



CHILD PROTECTION POLICY 2015

1. Statement of Intent

St Joseph's believes that the protection of children should be an integral part of the ethos of the school, and that this should be a "listening" school, which seeks to create an atmosphere in which children feel secure, that their viewpoints are valued, and that they are encouraged to talk and are listened to. Our commitment to the protection of children flows from our common belief in the dignity and sanctity of every human life, clearly demonstrated in our Mission Statement as a Roman Catholic School.

Each child has a right to expect the highest level of care and protection, love and encouragement that we can give in order that they might grow towards maturity and fulfil their potential in a supportive and nurturing community where they are safe from harm.

St Joseph's will follow the procedures as laid down by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and Salford Diocese, will respect issues of confidentiality and will give priority to working together with other agencies to protect children in our care particularly those who have been identified as being at risk of child abuse.

In this statement, and policy, staff includes both teachers and any other person employed to work in the school who has contact with our children.

2. The role of the Headteacher and Governors

The Headteacher and Governors of the school will seek to fully support the role and responsibilities of the Designated Teacher for Child Protection through ensuring that:

- Staff are aware who is the Designated Teacher and the procedures to be followed have their full support
- Interagency procedures are known and followed
- Time is available for both the Designated Teacher and staff to be trained
- Time and the necessary resources are available for the Designated Teacher to carry out their role and responsibilities; and
- An annual report to Governors is provided which details the training undertaken during the year and monitors and reviews the school policy and in-school procedures

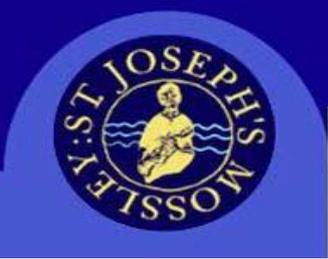
3. The Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher for St Joseph's is Sheila Partington and she will always be the first point of reference for any issue to do with child protection in the school. In the absence of Sheila, Dee Madden (Deputy Head) should be referred to.

We do not expect our Designated Teacher to be an "expert" in recognising and dealing with suspected child abuse. We also firmly support the view that it is for the police and Social Services to carry out any necessary investigations, not the school, after the matter has been referred to them.

At St Joseph's the Designated Teacher will seek to:

- Co-ordinate action in cases of child abuse both within school and with outside agencies
- Act as a consultant for school staff and outside agencies about particular children



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- Ensure that appropriate staff within the school know sufficient about the child at risk to cope with her/him within school and protect her/him
- Ensure that all staff coming into contact with a child who has or may be suffering abuse know what signs to look for and what to do
- Keep information regarding children on the Child Protection Register, informing staff appropriately
- Pass on information when children change schools; liaise with other agencies of the LSCB; and
- Arrange ongoing whole school awareness raising and staff development (including support staff), with regard to child protection

4. The Role and responsibilities of every member of staff will be to:

- Know who the Designated Teacher is
- Know and follow the in-school procedure
- Attend any in-school meetings when appropriate
- Monitor any vulnerable child who is in their care, and implement any child protection plan for a child who is on the "at risk" register
- Ensure that they do not treat any child they know to have been abused any differently from any other pupils
- Have a general awareness of the possible indicators of abuse, also being aware of the various forms abuse can take (verbal, physical, emotional, sexual); and
- Keep confidential any sensitive information that has been shared with them

5. If a member of staff has concerns about a child or a child has disclosed abuse:

Staff will follow the guidance given for individuals stated below, and the school will then follow the in-school child protection procedures.

If a child chooses to share information with a member of staff about an abusive incident or incidents, it is important that the child is supported and feels *she/he* has done the "right thing". It is, therefore, essential that we reassure the child and say the following in a natural, caring and genuine manner:

- "I BELIEVE YOU"
- "IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT"
- "I'M GLAD YOU TOLD ME"
- "I'M SORRY THIS HAS HAPPENED TO YOU"
- "I'M GOING TO HELP YOU"

However the teacher must not promise complete confidentiality.

We must bear in mind that we do not inadvertently contaminate possible criminal evidence. It is important to remember here that the school is not the investigative agency and our role is that of supporting the child.



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Any early discussions with the child involved should, as far as possible, adhere to the following basic principles:

- Listen to the child, rather than directly question her or him
- Never stop a child who is freely recalling significant events
- Make a note of the discussion, taking care to record the timing, setting and people present as well as what was said and sign them
- Record all subsequent events up to the time of the substantive interview (This is the interview with Social Services.) It is important to write up at least a rough draft immediately in order to retain as much accurate information as possible.

It is also important that the child does not have to repeat what she/he has said to other members of staff, e.g. Designated Teacher or Deputy Headteacher. One telling is quite traumatic for the child and if she/he is made to repeat the information, it may seem that she/he has not been believed. Also, it has probably taken a great deal of courage for the child to tell and she/he has chosen someone they feel will be sensitive and caring.

It is essential that the child is treated sensitively and with dignity and that they are told what is happening, and why, at each stage, and prepared for the next step. Questions should be answered as openly and honestly as possible. It is not good practice, for example, to telephone Social Services or the LSCB from the same room that the child is sitting in or to make promises to the child that you are uncertain will be kept.

In many instances, it will be beneficial to the child for the member of staff she/he chose to remain with the child and to be present as a support at the interview with the social worker as long as both agree. If, however, either the member of staff feels unable to do this, or the child does not want her or him present then there should be no pressure on either of them to comply.

6. Procedures followed after a disclosure.

- a) Notes of concern are collected from the class teacher and any other relevant information is collected. The class teacher should be kept informed, where possible, of what is happening
- b) All known information pertaining to the family is gathered - Child's name, address, DOB, mum and dad's names, other family members, G.P" and any other information about the family
- c) If the parents are still there, approach them and say that you are concerned and that you have no choice but to involve the Social Services (this should be done in private). It is often wise to discuss how to approach parents with Social Services prior to entering into discussion with them, particularly in complex cases
- d) Details will be passed on to the duty officer and if needed a register check is completed with Social Services
- e) The social workers will need to complete their own list of information to be gathered. They get in touch with the parents for permission to become involved. The child (who has remained in school) may (if necessary) be collected from school, with the parents and social worker, to be examined by a medical officer
- f) When all the information has been collected by everyone a case conference may or may not be called and the way forward is decided.



7. The impact of Child Abuse

- **Supporting Staff**

When a child shares information about an abusive incident with a member of staff, or when suspected abuse is confirmed, those adults involved are likely to feel very upset, emotionally drained and perhaps guilty. It is important that support is given where necessary and that colleagues are aware of the effects of involvement with an incident.

Although the details should be kept confidential, it is useful for people to be able to talk with someone and to express their feelings. It is likely that this will be necessary more than once and that support may need to be on going, especially if the case goes to court and the member of staff is a witness.

- **Supporting the child**

The school can provide a stable, secure environment for the child during the very stressful time of the investigation, the case conference and afterwards. In many cases the school will be the only area of the child's life where the normal routine continues.

Teachers have the skills and the sensitivity to help children during this difficult period and afterwards, but there is a need to be cautious regarding possible case evidence when talking with children.

8. Recording, storing and sharing information

The purpose of confidentiality is to benefit the child. When they choose to tell someone about an abusive situation, they do so on the probable expectation that help results. One of the roles of the school is to keep the suffering of the child to a minimum and a policy of confidentiality is an important part of a Child Protection Policy.

All former confidential information relating to pupils is stored in a locked cabinet. Only the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher have keys to this cabinet, and access to any information is through them.)

All confidential information is now recorded by the Head teacher on her computer. This is a private file and only she and Dee Madden have right of access to this file.

Relevant information will only be shared on a "need to know" basis with appropriate staff who have regular contact with the pupil concerned.

Once any information has, of necessity, been shared with a member of staff that member of staff must undertake not to discuss the information with anyone who is not in possession of the same information.

A separate incident/concerns book is to be held for the class teachers in which daily concerns can be noted, and to which any member of staff can contribute. (Critical Incident Log) This will be held centrally. The Designated Teacher will check this information to try and identify any emerging patterns of concerns, and track recurring anxieties relating to individual children to see if any further action needs to be taken.



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When a pupil transfers to another school in this area, the following action will be taken:

- a) If the child is on the "at risk" register, a meeting will be held with the Designated Teacher from the receiving school, at which all relevant information will be transferred. If possible, both Designated Teachers will attend the next case review; and
- b) If the child is not on the "At Risk" Register but either has been in the past, or if grave concerns exist, a note will accompany the child's information to the new school, which indicates that the Designated Teacher is available for an informal discussion if the new school considers it necessary. Confidential information on children in this position will be stored by this school for a period of five years. Unless the child is re-registered as "at risk" at the new school these records will be destroyed after that time.

If a child whom the school has concerns about, or who is on the At Risk Register "disappears", the school will make initial enquiries as to the whereabouts of the child, and refer the matter urgently to the Education Welfare Service if nothing can be discovered.

THE CRITICAL INCIDENT BOOK (KEPT UP TO DATE) WILL HAVE ANY MATTERS RELATING TO CHILD PROTECTION OR OTHER CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION MARKED WITH A RED TRIANGLE, WITH THE RELEVANT DATE. THE INFORMATION WILL BE COMMUNICATED TO SHEILA PARTINGTON WHO WILL KEEP THE DETAILS.

9. Staff Training

Very few teachers will have received any information regarding child protection from initial teacher training courses. Most teachers, therefore, will have little or no experience of child abuse when they enter the profession. Also procedures and practice are continually improved in the light of new knowledge. With this in mind, any new member of staff will be asked to undertake a short training session with the Designated Teacher on this policy and procedure.

All members of staff will be regularly updated by the Designated Teacher on any changes in Local Authority procedures, and a review and discussion of the schools response as outlined in this document, will take place every school year in September and be reported to the Governors.

The school undertakes to ensure that the Designated Teacher will be allowed to attend relevant training on behalf of all the staff in the school and will in turn be given whole staff training time to pass on that training to all staff.

10. Information for Parents

The following statement will appear in the school's prospectus to inform parents of the schools duty in this respect.

"Schools have an important part to play in the detection and prevention of child abuse, either physical, sexual or emotional. If at any time the staff of the school suspect that a child has been the subject of abuse, we have a legal obligation to report this to the Child Protection Unit. This requirement forms part of the local Authority's procedures for dealing with child abuse."

This role will be highlighted at the initial meeting for new Reception parents.



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11. Preventative Work in School

The school will make use of resources available in the authority to encourage the development of the school as a "listening school".

The PHSE curriculum will be examined to identify any areas in which direct teaching might be appropriate to support children in protecting themselves and in recognising the need to protect themselves.

Children need help to resist abuse and to become responsible, caring and confident adults. They need help to develop strategies for making judgements about people and recognising and expressing their own feelings. Decision-making skills, assertiveness and the development of a positive self-esteem are essential elements of prevention. Children do, however, need time to practice and develop these skills. Activities need to be planned and co-ordinated throughout the school.

12. Other important information

The Child Protection Handbook is available for all staff to refer to in cases of child protection. It is kept in the Head teacher's office.

13. Key advice

- Staff will be good role models for children in their care at all times.
- Staff will not befriend current and former pupils on Facebook or other social sites
- Staff will not put school information or photographs on Facebook or other social sites.
- Staff will adhere to the School internet safety policy at all times.
- Any photographs taken by staff will remain in school for use and not shown elsewhere.

14. Allegations against an employee

Procedures for Dealing with an Allegation against an Employee of Sexual or Physical Abuse are given by the LA and Salford Diocese. These have to be followed implicitly.

In cases where an allegation is made but found to be untrue the following steps may be taken:

- Discuss with child.
- Discuss with LSCB.
- Discuss with parents.
- Informal assessment of situation.
- Work in school with peers, class etc re the situation.

This policy is to be reviewed annually. Staff are to be updated on Child Protection duties annually in September.

Governors will also review their own roles in relation to Child protection each year.

Staff will attend training as needed to ensure the school can fully meet its duties and support any vulnerable child.

A Governor will always be accredited for Safe Recruitment.