other cultures, religions and beliefs, including the far right and white supremacy. Our staff are trained to identify those at risk of being radicalised or drawn into extremism.
- 19.3 As part of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, schools have a duty to 'prevent people being drawn into terrorism'. This has become known as the 'Prevent Duty'.
- 19.4 If staff are concerned that a child may be at risk of radicalisation or being drawn into extremism, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead, who has received training about the Prevent Duty and tackling extremism and is able to support staff with any concerns they may have.
- 19.5 At school name we use the curriculum to ensure that children and young people understand how people with extreme views share these with others, especially using the internet. We are committed to ensuring that our pupils are offered a broad and balanced curriculum that aims to prepare them for life in modern Britain. Teaching the school's core values alongside the fundamental British Values supports quality teaching and learning, whilst making a positive contribution to the development of a fair, just and civil society.

20 Allegations made against/Concerns raised in relation to teachers, including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers and contractors

- 20.1 **At school name we recognise the possibility that adults working in the school or on behalf of the school may harm children. If an allegation is made or low-level concern is raised against a member of staff, including supply staff, contractor or a volunteer, our set procedures must be followed as described in our 'Allegations made against/Concerns raised in relation to teachers, including supply teachers, other staff, volunteers and contractors' Policy, which can be accessed on the Trust extranet. The full procedures for managing such allegations or concerns are set out in Part Four of Keeping children safe in education, 2021.**
- 20.2 We provide our staff with advice regarding their personal online activity and we have clear rules regarding electronic communications and online contact with pupils. It is considered a serious disciplinary issue if staff breach these rules.
- 20.3 Our Staff Code of Conduct sets out St Mary's expectations of staff and is signed by all staff members to confirm that they have read, understood and will comply with the expectations.
- 20.4 Any concerns about the conduct of adults in the school or those working on behalf of the school should be reported to the Headteacher without delay (or where that is not possible, to the Designated Safeguarding Lead);
- 20.5 any safeguarding concerns or allegations about the Headteacher should be communicated in writing to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust.
- 20.6 Allegations made against staff who no longer work at the school will be reported to the police.
- 20.7 Safeguarding concerns and allegations against members of staff should be reported whether they take place on the school premises or offsite.
- 20.8 Where appropriate, the school will inform Ofsted of the allegation and actions taken, within the necessary timescale.

21 Whistle blowing if you have concerns about a colleague

21.1 It is important that all staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about a colleague's practice. The Trust's whistleblowing Policy, available on St Thomas Aquinas Trust extranet, allows staff to raise concerns or make allegations about suspected wrongdoing and for an appropriate enquiry to take place. If a member of staff reasonably believes they have discovered serious malpractice within the school, ideally, they should raise these concerns with their line manager. However, if, for whatever reason this is not possible or appropriate, they should contact the Headteacher.

If a member of staff suspects that the Headteacher may be involved in the malpractice, then they should contact in writing to the CEO of The Trust.

21.2 Staff may also report their concerns directly to children's social care or the police if they believe direct reporting is necessary to secure action.

21.3 The NSPCC runs a whistleblowing helpline on behalf of the government, which offers free advice and support to professionals with concerns about how child protection issues are being handled in their own or another organisation: Contact details are: 0808 800 5000, email help@nspcc.org.uk.

22 Safer recruitment

22.1 The governing body and our senior leadership team are responsible for ensuring we follow recruitment procedures that help to deter, reject or identify people who might harm children. When doing so we check and verify the applicant's identity, qualifications and work history in accordance with Part Three of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 and the local safeguarding partners arrangements.

22.2 When using supply staff, we will obtain written confirmation from supply agencies or third-party organisations that staff they provide have been appropriately checked and are suitable to work with children. Trainee teachers will be checked either by the school or by the training provider, from whom written confirmation will be obtained confirming their suitability to work with children.

22.3 We ensure that our volunteers undergo a risk assessment, are appropriately checked and supervised in school. We check the identity of all contractors working on site and request DBS checks where required by Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021). Contractors who have not undergone checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised during the school day.

22.4 The school maintains a single central record of recruitment checks undertaken, which is monitored for compliance by the Trust. Our recruitment policy and procedures can be accessed on St Thomas Aquinas Trust extranet.

22.5 All relevant staff (involved in early years settings and/or before or after school care for children under eight) are made aware of the disqualification from childcare guidance and their obligations to disclose to us relevant information that could lead to disqualification.

22.6 All staff who have contact with children and families will have supervisions, which will provide them with support, coaching and training, promote the interests of children and allow for confidential discussions or sensitive issues.

23 Site security

Visitors are asked to sign in at the school reception and are given a badge, which confirms they have permission to be on site. If visitors have undergone the appropriate checks, they can be provided with unescorted access to the school site. Visitors who have not undergone the required checks will be escorted at all times.

24 Child protection procedures

24.1 Recognising abuse

24.1.1 Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse may be committed by adult men or women and by other children and young people.

24.1.2 Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2021) refers to four categories of abuse. These are set out at Appendix 1 along with indicators of abuse.

24.1.3 If a member of staff is unsure about the signs that may indicate abuse, neglect or a mental health issue, they should speak to the DSL.

24.2 Taking action

Any child could become a victim of abuse. Key points for staff to remember for taking action are:

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, if a child is in immediate danger, call 999;
- record your concern on CPOMS or on the school's safeguarding form if you cannot access CPOMS and report to the DSL as soon as possible.
- share information on a need-to-know basis only and do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family

24.3 If you are concerned about a pupil's welfare

24.3.1 Staff may suspect that a pupil may be at risk. This may be because the pupil's behaviour, attendance or their appearance has changed or physical signs are noticed. In these circumstances, staff will give the pupil the opportunity to talk and ask if they are OK.

24.3.2 If the pupil does reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below.

24.3.3 There will be many occasions when a member of staff is concerned about a child and a child does not directly disclose abuse or neglect. If the child does not reveal that they are being or have been harmed, but staff have concerns about the child, they should report this to the DSL immediately.

24.3.4 Staff, parents and members of the wider community should never assume that someone else will report concerns. Everyone has a responsibility to safeguard children and should always report concerns, however minor.

24.4 If a pupil discloses to you

If a pupil tells a member of staff about a risk to their safety or wellbeing, the staff member will:

- remain calm and not overreact
- allow them to speak freely
- not be afraid of silences
- not ask leading questions
- give reassuring nods or words of comfort – ‘I’m so sorry this has happened to you’, ‘I want to help’, ‘This isn’t your fault’, ‘You are doing the right thing in talking to me’
- not automatically offer physical touch as comfort
- let the pupil know that in order to help them they must pass the information on to the DSL
- tell the pupil what will happen next
- complete a CPOMs report or use the **school’s** safeguarding form if you cannot access CPOMS and pass it to the DSL as soon as possible
- report verbally to the DSL even if the child has promised to do it by themselves

24.5 Notifying parents

St Mary’s will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a pupil with their parents. If the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from children’s social care and/or the police before parents are notified.

The school will always adhere to the Data Protection Act (2018) and the General Data Protection Regulation (2018).

25 Responding to a safeguarding concern

25.1 The DSL will make a decision about the appropriate action to take following a safeguarding concern or direct disclosure. This may include:

- Managing support internally;
- Implementing early help intervention;
- Starting an early help assessment for targeted support; or
- Referring the case or incident to children’s social care for statutory intervention.

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

25.3 The school follows Keeping children safe in Education (2021) as well as local threshold² and reporting guidance when deciding whether to refer a child to children’s social care.

² For more information about local threshold guidance, see <http://www.lcitylscb.org/media/1641/llr-thresholds-document.pdf>

24.4 Staff should follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy by making a referral to the DSL. However, they may also share information directly with children’s social care or the police if they are convinced that a direct report is required or if the Safeguarding Lead, the deputies, the Headteacher or the Chair of Governors are not available, and a referral is required immediately.

In the event that a member of staff (who is not the DSL or DDSL) needs to make a referral to children’s social care they should:

Leicester	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Call 0116 454 1004 to discuss concerns 2. Complete a Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) 	http://www.lcitylscb.org/what-to-do-if-you-are-concerned-about-a-child/
Leicestershire	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Call 0116 3050005 to discuss concerns 2. Complete a Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) 	https://lrsb.org.uk/uploads/marf-form.pdf

If a member of staff other than the DSL or DDSL makes a referral, they should inform the DSL as soon as possible.

26 Confidentiality and sharing information

Child protection issues necessitate a high level of confidentiality. Staff should only discuss concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Headteacher, Chair of Governors or in cases of safeguarding concerns or allegations against the Headteacher, the CEO of St Thomas Aquinas Trust.

26.1 Sharing information

26.1.1 The DSL will normally obtain consent from the parents to share child protection information. Where there is good reason to do so, for example if it is believed that it would put the child at risk, the DSL may share information *without* consent, and will record the reason for deciding to do so.

26.1.2 Information sharing will take place in a timely and secure manner and only when it is necessary and proportionate to do so and the information to be shared is relevant, adequate and accurate.

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

26.1.4 **The UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent the sharing of information with relevant agencies for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.** This includes allowing practitioners to share information without consent. If any member of staff receives a request from a pupil or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the Data Protection Officer.

26.1.5 **If a member of staff has concerns about a child’s welfare and considers that they may be a child in need or that the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm, they should share this information with children’s social care and/or the police. It is particularly important to**

share information when a child moves from one local authority to another, due to the risk that information pertinent to keeping the child safe could be lost.

26.2 Storing information

- 26.2.1 Child protection information will be stored separately from the pupil's school file and the school file will be 'tagged' to indicate that separate information is held. It will be stored and handled in line with the Trust's Retention and Destruction Policy.
- 26.2.2 Our Confidentiality and Information Sharing policy and the Retention and Destruction policy are available to parents and pupils on request.

27 Special Circumstances

27.1 Looked after children

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse or neglect. The school ensures that staff have the necessary skills and understanding to keep looked after children safe. Appropriate staff have information about a child's looked after status and care arrangements, including the level of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after the child. The designated teacher for looked after children and the DSL have details of the child's social worker and the name and contact details of the local authority's virtual head for children in care.

27.2 Children who have a social worker

- 27.2.1 Children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. Local authorities will share this information with us, and the DSL will hold and use this information to inform decision about safeguarding and promoting the child's welfare.

27.3 Work Experience

- 27.3.1 The school has detailed procedures to safeguard pupils undertaking work experience, including arrangements for checking people who provide placements and supervise pupils on work experience, which are in accordance with statutory guidance.

27.4 Children staying with host families Schools to delete this section as appropriate

27.5 Homelessness Duty

- 27.5.1 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 placed duties on local authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness in their area. It placed a duty to refer, which applies to child protection, anyone they consider are or may become homeless or threatened with homelessness. St Mary's will work together with social care and housing authorities as appropriate where they consider a child or young person may be homeless or at risk of being made homeless. Where applicable, we will work within the Homelessness Code of Guidance, including the guidance on prevention of homelessness and provision of accommodation for 16 and 17-year-old young people who may be homeless or require accommodation.

28 Private fostering arrangements

- 28.1 A private fostering arrangement occurs when someone other than a parent or a close relative cares for a child for a period of 28 days or more, with the agreement of the child's parents. It applies to children under the age of 16 or aged under 18 if the child is disabled. By law, a parent, private foster carer or other persons involved in making a private fostering arrangement must notify children's services as soon as possible.
- 28.2 Whilst most privately fostered children are appropriately supported and looked after, they are a potentially vulnerable group who should be monitored by the local authority, particularly when the child has come from another country. In some cases, privately fostered children are affected by abuse and neglect, or may be victims of trafficking, child sexual exploitation or modern-day slavery.
- 28.3 On admission to the school, we will take steps to verify the relationship of the adults to the child who is being registered.
- 28.4 Where a member of staff becomes aware that a pupil may be in a private fostering arrangement they will tell the DSL and the school will discharge its mandatory duty to notify the local authority of the circumstances.

30 Local Priorities

The local authority and LSCP B have their own priorities which reflect the area in which our school is based. Some of these include being aware of knife crime, gang related issues, Radicalisation, county lines, criminal activity, anti-social behaviour, FGM and contextual safeguarding. We work closely with other agencies including the Police, community groups and social care.

31 Related safeguarding policies

St Mary's governing body's legal responsibility for the safeguarding of the children goes beyond child protection. Their duty is to ensure that safeguarding permeates all activities and functions. This policy therefore complements and supports a range of other policies, for instance:

Staff Code of Conduct;

The school's Behavior policy, including drug and alcohol abuse;

First aid and the administration of medicines;

Anti-bullying, including cyber bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying;

Relationships Education, Relationships and sex education and health education;

Equal opportunities;

Physical intervention and restraint;

Personal and intimate care;

Special educational needs and disability;

Looked after and previously looked after children;

Complaint's procedure;

Work experience and extended work placements;

Acceptable use of IT;
 Mobile phone and camera use;
 Extended school activities;
 STA Whistleblowing Policy;

Allegations made against/Concerns raised in relation to teachers, including supply teachers, other staff volunteers and contractors.

Retention and destruction policy;
 Online safety;
 Recruitment and selection;
 Critical Incident Plan;
 Data Protection and Privacy Notice;
 Lone working/home visits risk assessment;
 Disciplinary policy;
 Early years foundation stage statutory framework (EYFS);

32 Useful contacts

St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi-Academy Trust	
Chair of the Trust Board : Sarah Noon	snoon@aquinas-cmat.org
Trust Board Safeguarding Director: Brian Underwood	bunderwood@aquinas-cmat.org
Chief Executive Officer (CEO): Neil Lockyer	nlockyer@aquinas-cmat.org
Director of Safeguarding: Marcella Gillespie	mgillespie@aquinas-cmat.org
Director of Business Services (DPO/H&S/SCR) Antoinette Bouwens	abouwens@aquinas-cmat.org
Leicester City	
One Front Door Duty & Advice (Includes out of hours) das.team@leicester.gov.uk Early Help & Support/ early-help@leicester.gov.uk	0116 454 1004
Leicester City	
Children's Safeguarding Unit	0116 454 2440
Leicestershire Police	999 / 0116 222222
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Jude Atkinson	0116 454 2440
Leicester Safeguarding Childrens Board (LSCP) http://www.lcityLSCP.org/	0116 454 6520
Prevent (Advice / Referral)	01164 546 923

Ailsa Coull – Ailsa.coull@leicester.gov.uk	07519 069 833
UAVA – United against violence and abuse (Domestic Violence, Abuse between Teenagers and Domestic Violence in BME community) info@uava.org.uk	0808 80 200 28
Forced Marriage Unit fm@fco.gov.uk	020 7008 0151
Female Genital Mutilation Helpline fgmhelp@nspcc.org	0800 028 3550
NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line help@nspcc.org.uk	0800 028 0285
Leicestershire	
First Response Children’s Duty (Tier 4 same day referrals) childrensduty@leics.gov.uk	0116 305 0005
All other referrals including Early Help (Children and Family Wellbeing Services) http://lrsb.org.uk/childreport	
Early Help enquiries and consultation line	0116 305 8727
Prevent Engagement Team prevent.team@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk	
Head of Service-Safeguarding and Performance Service: Kelda Claire	0116 305 9084/0750 768 6100
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Kim Taylor/ Lovona Brown	0116 305 7597
Service Manager Hayley Binley	01163057566/07538562293
Useful websites and links	
www.thinkuknow.co.uk www.disrespectnobody.co.uk www.saferinternet.org.uk www.internetmatters.org www.pshe-association.org.uk www.educateagainsthate.com www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-use-of-social-media-for-online-radicalisation	

Appendix 1 - Four categories of abuse

(Source: Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2021)

It is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the designated safeguarding lead. It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns.

All staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely stand-alone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

1 Physical abuse

Physical abuse is a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. It occurs when a parent or carer, usually the child's biological mother, exaggerates or deliberately causes symptoms of illness in the child. In fabricated or induced illness (FII), the parent may present the child as ill when they are healthy, deliberately induce symptoms of illness, manipulate test results, or exaggerate or lie about symptoms.

1.1 Indicators of physical abuse

The following may be indicators of physical abuse:

- have bruises, bleeding, burns, bites, fractures or other injuries
- show signs of pain or discomfort
- keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather
- be concerned about changing for PE or swimming
- An injury that is not consistent with the account given
- Symptoms of drug or alcohol intoxication or poisoning
- Inexplicable fear of adults or over-compliance
- Violence or aggression towards others including bullying
- Isolation from peers

2 Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child 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, although it may occur alone.

2.1 Indicators of emotional abuse

The following may be indicators of emotional abuse:

- The child consistently describes him/herself in negative ways
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Delayed physical, mental or emotional development
- Inappropriate emotional responses, fantasies
- Self-harm
- drug or solvent abuse
- Running away
- Appetite disorders – anorexia nervosa, bulimia; or
- Soiling, smearing faeces, enuresis

3 Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

3.1 Indicators of sexual abuse

The following may be indicators of sexual abuse:

- Sexually explicit play or behaviour or age-inappropriate knowledge
- Aggressive behaviour including sexual harassment or molestation
- Reluctance to undress for PE or swimming
- Anal or vaginal discharge, soreness or scratching
- Bruises or scratches in the genital area
- Reluctance to go home
- Refusal to communicate
- Depression or withdrawal
- isolation from peer group
- Eating disorders, for example anorexia nervosa and bulimia
- self-harm
- substance abuse
- acquire gifts such as money or a mobile phone from new 'friends'

4 Neglect

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

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

4.1 Indicators of neglect

The following may be indicators of neglect:

- Constant hunger or stealing, scavenging and/or hoarding food
- Frequent tiredness
- Frequently dirty or unkempt
- Poor attendance or often late
- Poor concentration
- Illnesses or injuries that are left untreated
- Failure to achieve developmental milestones or to develop intellectually or socially
- Responsibility for activity that is not age appropriate such as cooking, ironing, caring for siblings
- The child is left at home alone or with inappropriate carers

Appendix 2 – Online Safety Matters

Online safety is a consideration running through the planning and implementation of all relevant policies and procedures. We acknowledge that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues and that children are at risk of abuse online as well as face to face.

Some children may use mobile and smart technology, whilst at school and outside of school, to sexually harass their peers, share indecent images (consensually and non-consensually) and view and share pornography and other harmful content.

Many children have unrestricted access to the internet via their mobile phones and our online safety policy describes the rules regulating their use in school. It also sets out the school's response to incidents which may involve one or more of the four areas of risk – content, contact, conduct and commerce.

School will carry out an annual review of our approach to online safety, supported by an annual risk assessment that considers and reflects the risks faced by our school community.

School staff will always respond if informed that children have been involved in sharing sexual images. The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCIS) guidance, 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people' (Dec 2020) will be used to guide the school's response on a case-by-case basis.

Staff should be aware of the following: -

- Report immediately to the DSL
- Never view, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery, or ask a child to share or download – this is illegal.
- If you have already viewed the imagery by accident (e.g. if a young person has showed it to you before you could ask them not to), report this to the DSL (or equivalent) and seek support.
- Do not delete the imagery or ask the young person to delete it.
- Do not ask the child/children or young person(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery. This is the responsibility of the DSL (or equivalent).
- Do not share information about the incident with other members of staff, the young person(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers.
- Do not say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved.
- Do explain to them that you need to report it and reassure them that they will receive support and help from the DSL (or equivalent).