

# All Saints Catholic Collegiate

## St Thomas More Catholic Academy

### Safeguarding Policy

Date of Policy: September 2023

Member of Staff Responsible: Jamie Stubbs

SLT:

Headteacher: Mark Rayner

Chair of the Board of Directors Anne Middleton-Hill

Chair of the Academy Representatives: Rob Ffello

Nominated Academy Representative: Clare Goodwin

Date of Policy Review: September 2024

This policy is available on our school website and is available on request from the school office. We also inform parents and carers about this policy when their children join our school and through our school newsletter.

The policy is provided to all staff (including temporary staff and volunteers) at induction alongside our Staff Code of Conduct. In addition, all staff are provided with Part One of the statutory guidance [Keeping children safe in education 2022 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101321/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2022.pdf)

To underpin the values and ethos of our school and our intent to ensure that pupils at our school are appropriately safeguarded the following policies are also included under our safeguarding umbrella:

- Anti-Bullying
- Attendance Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Child on Child Abuse Policy
- RSE/PSHE Policy
- Educational visits
- Health and Safety including site security
- Supporting Students with Medical Needs Policy
- Online safety – IT code of conduct
- Safer Recruitment & Selection Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Preventing Extremism & Radicalisation Policy
- Early Years Foundation Stage Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

## Key Information

Role	Name	Contact Details
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mrs. J. Stubbs	01782 882900
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mrs. A. Staton Mrs Williams	01782 882900
Early Help Champion	Mrs. A Staton	01782 882900
Nominated Academy Representative	Mrs. C. Goodwin	office@stmca.org.uk
Headteacher	Mr. M. Rayner	01782 882900
Online Safety Co-ordinator	Mrs N Byrne	01782 882900
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	John Hanlon	01782 235100
Safeguarding Referral Team (Children's Social Care Stoke-on-Trent)	Mon – Thurs: 8.30am - 5pm Fri:8.30am – 4.30pm	01782 235100
Emergency Duty Team (Children's Social Care Stoke-on-Trent)	Out of hours (above)	01782 234234
Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Board	<a href="http://www.safeguardingchildren.stoke.gov.uk">www.safeguardingchildren.stoke.gov.uk</a>	
Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Board Agency Representative	Sangita Mishra <a href="mailto:sangita.mishra@stoke.gov.uk">sangita.mishra@stoke.gov.uk</a>	01782 235897

**In exceptional circumstances any member of staff can refer a child to**

**Social Services on 01782 235100 or seek advice on 01782 232200**

Exceptional circumstances such as in an emergency or a genuine concern that  
appropriate action has not been taken to safeguard a child.

### St Thomas More Catholic Academy

All Saints Catholic Collegiate

***United in Faith, Love and Learning***

### Mission Statement

Christ is at the centre of our community, where everyone is known and loved.

In fulfilling our Mission we are a school of prayer. We live as community of love, peace and reconciliation, valuing everyone's dignity as a child of God to promote and celebrate the growth and achievement of the whole person.

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## 1. Introduction

At St Thomas More Catholic Academy, we recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all students. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected, valued and listened to. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support and protection. We will always promote and prioritise the safety and welfare needs of our children and we are committed to providing the right help, support and intervention at the right time.

St Thomas More Catholic Academy will always act in the best interests of children, and we use the model of identify, help, and manage to support our culture of, and approaches to, safeguarding.

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers working in or on behalf of our school.

## 2. Policy Principals and Aims

- The welfare of the child is paramount. We are committed to developing a robust culture of vigilance and culture, including and especially vulnerable students who have been abused, have witnessed violence towards others or may be vulnerable to abuse.
- Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility; everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play.
- All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to support and protection.
- We recognise the importance of providing a safe environment within our school that will help children feel safe and respected, and in which children can learn and develop with an ethos of openness. We recognise the importance of enabling children to talk openly and to feel confident that they will be listened to, through establishing a culture where children are taught to treat each other with respect, to feel safe, to have a voice and know that they will be listened to.
- We believe that our school should provide a caring, positive, and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child, by raising awareness of safeguarding and child protection issues, and equipping children with the language and skills to keep themselves safe.
- Preventing unsuitable people from working with children, by ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of all school staff, supply staff and volunteers to work with our children, is part of our safeguarding culture, including maintaining an active vigilance thereafter.
- The Directors and Academy Committee takes seriously its responsibility under the Education Act 2002 and the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; and to work together with other agencies to ensure adequate arrangements within our school to identify, assess, and support those children who are suffering harm.
- All staff have an equal responsibility to act without delay, on any concern or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm.
- We will work with parents to build an understanding of the school's responsibilities to ensure the welfare of all children, including the need for referrals to other agencies in some situations.
- Representatives of the whole-school community of students, parents, staff, Directors and Academy Representatives will be involved in policy development and review
- This policy will be reviewed annually, unless an incident or new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim review.
- This policy is one of a series in the school's integrated safeguarding portfolio, and should be read alongside other relevant policies.

Our aim is to follow the procedures set out by Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and Keeping Children Safe in Education by knowing and understanding that:

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility, and the voice of the child is evident.
- Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play.
- Everyone should ensure that their approach is child-centred considering, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.
- By establishing a safe environment, we enable our children to learn and develop within an ethos of openness.
- No single practitioner can have the full picture of a child's needs and circumstances

- If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action
- The importance of providing children with a balanced curriculum including RSE and PHSE, healthy relationship education, online safety, sexting, child on child abuse as well as County Lines, contextualised issues and child exploitation are central to the safeguarding of our students. Also supporting this with online activities, enabling them to enhance their safeguarding skills and knowledge whilst understanding the risks.
- Undertaking the role to enable children and young people at our school to have best outcomes is part of our child centred focus.
- As a school, we have awareness of our staff's knowledge and understanding as well as embedding safeguarding, through clear systems of communication and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) so that safeguarding is a robust element of our school practice.
- Protecting children and young people from maltreatment, preventing impairment of our children and young people's mental and physical health or development, ensuring that our children and young people grow up in circumstances consistent with the provisions of safe and effective care remain central at all times to our culture of safeguarding.

This policy provides guidance to all adults working within the school, whether paid or voluntary or directly employed by the school or a third party.

This policy is available on our school website and is available on request from the school office. We also inform parents/carers about this policy when their children join our school.

- This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body on an annual basis or sooner should legislation/guidance change.
- This policy sets out how the school's governing body discharges its statutory responsibilities relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are students at this school. Our policy applies to all staff; paid and unpaid, working in the school, including Governors.
- The policy is provided to all staff (including temporary staff, supply staff and volunteers) at the point of induction, alongside our Staff Code of Conduct.
- Our Governing Body, working with the senior leadership team and especially our Designated Safeguarding Lead, ensure that those staff who do not work directly with children read and either Part 1 or Annex A (condensed version of Part 1) of the KCSiE 2022 guidance.
- All staff who work directly with children, are provided and read Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022.

The child's welfare is of paramount importance, we are a child centred school and make all efforts possible to capture the voice of the child and to try and understand what their daily lived experiences are like.

We all have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to maintain a professional attitude of "it could happen here" where safeguarding is concerned.

Our school is committed to safeguarding children and promoting children's welfare and expects all staff, governors, volunteers, and visitors to share this commitment and maintain a vigilant and safe environment. Everyone has a responsibility to act without delay to protect children by reporting anything that might suggest a child is being abused or neglected. It is our willingness to work safely and challenge inappropriate behaviours that underpins this commitment. The school seeks to work in partnership with families and other agencies to improve the outcomes for children who are vulnerable or in need.

All staff are instructed to report any concerns that they have and not see these as insignificant. On occasions, a referral is justified by a single incident such as an injury or disclosure of abuse. More often however, concerns accumulate over time and are evidenced by building up a picture of harm; this is particularly true in cases of emotional abuse and neglect. In these circumstances, it is crucial that staff record and pass on concerns in accordance with this policy to allow the Designated Safeguarding Lead to build up a picture and access support for the child at the earliest opportunity.

We maintain a professional attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When there are concerns about the welfare of a child, staff members will always act in the best interests of the child. This policy has been developed in-conjunction with our school culture of prevention, protection, and support.

Children at St Thomas More Catholic Academy are reassured that they have a voice, they are listened to and what they say taken seriously. They know that they will be supported and kept safe. They are never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence, or sexual harassment. Children at our school are encouraged to talk



freely with staff if they are worried or concerned about something and our staff understand that a victim of any type of abuse should never be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

The child's needs and welfare are paramount and insert school name is a **child centred school**. All children have a right to be protected from abuse and neglect and have their welfare safeguarded. Children should be **listened to** and their views and wishes should inform any assessment and provision for them. Staff should always act in the **interests of the child** in order to protect them.

The school recognises that scrutiny, challenge, and supervision are key to safeguarding children.

- At St Thomas More Catholic Academy we have a robust safeguarding training schedule for all staff, which is monitored by the DSL. All staff receive Level 1 Safeguarding training, as required in KCSIE 2022, and receive regular updates through staff meetings, briefings, emails etc. to develop and support robust safeguarding practices amongst all staff.
- The school has **clear induction processes** for all staff, volunteers and governors, and all required documents and policies are provided both at induction of new staff, and on a yearly refresh basis for current staff. These documents include Part 1 of KCSIE 2022, Safer Working Practice leaflet (including Whistleblowing procedure) and the Staff Code of Conduct; staff sign to confirm that they have read and understand the documents and CPD, and also demonstrate that they understand what this means to them in their daily practice.
- All staff are aware that abuse, neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.
- All staff are aware that safeguarding incidents and /or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the school or college and /or can occur between children outside of these environments.
- All staff, but especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead/ Deputies will consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including, but not limited to, sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and serious youth violence.
- The school is committed to working with other agencies to provide early help for children before they become at risk of harm or require a 'child in need' statutory assessment.
- All staff should be aware of the local early help process and understand their role in it. (KCSIE 2022). 'Early Help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. (Working Together 2018). This includes liaising with the designated safeguarding lead, sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment and, in some cases, acting as the lead professional in undertaking an early help assessment.' (DfE 2018)
- All staff should be aware of the process for making referrals to children's social care and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989 that may follow a referral, along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments. (KCSIE 2022)
- All staff have equal responsibility to report their concerns about a child or the behaviour of any adult without delay to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Whilst the Designated Safeguarding Lead will normally make referrals to Children's Services, any staff member can refer their concerns to children's social care 'Child and Advice' service (ChAD) on 01782 235100
- Everyone has responsibility to escalate their concerns and 'press for reconsideration' if they believe a child's needs remain unmet or if the child is failing to thrive and in need or if the child is at risk of harm.
- The school understands its responsibility to request a statutory assessment lead by a social worker for any child in need, as defined under the Children Act 1989, who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development, or their health and development will be significantly impaired, without the provision of services.
- The school will work in partnership with other agencies to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm, including the need to share information about a child to safeguard them.
- The school will work with other agencies to ensure any actions that are part of a multi-agency coordinated plan are completed in a timely way.
- The school will follow the Stoke on Trent Children's Safeguarding Partnership's procedures and provide them with information as required
- Staff, children, and families will need support following child protection processes being followed.
- Children have a right to learn ways to keep themselves safe from harm and exploitation. We will provide opportunities for students to develop skills, concepts, attitudes, and knowledge that promote their safety and well-being.

- Safeguarding issues will be addressed through the RSE and PSHE curriculum, for example self-esteem, emotional literacy, assertiveness, power, consent, coercion, control as part of healthy relationship education, online safety, sexting and bullying (including cyber bullying)
- Relevant issues will be addressed through all areas of the curriculum.
- All our policies, which support our ethos of safeguarding, will be interlinked with this Safeguarding Policy.

### 3. Terminology

- **Safeguarding** and promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- **Child protection** refers to the processes undertaken to protect children who have been identified as suffering, or being at risk of suffering significant harm.
- **Harm** is ill treatment or impairment of health and development, including impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another.
- **Significant harm** is the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in the family in the best interests of the child. Section 31 of the Children Act 1989 states 'where the question of whether harm suffered by a child is significant turns on the child's health or development, their health or development shall be compared with that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child.'
- **Early Help** means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years to teenage years.
- **Child** refers to anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.
- **Parent** refers to birth parents or adoptive parents i.e. those with parental responsibility. It is recognised, however, that other adults may be in a parenting role, for example step parents and foster carers.
- **Staff** refers to all those working for or on behalf of the school, including paid and unpaid staff, full time or part time staff, temporary, casual, agency staff, self-employed people and contractors.
- **DSL** refers to the schools Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- **Deputy DSL** refers to the schools Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- **Multi agency working** relates to the new Safeguarding Partner Arrangements

### 4. Legal Framework

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on Local Authorities (in relation to their education functions) and governing bodies of maintained schools and FE institutions, to exercise their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students at a school, and students under 18 years of age attending education institutions. The same duty applies to independent schools (which include Academies and free schools) by virtue of section 157 of the same act.

Our safeguarding policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by:-

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023) (KCSIE)
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- KCSIE incorporates the additional statutory guidance, Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (June 2016)
- KCSIE also refers to the non-statutory advice for practitioners: What to do if you're worried a child is being abused – Advice for practitioners (March 2015)
- Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings October 2019 (Safer Recruitment Consortium)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- WT refers to the non-statutory advice: Information sharing (March 2015)
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Children missing Education: statutory guidance for local authorities 2016
- Education Act 2002 (section 175)
- Information Sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services 2015
- The Education (Student Information) (England) Regulations 2005

- Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006
- The Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018
- Prevent Duty Guidance July 2015
- Safeguarding vulnerable groups Act 2006
- Improving the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of students, November 2013 and Supplementary Information 2014
- Teacher Misconduct: the prohibition of teachers October 2015
- The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (section 26).
- Data Protection Act 2018
- When To Call The Police for Schools and Colleges NSPCC
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges – 2021

All staff must read and understand Part One of Keeping Children Safe In Education

Local authorities have a duty to make enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, **significant harm**, to enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard and promote the child's welfare. There may be a need for immediate protection whilst the assessment is carried out.

A **child in need** is defined under the Children Act 1989, as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a satisfactory level of health or development, or their health and development will be significantly impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled. A social worker will lead and co-ordinate any assessment under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities (in relation to their education functions, and governing bodies of maintained schools and further education institutions, which include sixth-form colleges) **to exercise their functions** with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are students at a school, or who are students under 18 years of age attending further education institutions.

## 5. Safeguarding and Child Protection

In essence, safeguarding applies to all children and young people. Child protection applies to a group of children who have/are experiencing abuse in their lives. Safeguarding and child protection is about managing risk. It starts at the front entrance to the school in that all adults in the school will have been vetted and will know how to behave appropriately. When staff members have concerns they know who to speak to and understand the next steps that will take place.

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

No single professional can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances. If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, **everyone** who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purpose of this policy as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's mental or 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.

All staff should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or being threatened. This could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child. It is also important that staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication.

Safeguarding is not just about protecting children from deliberate harm, and therefore all staff have an awareness of the following issues through regular training and briefings. Staff are aware that these behaviours can make children vulnerable and put them in danger: It includes issues such as:

- Abuse
- Behaviours linked to safeguarding issues
- Bullying, including cyber bullying and/or bullying based on a protected characteristic
- Children and the courts system
- Child on child abuse
- Children with family members in prison or are affected by parental offending
- Children missing from education or are persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day
- Child missing from home or care
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- Child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- County Lines
- Domestic abuse including coercive control
- Drugs and substance abuse
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Faith abuse
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Forced marriage
- Gangs and youth violence
- Gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- Homelessness
- Honour based abuse
- Looked after, and previously looked after, children
- LGBTQ+
- Management of contractors
- Management of visitors
- Medical care and first aid
- Mental health
- Online safety, including the impact of new technology
- Private fostering
- Preventing radicalisation and extremist behaviours
- Prevent Duty and Channel
- Protected characteristics
- Serious violence
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment
- Sexting-**Sharing of nude/semi nude images**
- Trafficking
- Upskirting

Risk Outside of the Home, also known as “Contextual Safeguarding,” or ‘extra-familial harm, is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people’s experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature **controlling and coercive behaviour**, violence and abuse.

Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people’s experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships

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

Risk Outside of the Home, known as contextual safeguarding, simply means assessments of children should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare.

Children's social care assessments should consider such factors so it is important that staff provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and the full context of any abuse.

## 6. Roles and Responsibilities

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy**

The school's lead person with overall responsibility for child protection and safeguarding is the Designated Safeguarding Lead. We also have a deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure there is appropriate cover for this role at all times. The Designated Safeguarding Lead's responsibilities are described in Appendix 1.

The All Saints Catholic Collegiate Executive Safeguarding and Inclusion Lead is Mrs J Stubbs

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is Mrs J Stubbs

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are Mrs A Staton and Mrs K Williams

The responsibilities of the DSL and DDSs are described in Appendix 1

We recognise the stressful and traumatic nature of safeguarding and child protection work. We will support staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the DSL and to signpost and seek further support as appropriate.

Regular supervision will be offered to the Lead DSL within school, at least half-termly and may be extended to other members of staff, as deemed appropriate by the school.

### **Nominated Academy Representative and Directors of the Academy**

The school has a nominated Academy Representative responsible for safeguarding to champion good practice and to liaise with the Headteacher. The Directors of the Academy are collectively responsible for ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are fully embedded within the school's ethos and reflected in the school's day-to-day practice.

The responsibilities of the nominated Academy Representative and Directors of the Academy are described in Appendix 2.

### **Headteacher**

The Headteacher will ensure that all policies and procedures are fully implemented and sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable staff members to discharge their safeguarding responsibilities. They will also act as case manager for dealing with allegations of abuse made against school staff members.

The Headteacher/ Head of School responsibilities are described in Appendix 2.

### **All Staff**

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All staff know how to recognise signs and symptoms of abuse, how to respond to students who disclose abuse and what to do if they are concerned about a child.

Staff have read and understand the school's safeguarding policy, staff code of conduct and other guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues.

All staff have received safeguarding training appropriate for their role, and approved by the multi agency safeguarding partner arrangements, every three years.

### **Designated Teacher for Looked After and previously Looked After Children**

The Governing body have appointed a Designated Teacher (DT) and this teacher works with the local authority and parents/carers to promote the educational achievement of registered students in our setting, who are 'looked after'.

The Designated Teachers are: Mrs Stubbs and Mrs Staton

Our Designated Teachers will work across the school to promote and improve educational outcomes for children in care using evidence-based interventions. This being children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship, or child arrangement orders or who were adopted from state care, outside of England and Wales. They are appropriately trained and have the relevant qualifications, training, and experience. Mrs Stubbs is in a leadership role and can make decisions on behalf of the school to implement plans to support children in care. At St Thomas More Catholic Academy we are attachment aware and trauma informed and take a relational based approach to supporting our most vulnerable children. We will work restoratively with children to improve their outcomes.

The Designated Teacher works with the Virtual school, to provide the most appropriate support, utilising the student premium plus, to ensure that they meet the needs identified in the child's personal education plan (PEP). They also work with the Virtual School Headteacher, to promote the educational achievement of previously looked after children.

Our school will admit any children in care without delay and work restoratively avoid exclusions for our most vulnerable children. We will make reasonable adjustments to our Behaviour Policy to support children in care and contact the Virtual School when a child is at risk of exclusion. Where a short period of suspension is unavoidable, we will provide 1<sup>st</sup> day provision.

**Care Leavers:** - The Designated Teacher has the details of the Local Authority Personal Advisor who has been appointed to guide and support the care leaver and liaises as necessary regarding any issues of concern affecting the care leaver.

## 7. Supporting Children

### 7.1. Working With Parents and Carers, Including Sharing of Information

Child protection information will be dealt with in a confidential manner. However, fears about sharing information in order to protect a child cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children. Staff will be informed of relevant details only when the Designated Safeguarding Lead feels their having knowledge of a situation will improve their ability to deal with an individual child and/or family. A written record will be made of what information has been shared with whom, and when.

At all times we will work in partnership and endeavour to establish effective working relationships with parents, carers, and colleagues from other agencies in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018). Our setting works closely with Stoke and Staffordshire Children's Social Care and, where appropriate from a placing local authority.

Information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse and neglect, and in promoting children's welfare, including their educational outcomes. Schools and colleges have clear powers to share, hold and use information for these purposes.

As part of meeting a child's needs, our Academy Representatives recognise the importance of information sharing between practitioners and local agencies. This includes ensuring arrangements are in place to set out clearly the processes and principles for sharing information within our setting and with the three safeguarding partners, other organisations, agencies, and practitioners as required.

We are proactive in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of children, whether this is when problems are first emerging, or where a child is already known to the local authority children's social care.

Our Academy Representatives are aware that among other obligations, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR place duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information they hold safe and secure. Our Academy Representatives ensure that relevant staff have due regard to the relevant data protection principles, which allow them to share (and withhold) personal information, as provided for in the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR.

**The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.**

Child protection records will be stored securely in a central place separate from academic records. Individual files will be kept for each child: the school will not keep family files. Files will be kept for at least the period during which the child is attending the school, and beyond that in line with current data legislation and guidance.

Access to these records by staff other than by the Designated Safeguarding Officer(s) will be restricted, and a written record will be kept of who has had access to them and when.

St Thomas More Catholic Academy will not disclose to a parent or carer any information held on a child if this would put the child at risk of significant harm.

If a student moves from our school, child protection records will be forwarded on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the new school, with due regard to their confidential nature and in line with current government guidance on the transfer of such records. Direct contact between the two schools may be necessary, especially on transfer from primary to secondary schools. We will record where and to whom the records have been passed and the date.

If sending by post, student records will be sent by "Special/Recorded Delivery". For audit purposes a note of all student records transferred or received should be kept in either paper or electronic format. This will include the child's name, date of birth, where and to whom the records have been sent and the date sent and/or received.

If a student is permanently excluded and moves to a Student Referral Unit, child protection records will be forwarded on to the relevant organisation.

Where a vulnerable young person is moving to a Further Education establishment, consideration should be given to the student's wishes and feelings on their child protection information being passed on in order that the FE establishment can provide appropriate support.

When a Designated Safeguarding Officer resigns their post or no longer has child protection responsibility, there should be a full face to face handover/exchange of information with the new post holder.

In exceptional circumstances when a face to face handover is unfeasible, the Headteacher will ensure that the new post holder is fully conversant with all procedures and case files.

At St Thomas More Catholic Academy we are committed to working in partnership with parents/carers to safeguard and promote the welfare of their children, and to support them to understand our statutory responsibilities in this area. The school follows legislation that aims to act in the best interests of the child.

When new students join our school, parents and carers will be informed that we have a safeguarding policy. A copy will be provided to parents on request and is available on the school website. Parents and carers will be informed of our legal duty to assist our colleagues in other agencies with child protection enquiries and what happens should we have cause to make a referral to the relevant local authority or other agencies.

We are committed to working with parents and carers in a positive, open and transparent way. We ensure that all parents and carers are treated with respect, dignity, and courtesy. We respect parents' and carers' rights to privacy and confidentiality and will not share sensitive information unless we have permission, or if it is necessary to do so to safeguard a child from harm.

We will seek to share with parents and carers any concerns we may have about their child before making a referral, unless to do so may place a child at increased risk of harm. A lack of parental or carer engagement or agreement regarding the concerns the school has about a child will not prevent the Designated Safeguarding Lead making a referral to the relevant local authority in those circumstances where it is appropriate to do so.

To keep children safe and provide appropriate care for them, the school requires parents and carers to provide accurate and up to date information regarding:

- Full names and contact details of all adults with whom the child normally lives.
- Full names and contact details of all persons with parental responsibility (if different from above).
- Emergency contact details (if different from above) and **at least 2 contacts**.
- Full details of any other adult authorised by the parent to collect the child from school (if different from the above).
- Any legal or criminal changes which effects parental responsibility e.g. bail condition, court orders, Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).

The School will retain this information on the student file. The school will only share information about students with adults who have parental responsibility for a student or where a parent has given permission and the school has been supplied with the adult's full details in writing.

## **7.2. Working with Students**

It is important to note that not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim or would want to be described in this way. For the purpose of this policy, we use the term 'alleged victim' and 'alleged perpetrator' as these are widely used and recognised terms.

We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence are likely to have low self-esteem and may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helpless, humiliated and some sense of blame. Our school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in their lives.

We accept that research shows that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be 'normal' to aggressive or withdrawn.

**Our school will support all students by:-**

- Encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness, through the curriculum as well as developing positive relationships, whilst not condoning aggression or bullying.
- Supporting the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence;
- Promoting a caring, safe and positive environment within the school.
- Ensuring that child protection is included in the curriculum to help children stay safe, recognise when they do not feel safe and identify who they might or can talk to;
- Providing students with a number of appropriate adults to approach if they are in difficulties;
- Ensuring repeated hate incidents, e.g. racist, homophobic or gender- or disability-based bullying, are considered under child protection procedures
- 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.
- Monitoring children who have been identified as having welfare or protection concerns, maintaining appropriate records and providing effective support.

**In addition, we will always follow best practice guidelines which include:-**

- Treating all students with respect
- Involving students in decisions that affect them
- Encouraging positive and safe behaviour among students
- Being a good listener
- Being alert to changes in students' behaviour
- Recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse
- Being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some students lead to an increased risk of abuse.
- Maintaining an attitude of "it could happen here," and therefore always exercising professional curiosity when carrying out our work.
- Setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately.

### **7.3. Physical intervention / Reasonable force**

There are circumstances when it is appropriate for staff in school to use reasonable force to safeguard children and young people. The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by staff that involves a degree of physical contact to control or restrain children. This can range from guiding a child to safety by the arm, to more extreme circumstances such as breaking up a fight or where a young person needs to be restrained to prevent violence or injury.

'Reasonable' in these circumstances means 'using no more force than is needed'. The use of force may involve either passive physical contact, such as standing between pupils or blocking a pupil's path, or active physical contact such as leading a pupil by the arm out of the classroom. Departmental advice for schools is available [here](#)

When using reasonable force in response to risks presented by incidents involving children including any with SEN or disabilities, or with medical conditions, staff should consider the risks carefully.

By planning positive and proactive behaviour support, for instance through drawing up individual behaviour plans for more vulnerable children and agreeing them with parents and carers, we will reduce the occurrence of challenging behaviour and the need to use reasonable force.

When physical contact is made with a child, this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration, and appropriate to their age, stage of development, gender, ethnicity and background. A general culture of 'limited touch' should be adapted, where appropriate, to the individual requirements of each child.



We understand that physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under child protection or disciplinary procedures.

Who can use reasonable force?

- All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force
- This power applies to any member of staff at the school. It can also apply to people whom the headteacher has temporarily put in charge of students such as unpaid volunteers or parents accompanying students on a school organised visit.

When can reasonable force be used?

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

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

Schools can use reasonable force to:

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

## 8. Recording Abuse

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

### Physical abuse

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

### Emotional abuse

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

### Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving 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 can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and all staff should be aware of it and of their school or college’s policy and procedures for dealing with it.

## 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. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing or shelter, including exclusion from home or abandonment; failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; failure to ensure adequate supervision, including the use of inadequate care-takers; or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

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

## Indicators of abuse – what you might see

Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example, bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has been inadequately supervised. The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they ‘tell’. It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty. For these reasons it is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the designated person.

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw, and each small piece of information will help the DSL to decide how to proceed. It is very important that you report your concerns – you do not need ‘absolute proof’ that the child is at risk.

All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues – some of which are listed below - and be aware that some manifest themselves as child on child abuse including gender-based violence, sexual assaults and bullying. Staff should be aware that behaviours linked to the likes of drug taking, alcohol abuse, truancy and sexting put children in danger. Child on child abuse should never be passed off as ‘banter’ or ‘part of growing up’ but should be taken seriously as abuse and should never be tolerated. The school will follow the safeguarding procedures in place to prevent all forms of abuse. It is important to note that children are not always ready or able to talk about their experiences of abuse and/or may not always recognise that they are being abused.

<p><b>PHYSICAL SIGNS OF ABUSE</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bruise marks consistent with either straps or slaps</li> <li>• Undue fear of adults - Fear of going home to parents or carers or fear of contact being made</li> <li>• Aggression towards others</li> <li>• Unexplained injuries or burns – particularly if they are recurrent and especially in non mobile babies</li> <li>• Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them</li> <li>• Injuries that occur to the body in places which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc</li> <li>• Reluctance to change for, or participate in games or swimming</li> <li>• Bruises, bites, burns, fractures etc which do not have an accidental/ satisfactory explanation</li> <li>• Cuts/scratches/substance abuse</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hitting (with the hand or implement) smacking, punching, kicking, slapping, twisting/pulling ear, hair or fingers, holding/squeezing with a tight grip, biting, and burning</li> <li>• Fabricated illness –see respective SCB websites for the procedure including signs and symptoms</li> <li>• Multiple bruises in clusters, or of uniform shape.</li> <li>• Bruises that carry an imprint, such as a hand or a belt.</li> <li>• Round burn marks.</li> <li>• Multiple burn marks and burns on unusual areas of the body such as the back, shoulders, or buttocks.</li> <li>• An injury that is not consistent with the account given.</li> <li>• Changing or different accounts of how an injury occurred.</li> <li>• Bald patches.</li> <li>• Symptoms of drug or alcohol intoxication or poisoning.</li> <li>• Unaccountable covering of limbs, even in hot weather.</li> <li>• Fear of medical help.</li> <li>• Fear of changing for PE.</li> <li>• Inexplicable fear of adults or over-compliance.</li> <li>• Violence or aggression towards others including bullying; or</li> <li>• Isolation from peers.</li> </ul>
<b>NEGLECT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exposure to danger/lack of supervision</li> <li>• Neglect - under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care etc.</li> <li>• Injuries that have not received medical attention</li> <li>• Inadequate/inappropriate clothing</li> <li>• Constant hunger</li> <li>• Poor standards of hygiene</li> <li>• Untreated illnesses</li> <li>• Persistent lack of attention, warmth or praise</li> <li>• Poor school attendance or often late for school.</li> <li>• Poor concentration.</li> <li>• Failure to achieve developmental milestones, for example growth, weight.</li> <li>• Failure to develop intellectually or socially.</li> <li>• Responsibility for activity that is not age appropriate such as cooking, ironing, caring for siblings.</li> <li>• The child is regularly not collected or received from school; or</li> <li>• The child is left at home alone or with inappropriate carers.</li> <li>• Adolescent neglect</li> <li>• Affluent neglect</li> </ul>
<b>EMOTIONAL SIGNS OF ABUSE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging. Also depression/ aggression, extreme anxiety</li> <li>• Nervousness, frozen watchfulness</li> <li>• Obsessions or phobias</li> <li>• Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration</li> <li>• Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults</li> <li>• Attention-seeking behaviour</li> <li>• Persistent tiredness</li> <li>• Running away/stealing/lying</li> <li>• Humiliating, taunting or threatening a child whether in front of others or alone.</li> <li>• Persistent lack of attention, warmth or praise.</li> <li>• Shouting/yelling at a child</li> <li>• Radicalisation – use of inappropriate language, possession of violent extremist literature, behavioural changes, the expression of extremist views, advocating violent actions and means, association with known extremists, seeking to recruit others.</li> </ul>
<b>INDICATORS OF POSSIBLE SEXUAL ABUSE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language and drawing inappropriate for age.</li> <li>• Child with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour</li> <li>• Regularly engages in age inappropriate sexual play</li> </ul>

/ HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOURS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual knowledge inappropriate for their age</li> <li>• Wariness on being approached</li> <li>• Soreness in the genital area or unexplained rashes or marks in the genital areas, including anal or vaginal discharge, soreness or scratching, thrush, persistent complaints of stomach disorders or pains</li> <li>• Pain on urination</li> <li>• Difficulty in walking or sitting</li> <li>• Stained or bloody underclothes</li> <li>• Recurrent tummy pains or headaches</li> <li>• Bruises on inner thigh or buttock.</li> <li>• Any allegations made by a child concerning sexual abuse</li> <li>• Sexual activity through words, play or drawing</li> <li>• Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults</li> <li>• Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home</li> <li>• Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations</li> <li>• Eating disorders - anorexia, bulimia</li> <li>• Unaccounted sources of money</li> <li>• Refusal to communicate</li> <li>• Telling you about being asked to 'keep a secret' or dropping hints or clues about abuse.</li> <li>• Reluctance to go home</li> <li>• Attention seeking behaviour, self-mutilation, substance abuse.</li> <li>• Aggressive behaviour including sexual harassment or molestation.</li> <li>• Unusual compliance.</li> <li>• Regressive behaviour, enuresis, soiling.</li> <li>• Frequent or open masturbation, touching others inappropriately.</li> <li>• Depression, withdrawal, isolation from peer group.</li> </ul>
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## 9. Children who may be particularly vulnerable

Some children may have an increased risk of abuse and therefore it is important that staff recognise the potential need for early help. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur.

We recognise that our safeguarding responsibilities are clearly linked to our responsibilities for ensuring that appropriate responses are in place for children who are **absent from school** or **who go missing from education**. We will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or who has been absent without school permission for a continuous period of **10 school days or more**

As a school we are aware of the potential for children with SEN to have **additional barriers when it comes to safeguarding**, the school recognises that this group can be more vulnerable to abuse and neglect. Disabled children may be **especially vulnerable to abuse** because they may have an impaired capacity to resist or avoid abuse. They may have speech, language and communication needs which may make it **difficult to tell** others what is happening. Children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges and the school is aware that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children.

These 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; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.
- Heightened vulnerability linked to:
  - Communications skills
  - Maturity (Lower cognitive ability)

- Perceptions of intent from others
- Lower self-esteem/confidence
- Potential to trust unreservedly
- A need to have “friends” or find a partner
- Differing boundaries
- Online safety – digital technology understanding

A **combination** of these factors can make them more susceptible to risks. To address these additional challenges, extra pastoral support for children with SEN and disabilities is provided as necessary.

Children develop and mature at different rates, so what appears to be worrying for a younger child might be normal behaviour for an older child. Parental behaviours may also indicate child abuse or neglect, so you should also be alert to parent/child interactions which are concerning and other parental behaviours. This could include parents who are under the influence of drugs or alcohol, if there is a sudden change in their mental health or if domestic abuse is present. By **understanding the warning signs**, you can respond to problems as early as possible and provide the right support and services for the child and their family.

Children say they need:

- **Vigilance:** to have adults notice when things are troubling them
- **Understanding and action:** to be heard and understood; and to have that understanding acted upon.
- **Stability:** to be able to develop an on-going stable relationship of trust with those helping them.
- **Respect:** to be treated with the expectation that they are competent, rather than not.
- **Information and engagement:** to be informed about and involved in procedures, decisions, concerns and plans.
- **Explanation:** to be informed of the outcome of assessments, decisions and how they have been reached, positive or negative.
- **Support:** to be provided with support in their own right as well as a member of their family.
- **Advocacy:** to be provided with advocacy, to assist them in putting forward their views.

To ensure that all of our students are safe and receive equal protection, we will apply extra vigilance to children who are:

- Disabled and has specific additional needs
- Has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory education, health and care plan)
- Has a mental health need
- A young carer
- Showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines
- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation
- Frequently missing / goes missing from care or from home
- Is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves
- Living in homes where there is domestic abuse
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- Is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves
- Has a family member in prison, or is affected by parental offending
- Living away from home or in private fostering arrangements
- Looked after and/or previously looked after children and/or privately fostered children
- Vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying (including online)
- Living in temporary accommodation
- Living in families with transient lifestyles
- Vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion or sexuality
- At risk of forced marriage or female genital mutilation
- At risk of sexual exploitation, modern slavery or trafficking
- At risk of extremism, exploitation or radicalisation
- Has returned home to their family from care
- Is attending alternative provision
- Showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect

- Is persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day
- The fact that a child or a young person may be LGBT is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. However, children who are LGBT can be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be LGBT (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBT.
- Children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. Children may need this help due to abuse, neglect and complex family circumstances. A child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour, and mental health.
- Local authorities should share the fact a child has a social worker, and the designated safeguarding lead should hold and use this information so that decisions can be made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare, and educational outcomes. This should be considered as a matter of routine. There are clear powers to share this information under existing duties on both local authorities and schools and colleges to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Where children need a social worker, this should inform decisions about safeguarding (for example, responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks) and about promoting welfare (for example, considering the provision of pastoral and/or academic support, alongside action by statutory services). We know that a child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour, and mental health. The DSL will hold and use information so that decisions can be made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare, and educational outcomes. We will work as a school to narrow the attainment gap, have high aspirations for all children with a social worker and will design our Pupil Premium strategy to meet the needs of CWSW (Children with a social worker).

When working with children with disabilities, practitioners need to be aware that additional possible indicators of abuse and/or neglect may also include:

- A bruise in a site that may not be of concern on an ambulant child such as the shin, maybe of concern on a non-mobile child.
- Not getting enough help with feeding leading to malnourishment.
- Poor toileting arrangements.
- Lack of stimulation.
- Unjustified and/or excessive use of restraint.
- Rough handling, extreme behaviour modification such as deprivation of medication, food, or clothing, disabling wheelchair batteries.
- Unwillingness to try to learn a child's means of communication.
- Ill-fitting equipment, for example, callipers, sleep boards, inappropriate splinting.
- Misappropriation of a child's finances; or
- Inappropriate invasive procedures.

In the context of safeguarding, and in line with the Equality Act, this policy, and the legal duties placed on schools and colleges in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, governing bodies and proprietors carefully considers how we are supporting students with regard to particular protected characteristics - including disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and race.

Staff should maintain an attitude of **'it could happen here'** where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff should always act in the **best** interests of the child.

Staff should not assume a colleague or another professional will take action and share information that might be critical in keeping children safe. They should be mindful that early information sharing is vital for effective identification, assessment and allocation of appropriate service provision. Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers supports staff who have to make decisions about sharing information. This advice includes the seven golden rules (see appendix) for sharing information.

All staff should act immediately on any concerns about a child's welfare immediately by reporting it to the DSL/Assistant DSL, or to a member of SLT if necessary. Where early help is necessary, the DSL or Assistant DSL will action this.

## 10. Child Protection Procedures

### 10.1. Dealing with Disclosures

It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose that they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual, their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell, they may have lost all trust in adults, or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault.

If a child talks to you about any risks to their safety or wellbeing you will need to let them know that you must pass the information on – you are not allowed to keep secrets. The point at which you do this is a matter for professional judgement. If you jump in immediately the child may think that you do not want to listen, if you leave it until the very end of the conversation, they may feel that you have misled them into revealing more than they would have otherwise.

Remember that the child is likely to have chosen **you** to disclose to for a reason.

#### **During your conversation with the student:-**

##### **DO NOT**

- Carry out your own investigation
- Put words in any child's mouth by asking direct questions such as "Did your Dad do it?"
- Feel that you must inform parents/carers if you think it may put the child at risk of further harm or cause them to be silenced.
- Ignore your worry
- Ask the child to sign what you have recorded or to repeat it to another member of staff
- Take photographs of any injury
- Delete information/ photographs from a computer/ memory stick/ mobile phone or any other electronic device
- Make promises to the child. Never agree or promise to keep it a secret. Assure them that you will try to help but let the child know that you will have to tell other people to do this and state who this will be and why.
- Communicate shock, anger, or embarrassment
- Make any comments about the alleged offender

##### **DO**

- Ask open-ended questions to clarify your concern e.g. "What happened to your arm?"
- Listen to the child / your gut feelings
- Take action.
- Stay calm
- Reassure the child and tell them that you are pleased that they are speaking to you
- Tell them that you believe them. Children very rarely lie about abuse; but they may have tried to tell others and not been heard or believed.
- Tell the child that it is not their fault
- Encourage the child to talk but do not ask "leading questions" or press for information
- Use the acronym T.E.D: Tell me. Explain. Describe
- Listen and remember to check that you have understood correctly what the child is trying to tell you
- Communicate that they have a right to be safe and protected
- Be aware that the child may retract what they have told you. It is essential to record in writing, all you have heard, though not necessarily at the time of the disclosure.
- At the end of the conversation, tell the child again who you are going to tell and why it is that person or people who need to know
- As soon as you can afterwards, make a detailed record of the conversation using the child's own language. Include any questions that you may have asked. Do not add any opinions or interpretations. (dates, times, names mentioned and to whom the information was passed need to be clearly recorded).
- Use the schools written/electronic recording forms
- If the disclosure relates to a physical injury do not photograph the injury, but record in writing in as much detail as possible

#### **10.2. Dealing with Concerns**

It may be that you don't have a disclosure from a child, but you are concerned. Concerns may come from something you see or hear - from the child, their family members, from professionals or from others.

**If you have a concern, no matter how small it may seem, you must pass the information onto your DSL (or Deputy DSL, in their absence) without delay.**

- Your concern can be passed on verbally but must be recorded as soon as possible using CPOMS

- Do not start your own investigation. You are not responsible for investigating but may need to ask open questions to ascertain more information
- Share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family – information should be taken to the DSL without delay, and advice from them

### **TED Questions**

Whilst you must not investigate, you may have to ask the child some questions to clarify what has happened. How you do this is important.

Do not ask leading questions, as answers from a child who was asked a leading question may not be able to be used as evidence in Court.

Ted Questions can be used with all ages, and are open questions that can help to ascertain what has happened. The information you pass on will therefore enable your DSL to make a decision as to whether an intervention is required.

- **Tell Me** – Tell me what happened
- **Explain** – Explain to me what happened next
- **Describe** – Describe what you saw /did / happened

### **10.3. Record keeping**

Good record keeping is vital. Records should be factual, accurate, relevant, up to date and auditable. They should support monitoring, risk-assessment and planning for children and enable informed and timely decisions about any appropriate actions to be taken. Sometimes a “one off” serious incident, concern or disclosure may occur and you will have no doubt that this must be immediately recorded and reported to the DSL, who will, without delay, refer to social care. Most often however, it is the accumulation of a number of small incidents, events or observations that provide the evidence of harm being caused to a child.

**It is vital therefore that any concern you have for a child’s welfare, however small, is recorded and passed to the DSL.**

All concerns must be recorded on CPOMS

CPOMS evidence may be shared with others, for example at child protection conferences. In exceptional cases, they may be submitted as evidence in court proceedings or at a serious case review.

**Records must be:-**

- Legible
- Dated
- Signed
- Relevant
- Distinguishing between fact, allegation, observation and opinion
- Using straight forward language, avoiding jargon or abbreviations
- Using the child’s own words wherever possible
- Written at the time of the concern
- Indicate what action you have taken
- Stored safely
- Kept confidential (ie – passed only to the DSL or Deputy, who will make the decision as to whether this information needs to be shared with another agency in order to protect the child)

Remember that other people might also be concerned about the child, and your record will help to build a bigger picture, so you should provide as much information as you can.

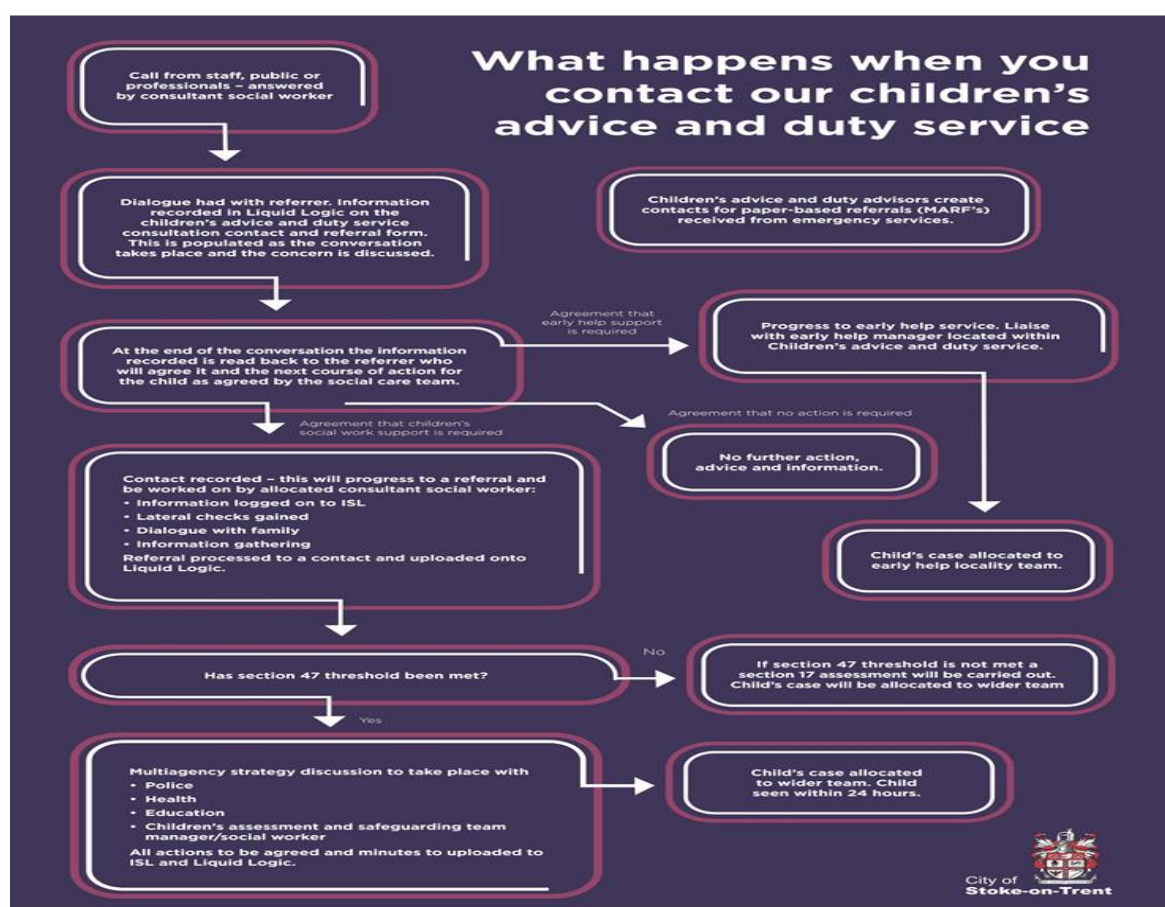
### **10.4. Referral to children’s social care**

The DSL or Deputy will make a referral to children’s social care, if it is believed that a child is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm (Children’s Act section 47;) or is a child in need (Children’s Act section 17). They will use the Guide to Levels of Need to help them assess if this statutory threshold has been met (multi agency / safeguarding partner arrangements) website).

In the absence of the DSL or Deputy DSL, if a child protection concern arises, someone else in school must make the referral and therefore information should be reported to a member of the senior leadership team. There should be no delays in making child protection referrals. **If the DSL and/or Deputy DSL are unavailable, any member of staff can report to the Safeguarding Referrals Team (SRT) on 01782 235100**



- To make a child protection referral, follow the flow chart.
- If you need advice or support, contact your locality social worker.
- Telephone numbers can be found on page 1 of this document.



## 11. Levels of Support / Threshold For Intervention

### 11.1. Early Help Assessment in Stoke-on-Trent

Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years. An Early Help Assessment should be initiated when welfare concerns are raised in relation to the child and their family. This should also be done when the support of more than one additional agency is needed in order to meet the child/family's needs.

Staff should discuss children who appear to have additional needs with the DSL or Early Help Lead, the child and parents/carers. School will need to obtain parental/student consent for an EHA to be completed. Please refer to Stoke-on-Trent Threshold Criteria for the Guide to Levels of Need for Children, Young People and Families and the Joint SCB

In appropriate cases, the DSL, Early Help Champion or member of the Pastoral team should discuss with the family the possibility of an Early Help Assessment. This assessment should identify what help the child and family require in order to prevent issues escalating to a point where social care intervention is required.

The early help assessment should be undertaken by a lead professional - the professional who has the best relationship with the family, (a teacher, special educational needs co-ordinator, family support worker, health visitor, for example).

**Any Child** may benefit from Early Help, but all school staff are particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who: -

- Is disabled and has specific additional needs.
- Has special educational needs (whether they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan or not).
- Is a young carer.

- Is showing signs of being drawn in to antisocial or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups.
- Is frequently missing or goes missing from school, care or from home.
- Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, or exploitation.
- Is at risk of being radicalised or exploited.
- Is in family circumstances that presents challenges for the child, such as drug or alcohol issues, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse.
- Is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves.
- Has returned home to their family from care.
- Is a privately fostered child.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that **all** staff are aware of the early help process and understand their role in it. This includes identifying emerging problems, liaising with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment and, in some cases, acting as the lead professional in undertaking an early help assessment.

Every member of staff, including volunteers, working with children at our school are advised to maintain an attitude of **‘professional curiosity and respectful uncertainty’** where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the best interests of the child and have a responsibility to act as outlined in this policy.

Practitioners should complete the Stoke on Trent Early Help Assessment (EHA) when:

- Age appropriate progress is not being made and the causes are unclear.
- The support of more than one additional agency is needed to meet the child or young person’s needs.
- Children do not meet threshold, yet concerns are emerging e.g. attendance, behavioural, academic progress, change in behaviour.

Guidance documents can be accessed at the following links:

- Stoke Early Help [Stoke on Trent Early Help](#)
- Stoke on Trent Threshold Document [Stoke on Trent threshold Document](#)
- The establishment EHA lead may need to make a referral directly to other agencies or request the support of Stoke on Trent City Council Early Help Teams. Referrals will be made through Stoke on Trent’s Children’s Advice and Duty service (ChAD) on 01782 235100.

The DSL may also consider seeking advice and guidance from Stoke on Trent Children’s Advice and Duty Service (ChAD) 01782 235100 around thresholds and appropriate referrals to ChAD.

**Concerns about a child should always lead to help for a child. The school may need to escalate it’s concerns with Children’s Services to ensure a referral is accepted or work with other agencies to ensure that an Early Help Assessment is completed.**

### **11.2. When concerns reach the threshold of Child in Need (S17 of the Children Act 1989)**

A ‘Child in Need’ is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled. Local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989

If the DSL considers that the welfare concerns indicate that a ‘Child in Need’ referral is appropriate, they will speak with parents / carers and the child where appropriate and obtain their consent for referral to the Stoke on Trent’s Childrens Advice & Duty (ChAD) service or the appropriate social care team if a different authority, to request an assessment. If parents refuse to give consent, but the child’s needs are not being met, the DSL will discuss these issues with the Stoke on Trent Childrens Advice and Duty (ChAD) service on 01782 235100.

### **11.3. Child Protection (Section 47)**

If the local authority have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, they have a duty to make enquires under Section 47 to enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard and promote the child’s welfare.

This duty also applies if a child is subject to an emergency protection order (under section 44 of the Children Act 1989) or in police protective custody under section 46 of the Children Act 1989.

Children's Services will convene an Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC) once a child protection enquiry under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 has been undertaken and the child is judged to be at continuing risk of significant harm. A review conference (RCPC) will take place once a child has been made the subject of a Child Protection Plan to monitor the safety of the child and the required reduction in risk. Between conferences regular meetings of a core group will take place to monitor the progress of the child protection plan.

The DSL, and sometimes other staff members, will attend a child protection conference on behalf of the school in respect of individual children.

The person attending will have as much relevant and up to date information/case files about the child as possible; any member of staff will be required to contribute to this process. The person attending will contribute to a recommendation on the risks/protective factors for the family from their information and a view on the need for a child protection plan. If we cannot attend, then we ensure that a report is sent prior to the conference.

Clearly child protection conferences can be upsetting for parents. We recognise that we are likely to have more contact with parents than other professionals involved. We will work in an open, honest, and transparent way with any parent whose child has been referred to Stoke on Trent's Children's Advice and Duty service or whose child is subject to a child protection plan.

Our responsibility is to promote the protection and welfare of all children and our aim is to achieve this in partnership with our parents/carers.

#### **11.4. Escalation Procedures**

The Stoke on Trent Safeguarding Children Partnership expects members of staff working directly with families to share information appropriately and work to plans agreed in all relevant forums. Good practice includes the expectation that constructive challenge amongst colleagues within agencies and between agencies provides a healthy approach to the work.

If we believe that concerns regarding a child are not being addressed, we understand the expectations that we will commence the escalation process be used until a satisfactory conclusion is reached.

The process of resolution will be kept as simple as possible and the aim will be to resolve difficulties at a professional practitioner level, wherever possible and always in a restorative way. We recognise that differences in status and experience may affect the confidence of some workers to pursue this course of action, and support should be sought from the DSL.

## **12. Behaviours Linked To Safeguarding Issues**

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

### **12.1. Responses from Parents/Carers**

Research and experience indicate that the following responses from parents may suggest a cause for concern across all five categories:

- Delay in seeking treatment that is obviously needed.
- Unawareness or denial of any injury, pain, or loss of function (for example, a fractured limb).
- Incompatible explanations offered, several different explanations or the child is said to have acted in a way that is inappropriate to her/his age and development.
- Reluctance to give information or failure to mention other known relevant injuries.

- Frequent presentation of minor injuries.
- A persistently negative attitude towards the child.
- Unrealistic expectations or constant complaints about the child.
- Alcohol misuse or other drug/substance misuse.
- Parents request removal of the child from home; or
- Violence between adults in the household.
- Evidence of coercion and control.

## 12.2. Private Fostering

Many private fostering arrangements are 'hidden' and, it appears, are rarely brought to the attention of local authorities, even though there it is an offence not to inform them. The penalty for non-reporting is a maximum £5,000 fine, but it seems that convictions are extremely rare.

The legislation governing private fostering is the 'Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005' and came into force following the death of Victoria Climbié in 2000. Victoria was privately fostered by her great aunt. Given the 'hidden' nature of much private fostering, local authorities have a duty to raise awareness of the need to notify the local Children's Services department.

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child under the age of 16 (under 18, if disabled) by someone other than a parent or immediate relative. If the arrangement is to last, or has lasted, for 28 days or more, it is categorised as private fostering.

Close relatives are defined as a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle, or aunt (whether of full blood or half blood or by marriage or civil partnership), or a stepparent.

People become involved in private fostering for all kinds of reasons. Examples of private fostering include:

- Children who need alternative care because of parental illness.
- Children whose parents cannot care for them because their work or study involves long or antisocial hours.
- Children sent from abroad to stay with another family, usually to improve their educational opportunities.
- Unaccompanied asylum seeking and refugee children.
- Teenagers who stay with friends (or other non-relatives) because they have fallen out with their parents.
- Children staying with families while attending a school away from their home area.

The Ofsted report into Private Fostering also refers to these reasons:

- children brought from outside the UK with a view to adoption
- children at independent boarding schools who do not return home for holidays and are placed with host families
- trafficked children

Our staff at St Thomas More Catholic Academy will notify the DSL/DDSL when they become aware of a private fostering arrangement. There is a mandatory duty on the school to inform Stoke on Trent Children's Services of a private fostering arrangement by contacting ChAD on 01782 235100, who then have a duty to check that the young person is being properly cared for and that the arrangement is satisfactory.

Guidance Document:

- [Children Act 1989 – Private Fostering](#)

## 12.3. Looked After and Previously Looked After Children, including Internationally Previously Looked After Children

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse and/or neglect. Governing bodies therefore ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked after children safe. In particular, they will ensure that appropriate staff have the information they need in relation to a child's looked after legal status (whether they are looked after under voluntary arrangements with consent of parents or on an interim or full care order) and contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility. They will also have information about the child's care arrangements and the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after him/her. The designated safeguarding lead will have details of the child's social worker and the name of the virtual school head in the authority that looks after the child.

Previously looked after children potentially remain vulnerable and all staff should have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe. When dealing with looked after children and previously

looked after children, all agencies will work together to ensure that prompt action is taken when necessary to safeguard these children, who are a particularly vulnerable group.

#### 12.4. Children Requiring a social worker

Children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. Children may need this help due to abuse, neglect and complex family circumstances. A child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health.

Local authorities should share the fact a child has a social worker, and the designated safeguarding lead will hold and use this information so that decisions can be made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. This is considered as a matter of routine. There are clear powers to share this information under existing duties on both local authorities and schools and colleges to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

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

#### 12.5. Mental Health

All staff have an incredibly important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our pupils and **are** aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

We have clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible mental health problems, including routes to escalate and clear referral and accountability systems.

St Thomas More Catholic Academy is a Trailblazer school for mental health, and there are also two members of staff who have completed the Senior Mental Health Lead training. A number of staff are qualified Mental Health First Aiders, and the school also has an identified Mental Health Lead (Mrs Williams).

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Education staff, however, are well placed to **observe** children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE), this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour, and education.

Guidance and helpful documents: -

- [Addressing Trauma and Adversity](#)
- [Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools Guidance](#).
- [Preventing and tackling bullying](#)
- [PHE Rise Above for Schools programme](#).
- [Every Interaction Matters](#)
- [Education recovery](#)
- [MIND-Parenting Capacity and Mental Health](#)
- [NSPCC-Mental Health and Parenting](#)
- [SSCB-Children & Young People who Self Harm or Disclose an Intent to Die by Suicide](#)

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following their child protection policy, and by speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy. Please refer to the school's Physical Health and Mental Wellbeing Policy for further detail relating to the support for students and staff' mental health and physical wellbeing.

#### 12.6. Children Missing Education

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. St Thomas More Catholic Academy will follow the school's procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

The school will inform the local authority of any student who is going to be removed from the admission register where the student:

- has been taken out of school by their parents and the school has received written notification from the parent they are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education;
- has ceased to attend school and no longer lives within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- Displaced because of a crisis e.g. domestic violence or homelessness
- has been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age;
- are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- have been permanently excluded.

All professionals working with children, as well as the wider community can help by remaining vigilant to children's safety. The law states every child should be receiving an education, and we stand a better chance of ensuring a child's safety if we know where and how they are receiving this. [THE EDUCATION AND INSPECTIONS ACT 2006 PLACES A DUTY ON LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN ENGLAND AND WALES TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS TO IDENTIFY CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OF COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE MISSING EDUCATION IN THEIR AREA; WE WORK CLOSELY TO ENSURE WE PUT APPROPRIATE SAFEGUARDING RESPONSES IN PLACE FOR CHILDREN WHO GO MISSING FROM EDUCATION.](#)

A child going missing, particularly repeatedly, can be a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding risks, including abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation; child criminal exploitation; mental health problems; substance abuse and other issues. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of them going missing in future.

Our school will hold **two or more** emergency contact numbers for each pupil. It is good practice to give our school additional options to contact a responsible adult when a child missing education, is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

The school will notify the Local Authority of any student who fails to attend school regularly after making reasonable enquiries or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more.

Our school will demonstrate that we have taken reasonable enquiries to ascertain the whereabouts of children that would be considered [‘missing’](#)

## 12.7. Child Missing from Home or Care

There are strong links between children involved in criminal and sexual exploitation and other behaviours such as running away from home, care or school, bullying, self-harm, teenage pregnancy, truancy, and substance misuse.

In addition, some children are particularly vulnerable, for example, children with special needs, those in residential or foster care, those leaving care, migrant children, particularly those who are unaccompanied, those forced into marriage, those involved in gangs and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

Most children who go missing are not in care and go missing from their family home. However, children who are looked after are much more likely to run away than those who live at home, and over 50% of young people in care have run away at some point.

Guidance document

- [Children who run away or go missing from home or care](#)

## 12.8. Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should be aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority, so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity.

Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse, and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. Whilst referrals and/or discussion with the Local Housing Authority should be progressed as appropriate, and in accordance with local procedures, this does not, and should not, replace a referral into children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.



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

Children's services will be the lead agency for these young people and the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should ensure appropriate referrals are made based on the child's circumstances.

### **12.9. Alternative Provision**

At St Thomas More Catholic Academy we know that the cohort of pupils in our provision often have complex needs, our Academy Representatives are aware of this additional risk of harm that their pupils may be vulnerable to.

We know that a child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour, and mental health. The DSL will hold and use information so that decisions can be made in the best interests of the child's safety, welfare, and educational outcomes.

Where children need a social worker, this will inform decisions about safeguarding (for example, responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks) and about promoting welfare (for example, considering the provision of pastoral and/or academic support, alongside action by statutory services.) We will strengthen provision to reduce absence and exclusions for this group as we recognise that regular attendance is important for vulnerable pupils and school can act as a protective factor.

We will work as a school to narrow the attainment gap, have high aspirations for all children with a social worker and will design our Pupil Premium strategy to meet the needs of CWSW (Children with a social worker).

### **12.10. Drugs**

There is evidence that children and young people are increasingly misusing alcohol and illegal drugs. Consequences range from non-attendance and poor attainment at school, poor health, committing crime to support 'habits' and increased risk of being a victim of violent crime and criminal exploitation, including sexual exploitation.

Guidance Documents:

- [NSPCC-Parental Substance Misuse](#)
- [SSCB-Working with parents who misuse substances](#)
- [Drugs Advise for Schools](#)

### **12.11. Child Exploitation**

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. In some cases, the abuse will be in exchange for something the alleged victim needs or wants and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increased status) of the alleged perpetrator or facilitator. The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Alleged victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual and it should be noted exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online.

CSE and CCE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation. Completion of a Risk Factor Matrix (RFM), attendance at MACE panels, partnership with local agencies and coordination of safeguarding concerns all form part of St Thomas More Catholic Academy's culture of safeguarding.

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

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

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

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

Some of the following can be indicators of CCE:

- children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions.
- children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation.
- children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being.
- children who misuse drugs and alcohol.
- children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late.
- children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

Guidance documents:

- [Safeguarding children who may have been trafficked](#)
- [Child Exploitation - StaffsSCB](#)

### **12.13. Child sexual exploitation (CSE)**

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

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

CSE can affect any child who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16- and 17-year olds who can legally consent to have sex. Some children may not realise they are being exploited e.g. they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power in the relationship. The alleged perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the alleged victim which increases as the exploitative relationship develops. Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying including cyberbullying and grooming. However, it is also important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse.

The above CCE indicators can also be signs of CSE, as can having older boyfriends or girlfriends and/or suffering from sexually transmitted infections/becoming pregnant.

Child sexual exploitation involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (for example food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts, money or in some cases simply affection) as a result of engaging in sexual activities. Sexual exploitation can take many forms ranging from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for affection or gifts, to serious organised crime by gangs and groups.

The following list of indicators is not exhaustive or definitive but it does highlight common signs which can assist professionals in identifying children or young people who may be alleged victims of sexual exploitation.

- Underage sexual activity
- Inappropriate sexual or sexualised behaviour
- Sexually risky behaviour, 'swapping' sex
- Sexually transmitted infections
- In girls, repeat pregnancy, abortions, miscarriage
- Receiving unexplained gifts or gifts from unknown sources



- Having multiple mobile phones and worrying about losing contact via mobile phone
- Having unaffordable new things (clothes, mobile) or expensive habits (alcohol, drugs)
- Changes in the way they dress
- Going to hotels or other unusual locations to meet friends
- Seen at known places of concern
- Moving around the country, appearing in new towns or cities, not knowing where they are
- Getting in/out of different cars driven by unknown adults
- Having older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Contact with known alleged perpetrators
- Involved in abusive relationships, intimidated and fearful of certain people or situations
- Hanging out with groups of older people, or anti-social groups, or with other vulnerable peers
- Associating with other young people involved in sexual exploitation
- Recruiting other young people to exploitative situations
- Truancy, exclusion, disengagement with school, opting out of education altogether
- Unexplained changes in behaviour or personality (chaotic, aggressive, sexual)
- Mood swings, volatile behaviour, emotional distress
- Self-harming, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, overdosing, eating disorders
- Drug or alcohol misuse
- Getting involved in crime
- Police involvement, police record
- Involved in gangs, gang fights, gang membership
- Injuries from physical assault, physical restraint, sexual assault.

See multi agency working safeguarding partner arrangements procedure – [www.safeguardingchildren.stoke.gov.uk](http://www.safeguardingchildren.stoke.gov.uk) – procedures

Guidance documents:

- [Child Sexual Exploitation Definition & Guidance](#)
- [Know about CSE](#)

#### **12.14. County Lines**

St Thomas More continues to work closely with Staffordshire Police and other relevant agencies to identify and support any affected young people, as well as to pro-actively prevent gang involvement where possible.

It is essential that those involved in gangs or at risk of becoming involved are able to find a meaningful alternative, such as education, training and employment.

County Lines takes the form of urban gangs supplying drugs to suburban areas and market and coastal towns using mobile phone lines or “deal lines”. It involves criminal exploitation with gangs who use children and vulnerable adults to move drugs (primarily heroin and crack cocaine) and money. It involves violence, intimidation and the offer of money or drugs. County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas (within the UK), using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”.

Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move and/or store drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in several locations including schools, further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, special educational needs schools, children’s homes, and care homes.

Children are often recruited to move drugs and money between locations and are known to be exposed to techniques such as ‘plugging’, where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs create drug debts and can threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

One of the ways of identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes (both from home and school), when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) should be considered.

If a child is suspected to be at risk of or involved in county lines, a safeguarding referral should be considered alongside consideration of availability of local services/third sector providers who offer support to victims of county lines exploitation.

As well as sexual exploitation, county lines cuts across a range of threats, including modern day slavery and human trafficking. People are being exploited using the county lines model to transport and sell more than drugs. Weapons, sex and money are also being traded in this way

People affected by county lines activity are at risk of criminal and / or sexual exploitation, serious violence, as well as risk of significant harm through physical, sexual and emotional abuse

Like other forms of abuse and exploitation, county lines exploitation: -

- Can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years.
- Can affect any vulnerable adult over the age of 18 years.
- Can still be exploitation even if the activity appears consensual.
- Can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and is often accompanied by violence or threats of violence.
- Can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and young people or adults and
- Is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

Signs and indicators may include

- Are they going missing from school or home?
- Do they suddenly have lots of money/new clothes/ new mobile phones?
- Are they receiving more calls or texts than usual?
- Are they being very protective of their phone/ reluctant to let it out of sight or off their person? (may act violently or be visibly scared if their phone is lost or confiscated)
- Are they using new or unknown slang words
- Do they have a new nickname?
- Have they suddenly changed their appearance – dressing in a particular style or 'uniform' similar to that of other young people they hang around with, including a particular colour
- Have they started using certain codes of group behaviour e.g. ways of talking and hand signs
- Do they seem emotionally 'switched off', but also containing frustration / rage?
- Do they seem very reserved or seem like they have something to hide?
- Do they seem scared?
- Are they constantly talking about another person who seems to have a lot of influence over them?
- Have they started to break away from old friends and hanging around with someone/people that are older and controlling?
- Have they dropped out of positive activities and their hobbies?
- Are they no longer engaging with services / young people?
- Do they have unexplained physical injuries, and / or refusal to seek / receive medical treatment for injuries?  
Are they limping (from 'warning stabs' to legs and buttocks)
- Are they travelling alone to places far away from home?
- Are they carrying or selling drugs?
- Are they carrying weapons or know people that have access to weapons?

Guidance Document:

- [Criminal Exploitation of Children and Vulnerable Adults; County Lines](#)

### **12.15. Cuckooing**

This is the process whereby criminal gangs target the homes of vulnerable people to deal drugs from their premises. Many of the alleged victims are vulnerable and may be drug users themselves. They are often approached by dealers offering them free drugs in exchange for use of their home or are sometimes forced by threats and intimidation to deal on their behalf. Cuckooing means the criminals can operate from a property rather than on the street, making them less easy to identify, and often they move between different properties to cover their activities. County lines groups also make use of serviced apartments, holiday lets, budget hotels and caravan parks. County lines groups

prefer to pay cash where possible and often use network associates to arrange these facilities, as a means of distancing themselves from the criminality.

Signs and indicators may include:

- It usually takes place in a multi-occupancy or social housing property
- More comings and goings, including people you haven't seen before, throughout the day and night, often visiting for only short periods of time
- New or an increase in the number of vehicles outside the property, including taxis or hire cars
- Bags of clothing or bedding around the property,
- An increase in crime and anti-social behaviour in and around the property reported to services, including the accumulation and storage of stolen pedal cycles
- Evidence of drug use such as deal bags, discarded syringes, weighing scales, foil and cling film, in and around the property.

Alleged victims of cuckooing may disengage with support services, and be unwilling to discuss what is happening at their property when the subject is raised with them.

## 12.16. Serious Violence

All staff should be aware of the indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

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

Guidance documents:

- [Home Office Preventing Youth Violence and Gang Involvement](#)
- [Criminal Exploitation of Children and Vulnerable Adults; County Lines](#)

## 12.17. Preventing Radicalisation and Extremism

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, places a duty upon schools and other agencies to have due regard to preventing people from being drawn into terrorism ("the Prevent Duty".)

The current threat from terrorism in the United Kingdom may include the exploitation of vulnerable people, to involve them in terrorism or in activity in support of terrorism. The normalisation of extreme views may also make children and young people vulnerable to future manipulation and exploitation. Schools within our collegiate are clear that this exploitation and radicalisation should be viewed as a safeguarding concern.

All staff should be fully engaged in being vigilant about radicalisation; they should overcome professional disbelief that such issues will not happen here and ensure that we work alongside other professional bodies and agencies to ensure that our students are safe from harm.

We emphasise that there is no place for extremist views of any kind in our school, whether from internal sources – students, staff or governors, or external sources - school community, external agencies or individuals.

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

Children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk should be a part of a schools' or colleges' safeguarding approach.

- **Extremism** is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.
- **Radicalisation** refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

- **Terrorism** is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, or ideological cause.

St Thomas More Catholic Academy we value freedom of speech and the expression of beliefs and ideology as fundamental rights underpinning our society's values. Students and school staff have the right to speak freely and voice their opinions. However, freedom comes with responsibility and free speech that is designed to manipulate the vulnerable or that leads to violence and harm of others goes against the moral principles in which freedom of speech is valued. Free speech is not an unqualified privilege; it is subject to laws and policies governing equality, human rights, community safety and community cohesion.

There is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Background factors combined with specific influences such as family and friends may contribute to a child's vulnerability. Similarly, radicalisation can occur through many different methods (such as social media or the internet) and settings (such as within the home).

The normalisation of extreme views may also make children and young people vulnerable to future manipulation and exploitation. St Thomas More Catholic Academy is clear that this exploitation and radicalisation must be viewed as a safeguarding concern and that protecting children from the risk of radicalisation is part of the school's safeguarding duty.

The school's designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) are aware of local procedures for making a Prevent referral.

## **12.19 Indicators of Vulnerability to Radicalisation**

1. Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism.

2. Extremism is defined by the Government in the Prevent Strategy 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." We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.

3. Extremism is defined by the Crown Prosecution Service as:

- The demonstration of unacceptable behaviour by using any means or medium to express views which
- Encourage, justify, or glorify terrorist violence in furtherance of beliefs
- Seek to provoke others to terrorist acts
- Encourage other serious criminal activity or seek to provoke others to serious criminal acts or
- Foster hatred which might lead to inter-community violence in the UK.

4. There is no such thing as a "typical extremist": those who become involved in extremist actions come from a range of backgrounds and experiences, and most individuals, even those who hold radical views, do not become involved in violent extremist activity.

5. Pupils may become susceptible to radicalisation through a range of social, personal, and environmental factors - it is known that violent extremists exploit vulnerabilities in individuals to drive a wedge between them and their families and communities. It is vital that school staff can recognise those vulnerabilities.

6. Indicators of vulnerability include:

- Identity Crisis – the student/pupil is distanced from their cultural/religious heritage and experiences discomfort about their place in society.
- Personal Crisis – the student/pupil may be experiencing family tensions; a sense of isolation; and low self-esteem; they may have dissociated from their existing friendship group and become involved with a new and different group of friends; they may be searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging;
- Personal Circumstances – migration; local community tensions; and events affecting the student/pupil's country or region of origin may contribute to a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of Government policy.

- Unmet Aspirations – the student/pupil may have perceptions of injustice; a feeling of failure; rejection of civic life.
- Experiences of Criminality – which may include involvement with criminal groups, imprisonment, and poor resettlement/reintegration.
- Special Educational Need – students/pupils may experience difficulties with social interaction, empathy with others, understanding the consequences of their actions and awareness of the motivations of others.

This list is not exhaustive, nor does it mean that all young people experiencing the above are at risk of radicalisation for the purposes of violent extremism.

More critical risk factors could include:

- Being in contact with extremist recruiters.
- Family members convicted of a terrorism act or subject to a Channel intervention.
- Accessing violent extremist websites, especially those with a social networking element.
- Possessing or accessing violent extremist literature.
- Using extremist narratives and a global ideology to explain personal disadvantage.
- Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues.
- Joining or seeking to join extremist organisations.
- Significant changes to appearance and/or behaviour; and
- Experiencing a high level of social isolation resulting in issues of identity crisis and/or personal crisis.

There are a number of behaviours which may indicate a child is at risk of being radicalised or exposed to extreme views. These include:

- Spending increasing time in the company of other suspected extremists.
- Changing their style of dress or personal appearance to accord with the group.
- Day-to-day behaviour becoming increasingly centred on an extremist ideology, group or cause.
- Loss of interest in other friends and activities not associated with the extremist ideology, group or cause.
- Possession of materials or symbols associated with an extremist cause.
- Attempts to recruit others to the group/cause.
- Communications with others that suggests identification with a group, cause or ideology.
- Using insulting to derogatory names for another group.
- Increase in prejudice-related incidents committed by that person – these may include;
  - Physical or verbal assault
  - Provocative behaviour
  - Damage to property
  - Derogatory name calling
- Possession of prejudice-related materials
- Prejudice related ridicule or name calling
- Inappropriate forms of address
- Refusal to co-operate
- Attempts to recruit to prejudice-related organisations
- Condoning or supporting violence towards others.

## **12.20. Prevent Duty and Channel**

### **Prevent**

The school governors, the Head Teacher/Principal and the DSL will assess the level of risk within the school and put actions in place to reduce that risk. Risk assessment may include consideration of the school's RE curriculum, SEND policy, Assembly Policy, the use of school premises by external agencies, integration of students by gender and SEN, anti-bullying policy and other issues specific to the school's profile, community and philosophy.

All schools are subject to a duty to have “due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism” (section 26, Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015). This is known as The Prevent Duty and is part of our school’s wider safeguarding obligations.

Designated safeguarding leads and other senior leaders familiarise themselves with the revised Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales, especially paragraphs 57-76, which are specifically concerned with schools (and covers childcare). We follow the guidance in terms of four general themes: risk assessment, working in partnership, staff training, and IT policies.

Our School will monitor online activity within the school to ensure that inappropriate sites are not accessed by students or staff. This is best done using specialist online monitoring software, which in this school is called [Securus](#).

### **Channel**

Channel is a multi-agency approach to provide support to individuals who are at risk of being drawn into terrorist related activity. It is led by the Staffordshire Police Counter-Terrorism Unit, and it aims to:

- Establish an effective multi-agency referral and intervention process to identify vulnerable individuals.
- Safeguard individuals who might be vulnerable to being radicalised, so that they are not at risk of being drawn into terrorist-related activity; and
- Provide early intervention to protect and divert people away from the risks they face and reduce vulnerability.
- The Channel programme focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. It provides a mechanism for schools to make referrals if they are concerned that an individual might be vulnerable to radicalisation. An individual’s participation in the programme is entirely voluntary at all stages.
- Schools have a duty to cooperate with the Channel programme in the carrying out of its functions, and with the Police in providing information about an individual who is referred to Channel (Section 38, Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015).

Guidance Documents:

- [The Prevent Duty](#).
- [Educate Against Hate](#)
- [ACT Early | Prevent radicalisation](#)

### **12.21 The role of the curriculum in preventing Radicalisation and Extremism**

Our curriculum is broad and balanced, promoting respect, tolerance and diversity. Children are encouraged to share their views and recognise that they are entitled to have their own different beliefs which should not be used to influence others. Our PSHE provision is embedded across the curriculum and we strive to equip our students with confidence, self-belief, respect and tolerance as well as setting high standards and expectations for themselves. We actively promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our students, in line with Promoting Fundamental British Values as part of SMSC in Schools DfE 2014

If staff become aware that a child is vulnerable to being radicalised or exposed to extreme views, (including peer pressure, influence from other people or the internet, bullying, crime and anti-social behaviour, family tensions, race/hate crime, lack of self-esteem or identity, prejudicial behaviour and personal or political grievances;) this will be reported directly to the DSL.

The DSL will liaise with other appropriate agencies, and make referrals directly to the police if deemed necessary, at [prevent@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:prevent@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk)

### **12.22. Child on Child Abuse, Child on Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment**

**All** staff have the knowledge and awareness that children can and sometimes do abuse other children (often referred to as Child on Child Abuse).

We have a specific and separate Child on Child Abuse Policy which includes Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children, as well as an Anti-Bullying and Behaviour Policy to guide, inform and support children, staff and parents/carers.

Child on Child Abuse including sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of **any** age and sex. It can occur with a single child or group of children. This can happen both inside and outside of our setting including online.



Children who are victims of child on child abuse including sexual violence and sexual harassment will find the experience stressful and distressing. This is likely to have an adverse effect their educational attainment. This type of abuse can exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable.

**All** staff recognise the indicators and signs of Child on Child Abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports of it. They understand the importance of the **timely** challenge of inappropriate behaviours between peers, many listed below, that are abusive in nature. They are aware of the importance of: -

- Making clear that child on child abuse including sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable and that that we have a zero-tolerance approach.
- Not dismissing Child on Child Abuse (including sexual violence or sexual harassment) as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”; and
- Challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as physical and sexual assaults e.g. grabbing bottoms, breasts, and genitalia, flicking bras and the lifting up of skirts.

**All** staff know that if we do not challenge and support our children that this will lead to a **culture** of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

We strive for a culture where children feel safe to speak to staff about their experiences. We know that the initial response to a report from a child is vitally important. We do not want to miss that opportunity and so we reassure victims that their reports are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. We never give victims the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. We reassure victims that they should not feel ashamed for making a report.

We have well promoted and easily understood systems in place so that our children feel confident to knowing their concerns will be treated seriously.

**All** victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. Staff are aware of the groups that are potentially more at risk as evidence shows that girls, children with SEND and LGBT children are at greater risk. The DfE states ‘peer on peer abuse should be taken as seriously as abuse by adults and should be subject to the same child protection procedures.

Victims of peer on peer abuse will be supported by the school’s pastoral system and referred to specialist agencies if appropriate. Risk assessment and/or safety planning are an integral part of this support plan, particularly regarding the post incident management.

**All** staff understand, that even if there are no reports in our setting, this does not mean that it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such it is important that if staff have any concerns regarding peer on peer abuse, they speak to their Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy (DDSL). Our staff will not develop high thresholds before acting.

Child on Child Abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying).
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers (sometimes known as ‘teenage relationship abuse’).
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse).
- sexual violence such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault and may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence. Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.
- sexual harassment such as sexual comments, remarks about clothes and/or appearance, jokes, taunting and online sexual harassment. This also includes the telling of sexual stories, making lewd comments and calling someone sexual names and physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone’s clothes and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature; and online sexual harassment.
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.

- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery) Consensual image sharing, especially between older children of the same age, may require a different response. It might not be abusive – but children still need to know it is illegal whilst non-consensual is illegal and abusive.
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm; and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

**All staff are** clear as to the school's policy and procedures with regards to peer on peer abuse and the important role they have to play in preventing it and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it.

If staff have a concern about a child or a child makes a report to them, they will follow the safeguarding referral process. As is always the case, if staff are in any doubt as to what to do, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy). Schools behaviour policy will support any sanctions.

The DfE states 'peer on peer abuse should be taken as seriously as abuse by adults and should be subject to the same child protection procedures.

Guidance Documents:

- [Disrespect NoBody](#)
- [CEOP-Safety centre](#)
- [UKCIS Guidance: Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes](#)
- [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Searching, screening and confiscation \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

The management of children displaying sexually harmful behaviour is complex and the school will work with other relevant agencies to maintain the safety of the whole school community. Children and young people who display such behaviour may be alleged victims of abuse themselves and the child protection procedures will be followed for both alleged victim and alleged perpetrator.

Government guidance, entitled Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges, includes what sexual violence and sexual harassment look like, important context to be aware of, related legal responsibilities for schools and colleges and advice on a whole school or college approach to preventing child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment. This includes the changes to the Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019 which criminalise the act of 'up skirting'. The [Criminal Prosecution Service \(CPS\)](#) defines 'up skirting' as a colloquial term referring to the action of placing equipment such as a camera or mobile phone beneath a person's clothing to take a voyeuristic photograph without their permission. It is not only confined to alleged victims wearing skirts or dresses and equally applies when men or women are wearing kilts, cassocks shorts or trousers. It is often performed in crowded public places, for example on public transport or at music festivals, which can make it difficult to notice offenders."

Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are likely to be complex and require difficult professional decisions to be made, often quickly and under pressure.

There is support available for schools and colleges. Paragraph 43 and Annex A in the Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges advice outlines procedures for responding to such incidents.

When there has been a report of sexual violence, the designated safeguarding lead will make a risk and needs assessment. Where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The risk and needs assessment will consider:

- the alleged victim, especially their protection and support;
- the alleged perpetrator; and
- all the other children (and, if appropriate, adult students and staff) at the school, especially any actions that are appropriate to protect them;

Risk assessments will be recorded (written or electronic) and will be kept under review. At all times, the school will actively consider the risks posed to all students and put adequate measures in place to protect them and keep them safe.



The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will engage with children's social care and specialist services as required. Where there has been a report of sexual violence, it is likely that professional risk assessments by social workers and or sexual violence specialists will be required. Any such professional assessments will be used to inform the school's approach to supporting and protecting students and updating our own risk assessment.

### 12.23. Online Safety

The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues. Child Criminal Exploitation, Child Sexual Exploitation, radicalisation, sexual predation, and technology often provides the platform that facilitates harm.

We realise that it is essential for our children to be safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. We have an effective whole school approach to online safety which empowers us to protect and educate pupils, students, and staff in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms for us to identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns where appropriate. All staff are aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. Children are at risk of abuse and other risks online as well as face to face. In many cases abuse and other risks will take place concurrently both online and offline. Children can also abuse other children online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic/misandrist messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography to those who do not want to receive such content.

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:

- **Content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, and extremism.
- **Contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.
- **Conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and
- **Commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If you feel your pupils, students or staff are at risk, please report it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (<https://apwg.org/>).

We ensure that online safety is a running and interrelated theme whilst devising and implementing policies and procedures. We consider online safety in other relevant policies, when planning curriculum, teacher training, the role and responsibilities of the DSL and parental engagement. We have filters and monitoring systems in place, and these are regulated, and risk assessed as part of the prevent duty.

We have an online safety policy which identifies the usage and expected behaviour of children/students. As a school we appreciate the value of technology and that appropriate filters are in place, yet this does not lead to unreasonable restrictions which would limit online teaching and safeguarding.

Education at home/Remote learning: - Where children are being asked to learn online at home, our school will refer to and use the links and resources provided by the DfE; Safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers and Safeguarding in remote education.

Most of our students will use mobile phones and computers at some time. However, we know that some adults will use these technologies to harm children. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails, to enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, webcam photography or face-to-face meetings. The school's e-safety policy explains how we try to keep students safe in school. Cyber-bullying by students, via texts and emails, will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures.

### Our Online Safety Lead is Mrs N Byrne

Chatrooms and social networking sites are the more obvious sources of inappropriate and harmful behaviour and students are not allowed to access these sites in school. Some students will undoubtedly be 'chatting' on mobiles or social networking sites at home. The school website contains child friendly E- Safety information to help parents and students understand the possible risks and how to stay safe when on line.

Further information is contained within the e-safety policy.

### **12.24. Photography and Images**

The vast majority of people who take or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely innocent, understandable and acceptable reasons. Sadly, some people abuse children through taking or using images.

#### **To protect students we will:**

- Seek parental consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications)
- Ensure students are appropriately dressed
- Encourage students to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them
- Include safeguarding across the curriculum, including PSHE, opportunities which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm and to know to whom they should turn for help.
- Ensure all staff are aware of school guidance for their use of mobile phones.

If we become aware that a child may be accessing materials inappropriate to their age, (for example, Facebook;) sending inappropriate e-mails, texts or images; or playing on games that are unsuitable (for example, games which have an 18 certificate;) we will contact parents to discuss our concerns and to raise parents' awareness about the potential risk to their children.

The school uses securus for monitoring and filtering purposes. Whilst filtering and monitoring are an important part of the online safety picture for school, it is only one part of a whole school approach to online safety.

#### **Guidance Documents:**

- [Children's Commissioner-Online Safety](#)
- [Teaching online safety in education settings](#)
- [Appropriate Filtering and Monitoring](#)
- [CEOP-Safety Centre](#)
- [National Cyber Security Centre](#)
- [NSPCC-Undertaking remote teaching safely](#)
- [PHSE-Advice on addressing coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [360 Degree Safe - Online Safety Review Tool](#)
- [UKCCIS-UK Council for Child Internet Safety](#)

### **12.25. Bullying, including Cyberbullying**

Bullying may be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period, where it is difficult for those bullied to protect themselves. It can take many forms, but the main types are:

- Physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft)
- Verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name-calling)
- Emotional (e.g. isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of their peer group)
- Cyberbullying (including sexting)

Guidance on bullying can be [Preventing & tackling bullying](#)  
[Cyberbullying advice](#)

Each school within the collegiate has an Anti-Bullying Policy which is set out in a separate document. This policy relates to all forms of bullying including cyber, racist, homophobic and gender related bullying, as well as all forms of harmful sexual behaviour, including sexual violence and sexual harassment.

The subject of bullying is addressed at regular intervals in the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum and anti-bullying assemblies, in addition to the school/ school council working closely with the LA and PCSOs.

If the bullying is particularly serious, or the anti-bullying procedures are deemed to be ineffective, the Headteacher and the DSL will consider implementing child protection procedures.

To allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection and disciplinary procedures. All staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child on child abuse. This is most likely to include, but not limited to: bullying (including cyber bullying), gender based violence/sexual assaults and sexting. Staff should refer any incidents of child on child abuse to the DSL/Assistant DSLs. Further information is available in the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

At St Thomas More we believe that all children have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm by adults in the school and other students.

In most instances, the conduct of students towards each other will be covered by the school's Behaviour for Learning policy. Some allegations may be of such a serious nature that they may raise safeguarding concerns. These allegations are most likely to include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. It is also likely that incidents dealt with under this policy will involve older students and their behaviour towards younger students or those who are vulnerable.

We recognise that some students will sometimes negatively affect the learning and wellbeing of others and their behaviour will be dealt with under the school's Behaviour for Learning Policy.

Occasionally, allegations may be made against students by others in the school which are of a safeguarding nature. Safeguarding issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. It is likely that to be considered a safeguarding allegation against a student, some of the following features will be found.

The allegation:

- is made against an older student and refers to their behaviour towards a younger student or a more vulnerable student
- is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence
- raises risk factors for other students in the school
- indicates that other students may have been affected by this student
- indicates that young people outside the school may be affected by this student

Examples of safeguarding issues against a student could include:

Physical Abuse

- violence, particularly pre-planned
- forcing others to use drugs or alcohol

Emotional Abuse

- blackmail or extortion
- threats and intimidation

Sexual Abuse

- indecent exposure, indecent touching or serious sexual assaults
- forcing others to watch pornography or take part in sexting
- Sexual violence
- Sexual harassment
- upskirting

Sexual Exploitation

- encouraging other children to attend inappropriate parties
- photographing or videoing other children performing indecent acts

In areas where gangs are prevalent, older students may attempt to recruit younger students using any or all of the above methods. Young people suffering from sexual exploitation themselves may be forced to recruit other young people under threat of violence.

When an allegation is made by a student against another student, members of staff should consider whether the complaint raises a safeguarding concern. If there is a safeguarding concern the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) should be informed. A factual record should be made of the allegation, but no attempt at this stage should be made to investigate the circumstances. The DSL may contact social services to discuss the case. It is possible that social services are already aware of safeguarding concerns around this young person. The DSL will follow through the outcomes of the discussion and make a social services referral where appropriate. The DSL will make a record of the concern, the discussion and any outcome and keep a copy in the files of both students' files. If the allegation indicates a potential criminal offence has taken place, the police should be contacted at the earliest opportunity and parents informed (of both the student being complained about and the alleged victim). It may be appropriate to

exclude the student being complained about for a period of time according to the school's behaviour policy and procedures.

Where neither social services nor the police accept the complaint, a thorough school investigation should take place into the matter using the school's usual disciplinary procedures. In situations where the school considers a safeguarding risk is present, a risk assessment should be prepared along with a preventative, supervision plan. The plan should be monitored and a date set for a follow-up evaluation with everyone concerned.

All staff should be clear about the procedures with regard to child on child abuse, including Academy Representatives. Staff will remain vigilant at all times and report any concerns relating to child on child abuse. All concerns must be reported to the DSL or Assistant DSL. All concerns will be taken seriously and investigated.

Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh' or 'part of growing up'. It is more likely that girls will be alleged victims and boys alleged perpetrators, but all child on child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

Child on child abuse can take different forms, including:

- sexual violence and sexual harassment.
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery)
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals
- sexual harassment. Sexual harassment means the 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child on child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to:
  - violate a child's dignity,
  - and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated
  - and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names;
- sexual "jokes" or taunting;
- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature; and
- online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include:
  - non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos;
  - sexualised online bullying;
  - unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media;
  - sexual exploitation; coercion and threats; and
  - upskirting. The Voyeurism (Offences) Act, which is commonly known as the Upskirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019. 'Upskirting' is where someone takes a picture under a person's clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the alleged victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender, can be a alleged victim.

## **12.26. Domestic Abuse**

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or 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. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Financial
- Emotional

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

result. Domestic abuse affecting young people, can also occur within their personal relationships, as well as in the context of their home life. We will signpost and support our children/ young people.

### **12.27. Operation Encompass**

Operation Encompass is an information sharing partnership between Staffordshire Police and Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent educational settings (from Reception through to Higher Education) which allows schools to offer immediate support for children and young people experiencing domestic abuse. Insert school name are fully committed to this project and work closely with the Local Authority and partners. Further information can be found in Appendix 8

Guidance Documents:

- [Domestic Violence and Abuse](#)
- [Domestic Abuse-Staffsccb](#)
- [NSPCC-Domestic Abuse](#)

### **12.28. Fabricated or Induced Illness (FII)**

Fabricated or Induced Illness is a condition whereby a child suffers harm through the deliberate action of their carer, and which is attributed by the adult to another cause.

There may be several explanations for these circumstances, and each requires careful consideration and review. Concerns about a child's health should be discussed with a health professional who is involved with the child.

Guidance Documents:

- [Safeguarding children in whom illness is fabricated or induced](#)
- [Staffsccb-Fabricated or induced Illness Guidance](#)

### **12.29. Honour-based Abuse**

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving "honour" often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators.

It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors, when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA.

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

FGM comprises of all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

FGM is known by several names including "cutting", "female circumcision" or "initiation". The term female circumcision suggests that the practice is like male circumcision, but it bears no resemblance to male circumcision and it has serious health consequences with no medical benefits. FGM is also linked to domestic abuse, particularly in relation to "honour-based abuse".

FGM mandatory reporting duty for teachers Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon teachers along with regulated health and social care professionals in England and Wales, to report to the police where they discover (either via disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18.

Those failing to report such cases may face disciplinary sanctions. It is rare to see visual evidence, and children should not be examined but the same definition of what is meant by "to discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out" is used for all professionals to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies.

Staff **must** personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless there is good reason not to, they should still consider and discuss any such case with the DSL (or deputy)

and involve children's social care as appropriate. The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases (i.e. where staff do not discover that FGM appears to have been carried out, either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) or in cases where the woman is 18 or over. In these cases, staff will follow local safeguarding procedures.

Guidance Documents: -

- Multi Agency Statutory guidance on Female Genital Mutilation
- Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003

Signs that may indicate FGM is planned:

- Child talking about getting ready for a special ceremony
- Family taking a long trip abroad
- Child's family being from one of the 'at risk' communities for FGM (examples include Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Egypt, Nigeria, Eritrea as well as non-African communities including Yemeni, Afghani, Kurdistan, Indonesia and Pakistan)
- Knowledge that the child's sibling has undergone FGM
- Child talks about going abroad to be 'cut' or to prepare for marriage
- Child talks about a big celebration in this country

Signs that may indicate a child has undergone FGM:

- Prolonged absence from school and other activities
- Behaviour change on return from a holiday abroad, such as being withdrawn and appearing subdued
- Bladder or menstrual problems
- Finding it difficult to sit still and looking uncomfortable
- Complaining about pain between the legs
- Mentioning something somebody did to them that they are not allowed to talk about
- Secretive behaviour, including isolating themselves from the group
- Reluctance to take part in physical activity
- Repeated urinal tract infection
- Disclosure

See multi agency (safeguarding partner arrangements) – [www.safeguardingchildren.stoke.gov.uk](http://www.safeguardingchildren.stoke.gov.uk) – procedures

### **12.31. Forced Marriage**

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one, entered, **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 a marriage. The threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Some perpetrators use perceived culture practices, to coerce a person into marriage. Schools and colleges play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage.

There are some significant differences between the referral of a concern about a young person being forced into marriage and other child protection referrals. Professionals must be aware that sharing information with a young person's parents, extended family, or members of their community, could put the young person in a situation of significant risk.

Any disclosure that indicates a young person may be facing a forced marriage must be taken seriously by professionals who should also realise that this could be 'one chance to save a life'. A forced marriage is a marriage in which one or both spouses do not consent to the marriage but are coerced into it. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual, and emotional pressure. In cases of vulnerable adults who lack the capacity to consent to marriage, coercion is not required for a marriage to be forced.

Guidance Document:

- Forced Marriage

### **13. Safer Recruitment**

Our school has robust recruitment and vetting procedures, in line with statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 KCSIE, to help prevent unsuitable people from working with children.

Our job advertisements and application packs make explicit reference to the school's commitment to safeguarding children, including compliance with disclosure and barring regulations and clear statements in the job description and person specification about the staff member's safeguarding responsibilities.

At least one member on every short listing and interview panel will have completed safer recruitment training.

We maintain a single central record of employment checks which is accurate and up to date.

Our Safer Recruitment and selection practice includes scrutinising applicants, verifying identity (best practice being birth certificate), checking academic or vocational qualifications, obtaining professional and character references, checking previous employment history, checking online profile and digital footprint, and ensuring that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job. It also includes undertaking interviews and appropriate checks including criminal record checks (DBS checks), barred list checks, prohibition checks whether they are known to the police and/or social care, if they have been disqualified from providing childcare and any relevant overseas information. Evidence of these checks is recorded on our Single Central Record.

Staff who have lived or worked outside the UK **will** undergo the same checks as all other staff, even if they have never been to the UK. We will ensure that any other appropriate checks are carried out so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered. These checks could include criminal records checks for overseas applicants and for teaching positions obtaining a letter (via the applicant) from the professional regulating authority in the country (or countries) in which the applicant has worked confirming that they have not imposed any sanctions or restrictions, and or that they are aware of any reason why they may be unsuitable to teach.

Guidance: [Application process for criminal records checks overseas](#)

[Regulated professions database](#)

[UK Centre for Professional Qualifications](#)

Separate barred list checks are only be carried out in the following circumstances:

- for newly appointed staff who are engaging in regulated activity, pending the receipt of an Enhanced Certificate with Barred List information from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) (and where all other relevant checks as per paragraph 213 have been carried out); or,
- where an individual has worked in a post in a school or college that brought them into regular contact with children or young persons which ended not more than three months prior to that person's appointment to the organisation (and where all other relevant checks as above have been carried out).

All recruitment materials will include reference to the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of pupils.

#### **14. Induction**

All staff must be aware of systems within their school or college which support safeguarding, and these should be explained to them as part of staff induction. This should include:

- The child protection policy.
- The behaviour policy.
- Child on Child Sexual Violence & Sexual Harassment policy.
- The Staff Code of Conduct.
- The safeguarding response to children who go missing from education; and
- The role of the DSL (including the identity of the DSL and any deputies).
- At least part one of KCSIE.

If staff, supply staff, visitors, volunteers, or parent helpers are working with children alone they will, wherever possible, be visible to other members of staff. They will be expected to inform another member of staff of their whereabouts in school, who they are with and for how long. Doors, ideally, should have a clear glass panel in them and be left open. No visitors, volunteers or parent helpers are ever to be left unsupervised with children or out of sight of the teacher or member of staff in charge. It is the responsibility of the member of staff to ensure this is the case.

Guidance about acceptable conduct and safe practice will be given to all staff and volunteers during induction. These are sensible steps that every adult should take in their daily professional conduct with children. All staff and

volunteers are expected to carry out their work in accordance with this guidance and will be made aware that failure to do so could lead to disciplinary action.

### **15. Educational Visitors To School.**

We will undertake risk assessment and use professional judgement and experience when deciding whether to seek an enhanced DBS for any volunteer not engaging in regulated activity. In doing so we will consider:

- What we know about the individual/company, including formal and informal information offered by staff, parents, other establishments, or volunteers.
- Whether the individual/company has other employment or undertakes voluntary activities where references can be advised, and suitability recorded.
- Whether the role is eligible for an enhanced DBS check
- We will clearly have decided the level of supervision required through risk assessment – the supervision will be “reasonable in all the circumstances to ensure the protection of children” as stated in KCSIE

We have clear visitor’s procedure that enables us to offer pupil experiences of meeting other professionals to extend knowledge and curriculum. This clearly states whether they are supervised or unsupervised within the school.

**Visitor Leaflet and Checklist For External Speaker leaflet are contained within Appendix 4 and Appendix 5**

### **16. Extended School and Offsite Arrangements**

Where extended school activities are provided by and managed by the school, our own Safeguarding Policy and procedures apply. If other organisations provide services or activities on our site, we will check that they have appropriate procedures in place, including safer recruitment procedures.

### **17. Site Security**

We provide a secure site which is controlled by precise management directives, but the site is only as secure as the people who use it. All people on the site must adhere to the rules which govern it. Laxity can cause potential problems with safeguarding, therefore: -

- Gates are kept closed during the school day; visitors gain access through the main entrance.
- Visitors, volunteers, and students must only enter through the main entrance and after signing in at the office will be issued with a school lanyard or visitor’s pass. School has a clear system of ensuring staff are accompanied / supervised by regulated staff member. Any visitor on site who is not identifiable by a visitor’s pass will be challenged by any staff member and this will be reported to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Parents, carers, and grandparents attending functions have access only through the designated and supervised entrances, with tickets for visitors for appropriate school events.
- Children will only be allowed home with adults with parental responsibility or confirmed permission.
- Empty classrooms should have closed windows and doors.
- Children should never be allowed to leave school alone during school hours unless collected by an adult such as a parent who is doing so for a valid reason. They should report to the office to do this.
- Two members of staff are always on duty at break times.
- A health and safety audit is completed annually with risk assessment/safety planning and will form part of Governors annual report. This will include a fire evacuation and evacuation Prevent risk assessment.
- The risk management of site security is managed by senior leadership/governance, we have a clear system of risk assessments and review timescales of these.
- Any sightings of drones must be reported to the police, either directly or via the DSL.

### **18. Managing Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers**

Our school takes seriously all allegations of abuse made against staff members, including supply staff and volunteers, and will investigate them in line with the statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education and multi-agency (safeguarding partner arrangements) procedure – Managing Allegations against Staff and Volunteers working with Children and Young People. This includes considering whether there are any lessons that can be learned.

The procedure applies to all adults working in the school or providing a service in or on behalf of the school to our students, either within or outside school premises, including staff supply staff and volunteers who are currently working in school



regardless of whether the school is where the alleged abuse took place. The allegations management procedure will be used in all cases where it is alleged that a staff member has:-

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child; or
  - Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
  - Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates that they would pose a risk of harm to children; or
  - Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates that they may not be suitable to work with children.
- 
- **Physical**  
For example, the intentional use of force as a punishment, slapping, use of objects to hit with, throwing objects, or rough physical handling.
  - **Emotional**  
For example, intimidation, belittling, scapegoating, sarcasm, lack of respect for children's rights, and attitudes that discriminate on the grounds of race, gender, disability, or sexuality.
  - **Sexual**  
For example, sexualised behaviour towards pupils, sexual harassment, inappropriate phone calls and texts, images via social media, sexual assault, and rape.
  - **Neglect**  
For example, failing to act to protect a child or children, failing to seek medical attention or failure to carry out an appropriate risk assessment.
  - **Spiritual Abuse**  
For example, using undue influence or pressure to control individuals or ensure obedience, follow religious practices that are harmful such as beatings or starvation.

Allegations may arise in a number of ways, for example a report from a child, a complaint from a parent, or a concern raised by another adult within the school. An allegation may arise regarding someone's behaviour or actions within their job, within a voluntary activity, within their family or with regards to their private life. If an allegation or concern arises about a staff member outside of their work with children, and this may present a risk to children for whom the staff member is responsible, the principles within this policy still apply. Therefore, all school staff should take care not to place themselves in vulnerable situations with a child.

- All Staff should be aware of the school's own Behaviour for Learning policy.
- All staff must adhere to the staff Code of Conduct.
- Guidance about conduct and safe practice, including safe use of mobile phones by staff and volunteers will be given at induction
- Anyone who has concerns about, or has received an allegation about, the behaviour of a staff member must report the concerns immediately to the Headteacher.
- In the absence of the Headteacher, or if the Headteacher is the subject of the allegation, concerns must be reported to the Chair of the Academy Trust. If both the Headteacher and the Chair of the Academy Trust are unavailable, or if there is a conflict of interest in reporting the matter to the Headteacher, the allegation must be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- The Headteacher (or Chair, if as above;) will discuss the content of the allegation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), if deemed to meet threshold
- If neither the Headteacher nor Chair of Governing Body is contactable on that day, the information must be passed to and dealt with by either the member of staff acting as Headteacher or the Vice Chair of Governors.
- Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer, or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels are open to them:
  - general guidance on whistleblowing can be found via: [Advice on Whistleblowing](#)
  - the [NSPCC's What You Can Do To Report Abuse Dedicated Helpline](#) is available as an alternative route for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally, or have concerns about the way a concern is being
- The person against whom the allegation has been made will be told at the earliest opportunity, following consultation with the LADO.
- Suspension of a member of staff is not automatic, and will only be considered as a last resort. The Headteacher will seek the advice of the LADO and Personnel Consultant in making this decision.

- The school will follow the guidance, as stated in 'Working Together To Safeguard Children (2018)':
  - *"Employers have a duty of care to their employees. They should ensure they provide effective support for anyone facing an allegation and provide the employee with a named contact if they are suspended. It is essential that any allegation of abuse made against a teacher or other member of staff or volunteer in a school or college is dealt with very quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective protection for the child and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation."*
  - *"Employers have a duty of care to their employees. They should act to manage and minimise the stress inherent in the allegations process. Support for the individual is vital to fulfilling this duty. Individuals should be informed of concerns or allegations as soon as possible and given an explanation of the likely course of action, unless there is an objection by the children's social care services or the police. The individual should be advised to contact their trade union representative, if they have one, or a colleague for support. They should also be given access to welfare counselling or medical advice where this is provided by the employer."*
- A nominated link person will liaise with the person against whom the allegation has been made, and appropriate support be made available.
- In the event of an allegation against the Headteacher, the decision to suspend will be made by the Board of Directors and Chair of the Academy Committee with advice from the LADO.
- The LADO will coordinate and have over-sight of individual cases to ensure that cases are dealt with in a thorough, fair, consistent and timely manner.
- In the event that a member of staff is dismissed because of the way they have behaved towards a child, a referral will be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- All referrals to LADO go through the Safeguarding Referral Team (SRT) on 235100  
[http://webapps.stoke.gov.uk/uploadedfiles/D01\\_LADO\\_Procedure\\_June\\_2016.pdf](http://webapps.stoke.gov.uk/uploadedfiles/D01_LADO_Procedure_June_2016.pdf)
  - Any concerns or allegations which do not meet threshold (low-level concerns) will be managed and recorded in line with the school's safeguarding Policy, and will appropriate action taken to safeguard children.

Our aim is to provide a safe and supportive environment securing wellbeing and best possible outcomes for the children at our school . We do recognise that sometimes the behaviour of adults may lead to an allegation of abuse being made.

The Governing Body ensures that there are procedures in place for dealing with the two sections covering two levels (see below) of concern and/or allegations against staff members, supply staff, volunteers, and contractors.

- Allegations that may meet the harms threshold.
- Allegation/concerns that do not meet the harms threshold – referred to for the purposes of this guidance as 'low level concerns'.

### **18.1 Allegation/concerns that do not meet the harms threshold – referred to for the purposes of this guidance as 'low level concerns'.**

We are aware that concerns may arise in several ways and from several sources, for example: suspicion; complaint; or disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside of our setting; or as a result of vetting checks undertaken.

We have the appropriate policies and processes in place to manage and record any such concerns and take appropriate action to safeguard children. As part of our whole school approach to safeguarding, we promote an open and transparent culture in which **all** concerns about **all** adults working in or on behalf of our setting (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately.

We have created a culture in which all concerns about adults (including allegations that do not meet the harms threshold) are shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately, and this is critical. We encourage an open and transparent culture; enabling us to identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour early; minimise the risk of abuse; and ensure that adults working in or on behalf of our school are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, and in accordance with the ethos and values of the institution.

Low level does not mean that it is insignificant, it means that the behaviour towards a child does not meet the harms threshold. Low level concern is still a concern, no matter how small, and even if no more than causing a sense of

unease or a 'nagging doubt' - that an adult working in or on behalf of the school or college may have acted in a way that

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work.
- and does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO.

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

- being over friendly with children.
- having favourites.
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone.
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,
- using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating, or offensive language.

We understand how crucial it is that any such concerns, including those which do not meet the harm threshold, are shared responsibly and with the right person, and recorded and dealt with appropriately. Ensuring they are dealt with effectively will also protect those working in or on behalf of our setting from potential false allegations or misunderstandings.

Any member of staff or volunteer who does not feel confident to raise their concerns with the Head teacher or Chair of Academy Representatives should contact **the LADO directly on 01782 235100**. General guidance on [whistle blowing](#) can be found at this link.

The NSPCC [whistleblowing helpline](#) is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call 0800 028 0285 and the line is available from 8:00am to 8:00pm, Monday to Friday and Email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

The school has a legal duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, or if there is reason to believe the member of staff has committed one of a number of listed offences, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left. The DBS will consider whether to bar the person. If these circumstances arise in relation to a member of staff at our school, a referral will be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the individual in accordance with advice from the LADO and/or HR. The DSL has a responsibility to inform Barring service.

### **18.2 Allegations that may meet the harms threshold**

We follow KCSIE guidance where it is alleged that anyone working in our education setting providing education for children under 18 years of age, including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors has:

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

This relates to members of staff, supply staff, volunteers, and contractors, who are currently working in any education setting, regardless of whether the school or college is where the alleged abuse took place. Allegations against a teacher who is no longer teaching and/or historical allegations of abuse will be referred to the police.

Where we are not the employer of an individual, we still have responsibility to ensure allegations are dealt with appropriately and that they liaise with relevant parties. In no circumstances will we decide to cease to use a supply teacher due to safeguarding concerns, without finding out the facts and liaising with the LADO to determine a suitable outcome. Our Governing body/proprietor will discuss with the agency whether it is appropriate to suspend the supply teacher, or redeploy them to another part of the school, whilst they carry out their investigation.

We take all possible steps to safeguard our children and to ensure that the adults in our school are safe to work with children.

### **18.3 Role of the Stoke on Trent LADO**

The Stoke on Trent City Council LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) promotes a safer children's workforce by providing effective guidance, advice, and investigation oversight to cases. They may be able to offer advice and assist with communication in situations which sit outside the statutory criteria, albeit at the discretion of the LADO Duty Officer and where the broader goals of a safer children's workforce are relevant.

The service will give advice on how concerns or allegations should be investigated, including if a referral needs to be raised with the Police and/or Children's Social Care. Stoke on Trent LADO is not directly responsible for investigatory activities but will actively support any investigation and give advice around a range of parameters including suspension, possible media interest, when to tell the adult, and ensure all interested parties are appropriately linked together. They will retain oversight of individual cases to ensure concerns or allegations are investigated thoroughly in a fair and timely manner, and will advise in relation to any subsequent duties to communicate with regulatory bodies and/or the DBS.

#### **18.4 Disqualification Regulations**

The Department for Education (DfE) issued updated statutory guidance in 2018 (The 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations).

In summary the revised documents contains the following changes:

- The 2018 regulations now remove the requirement for schools to establish whether a member of staff who is providing or employed to work in childcare is disqualified by association as this aspect of the regulations will only apply where childcare is provided in domestic settings e.g. a childminder.
- A revised list of applicable offences and orders have been produced (found in Schedules 1,2 and 3 of the regulations)
- The guidance also provides specific advice in paragraphs 25 – 37 regarding the implications of this guidance in relation to GDPR and the Rehabilitation of Offenders act 1974(Exceptions order 1975 (as amended in 2013).

Please find below the relevant links for both the full regulations and associated guidance notes for your reference:

The Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 are published here: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2018/794/contents/made>.

Under the 2018 regulations, schools are no longer required to establish whether a member of staff providing, or employed to work in childcare, is disqualified by association. Regulation 9 does not apply to staff in a relevant school setting. Disqualification by association is only relevant where childcare is provided in domestic settings (for example where childminding is provided in the home) or under registration on domestic premises, including where an assistant works on non-domestic premises up to 50% of the time under a domestic registration. Accordingly, schools are not entitled to ask their staff questions about cautions or convictions of someone living or working in their household. Schools should review their staffing policies and safer recruitment procedures, and make changes accordingly.

#### **What this means for individuals, schools and employers**

St Thomas More will ensure that we are not knowingly employing a person who is disqualified under the 2018 regulations in connection with relevant childcare provision. We will also ensure that we do not apply these arrangements to individuals who do not fall in scope or are specifically excluded (as per the staff who may be covered and staff not covered sections of the government guidance). In gathering information to make these decisions we will ensure that we act proportionately and minimise wherever possible the intrusion into the private lives of staff.

We will ensure that we handle personal information fairly and lawfully and take care not to breach:

- Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA)
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (EU) 2016/679
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended in 2013) ('the Exceptions Order')
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (ROA)
- Human Rights Act 1998

Further information can be found at:-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006#staff-covered>

#### **19. Managing Complaints**

As a school we encourage children and families to raise compliments, concerns or comments and have a robust internal investigation process.

The Complaints Policy states clearly the stages of complaints and where to escalate concerns following completion of process either through Ofsted or EFSA. Our complaints policy is on our school website for parents/carers to access.

**Safeguarding concerns should be raised with school immediately.** If a concern means a child is **at immediate risk, the individual needs to contact Stoke on Trent Childrens Advice and Duty(Chad) service on 01782 235100.** All visitors are given safeguarding information **at the point of entrance to the school by the visitor reception** which outlines how to share concerns and code of conduct expected by visitors/contractors.

## Appendix 1 – Designated Safeguarding Lead Responsibilities

The DSL/DDSL will undergo the appropriate safeguarding training to provide them with the knowledge and skills to carry out their role. This training should be updated at least every 2 years, in line with the Stoke on Trent Safeguarding Children Partnership requirements.

In addition to the formal training, their knowledge and skills are refreshed at regular intervals, at least annually, through the termly DSL briefings, meeting other DSLs, emails and reading statutory guidance. The training provides DSL/DDSLs with a good understanding of their own role, the processes, procedures, and responsibilities of other agencies, particularly children's social care.

The DSL continually develops an understanding of the community the school serves, the risks and resilience.

### **The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and/or deputies) are responsible for:-**

- Ensuring that children receive the right help and support at the right time. Where concerns do not meet the threshold for social care intervention, Early Help will be offered in an attempt to prevent concerns from escalating.
- Acting as the first point of contact, support, advice and expertise for staff to discuss concerns.
- Acting as a point of contact with the safeguarding partners
- Being the expert within our setting to support staff in liaising with other agencies, making assessments and referrals. Any staff member may be required to be part of strategy discussions with other interagency meetings and contribute to the assessment of child/ren
- Keeping written records of concerns about a child even if there is no need to make an immediate referral
- Liaising with the headteacher or principal to inform him or her of issues- especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations
- Liaising with, as required, the "case manager" (as per Part four) and the local authority designated officer(s) (LADO) for child protection concerns in cases which concern a staff member
- Liaising with staff (especially teachers, pastoral support staff, school nurses, IT technicians, senior mental health leads and special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs), or the named person with oversight for SEND in a college and senior mental health leads) on matters of safety and safeguarding and welfare (including online and digital safety) and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies so that children's needs are considered holistically
- Ensuring that all such records are kept confidentially and securely and are separate from student records, until the child's 25th birthday, and are copied on to the child's next school or college.
- Liaising with the three safeguarding partners and work with other agencies in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.
- Referring cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required.
- Referring cases where a crime may have been committed to the police as required
- Referring a child, if there are concerns about possible abuse or neglect, to the Local Authority
- Where a parent chooses to remove their child/ren from school to receive EHE (Elective Home Education), will make arrangements to pass any safeguarding concerns and the safeguarding file if there is one, to the EHE Team within The Stoke on Trent City Council and inform other professionals who may be involved with that child. EHE email; [electivehomeeducation@stoke.gov.uk](mailto:electivehomeeducation@stoke.gov.uk) or to refer to the EWO's after they have been missing for over 5 days but not yet the 20.
- Ensuring that either they or an appropriate staff member attend child protection conferences, core groups, early help meetings, or other multi-agency planning meetings, contribute to assessments, and provide a report which has been shared with the parents.
- Ensuring that any child currently with a child protection plan who is absent in the educational setting without explanation for two days is referred to their social worker's Social Care Team.
- Organising child protection induction for new staff and volunteers, and update training every 3 years, for all school staff.

- Maintaining robust systems to monitor and record training of all staff, volunteers, supply annually, and refresher time scales are evident. Training is delivered in-line with Stoke on Trent's Safeguarding Children Partnership training strategy and KCSIE recommendations. This will include bulletins, briefings, and inset day training as well as external events attended. Regular updates will be shared with staff and a system to record these communications is in place.
- Ensuring that all staff and regular visitors have training on how to recognise indicators of concern, how to respond to a disclosure from a child and how to record and report this information accurately. Staff/volunteers do not make promises to any child and will not keep secrets. Every child will be made aware of what the adult will have to do with any information they have chosen to disclose to a staff member/volunteer.
- Providing, with the Headteacher, an annual report for the governing body, detailing any changes to the policy and procedures; training undertaken by the DSL, and by all staff and governors; number and type of incidents/cases, and number of children on the child protection register (anonymised)
- Ensures that all staff sign to indicate that they have read and understood the Safeguarding Policy and the Staff Code of Conduct
- Ensures that the Safeguarding Policy is updated annually
- Liaise with the nominated academy representative and Headteacher (where the role is not carried out by the Headteacher) as appropriate
- Promoting supportive engagement with parents and/or carers in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including where families may be facing challenging circumstances
- Ensuring that during term time, the DSL or DDSL is available (during school hours) for staff in the school to discuss any safeguarding concerns. As a school we have cover arrangements in place to cover any out of hours/out of term activities. This information is shared with the Local Authority.
- Working with the headteacher and relevant strategic leads, taking lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing, or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on children's attendance, engagement and achievement at school or college . This includes:
  - o ensuring that the school or college knows who its cohort of children who have or have had a social worker are, understanding their academic progress and attainment, and maintaining a culture of high aspirations for this cohort, and
  - o supporting teaching staff to provide additional academic support or reasonable adjustments to help children who have or have had a social worker reach their potential, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there is still a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes.

The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. This training should be updated at least every two years. The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should undertake Prevent awareness training. Training should provide designated safeguarding leads with a good understanding of their own role, how to identify, understand and respond to specific needs that can increase the vulnerability of children, as well as specific harms that can put children at risk, and the processes, procedures and responsibilities of other agencies, particularly local authority children's social care, so they:

- understand the assessment process for providing early help and statutory intervention, including local criteria for action and local authority children's social care referral arrangements
- have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so
- understand the importance of the role the designated safeguarding lead has in providing information and support to local authority children social care in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- understand the lasting impact that adversity and trauma can have, including on children's behaviour, mental health and wellbeing, and what is needed in responding to this in promoting educational outcomes
- are alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), those with relevant health conditions and young carers
- understand the importance of information sharing, both within the school and college, and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners
- understand and support the school or college with regards to the requirements of the Prevent duty and are able to provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation
- are able to understand the unique risks associated with online safety and be confident that they have the relevant knowledge and up to date capability required to keep children safe whilst they are online at school or college

- can recognise the additional risks that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) face online, for example, from online bullying, grooming and radicalisation and are confident they have the capability to support children with SEND to stay safe online
- obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses, and
- encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measures the school or college may put in place to protect them. In addition to the formal training set out above, their knowledge and skills should be refreshed (this might be via e-bulletins, meeting other designated safeguarding leads, or simply taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments) at regular intervals, as required, and at least annually, to allow them to understand and keep up with any developments relevant to their role.

Training should support the designated safeguarding lead in developing expertise, so they can support and advise staff and help them feel confident on welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters. This includes specifically to:

- ensure that staff are supported during the referrals processes, and
- support staff to consider how safeguarding, welfare and educational outcomes are linked, including to inform the provision of academic and pastoral support

It is important that children feel heard and understood. Therefore, designated safeguarding leads (and deputies) should be supported in developing knowledge and skills to:

- encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, and in any measures the school or college may put in place to protect them, and,
- understand the difficulties that children may have in approaching staff about their circumstances and consider how to build trusted relationships which facilitate communication.



The Directors, Academy Representatives and Headteacher are accountable for ensuring the effectiveness of this policy and compliance.

### The Directors and Academy Representatives ensure that the school has:

- A DSL for safeguarding and child protection who is a member of the senior leadership team and who has undertaken training in inter-agency working, in addition to basic child protection training, regularly.
- Ensured that the DSL has the time and resources required to fulfil the duty. The Headteacher, Directors and Academy Representatives have ensured that the DSL understands their responsibility in leading safeguarding and child protection across the school. This individual has the appropriate status, authority, funding, resources, training, and support to provide advice and guidance to all staff members within the school on child welfare and child protection. The DSL/Deputy DSL receives appropriate and regular supervision from senior leadership team or external services.
- Identified DDSLs who are trained to the same safeguarding standard as the DSL. The DSL can delegate activities to DDSLs, however the ultimate responsibility remains with the DSL.
- shared the content of “Keeping Children Safe in Education” with Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead and are confident the individuals have the knowledge, understanding to carry out their roles appropriately. The DSL training is compliant with the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board requirement.
- Facilitated a whole setting approach to safeguarding. This means ensuring safeguarding and child protection are at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development. Ultimately, all systems, processes, policies and practice, should operate with the **best interests of the child** at their heart.
- Ensured that the child’s wishes and feelings are considered when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Systems are in place and are well promoted, explained properly and easily accessible for children to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously, and knowing they can safely express their views and give feedback.
- Ensured that the school is **compliant with their 175/157** audit return to the Local Authority/Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Safeguarding Children Board. Any areas of concern in safeguarding are identified and a safeguarding action plan is developed. The Governing Body ensures the school contributes to inter-agency working in-line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018).
- Procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against members of staff including allegations made against the Headteacher, in line with multi agency (safeguarding partner arrangements) procedure – Managing Allegations Against Adults Working with Children and Young People.
- Safer recruitment procedures, that include the requirement for appropriate checks in line with national guidance, are followed
- A training strategy that ensures all staff, including the Headteacher, receive child protection and safeguarding training, with refresher training at three-yearly intervals. The DSL should receive safeguarding training at two-yearly intervals
- Arrangements to ensure that all temporary staff, Academy Representatives volunteers are made aware of the school’s arrangements for child protection and safeguarding.
- overview of training schedule and future training requirements. All staff, volunteers and Academy Representatives have received an induction which includes regular updated safeguarding training compliant with SOTCSP including online safety.
- The Academy Representatives nominate a member (normally the chair) to be responsible for liaising with the local authority and other agencies in the event of an allegation being made against the Headteacher
- Appropriate policies and procedures are in place for appropriate action to be taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children’s welfare. These policies are updated at least annually with timely updates, if required sooner. These policies include: -
  - This Safeguarding Policy and our whole setting culture and approach to all forms of safeguarding referencing SOTSCP safeguarding arrangements by safeguarding partners, as well as other policies such as child on child abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment, online safety and special

educational needs and disabilities (SEND). We ensure that we keep up to date with safeguarding issues as they emerge and evolve, including lessons learnt.

- a restorative Behaviour Policy including measures to prevent bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- a staff code of conduct which includes acceptable use of technologies (including the use of mobile devices), staff/student relationships and communications including the use of social media.
- a Whistleblowing Policy and staff have received a copy and had the opportunity to raise concerns. There is a culture in our setting where staff can raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and such concerns are addressed professionally and sensitively in accordance with agreed whistle blowing procedures. The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call on 0800 028 0285 and the line is available from 8am to 8pm, Monday to Friday. Email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)
- appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place to respond to children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions

All new members of staff, including newly-qualified teachers and teaching assistants, will be given induction that includes basic child protection training on how to recognise signs of abuse, how to respond to any concerns, e-safety and familiarisation with the child protection policy and other related policies, including the school's Behaviour for Learning policy and the Staff Code of Conduct.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputies will undergo updated multi agency (safeguarding partner arrangements) approved child protection training every two years.

All staff members of the school and appropriate academy representatives will undergo multi agency (safeguarding partner arrangements) approved child protection training (whole-school training) every three years.

Staff members who miss the whole-school training will be required to undertake other relevant training to make up for it, e.g. by joining another school's whole-school training or a multi agency (safeguarding partner arrangements) open session.

We will ensure that staff members provided by other agencies and third parties, e.g. supply teachers, have received appropriate child protection training commensurate with their roles before starting work. They will be given the opportunity to take part in whole-school training if it takes place during their period of work for the school. They will also receive the school's Visiting Staff Leaflet (appendix 4)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will provide an annual briefing to the school on any changes to child protection legislation and procedures and relevant learning from local and national serious case reviews.

The school will maintain accurate records of staff induction and training.

It is important that all staff have training to enable them to:-

- identify when "Early Help" is an appropriate intervention
- recognise the possible signs of abuse and neglect
- know how to deal with a disclosure
- understand how to exercise professional curiosity
- know what to do if they have a concern
- know how to make a referral

### Visiting staff child protection information leaflet

WELCOME TO: St Thomas More Catholic Academy

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#### School Statement

We all have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and at our school we take this responsibility seriously. We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all students. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children received effective support, protection and justice. While working in our school we expect you to take care of our students and follow our procedures.

#### Key facts about child abuse

Abuse and neglect can happen to any child, boy or girl, of any race, culture, ethnicity or sexuality. Disabled children and children with SEN are particularly vulnerable.

Many children are unable to disclose what is happening to them and rely on us to interpret their behaviour and spot signs of abuse.

A student may:

- Have a bruise, burn or injury that seems suspicious
- Show signs of pain or discomfort
- Be unnaturally passive or withdrawn
- Be unpredictable and challenging
- Seem anxious, fearful or distressed
- Provide an unlikely explanation for their injury or their behaviour

Do not think that your worry is insignificant if it is about hygiene, appearance, or behaviour – we would rather you told us as we would rather know about something that appears small than miss a worrying situation.

Any allegation concerning a member of staff, a child's foster carer or a volunteer should be reported immediately to the Head teacher. If an allegation is made about the Head teacher, you should pass this information to the Chair of the Governing Body. Alternatively, you can contact the Local Authority Designated Officer on 01782 235100.

The people you should talk to in school are:

#### Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mrs Jamie Stubbs

Location of office: Central corridor, near to Student Reception

Contact Number: 01782 882913

#### Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads: Mrs Alison Staton / Mrs Kellie Williams

Location of office: Central corridor, near to Student Reception

Contact Number: 01782 882912 / 01782 882959

#### Chair of Governing Body: Mr Rob Ffello

Contact Number: 01782 882900

**If you are concerned for a child's health, welfare or safety in any way you must speak to the designated safeguarding lead, (DSL) Mrs Stubbs or (Deputy DSLs) Mrs Staton and Mrs Williams. If you are unable to locate them, ask a member of the school office staff to find them and to ask them to speak with you immediately about a confidential and urgent matter. Any safeguarding concerns must be reported in person before you leave the school site.**

Do not question the student or try to secure evidence. Your responsibility is to report your concern, not to investigate.

If a student tells you something that suggests they are at risk or harm, allow them to tell you as much as they wish and let them know that you must pass the information on to the DSL/DCPO.

If you become concerned about a student's immediate safety, notify the nearest member of staff and tell them why you are concerned.

If you have any questions or wish to see our Safeguarding Policy, please contact the DSL, Mrs Stubbs or Deputy DSLs Mrs Staton and Mrs Williams.

**Any adult concerned about an allegation of abuse by a member of staff should speak to the Headteacher.**

### **Managing Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers**

This guidance applies to when there is an allegation or concern that any person who works with children, in connection with their employment, voluntary or personal activity, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child;
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with children.
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

**Please refer to "Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Board: PROCEDURES FOR CHILDREN IN SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES MANAGING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS WORKING WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (LADO)".**

[http://webapps.stoke.gov.uk/uploadedfiles/D01\\_LADO\\_Procedure\\_June\\_2016.pdf](http://webapps.stoke.gov.uk/uploadedfiles/D01_LADO_Procedure_June_2016.pdf)

**The Designated Safeguarding Lead for Child Protection is Mrs J Stubbs**

**The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads for Child Protection are Mrs Staton and Mrs Williams**

### **Safeguarding environments**

All organisations should be proactive in reducing the risk of child abuse taking place within their services by promoting an environment that safeguards children. A safeguarding environment is one where:

- Children and staff can express their concerns; where staff/volunteers are encouraged to challenge poor practice constructively; and where 'whistle blowing' procedures can be engaged without fear.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures are accessible to all and there is access to skilled advice, both internal and external to the organisation.
- Large organisations may have access or input from human resources professionals to assist in developing their internal procedures, policies and practices relating to safeguarding children and young people. This human resources professional can also be used to advise the named senior officer when an allegation is made against an adult.
- There are safe recruitment and effective termination of employment practices.
- All staff/volunteers receive appropriate training in child protection - signs, symptoms and referral procedures, which includes how to recognise and respond to allegations against staff.
- Staff/volunteers understand what constitutes safe practice. (This can be supported by a code of practice to guide the work that is relevant to the particular agency/organisation, see Guidance on Safer Working Practices.) In particular, they are aware of behaviours that are likely to result in criminal, child protection or disciplinary action.
- Concerns expressed by staff/volunteers are taken seriously and responded to at the earliest stage.
- Risk assessments following allegations are undertaken to reduce the likelihood of repetition.

**Staff should also ensure that they avoid any situation which could leave them exposed to a false allegation made by a student or young person.**



## CHECKLIST FOR EXTERNAL SPEAKERS / ORGANISATIONS INVITED TO SCHOOLS

In this checklist '**School(s)**' means all Catholic school(s). For the avoidance of doubt this includes:

- Catholic voluntary aided schools;
- Catholic independent schools (including Catholic academies);
- Catholic sixth form colleges; and
- Catholic non-maintained special schools.<sup>1</sup>

As an integral part of its educational vision for the holistic formation of children and young people, the Catholic Church expects Catholic schools to promote and uphold high standards throughout their activities and this includes visits from external speakers.

All external speakers invited to schools should be of the highest quality and school leaders are responsible for ensuring that they have enough information about the content to be delivered by any external speaker to enable them to determine whether the content will be pitched at the right level for the age and level of maturity of the children and young people to whom the external speakers will present. All schools should have clear policies for the booking of external speakers which includes sign-off of the booking at an appropriately senior level and compliance with safeguarding checks.

Schools should also be mindful of the DfE guidance on "political impartiality in schools" which can be found by following this link:

[Political impartiality in schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/political-impartiality-in-schools)

This checklist should be completed *prior* to welcoming (and establishing collaborative relationships with) external speakers (and any organisation they represent) to ensure that the Catholic character of your school is preserved and developed in the external speaker's communications with pupils and parents and carers.

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<sup>1</sup> For the avoidance of doubt, the CES advises that the DfE guidance and this checklist should be followed by all of the specified educational settings listed above. This is the case, even where the DfE guidance does not apply to the setting type.

<b>Name of Speaker</b>		
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Actions needed/Comment</b>
<p>Will the Speaker be supervised at all times during their visit?</p> <p>If not, why not?</p>	<p>YES <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>NO <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>FURTHER COMMENT <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>Have you carried out safeguarding checks (if appropriate) for the Speaker and have these been recorded in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures?</p>	<p>YES <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>NO <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>FURTHER COMMENT <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>Has the Speaker understood and confirmed that their communications in the school will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be respectful towards Catholic teachings</li> <li>• Not be prejudicial or detrimental to the Catholic character of the school</li> <li>• Not engage pupils in political activity and</li> <li>• Not cover certain partisan political views which are not deemed relevant or appropriate (provide details if applicable)</li> <li>• Be delivered in accordance with the requirements set out</li> </ul>	<p>YES <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>NO <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>FURTHER COMMENT <input type="checkbox"/></p>	

<p>in the DfE's guidance on political impartiality in schools (if appropriate)</p>		
<p>Have you reviewed the resources/materials that will be used by the Speaker?</p>	<p>YES <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>NO <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>FURTHER COMMENT <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>Have you reviewed other resources produced by the Speaker (and by any organisation the speaker represents) even if they will not form part of the speaker's activities at the school?</p>	<p>YES <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>NO <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>FURTHER COMMENT <input type="checkbox"/></p>	



<p>Have you conducted a general internet search using the Speaker's name (e.g. a google search)? If parents or children and young people conducted a similar search are any concerns likely to arise?</p>	<p>YES <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>NO <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>FURTHER</p> <p>COMMENT <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>Can you confirm that the political views espoused by the speaker/speaker's organisation are in compliance with British values and do not involve taking an extreme political position?</p>	<p>YES <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>NO <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>FURTHER</p> <p>COMMENT <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>Have school policies and procedures applicable to the speaker been explained to and understood by the Speaker?</p>	<p>YES <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>NO <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>FURTHER</p> <p>COMMENT <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>Are there any other outstanding issues or concerns with the Speaker and/or their suitability?</p>	<p>YES <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>NO <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>FURTHER</p> <p>COMMENT <input type="checkbox"/></p>	

Will the Speaker deliver content of a high quality that is appropriate to the age and maturity of the children or young people in the audience?	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	FURTHER COMMENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	

**If you have any concerns regarding the suitability of this Speaker, you should contact your Diocese to seek further clarification.**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Dated \_\_\_\_\_

Approved for booking

Senior Staff member Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Dated \_\_\_\_\_

The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

1. Remember that the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Data Protection Act 2018 and human rights law are not barriers to justified information sharing, but provide a framework to ensure that personal information about living individuals is shared appropriately.
2. Be open and honest with the individual (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
3. Seek advice from other practitioners, or your information governance lead, if you are in any doubt about sharing the information concerned, without disclosing the identity of the individual where possible.
4. Where possible, share information with consent, and where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to having their information shared. Under the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 you may share information without consent if, in your judgement, there is a lawful basis to do so, such as where safety may be at risk. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case. When you are sharing or requesting personal information from someone, be clear of the basis upon which you are doing so. Where you do not have consent, be mindful that an individual might not expect information to be shared.
5. Consider safety and well-being: base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the individual and others who may be affected by their actions.
6. Necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure: ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those individuals who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely (see principles).
7. Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

## Appendix 7. Additional Advice and Support

- Stoke-on-Trent Children's Services: Chat and Advice Service (CHAD) 01782 235100, between the hours of 8am & 6pm, Monday- Friday.  
**Select Option 1** if known to have a Social Worker  
**Select Option 2** for any new queries for children not already open to social care
- Stoke on Trent Emergency Duty Team: 01782 234234 (outside office hours, weekends, and bank holidays)  
Minicom: 01782 236037
- Staffordshire County Council's Education Safeguarding Advice Service  
01785 895836 e-mail: [esas@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:esas@staffordshire.gov.uk)
- LADO Stoke on Trent 01782 235100/01782?
- Staffordshire Children's Social Care Services: Staffordshire Childrens Advice and Support team within the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (M.A.S.H.) 0800 1313 126 or using the online referral [Report a concern online](#)
- Staffordshire Emergency Duty Services (out of hours safeguarding concerns) 0345 604 2886 or email [eds.team.manager@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:eds.team.manager@staffordshire.gov.uk)
- Stoke on Trent & Staffordshire Police M.A.S.H. can be contacted on 101. In the event of an emergency please dial 999
- Staffordshire Police coordinator: Mark Hardern Tel: 07539 3636299 Email: [mark.hardern@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:mark.hardern@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk)
- Stoke on Trent PREVENT Education officer – Sarah Dyer – 01782 233239/07900135606
- Staffordshire Police Prevent Team 01785 232054, 01785 233109 or email [prevent@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:prevent@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk)

### NSPCC

- Harmful Sexual Behaviour project: **0844 892 0273**
- [Keeping children safe online-online safety/sexting/sending nudes](#)

### Local

- Stoke on Trent Safeguarding Children Partnership
- Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board [StaffsSCB](#)
- Fostering Service (Stoke-on-Trent) 01782 234555 Email: [fostering@stoke.gov.uk](mailto:fostering@stoke.gov.uk)

### National Contacts

- Police (Non-emergency 101)
- CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection) [CEOP Safety Centre](#)
- Professionals Online Safety Helpline – 0844 381 4772 [Safer Internet Helpline](#)
- Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) – [Internet Watch Foundation](#)
- Safer Internet Centre – [helpline@saferinternet.org.uk](mailto:helpline@saferinternet.org.uk)
- Childline – 0800 1111 [Childline](#)
- Ofsted – General enquiries: 0300 123 1231  
About Schools: 0300 123 4234  
Concerns: 0300 123 4666  
e-mail: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)
- HM Government (advice on protecting children from radicalisation for parents, teachers and leaders)  
[www.educateagainsthate.com](http://www.educateagainsthate.com)
- **NSPCC Harmful Sexual Behaviour project: 0844 892 0273**

### Useful websites

- SOT Safeguarding Children Partnership
- Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board [StaffsSCB](#)
- Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) – [Ceop-Police](#) & [knowaboutcse](#)
- NSPCC – 24-hour Child Protection Helpline 0808 800 5000

#### NSPCC

- WOMENS AID - 24 Hour Helpline: **0870 2700 123**
- UNICEF – Support Care Team 0300 330 5580 (Mon – Fri 8am-6pm). If you think a child is in immediate danger, please call 999. [Unicef](#)

#### **Legislation**

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- [Working Together To Safeguard Children 2023](#) (DfE)
- [Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board Procedures](#)
- [Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board-Learning Zone](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education 2023](#) ([publishing.service.gov.uk](#))
- [Disqualification under the Child Care Act 2006](#)
- [Information Sharing Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services](#)
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Education Act 2002
- [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#)
- Whistle Blowing policy (insert link to view)
- [Online Safety Toolkit](#)
- [Children Missing Education policy](#)
- [Early Years Statutory Framework](#)
- [Statutory policies for schools](#)
- [NSPCC/TES safeguarding in education tool](#)
- [Visa – Immigration/Asylum](#)
  - [Children's commissioner](#)

All early years' settings within All Saints Catholic Collegiate follow the regulations for EYFS staff as set out within the EYFS Statutory Framework:

- [Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage](#)
- [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework](#)

Specific pre-employment checks for EYFS staff are fully compliant with statutory expectations and documented within each setting's SCR, as outlined within KCSIE.



## **Operation Encompass Staffordshire -Supporting children experiencing domestic abuse throughout Stoke and Staffordshire**

Operation Encompass is an information sharing partnership between Staffordshire Police and Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent educational settings (from Reception through to Higher Education) which allows schools to offer immediate support for children and young people experiencing domestic abuse.

### **How does Operation Encompass work?**

Information obtained by the police at the attendance of a domestic abuse incident is shared with a school prior to the start of the next school day which enables appropriate support to be given dependent on the needs of the child.

### **How do the schools receive notification by the police that a domestic incident has occurred?**

When an officer attends the incident and completes the risk assessment on their handheld device, the name(s) of the children who form part of the household (whether present or not) are included. Alongside the details of the child, the officer will select the school that the child attends from the dropdown list. By completing this section of the risk assessment, the officer generates an automatic referral to the school via an email in real time.

Limited information will be shared about the incident; the name and DOB of the child (if known), the fact they have been identified as being in a household where a domestic abuse incident took place, date and time of the incident and a police reference number.

### **How does the notification help to support the child?**

Children experiencing domestic abuse are negatively impacted by this exposure and this can lead to emotional, physical and psychological harm. By providing the school with the knowledge that a domestic incident has taken place in the homes of their students the previous day, it allows the school to consider appropriate support for the child.

## Children's Social Care

Once a notification is received from Staffordshire Police there is **NO** requirement for the School to then make a referral to Children's Social Care. Please be reassured that it is purely a notification to enable the School to support that child. If there is a requirement for a referral to be made, the Police would have already done this if necessary. The training provided to Schools outlines this message clearly. Of course, if the child is already an 'open case' then the school would inform the dedicated key/social worker of the notification.

### Next Steps:

Staffordshire Police, and Staffordshire and Stoke Education Authorities have provided a virtual bespoke training package which will enable Schools to understand the impact domestic abuse can have on a child and how best to support them in school. This will be available in due course.

