



ST. JOSEPH'S COLLEGE  
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**Safeguarding Policy**

This policy relates to all sections of St Joseph's College, including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

**Key school contacts:**

Role	Name	Contact number	Email
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Sean Hatton	07540 236203 01189 661000	<a href="mailto:sean.hatton@sjcr.org.uk">sean.hatton@sjcr.org.uk</a>
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads	Natalia Jwaideh Sharon Boccaccini Jess Kirkpatrick Amena Siddiqui Dorinda Bray Alice Maxwell	01189 661000	<a href="mailto:natalia.jwaideh@sjcr.org.uk">natalia.jwaideh@sjcr.org.uk</a> <a href="mailto:sharon.boccaccini@sjcr.org.uk">sharon.boccaccini@sjcr.org.uk</a> <a href="mailto:jess.kirkpatrick@sjcr.org.uk">jess.kirkpatrick@sjcr.org.uk</a> <a href="mailto:amena.siddiqui@sjcr.org.uk">amena.siddiqui@sjcr.org.uk</a> <a href="mailto:Dorinda.bray@sjcr.org.uk">Dorinda.bray@sjcr.org.uk</a> <a href="mailto:Alice.maxwell@sjcr.org.uk">Alice.maxwell@sjcr.org.uk</a>
Head	Laura Stotesbury	01189 661000	<a href="mailto:laura.stotesbury@sjcr.org.uk">laura.stotesbury@sjcr.org.uk</a>
Chair of Governors	Hilary Buckle		<a href="mailto:chair@sjcr.org.uk">chair@sjcr.org.uk</a>
Safeguarding Governor	Amy Bainbridge	Contact details can be obtained from Michele Gravenor <a href="mailto:michele.gravenor@sjcr.org.uk">michele.gravenor@sjcr.org.uk</a>	

**Additional school contacts:**

Bursar – [lynn.douglas@sjcr.org.uk](mailto:lynn.douglas@sjcr.org.uk)

**Key external contacts:**

Children's Single Point of Access	Duty Social worker	Brighter Futures for Children, Civic Offices, Reading, RG1 2LU	0118 937 3641 Emergency Duty Service (outside of office hours) Tel: 01344 351999	<a href="mailto:cspoa@brighterfuturesforchildren.org">cspoa@brighterfuturesforchildren.org</a>
Prevent Officer Thames Valley Police	Prevent Officer	Reading Police Station, Castle Street, Reading RG1 7TH	07788 307 178	<a href="mailto:Preventreferrals@thamesvalley.police.uk">Preventreferrals@thamesvalley.police.uk</a>
Community Safety Partnership	Joanne Middlemass	Reading Borough Council, Civic Offices, Reading, RG1 2LU	0118 937 3179	<a href="mailto:Joanne.middlemass@brighterfuturesforchildren.org">Joanne.middlemass@brighterfuturesforchildren.org</a>
Service Manager for	Corinne Dishington	Brighter Futures for Children, Civic	0118 937 6012	<a href="mailto:Corinne.dishington@brighterfuturesforchildren.org">Corinne.dishington@brighterfuturesforchildren.org</a>



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Early Help and Prevention (including early years)		Offices, Reading, RG1 2LU		
Education Welfare Service	Shirley Moneanu	Brighter Futures for Children, The Avenue Centre, Tilehurst, Reading	0118 937 6545	<a href="mailto:Shirley.moneanu@brighterfuturesforchildren.org">Shirley.moneanu@brighterfuturesforchildren.org</a>
Local Authority Designated Officer	Sarah Rae Sue Darby	Brighter Futures for Children, Civic Offices, Reading, RG1 2LU	01189 372684	<a href="mailto:LADO@brighterfuturesforchildren.org">LADO@brighterfuturesforchildren.org</a>
Safeguarding and Children Missing Education Officer (including exclusions)	Fiona Hostler	Brighter Futures for Children, Civic Offices, Reading, RG1 2LU	0118 937 4336 07811 422419	<a href="mailto:Fiona.hostler@brighterfuturesforchildren.org">Fiona.hostler@brighterfuturesforchildren.org</a>
Mental Health Support Team	Deborah Hunter	Brighter Futures for Children, Civic Offices, Reading, RG1 2LU	0118 937 6548	<a href="mailto:MHST@brighterfuturesforchildren.org">MHST@brighterfuturesforchildren.org</a>
Schools Police Officer	Steven Marr	Thames Valley Police		<a href="mailto:steven.marr@thamesvalley.police.uk">steven.marr@thamesvalley.police.uk</a>

## Introduction

The safety and welfare of all our pupils is our highest priority and we will always consider the best interests of the child. Over and above our obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010, our business is to know everyone as an individual and to provide a secure and caring environment so that every pupil can learn in safety.

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. As a College we will always follow a 'child-centred' approach. This means that we will consider, at all times, what is in the **best interests** of the child.

As outlined in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2023), Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

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



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('Children' includes everyone under the age of 18 and will include all pupils at the College)

We also recognise that pupils with SEND, or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges and barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect.

These can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration,
- these children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children,
- the potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs,
- being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in schools or colleges or the consequences of doing so,
- communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges.

This can also be the case for children who identify as LGBT. The fact that a child or a young person may be LGBT is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. However, we acknowledge that 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.

Risks can be compounded where children who are LGBT lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. The College endeavours to reduce the additional barriers faced and provide a safe space for children to speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

Equality, diversity and inclusion is part of our PSHEE and RSE curriculum and is firmly embedded in the ethos of the College, we hold a zero-tolerance policy for all forms of bullying, abuse and discrimination.

In all matters relating to child protection the College will follow the procedures laid down by the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership together with the DfE guidance contained in Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023) (KCSIE). KCSIE incorporates the additional statutory guidance including Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children in schools and colleges, Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (August 2018). Reference is made to Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (2019). KCSIE also refers to the non-statutory advice for practitioners: What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (March 2015). Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018) (WT). WT refers to the non-statutory advice: Information sharing (July 2018) and the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Revised Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales (April 2021) (Prevent). Prevent is supplemented by non-statutory advice and a briefing note: The Prevent duty: Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers (June 2015). The use of social media for on-line



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radicalisation (July 2015). Child Missing Education (September 2016) refers to the statutory guidance for local authorities in terms of children missing education (CME).

[KCSIE \(September 2023\)](#)

[Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges \(September 2021\)](#)

[Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 \(August 2018\)](#)

[What to do if you're worried a child is being abused \(March 2015\)](#)

[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 \(July 2018\)](#)

[Information sharing \(July 2018\)](#)

[The Prevent Duty \(April 2021\)](#)

[The Prevent duty: Departmental advice for schools and childminders \(June 2015\)](#)

[The use of social media for on-line radicalisation \(July 2015\)](#)

[Child Missing Education \(September 2016\)](#)

[Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education \(2019\)](#)

Our whole College approach to safeguarding means that all members of staff have a duty to safeguard our pupils' welfare and must therefore familiarise themselves and comply at all times with this policy. This includes a duty both to children in need and to children at risk of harm, as well as preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health.

All staff must read at least Part 1 of the statutory 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' guidance. Staff are also asked to read Further information from Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education on domestic abuse, upskirting, child-on-child abuse, sexual violence and harassment, child criminal exploitation (CCE), child sexual exploitation (CSE), honour-based violence (HBV), female genital mutilation (FGM), Forced marriage and the Prevent Duty. All College staff must be aware that safeguarding incidents can happen at any time and anywhere and are required to be alert to any possible concerns. All staff should be 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 (and deputies) should 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.



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All staff should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone 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.

All Staff are encouraged to read ['Protecting children from radicalisation: the 'Prevent duty'](#) and [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused \(March 2015\)](#).

## **WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?**

The KCSIE definition of 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.

Abuse can be:

- physical abuse;
- emotional abuse;
- sexual abuse; and/or
- neglect.

Staff must read Appendix 1 of this policy for further detail of the types of abuse and possible signs of abuse.

A copy of KCSIE Part 1 and Annex B is also included as Appendix 2.1 and must also be read by staff. A list of possible signs and indicators of abuse are included in Appendix 2.2.

## **TRANSPARENCY**

St Joseph's College prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting St Joseph's College. Copies of this policy, together with our other policies relating to issues of child protection are on our website and we



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hope that parents and guardians will always feel able to take up any issues or worries that they may have with the College. Allegations of child abuse or concerns about the welfare of any child will be dealt with consistently in accordance with this policy. Open communications are essential.

## **SAFER EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES**

All staff in the College have read both the latest update to KCSIE Part 1 and Annex B. A declaration form confirming this is signed by all staff working in the College and these are retained by the HR Coordinator. All staff have to complete online training in safeguarding annually.

St Joseph's College follows the Government's recommendations for the safer recruitment and employment of staff who work with children and acts at all times in compliance with the Independent School Standards Regulations. The Head, the Bursar and members of SLT have completed the training for the safer recruitment process.

In line with Part 3 of the DfE's guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (KCSIE 2023), the governing body prevent people who pose a risk of harm from working with pupils by adhering to statutory responsibilities to check all staff who work with children, taking proportionate decisions on whether to ask for any checks beyond the minimum required, and ensuring volunteers are appropriately supervised.

The College works with external agencies where appropriate including inter-agency working on the part of the DSL and attendance at strategy meetings.

As part of carrying out safe recruitment procedures under KCSIE, members of the teaching and non-teaching staff at the College including part-time staff, temporary and supply staff, and visiting staff, such as musicians and sports coaches are subject to the necessary statutory child protection checks before starting work. For most appointments, an enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check with 'barred list' information will be appropriate. A DBS certificate will be obtained from the candidate before or as soon as practicable after appointment. Alternatively, if the applicant has subscribed to it and gives permission, the College may undertake an online update check through the DBS Update Service.

Further to the DBS check, anyone appointed to carry out teaching work will require an additional check to ensure they are not prohibited from teaching by order of the Secretary of State. Those undertaking management posts will be subject to Prohibition from Management of Independent Schools checks.

In addition, as part of the shortlisting process the College may carry out an online search on the shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have



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happened, and are publicly available online, which the College might want to explore with the applicant at interview.

All governors, volunteers and contractors working regularly during term-time (such as contract catering staff) are also subject to the statutory DBS checks. Confirmation is obtained that appropriate child protection checks and procedures apply to any staff employed by another organisation and working with the school's pupils at school or on another site.

Should the College develop concerns about an existing staff member's suitability to work with children; it will carry out all relevant checks as if the individual were a new member of staff.

Please also refer to the College Recruitment Policy and Safer Recruitment policies for further details.

## **THE GOVERNING BODY**

Amy Bainbridge is the liaison governor for safeguarding issues. Her contact details can be obtained from the Senior School reception: 0118 966 1000 or the Head's PA.

The role of the designated governor is to liaise with the local authority in case of allegations against the Head or a member of the Governing Body. The designated governor is also the chair of the Governors Safeguarding Committee. The Governors Safeguarding Committee carry out an annual review of the College Safeguarding Policy and procedures with day-to-day issues being delegated to the Head and the designated safeguarding leads. The Governors Safeguarding Committee is responsible for:

- reviewing the Safeguarding Policy and procedures for and the efficiency with which the safeguarding duties have been discharged,
- ensuring that any deficiencies or weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements are remedied without delay,
- approving amendments to safeguarding arrangements in the light of changing Regulations or recommended best practice.

We recognise that the College plays a significant part in the prevention of harm to our pupils by providing good lines of communication with trusted adults, supported friends and an ethos of protection. We include within this the emotional wellbeing of our pupils and recognise the role College plays in recognising and protecting our children who may be vulnerable to radicalisation or exposed to extremist views.

## **DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD AND DEPUTIES**

Sean Hatton (Assistant Head Wellbeing & Safeguarding) is part of the Senior Leadership Team and is the Designated Safeguarding Lead for the College, including being the designated safeguarding lead for EYFS.



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The DSL has a job description for the safeguarding role and key activities. The DSL's role is to ensure that each member of staff has access to and is aware of and understands the College safeguarding policy and procedures.

Natalia Jwaideh (College Deputy Head Senior), Sharon Boccaccini (College Deputy Head Prep), Alice Maxwell (Head of Sixth Form), Dorinda Bray (Prep Pastoral Lead), Jess Kirkpatrick (Holiday Club) and Amena Siddiqui (Lead Early Years Practitioner) are Deputy DSLs.

They have been fully trained for the demands of this role in child protection and inter-agency working. Both the DSL and the deputies regularly attend courses with child support agencies to ensure that they remain conversant with best practice. The DSL and deputies receive regular updates via E-Bulletins from the NSPCC and correspondence from the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership (BWSCP's). They undergo refresher training every two years, which includes Local agency working protocols and training in the BWSCP's approach to the Prevent Duty. Their training meets the requirements of the DfE's 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (KCSIE).

The DSL and/or the deputy DSLs can be contacted at any time via the College on 0118 966 1000 or by email, details can be found on the first page of this policy.

The DSL maintains close links with the BWSCP's for Reading and reports at least once a half term to the Safeguarding governor on the child protection issues outlined above, once a term to the Governors Safeguarding Committee and at least once a year to the whole Board. The DSL and Deputy DSLs receive focused training to support learning and understanding of the ever-changing landscape of safeguarding which is underpinned by legislation and guidance and includes issues such as radicalisation. The College records on child protection are kept in a secure online platform (CPOMS), and are categorised separately from routine pupil records. Access is restricted to the DSL, Deputy DSLs and the Head.

The College also has the following staff who receive training to have responsibility for the welfare and progress of looked-after children, as appropriate:

- College Deputy Head Senior - natalia.jwaideh@sjcr.org.uk
  - College Deputy Head Prep – sharon.boccaccini@sjcr.org.uk
  - Assistant Head (Wellbeing & Safeguarding) – sean.hatton@sjcr.org.uk
- More information on the role of the DSL and Deputies can be found in Appendix 3

## **INDUCTION OF NEW STAFF, GOVERNORS, AND VOLUNTEERS IN SAFEGUARDING**

We believe that a comprehensive induction programme helps all our new members of staff to settle into St Joseph's College as quickly as possible and to start to make an effective contribution. Every new member of staff is given an induction programme that is tailored to his or her roles and responsibilities.





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All new teaching and non-teaching staff are allocated a 'buddy' in their first year whose role is to provide informal support and assistance. Organisation and regularity of meetings will depend on experience and nature of role of member of staff and the support they are receiving from other colleagues, including the Head of Department, Head of Year or Head of Section. The areas to be covered within meetings for teaching staff are listed in the staff handbook.

At all meetings with 'buddies' there will be an opportunity for new staff to raise issues and gain advice and help from experienced staff familiar with the practices of St Joseph's College.

Every new member of the teaching and non-teaching staff, including new peripatetic musicians and sports coaches, and trustees, governors and volunteers are required to attend a training session on safeguarding. These sessions are organised by Mr Sean Hatton, our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and these will be held prior to any interaction with children. Similar training is offered to all governors and to the parents who help with activities that bring them into contact with children. The DSL is responsible for ensuring that Thomas Franks, the firm that runs our catering, and TK Travel, the firm that runs our transport to and from the College, receive the school's policy on Safeguarding and the Staff Code of Conduct and are briefed annually on the safeguarding procedures within the College and are given the opportunity to ask questions and raise issues. The only adults who work or visit the school who are exempted from this requirement are:

- Night-time cleaners whose hours of work mean that they do not have contact with pupils.
- Occasional visitors, including occasional lecturers and contractors, who sign in and are given security badges by our Receptionists, who draw their attention to the Fire Safety and Safeguarding guidance on the rear of these badges and who are subsequently escorted throughout their visit.  
Contractors working on a designated site that is physically separated from the rest of the school who are required to sign in and out at their site office and to wear security badges at all times.

Child protection is our top priority; every member of staff needs to be confident that they understand their role in:

- Keeping children safe
- Promoting the welfare of pupils
- Promoting equal opportunities and inclusion
- Preventing bullying and harassment

Everyone is required to take part in the training no matter what their previous background or level of expertise. Refresher training for all staff is held regularly in line with advice from the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Our induction training will tell you about:



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- Our pupil welfare systems including the roles of the following:
  - the liaison governor for child protection issues and chair of the Safeguarding Committee
  - the Senior Leadership Team and the DSL
  - weekly pastoral meetings including the Assistant Head Wellbeing & Safeguarding, Heads of Year/Section and Prep Pastoral Lead
  - the regular monitoring arrangements by the Head of Year and Heads of Section
  - the role of the College Chaplain and Education Mental Health Practitioner
  - pastoral support stages
  - the prefect system and the training in leadership given to senior pupils
  - the role of the school council and pupil voice committees
  - our partnerships with parents and guardians
  - filtering and monitoring processes within the College and the individual's role in promoting online safety
  - CPOMS Pastoral and Safeguarding Reporting and Management System
  - Schoolbase registration and system for recording rewards and sanctions
  - TooToot anonymous reporting system for pupils

We will describe our arrangements for providing additional support for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

- The Legal Framework for our Child Protection and Anti-Bullying Policies

We describe this briefly and our policies cover:

- Anti-bullying
- Behaviour
- Disability, Special Education Needs and Learning Difficulties
- Equal Opportunities
- Educational Visits
- Safer recruitment of staff, covering our procedures in recruiting, checking that our staff are suitable and qualified for their roles, and that the statutory child protection checks have been carried out.
- Arrangements for checking governors, volunteers, contractors' staff, volunteers and adult members of the households of staff accommodated on-site.
- The safe supervision of visitors
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Obligations under The Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2018

Teaching staff have a particular responsibility for supervising pupils and ensuring that they behave with consideration and good manners at all times; but all staff need to be made aware of the school's policies in these areas. All staff are reminded of their important role in building positive relationships, identifying risks and keeping everyone safe. We cover internet and technological bullying and the



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potential risks (as well as benefits) of the internet and social networking sites. We train staff in being alert to the signs of bullying or children at risk of radicalisation. Training includes awareness to equip staff to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism.

➤ Understanding Challenging Behaviour

We draw upon national guidance relating to the safeguarding and protection of children, the signs of abuse, and the duties of staff, as well as the role of specialist agencies. We explain our expectations of how they must respond in a difficult situation and why they cannot promise confidentiality to a pupil.

➤ The School's Policies on Safeguarding

All new staff as part of their induction will be expected to become familiar with our policies on:

- Safeguarding
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Missing Child
- Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Whistle-blowing
- E-Safety
- Mobile Devices

Copies of these documents can be found on our website. We also draw upon official guidance, such as 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. **Please note that all staff and volunteers will be required to have read Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education and Annex B, and to have completed the Educare on-line training in Safeguarding and Child Protection.**

➤ Visitors and Site Security

This covers the need for visitors to be signed in at Reception and to be escorted about the school.

➤ Effective Record Keeping

Why effective record keeping matters.

➤ Refresher Training

The session concludes with reminding staff that refresher training is given annually and by inviting all staff, Governors and volunteers to provide a certificate to show that they have completed the training session.

## TRAINING OF ALL STAFF & GOVERNORS



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All Governors receive safeguarding training every three years and are equipped with the knowledge to fulfil their various roles. This training equips them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place at the College are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. Their training is updated annually in line with the updates to Keeping Children Safe in Education.

The Head and all staff attend annual refresher training in line with advice from the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership. Training includes a review of the following:

- 1) The College Safeguarding Policy
- 2) Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 1 including Annex B
- 3) The Staff Code of Conduct
- 4) The College Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy
- 5) Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- 6) The Prevent Duty
- 7) External Visiting Speakers Policy
- 8) E-Safety Policy
- 9) Anti-bullying policy
- 10) Attendance policy, which includes the College's response to a Child Missing from Education

All staff must read and sign to confirm that they have read all the relevant documents listed above. All staff are required to complete and pass an online training module on Child Protection provided by Educare and the Prevent Duty. Further Educare modules are to be completed each year and as required.

All staff receive a safeguarding update every half term from the DSL with any updates or relevant information from agencies such as Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership, NSPCC, Child Line etc. All of the safeguarding updates cover key topics and specific issues as outlined in KCSIE.

Training also promotes staff awareness of sexual violence and harassment, child sexual exploitation, forced marriage, female genital mutilation and online e-safety. Staff are made aware of the signs, symptoms and indicators of such practices and are required to take action without delay if such a practice is suspected. Opportunity is given for all staff to discuss the policy and practice and make recommendations for changes where appropriate.

Further guidance is available on whistle blowing at [NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line](#).

Contract staff regularly in school will have basic safeguarding training from the DSL on school safeguarding procedures over and above training delivered by their company.

## **TECHNOLOGY**



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The College guidelines on use of mobile phones, including use of cameras, is found in the Staff Code of Conduct. This applies to the whole College, including EYFS.

Policies are:

- Computer usage Policy
- Communications with pupils, including the use of Social Media
- Mobile device Policy
- Social media Policy for Staff
- E-Safety Policy

The breadth of issues classified within online safety are 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.

The College communicates regularly with parents/guardians to reinforce the importance of children being safe online. Key information about how to discuss these issues at home focusses on positive and empowering online behaviours, such as critical thinking, how and where to report concerns about harmful content and how to block content and users.

The College has adequate filtering systems to ensure that the content is appropriate when pupils are accessing the internet. As a College we teach the pupils to understand why they need to behave responsibly if they are to protect themselves. The College technical staff have a key role in maintaining a safe technical infrastructure and in keeping abreast with the rapid succession of technical developments. They are responsible for the security of the College hardware system and its data. They monitor the use of the internet and emails and will report inappropriate usage to the DSL. The governing body is responsible for ensuring the College has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place and regularly review their effectiveness.

Many pupils have access to unlimited 3G,4G and 5G data via their mobile devices. As this is not within the confines of the filtering systems, it is important to note that the



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College has clear procedures for when pupils are allowed to access their mobile devices (please refer to the Mobile Device Policy) and educated in the importance of online safety.

The appropriateness of any filters and monitoring will be informed by the Prevent Duty Risk Assessment.

## **Use of mobile devices by staff, visitors and volunteers – In Accordance with the Mobile Device Policy**

Mobile devices provide many benefits to school life, notably in improving health and safety through better communication with staff in more remote parts of the school grounds and off-site visit.

However, mobile phones, particularly those capable of taking pictures, also present a challenge to the school community to ensure that pupils are safeguarded in relation to the potential for improper use and also that their education is not impeded by the use of mobile phones at inappropriate times.

EYFS staff phones are kept secure in their areas and mobile phones may not be on view or in use when EYFS pupils are present.

On arrival at school, staff must switch their phones onto silent for the course of the school day. Whilst staff are permitted to use their phones during the school day, they must ensure this use does not prevent them from carrying out their professional duties.

Any mobile phones being used as contact phones for trips and visits, must be registered on the trip paperwork and risk assessments.

Staff use of mobile devices must be in accordance with this policy, the Taking Storing and Using images of children policy, and the Safeguarding policy.

## **STAFF OBLIGATIONS**

Further details are found in the Staff Code of Conduct, which must be read in conjunction with this policy.

## **Disqualification from providing childcare or registration**

All staff in our school are required to notify the College immediately if there are any reasons why they must not be working with children. The DfE have removed disqualification by association for individuals working in schools in the 2018 updates. The Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 apply to those providing early years



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childcare or later years childcare, including before school and after school clubs, to children who have not attained the age of 8 and to those who are directly concerned in the management of that childcare.

The College takes its responsibility to safeguard children very seriously and any staff member who is aware of anything that may affect their suitability to work with children must notify the Head, the Bursar or one of the Deputy Heads immediately. This will include notification of any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands or warnings they may receive.

Staff who are disqualified from childcare or registration, may apply to Ofsted for a waiver of disqualification. Such staff may not be employed in the areas from which they are disqualified, or involved in the management of those settings, unless and until such waiver is confirmed. Please speak to the Head or the Bursar for more details. In the case of Educational Visits, the organisations visited have been checked for suitability to ensure the College's care for the safety of the pupils.



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## **Visiting Speakers**

The College Visiting Speaker Policy sets out the requirements needed before a visit takes place. This includes an online search for suitability, with reference to the Prevent Duty and safeguarding matters. A checklist is completed by the member of staff responsible for booking the speaker and when completed, is kept by the Bursar alongside the Single Central Register.

## **Lettings at the College**

If the College premises is hired to any external provider, the school will gain assurances that the hiring body has appropriate safeguarding procedures in place. Hirers will be required to submit their safeguarding policies and procedures when completing their lettings agreement.

## **Preventing radicalisation (the Prevent Duty)**

We recognise that it is a key role of the College to support children and that school may provide stability in the lives of children who may be at risk of harm. We also recognise that our pupils can be vulnerable and exploited by others. Staff will be alert to the signs of susceptibilities to any extremist indoctrination.

Staff acknowledge the need for a culture of vigilance to be present in the College to support safeguarding. This includes awareness and sensitivity to attitudinal changes of pupils which may indicate they are at risk of radicalisation.

Staff will consider the level of risk to identify the most appropriate referral, which could include reference to Channel or Children's Social Care. Any referral to the Channel program will require the individual's consent.

Contact details for support and advice on the Prevent Duty can be found below.

### **Thames Valley Prevent Duty Contacts:**

If you have a Prevent related concern and want some guidance you must contact:

the Prevent Officer at Thames Valley Police on 07788 307 178

Or

email [Preventreferrals@thamesvalley.police.uk](mailto:Preventreferrals@thamesvalley.police.uk)

This is managed daily during office hours Monday to Friday. A member of the Thames Valley Police Prevent Team will contact you to take further information or provide advice. The Reading Channel Panel meets on a monthly basis to consider any referrals. If you





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have immediate concerns or you need to contact outside of these hours please call 101 and ask for the on call Special Branch Sergeant.



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## **PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OR CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD**

The College treats the safeguarding of the pupils in its care as the highest priority and recognises the important role it has to play in the recognition and referral of children who may be at risk. All our school staff are made aware of their duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the school's care. Staff members are alerted to the particular potential vulnerabilities of looked after children.

If staff members have concerns about a child, they must have a conversation with the DSL (or in their absence either the Head or the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads) to agree a course of action, although any member of staff can make a referral to children's social care, they must inform the DSL, as soon as possible thereafter. If at any time, a child is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm a referral must be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately but must inform the DSL as soon as possible.

Every member of staff, including part-timers, temporary, visiting, contract and volunteer staff working in the College is required to report immediately instances of actual or suspected child abuse or neglect to the DSL. This includes alleged abuse by one or more pupils against another pupil. A written report must be completed at the earliest opportunity. In the absence of the DSL, the report must be made to either one of the Deputy DSLs or the Head.

Where there is a child protection concern, allegation or disclosure, a phone call will immediately be made to Reading Children's Single Point of Access/Children's Services of the child's home authority, or Emergency Duty Team if outside of office hours, to alert them to the situation.

The College local authority is Reading, who have partnered with Wokingham and West Berkshire to form the [Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership](#).

and their threshold criteria is located [here](#).

Delay in referring cases immediately may place the child at further risk and may prevent Reading Children's Single Point of Access/Children's Services of the child's home authority from putting in place timely, protective measures for the child or young person. In the event of a Prevent concern or allegation, a phone call will also be made to the Prevent Officer at Thames Valley Police.

If it is decided that the contact does not meet the thresholds for social care intervention, Reading Children's Single Point of Access will advise as to whether there is a role for Reading Children's Action Team (CAT).



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If staff members are unsure they must always speak to the DSL. In exceptional circumstances such as in an emergency or a genuine concern that appropriate action has not been taken, staff members can speak directly to children's social care or the police.

All staff in the College are aware that anyone can make a referral to children's social care or the police. If anyone other than the DSL makes a referral, they must inform the DSL that a referral has been made at the earliest opportunity.

If a disclosure is being made against a member of staff/volunteer, this must be made to the Head or in their absence, the Chair of Governors/Safeguarding Governor.

Where a disclosure is made against supply and agency staff, the agency will be kept full informed and aware of the situation.

## **PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH ALL DISCLOSURES/ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE**

Allegations of abuse may be made against a member of staff, a contractor, a volunteer, a governor, a pupil, parent or other person connected to the College.

Allegations of abuse against teachers and other staff will be dealt with according to the statutory guidance set out in part four of KCSIE.

If a member of staff is made aware of any allegation of abuse, or if knowledge of possible abuse comes to his/her attention it is his/her duty to listen to the child, to provide re-assurance and to record the child's statements, but not to probe or put words into the child's mouth.

On hearing an allegation of abuse or complaint about abuse directly from a child, a member of staff must limit questioning to the minimum necessary for clarification. Leading questions must be avoided. No inappropriate guarantees of confidentiality must be given; rather the child must be told that the matter will be referred in confidence to the appropriate people in positions of responsibility. The member of staff must make and submit an accurate written record and inform the Head and the DSL immediately so that appropriate agencies can be informed within 24 hours and the matter resolved without delay. In a situation where there is a conflict of interest in reporting the matter to the Head, this should be reported directly to the LADO.

If a member of staff is the subject of an allegation or suspicion, they should not be informed of this at this stage, until advice is sought from the relevant agencies. Doing so may put a child or young person at further risk and/or jeopardise any subsequent investigations.

The Head will ensure a follow up meeting takes place with the member of staff who received the initial disclosure and support put in place if required.



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Where there is a safeguarding concern the College will ensure the child's wishes are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide.

The Head/DSL will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for advice or direction and will inform ISI if appropriate. In relation to our EYFS setting, the College will inform Ofsted as soon as is reasonably practical, in any event within 14 days of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working or looking after children at the premises (whether that allegation relates to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere) or any other abuse which is alleged to have taken place on the premises, and of the action taken in respect of these allegations.

Should the allegation of abuse concern the DSL, the member of staff must inform the Head. Allegations against the Head or Governor must be reported directly to the Chair of Governors without the Head being informed first. Their contact details can be obtained from the Senior School reception: 0118 966 1000 or the Head's PA. It will be the Chair's responsibility to contact the LADO.

The Head, DSL, Chair of Governors or the Safeguarding Governor will refer all allegations or suspicions of abuse or cases where there is reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, to the local authority designated officer (LADO) within 24 hours. In the case of serious harm, the police will be informed from the outset of any allegation.

Borderline cases will be discussed with the LADO without identifying individuals in the first instance and following discussions the LADO will judge whether an allegation or concern meets the relevant threshold. The LADO and the Head/DSL (or the Chair of Governors/Safeguarding Governor) will decide in the circumstances what further steps must be taken. This could involve informing parents and calling the police.

If the allegation concerns a member of staff, a volunteer, or another pupil he/she would normally be informed as soon as possible after the result of any initial investigation authorised or conducted by the LADO is known. Advice will always be sought from the LADO first, however. The College will normally appoint a member of staff to keep the person informed of the likely course of action and the progress of the case.

The outcome of an investigation of an allegation will record whether:

- it is substantiated (there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation)
- unsubstantiated (there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence)
- malicious (sufficient evidence to disprove it and that there has been a deliberate act to deceive).

If it is established that the allegation is malicious, no details of the allegation will be retained on the individual's personnel records. However, for all other allegations, the following information will be kept on the file of the person accused:



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- a clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation;
- details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved;
- a note of any action taken, and decisions reached and the outcome as categorised above;
- a copy provided to the person concerned, where agreed by children's social care or the police; and,
- a declaration on whether the information will be referred to in any future reference.

If the LADO or any of the statutory child protection authorities decide to take the case further, any staff member concerned may be suspended if this is felt appropriate. The reasons and justification for suspension will be recorded and the staff member informed of them. In the case of staff, the matter will be dealt with in accordance with the Disciplinary Procedures. Where a member of staff, governor or other person connected to the College resides on site and is suspended pending an investigation of a child protection nature, suitable arrangements must be put in place for alternative accommodation away from children.

In the case of child-on-child abuse which the College has reported to children's social care and which the statutory child protection authority decides to investigate further, the matter will be dealt with under the College Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy after discussion with the local authority.

During the course of the investigation the College in consultation with the LADO will decide what information must be given to parents, staff and other pupils and how press enquiries are to be dealt with. In reaching their decision due consideration will be given to the provisions in the Education Act 2011 and in Keeping Children Safe in Education relating to reporting restrictions identifying teachers who are the subject of allegations from pupils.

Any pupils who are involved will receive appropriate care and support from the College.

If a referral to an external agency is not made, we would then follow the procedures from our Anti-Bullying Policy.

## **Low Level Concerns**

It may be possible that a member of staff acts in a way that does not cause risk to children, but is however inappropriate. A member of staff who has a concern about another member of staff should inform the Head or DSL about their concern using a Low-Level Record of Concern Form (SharePoint Homepage). If the concern is about the Head this must be reported to the Chair of Governors.

The Low Level Concerns Policy (Appendix 4) must be read alongside the College Safeguarding Policy and Staff Code of Conduct.



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## External reporting

We follow the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) guidance and procedures regarding referrals and barring decisions and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (Prescribed Criteria and Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2009. Separate to involvement of the LADO, schools have a legal duty to refer to the DBS 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) at the College, or would have been removed had they not left.

St Joseph's College will make such a referral as soon as possible after the resignation or dismissal of any individual (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or a student) whose services are no longer used because he or she is considered unsuitable to work with children. This includes dismissal, non-renewal of a fixed term contract, no longer using supply teacher engaged directly or supplied by an agency, terminating the placement of a trainee or volunteer, no longer using staff employed by a contractor and resignation and voluntary withdrawal from any of the above.

If an investigation leads to the dismissal or resignation prior to dismissal of a member of teaching staff specifically, the College will make a referral to the Department for Education and the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as appropriate and a prohibition order may be required (because that teacher has displayed unacceptable professional conduct, conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute or a conviction at any time for a relevant offence). The College will make a serious incident report to the Charity Commission whenever the Commission's guidelines deem it appropriate to do so.

Where the College ceases to use the services of a teacher because of serious misconduct, or would have dismissed them had they not resigned, it will consider whether to refer the case to the Secretary of State, as required by sections 141D and 141E of the Education Act 2002. The Secretary of State may investigate the case, and if s/he finds there is a case to answer, must then decide whether to make a prohibition order in respect of the person.

Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 places a statutory duty on teachers along with social workers and healthcare professionals to report to the police where they discover that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions. Unless the teacher has a good reason not to, they must still consider and discuss any such case with the school's designated safeguarding lead and involve children's social care as appropriate.



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## **PARENTS**

The College does not require consent from parents to refer a child. In general, we believe that parents must be informed about any safeguarding concerns regarding their children. It is important that we are honest and open in our dealings with parents. In some cases, it may not be right to inform parents of our concerns immediately as that action could prejudice any investigation or place the child at further risk. In such cases, advice will be sought from Children's Single Point of Access/Children's Services of the child's home authority and/or the Police.

## **PROMOTING AWARENESS**

The College curriculum and pastoral systems are designed to foster the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all our pupils. All teaching staff play a vital role in this process, helping to ensure that all pupils relate well to one another and feel safe and comfortable within the College. We expect all the teaching staff to lead by example and to play a full part in promoting an awareness that is appropriate to their age amongst all our pupils on issues relating to health, safety, well-being, relationships, and sex. All staff, including all non-teaching staff, have an important role in insisting that pupils always adhere to the standards of behaviour set out in our behaviour policy and in enforcing our anti-bullying policy.

Our PSHEE programme, which incorporates the new government guidelines on [Relationships and Sex, and Health Education \(RSE\)](#) equips pupils with the skills they need to stay safe from all forms of abuse such as bullying, homophobic behaviour, racism, sexual violence and harassment, sexism and extremism through promoting fundamental British values. Pupils are exposed to a variety of outside speakers on these topics which are followed up in PSHEE, for example Alter Ego's 'Going to Extremes', 'Chelsea's Story' and 'Unacceptable'. Any discriminatory behaviours are challenged and help and support is given to children about how to treat others with respect. The PSHEE Curriculum includes material which will help pupils develop realistic attitudes and resilience to deal with the challenges of growing up in the 21st Century.

Time is allocated in PSHEE to discussions of what constitutes appropriate behaviour and on why bullying and lack of respect for others is never right. Assemblies, drama and RE lessons along with the wider curriculum are used to promote tolerance and mutual respect and understanding.

All pupils know that there are adults to whom they can turn to if they are worried, including the College Lay Chaplain. If the College has concerns about a child there is always a recognised requirement for sensitive communication and designated staff members are aware of the need to avoid asking leading questions. Our support to pupils includes the following:

- All pupils have access to a telephone helpline enabling them to call for support in private.



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- A leaflet on support available from the Chaplaincy and Wellbeing Centre.
- Every child in Year 3 and above has a planner or homework diary which contains guidance on where to turn for advice, including confidential help lines and web addresses for external specialists such as ChildLine, Kidscape, Get Connected and the Samaritans.
- Our classrooms for Year 3 and above display advice on where pupils can seek help.
- In the Senior School we operate a peer mentoring scheme whereby Sixth Form students are encouraged to offer advice and support to younger pupils.
- In the Senior School we provide leadership training to our prefects/senior pupils which specifically covers child protection issues and the importance of offering support and assistance to younger and to vulnerable pupils.
- We provide regular lessons to pupils on e-safety and ensure that all pupils understand and adhere to the College guidelines in this area. This includes guidance on educating pupils to stay safe including online protection. For more details on cyber-bullying please refer to the College Anti-bullying Policy. Also see our Computer Usage Policy which outlines safe usage online.
- TooToot anonymous reporting system, which allow a pupil to be identified if they are at risk of harm.

## **PASTORAL SUPPORT STAGES**

There are **four** stages in terms of pastoral levels of support in the College:

Pastoral Stages are overseen by the Assistant Head Wellbeing & Safeguarding alongside the Prep Pastoral Lead, Head of Sixth Form and Heads of Year. All work closely with the College Lay Chaplain, Education Mental Health Practitioner and Head of Learning Support. In addition to weekly pastoral meetings, all pupils are reviewed each half term both academically and in an SEMH context. Further information is provided for staff on Pastoral Stages in the Staff Handbook.

## **POSITION OF TRUST**

As a result of their knowledge, position and/or the authority invested in their role, all adults working with children and young people in education settings are in positions of trust in relation to the young people in their care. A relationship between a member of staff and a pupil cannot be a relationship between equals. There is potential for exploitation and harm of vulnerable young people and all members of staff have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification.

Wherever possible, staff must avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others, and report and record any incident with this potential. Staff must refer the College Staff Handbook, including the Staff Code of Conduct and the Social Media Policy for Staff.





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**External Agency Contact Information**

**The College points of contact for children who are the focus of concern are as follows:**

Reading website for child protection:

[Early help assessment - Brighter Futures For Children](#)

[Children's Single Point of Access | Reading Services Guide](#)

[Report concerns about a child - Brighter Futures For Children](#)

Wokingham:

[Care and support for children and families - Wokingham Borough Council](#)

[Report a concern about a child - Wokingham Borough Council](#)

West Berkshire:

[Children and Family Services - West Berkshire Council](#)

[West Berkshire Council - Concerned about a Child? - Information](#)

Bracknell:

[Report child abuse or concern about a child | Bracknell Forest Council \(bracknell-forest.gov.uk\)](#)

Oxfordshire:

[Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub \(MASH\) | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

[Children's social care request for service form | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

Children's Social Care (Local Authority):

- Bracknell: 01344 351582
- Oxfordshire: 0845 050 7666
- Reading (Children's Single Point of Access): 0118 937 3641
- Slough: 01753 690898 / 875591
- West Berkshire: 01635 503090
- Windsor and Maidenhead: 01628 683150
- Wokingham: 0118 908 8002



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Outside these hours – between 5.00 p.m. and 9.00 a.m. and on weekends and Bank Holidays – the Emergency Duty Team (which covers the whole of Berkshire) can be contacted on 01344 786543

Police Emergency – 999

Police Non-Emergency – 101

## **OFSTED Safeguarding Children**

08456 404046 (Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm)

[Whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:Whistleblowing@ofsted.gov.uk)

## **The College points of contact for children who are in need of help are as follows:**

Reading Early Help Assessment/Advice team [www.reading.gov.uk/earlyhelp](http://www.reading.gov.uk/earlyhelp)

Reading Children's Action Team: 0118 937 6545

Reading Services Guide:

<http://servicesguide.reading.gov.uk/kb5/reading/directory/home.page>

West Berkshire Help for Families Team: 01635 503090

<http://info.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=30030>

Wokingham CAF Team: 0118 974 6220

[www.wokingham.gov.uk/children-and-families/family-support/early-intervention-and-common-assessment-framework/](http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/children-and-families/family-support/early-intervention-and-common-assessment-framework/)

CAMHS Berkshire Health Care website: [www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/camhs/](http://www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/camhs/)

Children's Services Directory:

Reading: [www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/CAMHS/documents/reading-childrens-services-directory.pdf](http://www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/CAMHS/documents/reading-childrens-services-directory.pdf)

West Berkshire: [www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/camhs/documents/west-berks-childrens-services-directory.pdf](http://www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/camhs/documents/west-berks-childrens-services-directory.pdf)

Wokingham: [www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/camhs/documents/wokingham-childrens-services-directory.pdf](http://www.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/camhs/documents/wokingham-childrens-services-directory.pdf)

## **Extremism**

Department for Education dedicated helpline for staff and governors: 020 7340 7264 and [counter-extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:counter-extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk)



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## **Critical Incident Support Service**

CISS are notified by hospitals and/or Children's Services about critical incidents, and then contact schools to offer support such as major incidents/death of a pupil at the school.

Deborah Hunter  
Principal Educational Psychologist (PEP)  
0118 9376545  
deborah.hunter@reading.gov.uk

## ***Other useful contacts***

### **Disclosure and Barring Service**

PO Box 181, Darlington, DL1 9FA  
Tel: 01325 953795

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THIS POLICY**

The College monitors and evaluates its safeguarding policy and procedures through the following activities:

- Governing body visits to the College
- Safeguarding audits
- Senior leadership team discussion sessions with children and staff
- Pupil questionnaires
- Frequent scrutiny of attendance data
- Regular analysis of a range of risk assessments
- Regular analysis of appropriate provision for the fulfilment of other safeguarding responsibilities relevant to the College [e.g. sufficient account must be taken of the nature, age range and other significant features of the College, such as historical issues, in the provisions made for safeguarding].
- Frequent scrutiny of governing body meeting minutes
- Logs of bullying and/or racist behaviour incidents are reviewed regularly by the senior leadership team and the governing body
- Regular review of parental concerns and parental questionnaires
- Regular review of the use of pupil common rooms and clubs at lunchtime and after school

## **APPENDIX 1 – What School and College Staff Should Lookout For**

**Early help assessment:** Any child may benefit from an early help assessment, but all college staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help assessment for a child who:



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- is disabled or has certain health conditions 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
- is a young carer
- is 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 frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- has a family member in prison, or is affected by parental offending
- 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 returned home to their family from care
- is at risk of 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage
- is a privately fostered child
- is persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day

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

## **Physical Indicators**

- Injuries that the child cannot explain or explains unconvincingly, or where accidental injury is unlikely
- Bite marks; cigarette burns
- Sore or damaged eyes
- Bruising resembling hand or finger prints
- Blunt-instrument marks or iron burns
- Broken limbs (particularly in children under 12)
- Immersion burns/scalds where tide marks have been left.



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## **Behavioural Indicators**

- Child does not want you to ask parents about the injuries
- Fear of parent on approach, or fear of going home
- Covering limbs even in hot weather or reluctance to change
- Flinches when touched or approached
- Depression or mood swings that are out of character

## **Parental Indicators**

- Inconsistent explanations
- Several different explanations
- Delay in seeking treatment

**Emotional abuse:** 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 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.

## **Physical Indicators**

- A failure to grow or thrive
- Sudden speech disorders
- Delayed development – physical or emotional
- Stress related illnesses or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

## **Behavioural Indicators**

- Seeing themselves as unworthy of love and affection
- Excessive lack of confidence (not just shyness) or persistent low self esteem
- Poor peer relationships
- Compulsive nervous behaviour
- Self harming
- Wetting/soiling
- Excessive need for approval, attention, affection
- Forced marriage
- Abnormal attachment between child and parent



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**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 (including via the internet). 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 (also known as child-on-child abuse) in education, and all staff should be aware of it and of their college's policy and procedures for dealing with it.

## **Physical Indicators**

- Pain, itching, bruising or bleeding to genital or anal areas
- Sexually transmitted disease or recurrent genital discharge or urinary tract infections without apparent cause
- Stomach pains or discomfort when child is walking or sitting

## **Behavioural Indicators**

- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour
- Nightmares or bedwetting
- Self harming or eating disorders
- Sexual drawings, play or promiscuous language or behaviour (inappropriate to age and understanding)
- Reluctance to change clothes for sports etc.
- Sexual bullying of other children

**Neglect:** the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers);
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.



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## **Mental Health**

All staff should also be 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. Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. 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, 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 and that they have read the College Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy. If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following the safeguarding policy and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

The College Senior Mental Health Lead is Sean Hatton, Assistant Head (Wellbeing & Safeguarding)

## **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of sexual abuse and consent cannot be given. It 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. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power in the relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the 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 cyber bullying and grooming. However, it also important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse. It is also important to note that the experiences of boys and girls may differ in CSE situations.

Staff are aware of the signs and symptoms of CSE. Pupils are also taught to recognise the signs of CSE in PSHEE lessons. Parents are invited to attend Information evenings on the subject of CSE.

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

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) is a form of abuse and both occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into criminal activity. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive



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ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. In some cases, the abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage (such as increased status) of the perpetrator or facilitator. The abuse can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual and it should be noted exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and/or take place online.

CCE can include children being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country (county lines, see below), forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

## **County lines**

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 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 a number of 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 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.





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## **Children missing or absent from education policy (CME)**

The welfare of all of our children at St Joseph's College is our paramount responsibility. A child going missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, including sexual exploitation and so called 'honour based' violence. Every adult who works at the school has been trained to appreciate that he or she has a key responsibility for helping to keep all of the children safe at all times. Every member of our staff has read Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education and Annex B. Our staffing ratios are generous and are deliberately designed to ensure that every child is supervised the whole time that he or she is in our care.

The College will monitor all pupil absences from school and promptly address concerns about irregular attendance with the parent/carer. Two emergency contact numbers will be held for each pupil. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. The College will inform the local authorities of the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or have missed ten school days or more without permission. The school will contact the local authority when children join or leave the school at non-standard transition times. When pupils leave, the College will tell the LA to which school they are moving and when they will start, this is very important if they are changing to home-schooling.

## **Serious Violent Crime**

All staff must be aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include:

- increased absence from school
- a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups
- a significant decline in performance
- signs of self-harm or a significant change in well-being
- 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.

If staff have any concerns that a child may be involved with serious violent crime they must report these to the DSL.



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**Honour-based abuse (HBA) including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

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

Since February 2023 any form of marriage under the age of 18 is illegal in the UK and any actions towards this are encompassed under the term 'forced marriage.'

If in any doubts staff must speak to the designated safeguarding lead. 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 HBV, or already having suffered HBV.

If staff have concerns that FGM has taken place, as well as reporting this to the police, they must also activate local safeguarding procedures using existing and national and local protocols. Unless the teacher has a good reason not to, they must still consider and discuss any case of FGM with the DSL and involve children's social care as appropriate. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they must not be examining pupils.

Police contact details for reporting FGM:

Thames Valley Police: 101 or 999

NSPCC FGM Help line 0880 028 3550

[fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk)

**Child-on-Child Abuse**

Children are vulnerable to abuse by their peers. Such abuse must be taken as seriously as abuse by all members of staff and are subject to the same child protection procedures. The College will respond to allegations from within and outside the school or online recognising that, even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse, such cases may still be going on and simply not being reported. Staff must not dismiss abusive behaviour as normal between young people and must not develop high thresholds before taking action. The College take a zero tolerance approach and abuse must never be passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up', as this could lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and unsafe environments. All disclosures will be taken seriously, and individuals supported and kept safe so that no victim will be given



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the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment and no victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

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
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)

It may be appropriate to regard a young person's behaviour as abusive if:

- There is a large difference in power (for example age, size, ability, development) between the young people concerned or
- The perpetrator has repeatedly tried to harm one or more other children or
- There are concerns about the intention of the alleged perpetrator.

If the evidence suggests that there was an intention to cause severe harm to the victim, this must be regarded as abusive whether or not severe harm was actually caused.

If child-on-child abuse is disclosed to the College, this will be reported to the DSL, who in consultation with the Head will make the appropriate referral to Children's Services.

The College Anti-Bullying Policy, Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy and the pupil voice Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee are in place to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse. Such abuse must always be taken as seriously as abuse perpetrated by an adult. Whenever a child may have harmed another, all agencies must be aware of their responsibilities to both children and multi-agency management of both cases must reflect this. Agencies must also be alert to the possibility that a child or young person who has harmed another may well also be a victim. However, the interests of the identified victim must always be paramount consideration and professionals must



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also be alerted to the fact that there is likely to be a risk to children other than the current victim.

Staff working with children need clear guidance and training to identify the difference between appropriate and exploitative peer relationships. Staff must not dismiss some abusive sexual behaviour as 'normal' between young people and must not develop high thresholds before taking action.

Work with children and young people who abuse others, including those who sexually abuse/offend, must recognise that such children are likely to have considerable needs themselves and that they may pose a significant risk of harm to other children. Evidence suggests that children who abuse others may have suffered considerable disruption in their lives, been exposed to violence within the family, may have witnessed or been subject to physical or sexual abuse, have problems in their educational development and may have committed other offences. Such children and young people are likely to be children in need and some will, in addition, be suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm and may themselves be in need of protection.

Children and young people who abuse other children must be held responsible for their abusive behaviour, while being identified and responded to in a way that meets their needs as well as protecting others. Staff must be aware that gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with child-on-child abuse, this could, for example include a pupil being sexually touched/assaulted.

When dealing with cases of child-on-child abuse, both victims and perpetrators will be supported.

## **Physical Indicators**

- Physical injuries
- Compromised sexual health
- Poor mental health and emotional wellbeing

## **Behavioural Indicators**

- Going missing/running away
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Committing criminal offences
- Acting disengaged from school

## **Upskirting:**

'Upskirting' typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is now a criminal offence.



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## **Sharing of nudes or semi-nudes (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)**

One concern which has been around for some time now, but where the scale of the threat has increased considerably, is that of illegal sexting – or the transfer online of indecent images of children – by which the law means of any minor under the age of 18. There is the risk of young people being criminalised by committing criminal offences of which they were unaware – and in the process bringing on themselves and their families potentially life changing consequences through being cautioned or convicted and placed the Sex Offenders Register. The College aims to work with pupils to ensure they are aware of the consequences of sexting. The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Service (CEOP) operates a website with age-appropriate advice for everyone from very young children to parents and teachers. The website is [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk) and it contains videos, factsheets and other resources. A factsheet on the revenge porn offence is available at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/revenge-porn-be-aware-b4-you-share](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/revenge-porn-be-aware-b4-you-share). If the College has cause to believe that one of its pupils is involved in sexting, then an initial review meeting will be held with the pupil concerned and the Designated Safeguard Lead of the College. This is in line with the UK Council for Child Internet Safety ([UKCCIS](http://www.ukccis.org)).

The initial review meeting will consider the initial evidence and aim to establish: -

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

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

- The incident involves an adult
- There is reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example, owing to special educational needs)
- What you know about the imagery suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person's developmental stage, or are violent
- The imagery involves sexual acts and any pupil in the imagery is under 13



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- You have reason to believe a young person is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of the imagery, for example, the young person is presenting as suicidal or self-harming

If none of the above apply then the College may decide to respond to the incident without involving the police or children's social care (the College can choose to escalate the incident at any time if further information/concerns come to light). However, the College will always inform parents of any incident that may have taken place.

If a pupil becomes a victim of sexting, the College will ensure that they are supported in the appropriate manner. Parents will be informed at the earliest opportunity and support offered through the College Lay Chaplain, School Counsellor or external agencies such as NSPCC, Childline, CEOP, and the Children's Action Team, working with Reading Children's Single Point of Access.

## **Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment**

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable. It is important that all victims are taken seriously, offered appropriate support and kept safe. All staff are trained to manage a report of child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. It is important to explain that the law is in place to protect children and young people rather than criminalise them, and this should be explained in such a way that avoids alarming or distressing them.

It is important to note that children may not find it easy to tell staff about their abuse verbally. Children can show signs or act in ways that they hope adults will notice and react to. In some cases, the victim may not make a direct report. For example, a friend may make a report or a member of school or college staff may overhear a conversation that suggests a child has been harmed, or a child's own behaviour might indicate that something is wrong. If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told.

Sexual violence includes rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (intentionally touching another person in a way that is sexual. In each of these cases B does not consent to the sexual act and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. Sexual harassment is defined as "Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline.



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The College sees preventative education through PSHEE and RSE as key to tackling the issue of sexual violence and harassment, this is underpinned by the Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions Policy, the Anti-Bullying Policy and pastoral support system.

College staff are aware that:

- it is more likely that girls will be the victims of sexual violence and more likely that sexual harassment will be perpetrated by boys.
- children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) can be especially vulnerable. Disabled and deaf children are three times more likely to be abused than their peers.

They must also understand the importance of:

- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up
- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as "banter", "part of growing up", "just having a laugh" or "boys being boys"
- challenging behaviours (which are potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts, vaginas and penises. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

The College's approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment reflects and is a part of the broader approach to safeguarding. 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. Any concerns must be reported to the DSL immediately who in consultation with the Head, will decide the on the appropriate course of action.

The guidance in KCSIE provides effective safeguarding practice and principles for schools and colleges to consider in their decision-making process. Decisions are for the College to make on a case-by-case basis. The DSL or a deputy will take a leading role and use their professional judgment, supported by other agencies, such as children's social care and the police as required. The College will engage with both the victim's and the alleged perpetrator's parents or carers when there has been a report of sexual violence unless there is good reason not to.

If a pupil is a victim of sexual violence and harassment the College will ensure that the appropriate support is offered both internally and with external agencies.

## **Substance Abuse**

All staff must have an awareness of substance abuse linked to the likes of drug taking and alcohol abuse. Further guidance is included in our Substance Misuse Policy.

## **Domestic abuse**



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Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial, or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.

## **Homelessness**

Being homeless, or at risk of homelessness presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The College is aware of potential indicators of homelessness including: household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as a family being asked to leave a property. If staff are made aware, or suspect that a pupil may be at risk of homelessness they should talk to the DSL in the first instance. Whilst referrals to the Local Housing Authority should be progressed as appropriate, and in accordance with local procedures, this does not and should not replace a referral to Children's Services where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, in accordance with this policy.

## **Cyberbullying**

### **Definition**

Cyber-bullying takes place online, such as through social networking sites, messaging apps or gaming sites. Like other forms of bullying, it is the repetitive, intentional harming of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. (See also the College behaviour policy.)

### **Preventing and addressing cyber-bullying**

To help prevent cyber-bullying, we will ensure that pupils understand what it is and what to do if they become aware of it happening to them or others. We will ensure that pupils know how they can report any incidents and are encouraged to do so, including where they are a witness rather than the victim.

The College will actively discuss cyber-bullying with pupils, explaining the reasons why it occurs, the forms it may take and what the consequences can be.

Teaching staff are also encouraged to find opportunities to use aspects of the curriculum to cover cyber-bullying. This includes PSHEE and other subjects where appropriate.

All staff, governors and volunteers training on cyber-bullying, its impact and ways to support pupils, as part of safeguarding training

In relation to a specific incident of cyber-bullying, the College will follow the processes set out in the College behaviour policy. Where illegal, inappropriate or harmful material has





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been spread among pupils, the school will use all reasonable endeavours to ensure the incident is contained.

The DSL will consider whether the incident should be reported to the police if it involves illegal material, and will work with external services if it is deemed necessary to do so.

## **Examining electronic devices**

College staff have the specific power under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (which has been increased by the Education Act 2011) to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images or files on pupils' electronic devices, including mobile phones, iPads and other tablet devices, where they believe there is a 'good reason' to do so.

When deciding whether there is a good reason to examine or erase data or files on an electronic device, staff must reasonably suspect that the data or file in question has been, or could be, used to:

- Cause harm, and/or
- Disrupt teaching, and/or
- Break any of the school rules

If inappropriate material is found on the device, it is up to the staff member in conjunction with the DSL or other member of the senior leadership team to decide whether they should:

- Delete that material, or
- Retain it as evidence (of a criminal offence or a breach of school discipline), and/or
- Report it to the police\*

\* Staff may also confiscate devices for evidence to hand to the police, if a pupil discloses that they are being abused and that this abuse includes an online element.

Any searching of pupils will be carried out in line with:

- The DfE's latest guidance on [screening, searching and confiscation](#)
- UKCIS guidance on [sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#)

Any complaints about searching for or deleting inappropriate images or files on pupils' electronic devices will be dealt with through the College complaints procedure.

## **Missing pupils**

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. If a child goes missing, we will follow the procedures as detailed in the College 'Pupil Missing from Site Policy' which can be found [here](#).



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## **Appendix 2: Arrangements for Safeguarding during prolonged closure of the College.**

### **Context**

During times of emergency, whether local or national, the College may receive instruction to close for a significant period of time. For example, from 20 March 2020 parents were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The purpose of this appendix is to provide guidance for all stakeholders should another significant period of closure take place.

### **General opening information**

During a period of significant closure, the College Leadership Team will take advice and instruction from the government, Public Health England, and other relevant agencies (depending on the context of the closure). The College will always aim to remain open for as many students as possible and will reopen once we have received permission from the relevant authorities and the College Leadership Team and deemed it is safe to do so. During periods of significant closure, the College will remain open for those students for whom we have instruction; this may include, but not be limited to, children of 'key workers,' vulnerable children, or other categories named at the time.

The College will continue to have regard to the statutory safeguarding guidance Keeping Children Safe In Education (Sept 2023).

We will take advice and work with the local safeguarding partners.

Should the government publish guidance for Education and childcare settings in a period of national emergency, the College will follow the advice set out and update this document.

### **Vulnerable children**

Vulnerable children include those who have a social worker and those children and young people up to the age of 25 with education, health and care (EHC) plans.

Those who have a social worker include children who have a Child Protection Plan and those who are looked after by the Local Authority. A child may also be deemed to be vulnerable if they have been assessed as being in need or otherwise meet the definition in Section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

In the event of a significant period of closure, those with an EHC plan will be risk-assessed in consultation with the Local Authority and parents, to decide whether they need to continue to be offered a school or college place in order to meet their needs, or



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whether they can safely have their needs met at home. This could include, if necessary, carers, therapists or clinicians visiting the home to provide any essential services. Many children and young people with EHC plans can safely remain at home.

Senior leaders, especially the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputy) know who our most vulnerable children are. They have the flexibility to offer a place to those on the edge of receiving children's social care support where appropriate.

The College will continue to work with and support children's social workers to help protect vulnerable children. This includes working with and supporting children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children. The lead person for this will be: Sean Hatton.

The College will follow guidance as set by the government for attendance to the school site.

The College will encourage our vulnerable children and young people to attend school whether in person or remotely.

## **Attendance monitoring**

The College has returned to using the attendance and absence codes in use before the COVID-19 outbreak (set out on page 9 of the attendance guidance), in addition to the new category of 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)':

- pupils not attending a session who meet the criteria for 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' should be recorded using code X[footnote 4]
- schools should continue to use code X for non-compulsory school aged pupils who are not expected to attend a session, as they did before the outbreak

In the case of a significant period of closure the College and social workers will agree with parents/guardians whether children in need should be attending school – The College will then follow up on any pupil that they were expecting to attend, who does not. The College will also follow up with any parent or carer who has arranged care for their child and the child subsequently does not attend.

To support the above, the College will, when communicating with parents/guardians, confirm emergency contact numbers are correct and ask for any additional /carers and carers emergency contact numbers where they are available.

In all circumstances where a vulnerable child does not take up their place at school, or discontinues, the College will notify their social worker.



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## **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

The optimal scenario is to have a trained DSL (or deputy) available on site. Where this is not the case a trained DSL (or deputy) will be available to be contacted via phone or online video - for example when working from home.

Where a trained DSL (or deputy) is not on site, in addition to the above, a senior leader will assume responsibility for co-ordinating safeguarding on site.

This might include updating and managing access to child protection online management system, CPOMS and liaising with the offsite DSL (or deputy) and as required liaising with children's social workers where they require access to children in need and/or to carry out statutory assessments at the school or college.

It is important that all College staff and volunteers have access to a trained DSL (or deputy). The DSL should be contacted in the first instance on the telephone number listed in the key contacts.

The DSL will continue to engage with social workers, and attend all multi-agency meetings, which can be done remotely.

## **Reporting a concern**

Where staff have a concern about a child, they should continue to follow the process outlined in the school Safeguarding Policy and contact the DSL or Deputies where appropriate. This should be done verbally and followed up with a record on CPOMS.

Staff are reminded of the need to report any concern immediately and without delay.

Where staff are concerned about an adult working with children in the school, they should report the concern to the Head. If there is a requirement to make a notification to the Head whilst away from school, this should be done verbally and followed up with an email to the Head.

Concerns around the Head should be directed to the Chair of Governors, Hilary Buckle.

The College will continue to offer support in the process of managing allegations.

DSLs will continue to report concerns to the Children's Single Point of Access/Children's Social Care in the borough in which the child lives in the usual way.

During office hours call **01635 503190**

Out of office hours, Emergency Duty Team Tel: **01344 786543**



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## **Safeguarding Training and induction**

DSL training has resumed as usual will the DSL and Deputies refreshing their training in September 2024.

For the period COVID-19 measures were in place, a DSL (or deputy) who had been trained continued to be classed as a trained DSL (or deputy) even if they miss their refresher training.

All existing school staff have had safeguarding training and have read part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023). The DSL should communicate with staff any new local arrangements, so they know what to do if they are worried about a child.

Online safeguarding training is still available for staff working from home via Educare.

Where new staff are recruited, or new volunteers enter the College, they will continue to be provided with a safeguarding induction.

If staff are employed from another education or children's workforce setting to our school, we will take into account the DfE supplementary guidance on safeguarding children during the COVID-19 pandemic and will accept portability as long as the current employer confirms in writing that:-

- the individual has been subject to an enhanced DBS and children's barred list check
- there are no known concerns about the individual's suitability to work with children
- there is no ongoing disciplinary investigation relating to that individual

Upon arrival, they will be given a copy of Safeguarding Policy and other related policies outlined in the Safeguarding Policy, confirmation of local processes and a remote meeting with the DSL regarding College procedures.

## **Safer recruitment/volunteers and movement of staff**

It remains essential that people who are unsuitable are not allowed to enter the children's workforce or gain access to children. When recruiting new staff, the College will continue to follow the relevant safer recruitment processes for their setting, including, as appropriate, relevant sections in part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023) (KCSIE).

In response to COVID-19, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) made changes to its guidance on standard and enhanced DBS ID checking to minimise the need for face-to-face contact.



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Where the College are utilising volunteers, we will continue to follow the checking and risk assessment process as set out in paragraphs 304 to 311 of KCSIE. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been checked be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

The College will continue to follow the legal duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed or poses a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult. Full details can be found at paragraph 347 of KCSIE.

The College will continue to consider and make referrals to the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA) as per paragraph 350 of KCSIE and the TRA's 'Teacher misconduct advice for making a referral.

All referrals should be made by following the link at [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

It is essential from a safeguarding perspective that any school is aware, on any given day, which staff/volunteers will be in the school or college, and that appropriate checks have been carried out, especially for anyone engaging in regulated activity. As such, the College will continue to keep the single central record (SCR) up to date as outlined in paragraphs 268 to 277 in KCSIE.

## **Online safety in schools and colleges**

The College will continue to provide a safe environment, including online. This includes the use of an online filtering system.

Where students are using computers in school, appropriate supervision will be in place.

## **Children and online safety away from the College**

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

Online teaching should follow the same principles as set out in the Staff Code of Conduct.

The College will ensure any use of online learning tools and systems is in line with privacy and data protection/GDPR requirements.

The below should be adhered to when delivering virtual lessons, especially where webcams are involved:



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- Group sessions only - No 1:1 sessions without the permission of the Head or one of the College Deputy Heads. (1:1 sessions may be allowed for peripatetic music, LAMDA and mental health support sessions at the parent's discretion)
- Staff and children must wear suitable clothing, as should anyone else in the household
- Pupils should keep their camera on during lessons, unless parents/guardians have requested otherwise
- Pupils must keep their microphones turned off during lessons unless they are directed to turn on their microphone by the member of staff, to ask or answer questions
- Any computers used should be in appropriate areas
- If a member of staff is using their camera, they must ensure that the background is plain
  
- The live class should be recorded so that if any issues were to arise, the video can be reviewed
- Live classes should follow the school timetable
- Staff must only use Google Classroom, Google Meets and Microsoft Teams platforms as specified by the Senior Leadership Team and approved by our IT network manager / provider to communicate with pupils
- Staff should record attendance of any sessions held

All staff at the College should remind themselves of the following policies:

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Computer Usage Policy

## **Supporting children not in school**

The College is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its pupils.

Where the DSL has identified a child to be on the edge of social care support, or who would normally receive pastoral-type support in school, they should ensure that a robust communication plan is in place for that pupil.

Details of this plan must be recorded in the Pastoral Support Stages, and a record kept of the contact made usually via email.

The communication plans can include; remote contact, phone contact, or email. Other individualised contact methods should be considered and recorded.

The College and its DSL will work closely with all stakeholders to maximise the effectiveness of any communication plan.

This plan must be reviewed regularly (at least once a fortnight) and where concerns arise, the DSL will consider any referrals as appropriate.

The College will share safeguarding updates with parents and pupils as required.

The College recognises that school is a protective factor for children and young people, and the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of pupils and their



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parents/guardians. Teachers at the College should be aware of this in setting expectations of pupils' work where they are at home.

## **Supporting children in school**

The College is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all its pupils.

The College will continue to be a safe space for all children to attend and flourish. The Head will ensure that appropriate staff are on site and staff to pupil ratio numbers are appropriate, to maximise safety.

The College will refer to the Government guidance for education and childcare settings on how to implement social distancing and continue to follow the advice from Public Health England on handwashing and other measures to limit the risk of spread of COVID-19.

The College will ensure that where we care on site, we will ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

Staff and volunteers should be aware that they may identify new safeguarding concerns about individual children as they see them in person following school closures. Any concern should be reported to the DSL immediately.

## **Child-on-Child Abuse**

The College recognises that during the closure a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims.

Where the College receives a report of child-on-child abuse, they will follow the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE and of those outlined within of the Safeguarding Policy.

The College will listen and work with the pupil, parents/guardians and any multi-agency partner required to ensure the safety and security of that young person.

Concerns and actions must be recorded and appropriate referrals made.

## **Mental Health**

Negative experiences and distressing life events, such as the current circumstances, can affect the mental health of children and their parents. Where the College has children of critical workers and vulnerable children on site, and/or more children returning to school, schools we will ensure appropriate support is in place for them.

Those who will be working closely with the pupils will be in a position to identify children who might need additional support and liaise with the DSL to put this support in place.





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Mental health issues can bring about changes in a child's behaviour or emotional state which can be displayed in a range of different ways, all of which could be an indication of an underlying problem. This can include for example being fearful or withdrawn; aggressive or oppositional; or excessive clinginess. Support for pupils in the current circumstances can include existing provision in the College through the CLARITY programme, the Lay Chaplain or the Education Mental Health Practitioner, and if necessary, external agencies.

Staff should be aware of the impact the current circumstances can have on the mental health of those pupils (and their parents) who are continuing to work from home, including when setting expectations of children's work.

## **Contingency Planning**

The College will ensure that for individuals or groups of self-isolating pupils and pupils who are shielding, we follow government guidance related to coronavirus (COVID-19), remote education plans and work will be accessible via google classroom.

The College will continue to operate as normally as possible. In the event that restrictions in schools are needed to help contain the spread of the virus, we will refer to the contingency framework, which has been updated and outlines how schools should operate in the event of any restrictions.

Should this come back into effect the College will use these principles and guidance to decide if pupils are shielding or self-isolating:

- children and young people who have been classed as clinically extremely vulnerable due to pre-existing medical conditions have been advised to shield. Clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable) people are those considered to be at a higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus. Few if any children will fall into this category, but parents should follow medical advice if their child is in this category
- child or young person who lives with someone who is clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable), including those who are pregnant, can attend their education or childcare setting
- if a child or young person or staff member lives in a household with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable, as set out in the guidance on shielding, it is advised they only attend an education or childcare setting if stringent social distancing can be adhered to and, in the case of children, if they are able to understand and follow those instructions - this may not be possible for very young children and older children without the capacity to adhere to the instructions on social distancing. If stringent social distancing cannot be adhered to, we do not expect those individuals to attend
- children or young people should not attend if they have symptoms or are self-isolating due to symptoms in their household



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## **Appendix 3: The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputies**

The designated safeguarding lead should take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety). Their additional responsibilities include providing advice and support to other staff on child welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters, taking part in strategy discussions and interagency meetings, and/or supporting other staff to do so, and to contributing to the assessment of children.

### **Deputy designated safeguarding leads**

Any deputies are trained to the same standard as the designated safeguarding lead and the role should be explicit in their job description. Whilst the activities of the designated safeguarding lead can be delegated to appropriately trained deputies, the ultimate lead responsibility for child protection, as set out above, remains with the designated safeguarding lead, this lead responsibility should not be delegated.

### **Availability**

During term time and Holiday Club the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should always be available (during College hours) for staff in the College to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Generally, the safeguarding lead (or deputy) is expected to be available in person, however, in exceptional circumstances availability via phone and or Microsoft Teams or other such media is acceptable, in their physical absence a member of SLT will be available on site.

### **Manage referrals**

The designated safeguarding lead is expected to refer cases:

- of suspected abuse and neglect to the local authority children's social care as required and support staff who make referrals to local authority children's social care;
- to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required and support staff who make referrals to the Channel programme;
- where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required; and
- where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required. NSPCC - When to call the police should help understand when to consider calling the police and what to expect when working with the police.

### **Working with others**

The designated safeguarding lead is expected to:

- act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff;
- act as a point of contact with the safeguarding partners;



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- liaise with the Head inform them of issues - especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations; including being aware of the requirement for children to have an appropriate adult while being questioned or detained by the police (usually as parent, guardian or social worker)
- as required, liaise with 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
- liaise with staff (especially teachers, pastoral team, Tech Support, and special educational needs co-ordinators, on matters of safety and safeguarding and welfare (including online and digital safety and the filtering and monitoring processes of the College) and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies so that children's needs are considered holistically
- liaise with the Mental Health Support Team, where safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health
- promote supportive engagement with parents and/or carers in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including where families may be facing challenging circumstances
- work with the Head 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 the College.

This includes:

- ensuring that the 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
- 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.

## **Information sharing and managing the child protection file**

The designated safeguarding lead is responsible for ensuring that child protection files are kept up to date. Information should be kept confidential and stored securely in CPOMS.

It is good practice to keep concerns and referrals in a separate child protection file for each child. Records should include:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

They should ensure the file is only accessed by those who need to see it.



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Where children leave the College (including in year transfers) the designated safeguarding lead should ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible, and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term. This should be transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained. Receiving schools and colleges should ensure key staff such as designated safeguarding leads and SENCOs or the named person with oversight for SEN in colleges, are aware as required. Lack of information about their circumstances can impact on the child's safety, welfare and educational outcomes.

In addition to the child protection file, the designated safeguarding lead should also consider if it would be appropriate to share any additional information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving to help them put in place the right support to safeguard this child and to help the child thrive in the school or college. For example, information that would allow the new school or college to continue supporting children who have had a social worker and been victims of abuse and have that support in place for when the child arrives.

## **Raising Awareness**

The designated safeguarding lead should:

- ensure each member of staff has access to, and understands, the College Safeguarding Policy and procedures, especially new and part-time staff;
- ensure the Safeguarding Policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work the governing body regarding this
- ensure the Safeguarding Policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the College in this
- link with the safeguarding partner arrangements to make sure staff are aware of any training opportunities and the latest local policies on local safeguarding arrangements; and
- help promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children who have or have had a social worker are experiencing with teachers and College leadership staff

## **Training, knowledge and skills**

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 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 children's social care, so they:



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- understand the early help assessment process 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 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 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 the 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 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.

## **Providing support to staff**

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

## **Understanding the views of children**



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It is important that children feel heard and understood. Therefore, designated safeguarding leads 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 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.

## **Holding and sharing information**

The designated safeguarding lead should be equipped to:

- understand the importance of information sharing, both within the College and with other schools and colleges on transfer including in-year and between primary and secondary education, and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners
- understand relevant data protection legislation and regulations, especially the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR); and,
- be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals and understand the purpose of this record-keeping.

## **Appendix 4: Low Level Concern Policy**

(To be read alongside the Staff Code of Conduct)

### **Introduction**

At St Joseph's College, we take safeguarding very seriously. This includes ensuring that adults who work with children do so in a way that is in accordance with the ethos and policies set out by the College, including the Staff Code of Conduct. This policy sets out the detail and processes for staff regarding low-level concerns they may have.

### **Summary**

It may be possible that a member of staff acts in a way that does not cause risk to children, but is however inappropriate. A member of staff who has a concern about another member of staff should inform the Head (in their absence the Chair of Governors) about their concern using a Low-Level Record of Concern Form (SharePoint Homepage). If they cannot be contacted, the Chair of Governors should be contacted instead. If the concern is about the Head this must be reported to the Chair of Governors. Concerns about supply staff and contractors should be reported to the agency/business so potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

When a concern has been raised by a third party, the Head should:

- collect as much evidence as possible by speaking where possible with that person who raised the concern, to the individual involved and to any witnesses
- complete a regular review



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If a pattern is identified, the course of action taken might be internal disciplinary procedures or referring to LADO. The College should consider whether wider cultural issues enabled the behaviour to occur, and whether policies need revision or training is needed to prevent this happening again. Rationale for all decisions taken must be recorded.

## **Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2023**

The following is taken from Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2023:

*424. As part of their whole school or college approach to safeguarding, schools and colleges should ensure that they promote an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about all adults working in or on behalf of the school or college (including supply teachers, volunteers and contractors) are dealt with promptly and appropriately.*

*425. Creating a culture in which all concerns about adults are shared responsibly and with the right person, recorded and dealt with appropriately, is critical. If implemented correctly, this should:*

- *enable schools and colleges to identify inappropriate, problematic or concerning behaviour early*
- *minimise the risk of abuse, and*
- *ensure that adults working in or on behalf of the school or college are clear about professional boundaries and act within these*

*What is a low level concern?*

*426. The term 'low-level' concern does not mean that it is insignificant. A low-level concern is any 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, contrary to the school policy;*
- *engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or,*
- *humiliating children.*

*427. Such behaviour can exist on a wide spectrum, from the inadvertent or thoughtless, or behaviour that may look to be inappropriate, but might not be in specific circumstances, through to that which is ultimately intended to enable abuse.*

*428. Low-level concerns may arise in several ways and from a number of sources. For example: suspicion; complaint; or disclosure made by a child, parent or other adult within or outside of the organisation; or as a result of vetting checks undertaken.*

*429. It is crucial that any such concerns are shared responsibly and with the right person, and recorded and dealt with appropriately. Ensuring they are dealt with*



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*effectively should also protect those working in or on behalf of schools and colleges from potential false allegations or misunderstandings.*

## Clarity around Allegation vs Low-Level Concern vs Appropriate Conduct

### Allegation

Behaviour which indicates that an adult who works with children 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 may pose a risk of harm to children.

### Appropriate Conduct

- Behaviour which is entirely consistent with the organisation's Code of Conduct, and the law.

### Low-Level Concern

Any concern – no matter how small, even if no more than a 'nagging doubt' – that an adult may have acted in a manner which:

- Is not consistent with an organisation's Code of Conduct, and/or
- Relates to their conduct outside of work which, even if not linked to a particular act or omission, has caused a sense of unease about that adult's suitability to work with children

## Storing and use of Low-Level Concerns and follow-up information

Low Level Concern forms and follow-up information will be stored securely within the schools safeguarding systems, with access only by the Head and Senior Leadership Team. This will be stored in accordance with the school's GDPR and data protection policies.

The staff member(s) reporting the concern must keep the information confidential and not share the concern with others apart from the Head or those aware in the senior leadership team.

Low-Level Concerns will not be referred to in references unless they have been formalised into more significant concerns resulting in disciplinary or misconduct procedures.

Whenever staff leave St Joseph's College, any record of low-level concerns which are stored about them will be reviewed as to whether or not that information needs to be kept. Consideration will be given to:





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- whether some or all of the information contained within any record may have any reasonably likely value in terms of any potential historic employment or abuse claim so as to justify keeping it, in line with normal safeguarding records practice; or
- if, on balance, any record is not considered to have any reasonably likely value, still less actionable concern, and ought to be deleted accordingly.

<b>Low Level Concerns Form</b>	
<b>Name</b>	
<b>Role</b>	
<b>Date and time of completing this form</b>	
<b>Details of individual (including yourself for self-reporting) whom the concern is about</b>	
<b>Name</b>	
<b>Role</b>	
<b>Relationship to the individual eg manager, colleague</b>	
<b>Details of Concern</b>	
<p><i>Please include as much detail as possible. Think about the following: What behaviour and/or incident are you reporting? What exactly happened? Why does the behaviour and/or incident worry you? Why do you believe the behaviour and/or incident is not consistent with our Staff Code of Conduct?</i></p>	



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<b>Details of any children or young people involved</b>	
<b>Name</b>	
<b>For use by Head/DSL upon receipt of the concern</b>	
<b>Date and time concern received</b>	
<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Role</b>	
<b>Actions to be taken and follow-up</b>	



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**OTHER APPENDICES**

- 2.1 [Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 1: Information for all school and college staff](#)
- 2.2 [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: Advice for practitioners](#)
- 2.3 [Protecting children from radicalisation: the prevent duty](#)
- 2.4 [DfE Child Missing from Education \(September 2016\)](#)
- 2.5 Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- 2.6 Prevent Duty Risk Assessment
- 2.7 Visiting Speakers Policy
- 2.8 Staff Disqualification Declaration
- 2.9 Staff Safeguarding Procedures Declaration
- 2.10 New Staff Induction Ongoing Programme for Mentors
- 2.11 Low Level Concerns Reporting Form
- 7a Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- 7h E-Safety Policy