

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Child Protection Policy



2026

Date	Action
July 2024	AS
July 2025	AS
July 2026	AS
	Review annually and as required

- Designated Safeguarding Lead for Children Protection (DSL): Alan Saunders (Headteacher)
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL): Mrs C Ford (Inclusion Manager).
- Also Mrs M Riches (DHT), Mrs C Tyerman (AHT), Miss K Rose (SOM)
- Governor responsible for Child Protection: Paula Craig

This policy should be read alongside:

- Staff Code of Conduct
- Behaviour Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- SEND Policy
- Equality Policy

This policy has been written in accordance with:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (current statutory guidance)
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Education Act 2002
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Prevent Duty Guidance
- The Prevent Duty (Section 26 Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015)

Section 2 – Mission Statement

"Learning, Growing, Belonging... Happy Together in God's Family."

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is a welcoming Catholic community where every child is valued as a unique child of God. We are committed to providing a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment in which every child can flourish spiritually, academically, emotionally and socially.

We seek to:

- promote the Gospel values of love, dignity, compassion and respect;
- provide an outstanding education which enables every child to achieve their full potential;
- nurture faith through worship, prayer and Catholic teaching;
- work in partnership with parents, carers, governors, the parish and external agencies;
- promote equality, inclusion and diversity;
- safeguard and promote the welfare of every child;
- ensure that all children feel safe, listened to and respected;
- prepare children to become responsible, resilient and compassionate citizens.

Safeguarding is fundamental to our Catholic mission and underpins everything we do.

Section 3 – Introduction

The governing body of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School recognises its statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Every adult working in or on behalf of the school has a duty to protect children from harm, promote their welfare and act in the best interests of every pupil.

This policy applies to:

- all teaching staff;
- support staff;
- governors;
- volunteers;
- supply staff;
- students on placement;
- contractors;
- visitors working with children.

The school adopts a child-centred approach to safeguarding. Decisions are always made in the best interests of the child, taking account of their wishes, feelings and lived experiences.

Our safeguarding culture is built upon:

- vigilance;
- professional curiosity;
- early identification;
- timely intervention;
- effective multi-agency working;
- listening to children;
- continuous safeguarding training.

Safeguarding includes protecting children from:

- physical abuse;
- emotional abuse;
- sexual abuse;
- neglect;
- child-on-child abuse;
- child sexual exploitation (CSE);
- child criminal exploitation (CCE);
- county lines;
- serious violence;
- domestic abuse;
- harmful sexual behaviour;
- online abuse;
- grooming;
- radicalisation and extremism;
- female genital mutilation (FGM);
- forced marriage;
- honour-based abuse;
- modern slavery;
- trafficking;
- mental health concerns linked to abuse;
- abuse facilitated through technology, including artificial intelligence (AI).

The school recognises that safeguarding extends beyond child protection and encompasses all aspects of children's welfare, health, attendance, behaviour, online safety and emotional wellbeing. All concerns will be taken seriously. No concern is too small if it relates to the safety or welfare of a child.

4. Safeguarding Principles and Definitions

4.1 Safeguarding Principles

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and every member of staff has a duty to act in the best interests of children at all times.

The school will ensure that safeguarding arrangements:

- place the child at the centre of decision-making;
- provide a safe, caring and inclusive learning environment;
- promote children's physical, emotional, mental and spiritual wellbeing;
- identify concerns at the earliest opportunity;
- provide timely Early Help where appropriate;
- work effectively with parents and partner agencies;
- take appropriate action to protect children from harm;
- maintain a culture of vigilance, openness and professional curiosity.

Safeguarding is embedded throughout the school's policies, curriculum, leadership and daily practice.

4.2 Definition of Safeguarding

In accordance with statutory guidance, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

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

Safeguarding is broader than child protection and includes preventative work designed to keep children safe from all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Child protection refers to the activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

4.3 Child-Centred Approach

All safeguarding decisions at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School will be made in the best interests of the child.

Staff will:

- listen carefully to children's wishes and feelings;
- take all concerns seriously;
- never assume someone else will act;
- avoid making assumptions about children or families;
- consider each child's individual circumstances;
- recognise that children may not always feel ready or know how to tell someone they are being abused.

The school recognises that some children are more vulnerable to abuse than others and may require additional support.

These include, but are not limited to:

- children with SEND;
- children with social workers;
- looked after and previously looked after children;
- young carers;
- children who are persistently absent;

- children experiencing domestic abuse;
 - children affected by substance misuse;
 - children experiencing mental health difficulties;
 - children from families experiencing poverty or homelessness;
 - children who are privately fostered;
 - children at risk of exploitation.
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4.4 Early Help

Early Help is support provided as soon as problems emerge.

All staff understand that providing help early can prevent concerns escalating into significant harm.

Indicators that a child may benefit from Early Help include:

- poor attendance;
- emerging mental health concerns;
- family difficulties;
- housing concerns;
- behavioural changes;
- parental conflict;
- bereavement;
- caring responsibilities;
- neglect.

Where appropriate, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will coordinate Early Help assessments and work alongside local agencies to improve outcomes for children.

4.5 Abuse and Neglect

Staff will be aware that abuse may be:

- physical;
- emotional;
- sexual;
- neglect.

Children may experience abuse:

- within the family;
- within institutions;
- from trusted adults;
- from strangers;
- online;
- from other children.

Abuse may occur in person, digitally or through a combination of both.

Staff will understand that abuse can occur over time or as a single incident.

4.6 Contextual Safeguarding

The school recognises that risks to children can arise outside their family environment.

These risks may occur:

- online;
- within the local community;
- during travel to and from school;
- through peer groups;
- through social media;
- through organised criminal groups.

The school will work with external agencies where contextual safeguarding concerns arise.

4.7 Online Safety

Online safety is an essential component of safeguarding.

The school recognises that technology offers significant educational benefits but also presents safeguarding risks.

Potential risks include:

- cyberbullying;
- grooming;
- sexual exploitation;
- online coercion;
- sextortion;
- exposure to harmful or illegal content;
- radicalisation;
- misinformation and disinformation;
- live-streaming abuse;
- online fraud;
- gaming-related risks;
- image-based abuse;
- sharing indecent images;
- technology-assisted abuse.

Children are taught how to stay safe online through the curriculum, assemblies, computing lessons, Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) and wider safeguarding education.

The Governing Body will ensure that appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place and regularly reviewed.

4.8 Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The school recognises that rapidly developing artificial intelligence technologies present both educational opportunities and safeguarding risks.

Staff will remain alert to safeguarding concerns arising from the misuse of AI, including:

- creation of false images or deepfakes;
- impersonation;
- online grooming;
- bullying;
- sexual harassment;
- image manipulation;
- misinformation;
- academic misuse;
- exploitation through AI-powered platforms.

Children will receive age-appropriate education about the safe, ethical and responsible use of emerging technologies.

Any safeguarding concerns involving AI will be managed in accordance with this policy.

4.9 Equality and Inclusion

Safeguarding applies equally to every child regardless of:

- age;
- disability;
- race;
- ethnicity;
- religion;

- sex;
- sexual orientation;
- gender reassignment;
- family circumstances;
- socio-economic background.

The school will make reasonable adjustments to ensure safeguarding procedures are accessible to all children.

Discrimination, prejudice or stereotyping will never prevent safeguarding action being taken.

4.10 Professional Curiosity

All staff are expected to exercise professional curiosity.

This means:

- asking appropriate questions;
- respectfully challenging where necessary;
- recognising patterns of concern;
- sharing information promptly;
- recording concerns accurately;
- seeking advice whenever unsure.

No member of staff should ever assume that another professional has taken responsibility for safeguarding concerns.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All adults working at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

5.1 The Governing Body

The Governing Body will ensure that the school complies with all statutory safeguarding duties and maintains an effective safeguarding culture.

Governors will:

- ensure safeguarding arrangements are effective and comply with current legislation;
- approve and annually review the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- appoint a suitably trained Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL);
- ensure adequate time, funding, supervision and resources are available for the DSL to fulfil the role effectively;
- appoint a nominated safeguarding governor to provide strategic oversight;
- ensure safeguarding is included within the school's strategic planning and self-evaluation;
- receive safeguarding reports at least annually whilst maintaining confidentiality;
- ensure appropriate safer recruitment procedures are implemented;
- ensure all required pre-employment checks are completed;
- monitor the school's Single Central Record;
- ensure robust procedures are in place for managing allegations against staff, volunteers and supply staff;
- ensure appropriate whistleblowing procedures are available and understood;
- ensure children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, through a broad and balanced curriculum;
- ensure suitable filtering and monitoring systems are in place and reviewed regularly;
- satisfy themselves that any technology used within school does not place children at increased safeguarding risk;

- ensure safeguarding considerations are embedded in all policies;
- monitor attendance, exclusions and children missing education as safeguarding indicators;
- ensure appropriate support is available for children with additional vulnerabilities;
- receive assurance that safeguarding training is current;
- ensure safeguarding is adequately resourced;
- fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities without becoming involved in individual child protection cases except where legally required.

Governors recognise that safeguarding is a standing item for governance and school improvement.

5.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for safeguarding within the school.

The Headteacher will:

- promote a strong safeguarding culture;
 - ensure safeguarding remains a strategic priority;
 - support the Designated Safeguarding Lead;
 - ensure policies are implemented consistently;
 - ensure safer recruitment procedures are followed;
 - promote staff wellbeing whilst maintaining children's safety;
 - ensure concerns are acted upon promptly;
 - ensure safeguarding forms part of induction for all staff;
 - ensure staff receive appropriate safeguarding training;
 - work collaboratively with safeguarding partners;
 - ensure children feel safe, respected and listened to;
 - monitor safeguarding practice across the school.
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5.3 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection.

Leadership

The DSL will:

- provide strategic leadership for safeguarding;
- promote a strong safeguarding culture throughout the school;
- ensure safeguarding remains child-centred;
- advise and support staff;
- promote professional curiosity;
- oversee safeguarding procedures;
- ensure safeguarding policies remain compliant with statutory guidance.

Managing Referrals

The DSL will:

- refer cases to Children's Social Care where appropriate;
- liaise with the Police;
- make referrals to Channel where radicalisation concerns exist;
- refer cases involving children missing education where appropriate;
- liaise with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) regarding allegations against adults;
- coordinate multi-agency safeguarding work;
- attend strategy meetings, child protection conferences and core groups.

Record Keeping

The DSL will ensure:

- safeguarding records are accurate;
- records are factual and contemporaneous;
- CPOMS records remain secure;
- records are transferred securely when pupils move schools;
- confidential information is shared appropriately.

Supporting Staff

The DSL will:

- provide safeguarding advice;
- support staff following disclosures;
- ensure staff understand reporting procedures;
- deliver safeguarding updates;
- identify training needs.

Curriculum

The DSL will ensure safeguarding education includes:

- healthy relationships;
- consent;
- online safety;
- exploitation;
- child-on-child abuse;
- extremism;
- mental health awareness;
- AI and emerging technologies.

Vulnerable Children

The DSL will monitor safeguarding arrangements for:

- children in need;
- children subject to child protection plans;
- children with social workers;
- looked after children;
- previously looked after children;
- children missing education;
- children with SEND;
- young carers;
- children at risk of exploitation.

Quality Assurance

The DSL will:

- audit safeguarding practice;
- review safeguarding records;
- monitor referral quality;
- review CPOMS regularly;
- report safeguarding trends anonymously to governors;
- evaluate safeguarding effectiveness annually.

Training

The DSL will:

- complete statutory DSL training every two years;
- undertake regular safeguarding updates;
- keep abreast of legislative changes;
- disseminate new safeguarding guidance promptly.

5.4 Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads

Deputy DSLs will:

- undertake the same level of safeguarding training as the DSL;
- provide safeguarding cover whenever the DSL is unavailable;
- contribute to safeguarding leadership;
- support staff with safeguarding concerns;
- attend safeguarding meetings where appropriate;
- maintain safeguarding records;
- contribute to quality assurance activities.

The ultimate responsibility for safeguarding remains with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

5.5 All Staff

Every member of staff has a responsibility to safeguard children.

All staff will:

- read and understand Part One of *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*;
- read the Staff Code of Conduct;
- understand the safeguarding policy;
- know the identity of the DSL and deputy DSLs;
- recognise indicators of abuse and neglect;
- maintain professional curiosity;
- report concerns immediately;
- record concerns accurately using CPOMS;
- never promise confidentiality;
- contribute to Early Help;
- support children who disclose abuse;
- maintain professional boundaries;
- understand whistleblowing procedures;
- challenge unsafe practice;
- understand safeguarding responsibilities relating to online safety;
- remain vigilant regarding emerging safeguarding risks, including AI-enabled abuse.

Safeguarding concerns must never be delayed because a member of staff believes someone else may report them.

5.6 Volunteers, Supply Staff, Students and Visitors

All adults working within school will:

- receive safeguarding information before working with children;
- know how to contact the DSL;
- understand reporting procedures;
- follow the Staff Code of Conduct;
- report concerns immediately.

Visitors will never investigate concerns themselves.

5.7 Children

The school believes every child has the right to:

- be safe;
- be listened to;
- be treated with dignity and respect;

- know who they can speak to;
- receive help when needed;
- be involved in decisions affecting them where appropriate.

Children's wishes and feelings will always be considered when safeguarding decisions are made.

5.8 Parents and Carers

The school recognises parents and carers as key partners in safeguarding.

The school will:

- work openly and honestly with families wherever appropriate;
- share concerns unless doing so places a child at increased risk;
- signpost support services;
- involve parents in Early Help where appropriate;
- maintain effective communication whilst prioritising the child's safety.

Where there is reason to believe informing parents would place a child at risk of significant harm, the school will seek advice from Children's Social Care before doing so.

6. Safer Recruitment, Staff Conduct and Managing Allegations

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is committed to ensuring that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children and that all adults working within the school maintain the highest standards of professional conduct.

Robust recruitment procedures form an essential part of safeguarding children.

6.1 Safer Recruitment

The Governing Body and Headteacher will ensure that safer recruitment procedures comply with current legislation and statutory guidance.

The school will:

- adopt safer recruitment practices for every appointment;
- ensure at least one member of every recruitment panel has completed recognised safer recruitment training (or refresher training where appropriate);
- scrutinise application forms for inconsistencies or unexplained gaps;
- obtain satisfactory references before appointment wherever possible;
- verify identity and right to work in the UK;
- verify professional qualifications where required;
- verify employment history;
- undertake enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks where required;
- undertake Children's Barred List checks where appropriate;
- complete prohibition from teaching checks where applicable;
- complete prohibition from management checks where required;
- undertake Section 128 checks where applicable;
- check overseas criminal records where appropriate;
- verify childcare disqualification requirements where relevant;
- complete online searches on shortlisted candidates in accordance with statutory guidance.

The purpose of online searches is to identify incidents or issues that may be explored during interview and to help assess a candidate's suitability to work with children.

All recruitment decisions will place safeguarding at the centre of the appointment process.

6.2 Single Central Record (SCR)

The school maintains an accurate and up-to-date Single Central Record.

The SCR includes all legally required recruitment and vetting information for:

- teaching staff;
- support staff;
- governors;
- volunteers where required;
- supply staff;
- contractors where appropriate;
- trainee teachers.

The Headteacher and Governing Body will regularly monitor the accuracy of the SCR.

6.3 Induction

All newly appointed staff will receive safeguarding induction before working unsupervised with children.

Induction will include:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- Staff Code of Conduct;
- Behaviour Policy;
- Online Safety Policy;
- Whistleblowing Policy;
- identity of the DSL and Deputy DSLs;
- reporting procedures;
- use of CPOMS;
- Part One (or Annex A where applicable) of *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*;
- safeguarding updates relevant to the role.

Agency staff, volunteers, students and contractors will receive safeguarding information appropriate to their role before commencing work.

6.4 Staff Code of Conduct

All adults are expected to maintain professional boundaries at all times.

Staff must:

- act as positive role models;
- maintain appropriate professional relationships;
- avoid behaviour which could be misinterpreted;
- never exploit their position of trust;
- treat children with dignity and respect;
- challenge discriminatory language or behaviour;
- maintain confidentiality appropriately;
- use school technology responsibly;
- follow the school's Online Safety Policy;
- report concerns immediately.

Staff must never:

- exchange personal contact details with pupils;
- communicate with pupils using personal social media accounts;
- transport pupils in private vehicles without authorisation;
- take photographs using personal devices;
- engage in inappropriate physical contact;

- use degrading or humiliating language.

Professional boundaries apply equally to face-to-face and online interactions.

6.5 Low-Level Concerns

The school promotes an open and transparent safeguarding culture in which all concerns about adults working with children are shared responsibly.

A low-level concern is any concern, no matter how small, that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct;
- may have caused a child to feel uncomfortable;
- could be perceived as inappropriate;
- may indicate emerging safeguarding concerns.

Examples may include:

- inappropriate language;
- poor professional boundaries;
- unnecessary one-to-one situations;
- inappropriate use of technology;
- favouritism;
- behaviour which could be misinterpreted.

Low-level concerns should be reported promptly to the Headteacher.

Concerns regarding the Headteacher should be reported to the Chair of Governors.

The Headteacher will:

- record all low-level concerns;
- review patterns of behaviour;
- determine whether further action is required;
- maintain confidential records securely.

Where appropriate, concerns may be managed through advice, supervision, additional training or formal procedures.

6.6 Allegations Against Staff

The welfare of children is paramount.

Any allegation that an adult working in school has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against a child;
- behaved towards a child in a manner indicating they may pose a risk of harm;
- behaved or may have behaved in a way indicating they may not be suitable to work with children,

must be reported immediately.

Allegations against staff must be reported immediately to the Headteacher.

Allegations against the Headteacher must be reported immediately to the Chair of Governors.

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be contacted promptly where required by statutory guidance.

No investigation will be undertaken by the school before discussion with the LADO unless specifically advised.

The school will work closely with:

- Children's Social Care;
- Police;
- the Local Authority;
- regulatory bodies where appropriate.

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout any investigation.

6.7 Concerns About Staff Conduct Outside School

The school recognises that safeguarding concerns may arise from behaviour outside the workplace.

Where staff behaviour outside school:

- suggests a risk to children;
- damages public confidence;
- breaches professional standards;
- indicates unsuitability to work with children,

appropriate action will be taken in accordance with statutory guidance.

6.8 Whistleblowing

All staff have a professional responsibility to report unsafe practice.

Staff should never assume someone else will report a concern.

Concerns may relate to:

- unsafe safeguarding practice;
- professional misconduct;
- abuse of authority;
- breaches of policy;
- failures to act;
- inappropriate behaviour towards children.

No member of staff will suffer detriment for raising genuine safeguarding concerns.

The school promotes a culture where concerns can be raised without fear of victimisation.

Where concerns cannot be resolved internally, staff may contact:

- the Local Authority;
 - the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line;
 - Teaching Regulation Agency where appropriate.
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6.9 Visitors and Contractors

Visitors and contractors will:

- sign in on arrival;
- wear visitor identification;
- receive safeguarding information;
- remain supervised where appropriate;
- understand reporting procedures.

Any visitor causing safeguarding concerns will be asked to leave the premises immediately and appropriate action will be taken.

6.10 Agency and Supply Staff

The school recognises that agency staff play an important safeguarding role.

Before commencing work, agency staff will:

- receive safeguarding information;
- know the identity of the DSL;
- understand reporting procedures;
- receive relevant school safeguarding documentation.

The school will seek written assurance from agencies that all required recruitment checks have been completed.

7. Recognising Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

All staff must be alert to the signs that a child may be experiencing abuse, neglect or exploitation. Staff should understand that children may not disclose abuse directly and that indicators may be subtle, cumulative or attributed to other factors. Any concern, however small, should be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Abuse may be perpetrated by adults or by other children. It may occur in person, online or through a combination of both.

The school recognises that safeguarding concerns rarely occur in isolation. A child may experience multiple forms of abuse simultaneously.

7.1 Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is the deliberate infliction of physical harm upon a child.

Indicators may include:

- unexplained injuries;
- injuries inconsistent with the explanation provided;
- frequent bruising or burns;
- bite marks;
- fractures;
- fear of going home;
- reluctance to change for PE;
- aggressive or withdrawn behaviour.

Staff should never investigate injuries themselves but should accurately record observations and report concerns immediately.

7.2 Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child resulting in severe and persistent adverse effects on emotional development.

Indicators may include:

- excessive anxiety;
- low self-esteem;
- developmental delay;
- social withdrawal;
- self-harm;
- extreme attention-seeking;

- fearfulness;
- lack of confidence;
- inappropriate emotional responses.

Emotional abuse may occur alongside other forms of abuse.

7.3 Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child understands what is happening.

Sexual abuse includes:

- contact abuse;
- non-contact abuse;
- grooming;
- online sexual abuse;
- exploitation through technology;
- encouraging children to watch sexual activity;
- making, possessing or sharing indecent images of children.

Indicators may include:

- age-inappropriate sexual knowledge;
- sexualised behaviour;
- sexually transmitted infections;
- pregnancy;
- sudden behavioural changes;
- unexplained gifts or money;
- anxiety regarding specific individuals;
- reluctance to participate in physical activities.

Staff should understand that children may not recognise they are being abused.

7.4 Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs.

Indicators may include:

- persistent hunger;
- poor hygiene;
- inadequate clothing;
- untreated medical conditions;
- poor attendance;
- tiredness;
- developmental delay;
- poor supervision;
- unsafe home conditions.

Neglect may be difficult to recognise because it often develops gradually over time.

7.5 Child-on-Child Abuse

The school recognises that children are capable of abusing other children.

Child-on-child abuse will never be dismissed as:

- banter;

- horseplay;
- growing up;
- part of adolescence.

Child-on-child abuse may include:

- bullying;
- cyberbullying;
- prejudice-based abuse;
- physical abuse;
- sexual violence;
- sexual harassment;
- harmful sexual behaviour;
- image-based abuse;
- initiation or hazing;
- coercive behaviour;
- emotional abuse;
- abuse within intimate relationships;
- online abuse;
- sextortion.

All incidents will be taken seriously.

Victims will be supported while appropriate action is taken regarding those responsible. The wishes and feelings of the victim will remain central to decision-making.

7.6 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse.

Children may be manipulated or coerced into sexual activity in exchange for:

- money;
- gifts;
- affection;
- accommodation;
- drugs;
- alcohol;
- status;
- protection.

Staff should remain alert to indicators including:

- missing episodes;
 - unexplained gifts;
 - older associates;
 - secrecy regarding relationships;
 - changes in behaviour;
 - increased online activity;
 - unexplained mobile phones;
 - deterioration in school attendance.
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7.7 Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Child Criminal Exploitation occurs where an individual or group manipulates a child into criminal activity.

Examples include:

- county lines;
- drug supply;
- theft;
- organised crime;
- financial exploitation;
- violence.

Children involved in criminal exploitation are victims and require safeguarding.

Indicators may include:

- unexplained money;
 - missing school;
 - travelling to unfamiliar locations;
 - carrying weapons;
 - unexplained injuries;
 - multiple mobile phones;
 - association with older individuals.
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7.8 County Lines

County lines involves organised criminal networks exploiting children to transport drugs or money.

Children may be:

- groomed;
- threatened;
- assaulted;
- trafficked;
- sexually exploited.

Staff should be aware that children may not recognise they are victims.

7.9 Domestic Abuse

Children can be seriously affected by witnessing domestic abuse.

Exposure may impact upon:

- emotional wellbeing;
- behaviour;
- attendance;
- relationships;
- educational achievement.

The school will work with partner agencies to support affected children.

7.10 Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB)

The school recognises that children may display inappropriate or harmful sexual behaviour.

Behaviour will always be considered within the child's developmental stage.

Staff will never dismiss concerning sexual behaviour as curiosity without appropriate assessment.

The school will work alongside Children's Social Care and specialist agencies where necessary.

7.11 Online Abuse

Online abuse may occur without the child leaving home.

Risks include:

- grooming;
- sexual exploitation;
- coercion;
- cyberbullying;
- image-based abuse;
- sextortion;
- extremist material;
- gaming exploitation;
- livestream abuse;
- financial scams targeting children;
- deepfake technology;
- AI-generated abuse.

Staff should understand that online abuse frequently continues into school and may have significant safeguarding implications.

7.12 Artificial Intelligence (AI) Enabled Abuse

The school recognises that rapidly evolving artificial intelligence presents new safeguarding challenges.

Risks include:

- AI-generated indecent images;
- deepfake videos;
- voice cloning;
- impersonation;
- online grooming;
- misinformation;
- manipulation;
- automated bullying;
- exploitation through AI chatbots.

Staff will remain professionally curious where AI may have facilitated abuse.

Children will receive age-appropriate education regarding safe and responsible use of AI technologies.

7.13 Mental Health

All staff should be aware that mental health concerns may indicate that a child has experienced abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Mental health concerns alone do not necessarily indicate abuse.

However, persistent changes in behaviour should always be considered alongside safeguarding concerns.

Staff should report concerns to the DSL.

7.14 Children Missing Education (CME)

Children missing education are at increased risk of:

- abuse;

- neglect;
- exploitation;
- forced marriage;
- child criminal exploitation;
- radicalisation.

The school maintains robust attendance procedures and investigates unexplained absences promptly.

Persistent absence will always be considered as a potential safeguarding concern.

7.15 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is illegal and constitutes child abuse.

All staff should be alert to indicators including:

- extended visits abroad;
- requests for prolonged leave;
- discussions regarding ceremonies;
- difficulties walking or sitting;
- repeated urinary infections.

Teachers have a statutory duty to report known cases of FGM in girls under 18 directly to the Police.

7.16 Forced Marriage and Honour-Based Abuse

Forced marriage and honour-based abuse are forms of child abuse.

Indicators may include:

- sudden restrictions on freedom;
- family conflict;
- withdrawal from education;
- fear of travel abroad;
- excessive family control.

Staff must seek advice from the DSL immediately.

Parents should not normally be informed before specialist advice has been obtained.

7.17 Radicalisation and Extremism

The school has a statutory duty under the Prevent Duty to protect children from radicalisation.

Staff will receive Prevent training and remain alert to:

- extremist ideology;
- significant changes in behaviour;
- isolation;
- concerning online activity;
- intolerance;
- extremist language.

Concerns will be discussed with the DSL who will consider referral to Channel where appropriate.

7.18 Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Children may be trafficked for:

- criminal exploitation;
- sexual exploitation;
- domestic servitude;
- forced labour.

Indicators include:

- repeated missing episodes;
- unexplained travel;
- fearfulness;
- poor living conditions;
- control by others.

Any concerns will be treated as safeguarding matters requiring immediate action.

8. Reporting Concerns, Responding to Disclosures and Record Keeping

8.1 Reporting Safeguarding Concerns

All staff have a responsibility to act immediately if they have any concern about the welfare or safety of a child.

Staff must never:

- assume someone else has reported the concern;
- investigate concerns themselves;
- delay reporting whilst seeking additional evidence;
- promise confidentiality to a child.

If a member of staff has any concern that a child may be:

- suffering harm;
- likely to suffer harm;
- at risk of abuse;
- at risk of neglect;
- at risk of exploitation;
- at risk of radicalisation;
- experiencing online abuse;
- experiencing child-on-child abuse;

they must report the concern immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or, in their absence, a Deputy DSL.

Where there is an immediate risk of significant harm and a DSL cannot be contacted, staff must make a referral directly to Children's Social Care or the Police and inform the DSL as soon as possible thereafter.

Safeguarding concerns must always take precedence over all other duties.

8.2 Immediate Risk of Harm

If a child is believed to be at immediate risk of significant harm, staff must take urgent action.

This may include contacting:

- Children's Social Care;

- the Police by calling **999** where emergency intervention is required;
- emergency medical services where appropriate.

No member of staff requires permission to make a safeguarding referral where delay could place a child at further risk.

8.3 Responding to a Disclosure

Children may choose to disclose abuse at unexpected times.

Staff should respond calmly and sensitively.

When a child makes a disclosure, staff should:

- remain calm;
- listen carefully;
- allow the child to speak freely;
- take the child seriously;
- reassure the child they have done the right thing;
- explain what will happen next;
- tell the child only those people who need to know will be informed;
- record the disclosure accurately;
- report immediately to the DSL.

Staff must not:

- interrupt unnecessarily;
- ask leading questions;
- investigate;
- express disbelief;
- criticise alleged perpetrators;
- make promises they cannot keep;
- promise confidentiality.

Open questions such as:

"Tell me what happened."

or

"Is there anything else you would like me to know?"

may be used where clarification is necessary.

The pace of the disclosure should always be determined by the child.

8.4 Recording Concerns

Accurate recording is essential.

All safeguarding concerns will be recorded using the school's safeguarding recording system (**CPOMS**) as soon as possible after the concern arises.

Records should include:

- date;
- time;
- location;
- people present;
- factual observations;
- exact words used by the child wherever possible;

- actions taken;
- name and signature (or electronic equivalent) of the member of staff.

Records must:

- be factual;
- be clear;
- distinguish between fact, opinion and professional judgement;
- avoid assumptions;
- be completed promptly.

Body maps should be completed where appropriate.

Photographs of injuries will only be taken where authorised within statutory guidance.

8.5 Professional Curiosity

Staff should exercise professional curiosity when safeguarding concerns arise.

This includes:

- recognising patterns;
- asking appropriate questions;
- respectfully challenging explanations where necessary;
- considering cumulative concerns;
- remaining alert to disguised compliance.

No concern is too small, and several low-level concerns may indicate significant safeguarding issues when viewed collectively.

8.6 The Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead Following a Referral

Upon receiving a safeguarding concern, the DSL will:

- review all available information;
- consider the child's wishes and feelings;
- assess risk;
- consult with deputy DSLs where appropriate;
- seek advice from Children's Social Care if necessary;
- determine whether Early Help is appropriate;
- make referrals where statutory thresholds are met;
- maintain accurate records of decisions;
- continue monitoring where referral thresholds are not met.

The rationale for all safeguarding decisions will be clearly recorded.

8.7 Early Help

Where concerns do not meet statutory intervention thresholds but indicate additional needs, the DSL will consider Early Help.

Early Help may include:

- family support;
- pastoral support;
- attendance interventions;
- SEND support;

- mental health services;
- Early Help Assessment;
- multi-agency planning.

Providing support at the earliest opportunity is central to safeguarding.

8.8 Referrals to Children's Social Care

Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, the DSL will make an immediate referral to Children's Social Care.

Referrals should not be delayed because:

- additional information is being sought;
- parents disagree;
- evidence is incomplete.

Parents will usually be informed unless doing so would:

- place the child at greater risk;
- compromise a criminal investigation;
- increase the likelihood of harm.

Advice will always be sought from Children's Social Care where uncertainty exists.

8.9 Escalation

The school recognises that professional disagreements sometimes occur.

Where staff believe sufficient safeguarding action has not been taken, they should:

- discuss concerns with the DSL;
- escalate concerns to the Headteacher if necessary;
- utilise local safeguarding partnership escalation procedures;
- make direct referrals where appropriate.

Children's welfare must remain paramount.

8.10 Information Sharing

Effective safeguarding depends upon timely and appropriate information sharing.

The school will share information in accordance with:

- Data Protection Act 2018;
- UK GDPR;
- statutory safeguarding guidance;
- Information Sharing Advice for Practitioners.

Information will be:

- proportionate;
- necessary;
- relevant;
- accurate;
- timely;
- secure.

Consent is not required where obtaining it would place a child at increased risk or where there is another lawful basis for sharing information to safeguard a child.

8.11 Confidentiality

Safeguarding information is confidential.

However, confidentiality must never prevent information being shared where a child may be at risk. Staff should only share safeguarding information with those who need to know in order to protect children.

Children should never be promised absolute confidentiality.

8.12 Record Keeping

The school maintains secure safeguarding records separately from educational records.

Safeguarding records will:

- be confidential;
- be stored securely;
- be accessible only to authorised staff;
- comply with data protection legislation;
- provide an accurate chronology of concerns.

Records will be retained and disposed of in accordance with statutory requirements.

8.13 Transfer of Child Protection Records

When a pupil transfers to another school:

- safeguarding records will be transferred securely to the receiving Designated Safeguarding Lead;
- records will be transferred as soon as possible;
- receipt of records will be confirmed;
- where appropriate, the DSL will speak directly with the receiving DSL to ensure continuity of safeguarding support.

The original safeguarding file will not be given to parents.

8.14 Attendance and Safeguarding

Poor attendance may be an indicator of safeguarding concerns.

The school will:

- monitor attendance closely;
- investigate unexplained absence promptly;
- identify patterns of persistent absence;
- consider safeguarding risks associated with non-attendance;
- work with external agencies where necessary.

Children missing education will be managed in accordance with statutory guidance.

8.15 Child Protection Conferences and Multi-Agency Working

The school will participate fully in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

This includes attendance at:

- Child Protection Conferences;
- Core Group Meetings;
- Child in Need Meetings;
- Team Around the Family meetings;
- Early Help reviews;
- Strategy Meetings where required.

The school recognises that effective safeguarding depends upon timely information sharing, professional challenge and collaborative working.

9. Supporting Children and Promoting Welfare

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School recognises that safeguarding extends beyond protecting children from abuse. It includes promoting children's overall welfare, helping them achieve the best possible outcomes and ensuring they feel safe, valued and supported.

The school aims to provide a nurturing, inclusive environment where every child is encouraged to thrive academically, emotionally, socially and spiritually.

9.1 Creating a Safe Environment

The school is committed to creating an environment where every child:

- feels safe;
- feels listened to;
- knows who to speak to if worried;
- is treated with dignity and respect;
- experiences positive relationships with trusted adults;
- understands how to keep themselves safe;
- develops resilience and confidence.

Safeguarding is embedded within:

- leadership;
 - curriculum;
 - pastoral care;
 - behaviour systems;
 - attendance procedures;
 - online safety education;
 - wider school culture.
-

9.2 Listening to the Voice of the Child

The school believes that children should be actively involved in decisions affecting their lives wherever appropriate.

Staff will:

- listen carefully to children's views;
- take their wishes and feelings seriously;
- communicate in age-appropriate ways;
- consider children's individual needs;
- provide opportunities for children to express concerns safely.

Children will be reminded regularly of trusted adults they can approach if they are worried.

The school recognises that some children may communicate through behaviour rather than words.

9.3 Supporting Children Experiencing Abuse

Children who have experienced abuse or neglect may experience difficulties affecting:

- emotional wellbeing;
- behaviour;
- attendance;
- learning;
- friendships;
- self-esteem.

The school will provide:

- consistent adult support;
- predictable routines;
- sensitive behaviour management;
- appropriate pastoral care;
- referrals to specialist services where appropriate;
- opportunities for children to feel heard.

Safeguarding concerns will always take precedence over disciplinary matters.

9.4 Early Help

The school recognises that identifying concerns early significantly improves outcomes for children.

Staff will remain alert to children who may benefit from additional support because of:

- family difficulties;
- poor attendance;
- emerging mental health concerns;
- poverty;
- housing instability;
- parental substance misuse;
- domestic abuse;
- bereavement;
- caring responsibilities;
- social isolation.

The DSL will coordinate Early Help where appropriate and work collaboratively with partner agencies.

9.5 Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

The school is committed to promoting positive mental health for all pupils.

Mental health difficulties may arise from many different circumstances.

Staff should understand that:

- mental health concerns alone do not indicate abuse;
- however, changes in mental health may be an indicator that safeguarding concerns exist.

Staff will remain alert to indicators including:

- persistent sadness;
- anxiety;

- withdrawal;
- significant behavioural change;
- self-harm;
- suicidal ideation;
- eating difficulties;
- emotional dysregulation.

Where concerns arise, staff will:

- report concerns to the DSL;
- work with parents where appropriate;
- involve external agencies where necessary;
- support the child through pastoral provision.

The school promotes resilience, emotional literacy and positive wellbeing through the curriculum and wider school life.

9.6 Attendance as a Safeguarding Priority

The school recognises that good attendance is an essential safeguarding measure.

Poor attendance may indicate:

- neglect;
- exploitation;
- domestic abuse;
- mental health concerns;
- child criminal exploitation;
- child sexual exploitation;
- family difficulties.

Attendance will be monitored carefully.

Patterns of:

- persistent absence;
- severe absence;
- repeated lateness;
- unexplained absence;

will be investigated promptly.

The DSL will be informed where safeguarding concerns emerge.

9.7 Children Missing Education (CME)

Children missing education are at increased risk of:

- abuse;
- neglect;
- exploitation;
- radicalisation;
- trafficking;
- forced marriage;
- child criminal exploitation.

The school will:

- investigate unexplained absence promptly;
 - work closely with the Local Authority;
 - follow statutory procedures when children leave the school roll;
 - maintain accurate admission and attendance registers.
-

9.8 Children with Additional Vulnerabilities

Some children face increased safeguarding risks.

These include:

- children with SEND;
- children with social workers;
- looked after children;
- previously looked after children;
- young carers;
- children living with domestic abuse;
- children living in temporary accommodation;
- children from military families;
- refugee and asylum-seeking children;
- children at risk of exploitation;
- children experiencing discrimination.

Staff should recognise that additional vulnerabilities may affect a child's ability to recognise abuse or seek help.

Safeguarding responses will always take account of individual needs.

9.9 Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The Governing Body recognises that children with SEND are statistically more likely to experience abuse.

Additional barriers may include:

- communication difficulties;
- assumptions regarding behaviour;
- dependence upon adults;
- reduced understanding of risk;
- social isolation.

Safeguarding procedures for children with SEND will:

- be personalised;
- take account of communication needs;
- ensure children can express their wishes and feelings;
- involve specialist professionals where appropriate.

No safeguarding concern will be dismissed because of a child's disability.

9.10 Looked After and Previously Looked After Children

The school recognises that looked after and previously looked after children often have increased safeguarding needs.

The school will:

- work closely with the Virtual School;
- support Personal Education Plans (PEPs);
- liaise with social workers;
- promote educational achievement;
- ensure stability and consistency.

The Designated Teacher will work closely with the DSL to support these pupils.

9.11 Young Carers

The school recognises that young carers may experience:

- emotional strain;
- anxiety;
- fatigue;
- reduced attendance;
- social isolation.

Young carers will be identified sensitively and supported appropriately.

9.12 Behaviour and Safeguarding

The school recognises that behaviour can communicate unmet need. When responding to behaviour, staff will consider whether safeguarding concerns may be contributing factors.

Behaviour management will:

- be fair;
- proportionate;
- restorative where appropriate;
- trauma-informed;
- consistent with safeguarding principles.

Suspension or exclusion will not replace appropriate safeguarding intervention.

9.13 Anti-Bullying (see Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy)

Bullying is never acceptable.

The school will take all reports seriously.

Bullying may include:

- physical;
- verbal;
- emotional;
- racist;
- homophobic;
- biphobic;
- transphobic;
- disability-related;
- sexist;
- online bullying.

Repeated bullying may constitute child-on-child abuse and will be managed through safeguarding procedures where appropriate.

9.14 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Every child has the right to feel safe regardless of:

- race;
- religion;
- ethnicity;
- disability;
- sex;
- sexual orientation;
- gender reassignment;
- family background.

The school will challenge prejudice, discrimination and hate incidents promptly. Children will be encouraged to value diversity and respect others.

9.15 The Curriculum

Safeguarding education is embedded throughout the curriculum.

Children are taught:

- healthy relationships;
- consent;
- online safety;
- digital citizenship;
- recognising abuse;
- personal safety;
- mental wellbeing;
- anti-bullying;
- road safety;
- substance misuse awareness;
- financial awareness;
- appropriate use of artificial intelligence;
- how to seek help.

Teaching is age-appropriate and reflects pupils' developmental needs.

9.16 Working with Parents and Carers

The school believes safeguarding is most effective when working in partnership with parents and carers.

Where appropriate, the school will:

- communicate concerns openly;
- involve parents in Early Help;
- provide advice and signposting;
- work collaboratively with external agencies.

However, where informing parents may place a child at increased risk, advice will first be sought from Children's Social Care.

10. Online Safety, Filtering, Monitoring and Cyber Security

Online safety is a fundamental aspect of safeguarding at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School. The school recognises that children are increasingly accessing digital technology for learning, communication and recreation. While technology provides significant educational opportunities, it also presents safeguarding risks that require effective management.

The Governing Body recognises its statutory responsibility to ensure that appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place to safeguard children whilst allowing access to educational resources.

10.1 A Whole-School Approach to Online Safety

Online safety is embedded throughout the school's safeguarding culture.

The school will:

- promote safe and responsible use of technology;
- teach online safety through the curriculum;
- maintain appropriate filtering and monitoring systems;
- educate staff, pupils and parents about emerging online risks;
- review online safety arrangements regularly;
- respond promptly to online safeguarding concerns.

Online safety education is delivered through:

- Computing;
- Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE);
- Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE);
- assemblies;
- themed safeguarding events;
- pastoral support.

Children are taught that behaviour online should reflect the same expectations of respect and responsibility as behaviour offline.

10.2 Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body

The Governing Body will ensure that:

- filtering and monitoring systems are effective and proportionate;
- online safety is regularly reviewed;
- cyber security arrangements are appropriate;
- safeguarding implications are considered before introducing new technologies;
- sufficient resources are available to maintain safe digital systems;
- staff receive appropriate online safety training.

Governors will receive regular reports regarding online safety trends, incidents and system effectiveness.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL will:

- oversee online safeguarding arrangements;
- monitor online safeguarding concerns;
- work closely with technical staff responsible for filtering and monitoring;

- ensure online safety incidents are recorded appropriately;
 - coordinate responses to online abuse;
 - ensure online safety education remains current.
-

All Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- modelling safe online behaviour;
 - following the Acceptable Use Agreement;
 - recognising indicators of online abuse;
 - reporting concerns immediately;
 - supervising children's use of technology appropriately;
 - remaining alert to emerging online safeguarding risks.
-

10.3 Filtering and Monitoring

The school uses appropriate filtering and monitoring systems to protect children from harmful online content.

Filtering systems are designed to:

- prevent access to illegal material;
- reduce exposure to inappropriate content;
- support safe educational use of the internet.

Monitoring systems help identify:

- attempts to access harmful material;
- safeguarding concerns;
- inappropriate searches;
- indicators of self-harm;
- extremist content;
- online exploitation.

The school recognises that no filtering system can eliminate every risk. Effective supervision, education and professional judgement remain essential safeguarding measures. Filtering and monitoring arrangements will be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain effective.

10.4 Cyber Security

The school recognises that cyber security contributes to safeguarding.

Appropriate measures include:

- secure passwords;
- multi-factor authentication where available;
- encrypted devices where appropriate;
- regular software updates;
- restricted access to safeguarding records;
- secure backup procedures;
- staff awareness training.

Any cyber incident affecting safeguarding information will be managed immediately in accordance with the school's Data Protection and Information Security procedures.

10.5 Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial intelligence is becoming increasingly integrated into education and children's daily lives. The school recognises both the educational benefits and safeguarding risks associated with AI.

Potential safeguarding risks include:

- AI-generated indecent images;
- deepfake videos;
- voice cloning;
- impersonation;
- online grooming;
- automated bullying;
- misinformation;
- manipulation;
- inappropriate chatbot interactions;
- academic dishonesty.

Staff will remain professionally curious where AI may have facilitated abuse or exploitation.

Children will receive age-appropriate education regarding:

- ethical use of AI;
 - recognising AI-generated content;
 - protecting personal information;
 - critical evaluation of online information;
 - responsible use of emerging technologies.
-

10.6 Social Media

Children will be taught how to use social media safely and responsibly.

Education will include:

- privacy settings;
- digital footprints;
- respectful communication;
- misinformation;
- online relationships;
- reporting concerns;
- managing peer pressure;
- recognising manipulation.

Staff must never communicate with pupils through personal social media accounts. Professional communication must only occur through authorised school systems.

10.7 Mobile Devices

The school has clear procedures governing the use of mobile devices. (see Policy)

Staff must:

- use personal devices in accordance with the Staff Code of Conduct;
- never use personal devices to photograph pupils;
- store school information securely;
- report lost or stolen devices immediately if they contain school information.

Pupil use of mobile devices will be managed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy and Online Safety Policy.

10.8 Remote Learning

Where remote learning is provided, safeguarding arrangements remain fully applicable.

The school will ensure:

- approved digital platforms are used;
 - staff maintain professional boundaries;
 - appropriate supervision arrangements are followed;
 - safeguarding concerns arising during remote learning are reported immediately;
 - children know how to access support.
-

10.9 Online Abuse

The school recognises that abuse increasingly occurs online.

Online abuse may include:

- grooming;
- cyberbullying;
- image-based abuse;
- sexual harassment;
- coercion;
- sextortion;
- financial exploitation;
- extremist material;
- hate crime;
- online scams;
- gaming exploitation.

Staff will treat online abuse with the same seriousness as abuse occurring offline.

10.10 Sharing Images

The school recognises that children may be pressured into sharing images.

Children will be taught:

- never to share indecent images;
- how to report concerns;
- how to seek help;
- that they will be supported if they have made mistakes.

Incidents involving youth-produced sexual imagery will be managed in accordance with current statutory guidance.

10.11 Live Streaming

Children will be educated regarding risks associated with:

- live streaming;
- location sharing;
- public broadcasting;
- online gaming platforms.

They will be encouraged never to communicate with unknown individuals online.

10.12 Deepfakes and Digitally Manipulated Images

The school recognises the increasing availability of AI-generated and digitally manipulated images.

Children will be taught:

- that images and videos may not be genuine;
- how manipulated media may be used to exploit or bully;
- how to report concerns immediately.

Any suspected deepfake involving a child will be treated as a safeguarding concern.

10.13 Sextortion

The school recognises sextortion as an increasing safeguarding risk.

Children will be taught:

- never to comply with demands for images or money;
- to stop communication immediately;
- to preserve evidence where safe to do so;
- to report concerns to a trusted adult.

Staff will respond promptly to all reports of sextortion.

10.14 Parents and Carers

The school will work with parents to promote safe online behaviour.

Support may include:

- information evenings;
- newsletters;
- guidance on parental controls;
- signposting to national online safety resources.

Parents are encouraged to discuss online safety regularly with their children.

10.15 Monitoring Emerging Technologies

The online environment changes rapidly. The DSL will monitor emerging risks including:

- new social media platforms;
- AI developments;
- gaming trends;
- messaging applications;
- virtual reality environments;
- evolving methods of online exploitation.

Safeguarding education will be reviewed regularly to reflect emerging risks.

10.16 Acceptable Use Agreements (see protocol)

All staff, pupils and, where appropriate, volunteers will sign and adhere to the school's Acceptable Use Agreements.

These agreements set out expectations regarding:

- appropriate use of technology;
- responsible online behaviour;
- safeguarding responsibilities;
- confidentiality;
- reporting concerns.

Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action and, where appropriate, safeguarding referrals.

11. Child-on-Child Abuse

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School recognises that children are capable of abusing other children. Child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue and will always be taken seriously.

The school operates a **zero-tolerance approach** to abuse, harassment and violence between children. Allegations will never be dismissed as:

- banter;
- part of growing up;
- harmless fun;
- just having a laugh;
- boys being boys;
- girls being girls;
- teasing;
- relationship difficulties.

All incidents will be investigated appropriately, with the welfare of all children involved remaining paramount.

11.1 Definition

Child-on-child abuse occurs when one child causes harm to another child.

It can occur:

- inside school;
- outside school;
- online;
- during educational visits;
- through social media;
- through gaming platforms;
- through mobile technology.

Abuse may involve children of any age or gender.

11.2 Forms of Child-on-Child Abuse

Child-on-child abuse may include, but is not limited to:

Physical Abuse

Including:

- assault;
- hitting;

- kicking;
 - biting;
 - choking;
 - inappropriate restraint.
-

Emotional Abuse

Including:

- intimidation;
 - humiliation;
 - coercion;
 - manipulation;
 - threats;
 - controlling behaviour.
-

Bullying

Including:

- verbal bullying;
- physical bullying;
- racist bullying;
- sexist bullying;
- disability-related bullying;
- homophobic bullying;
- biphobic bullying;
- transphobic bullying;
- cyberbullying.

Repeated bullying may constitute child-on-child abuse.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment may include:

- sexual comments;
- sexual jokes;
- sexualised name-calling;
- unwanted sexual attention;
- displaying sexual images;
- online sexual harassment;
- unwanted touching;
- sexual rumours.

Sexual harassment will never be tolerated.

Sexual Violence

Sexual violence refers to sexual offences including:

- rape;
- assault by penetration;
- sexual assault;
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent.

All allegations of sexual violence will be managed in accordance with statutory safeguarding procedures.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Children displaying harmful sexual behaviour require safeguarding as well as those affected by the behaviour.

The school will seek specialist advice where appropriate.

Image-Based Abuse

Including:

- sharing intimate images;
- threatening to share images;
- editing images;
- AI-generated indecent images;
- deepfake images;
- digitally manipulated content.

Image-based abuse is treated as a safeguarding concern regardless of whether images were created voluntarily.

Online Abuse

Including:

- cyberbullying;
 - coercion;
 - grooming;
 - online humiliation;
 - exclusion;
 - harassment;
 - impersonation;
 - misuse of AI technologies.
-

Abuse within Intimate Relationships

Children may experience:

- coercive control;
- emotional abuse;
- physical abuse;
- sexual abuse;
- digital surveillance.

These concerns will be managed as safeguarding matters.

Prejudice-Based Abuse

Including abuse motivated by:

- race;
- religion;
- disability;
- sex;

- sexual orientation;
- gender reassignment.

Such incidents will always be recorded and investigated appropriately.

11.3 Prevention

The school seeks to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse through:

- a positive safeguarding culture;
- high expectations of behaviour;
- a broad and balanced curriculum;
- Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE);
- online safety education;
- anti-bullying work;
- pastoral support;
- pupil voice;
- effective supervision;
- staff training.

Children are taught:

- healthy relationships;
 - respect;
 - consent;
 - appropriate boundaries;
 - recognising abusive behaviour;
 - reporting concerns.
-

11.4 Reporting Concerns

Any concern regarding child-on-child abuse must be reported immediately to the DSL.

Staff must:

- listen carefully;
- avoid investigating;
- record accurately;
- reassure the child;
- avoid promising confidentiality.

The wishes and feelings of the child making the disclosure will always be considered.

11.5 Responding to Allegations

The DSL will:

- assess immediate risk;
- ensure all children are safe;
- obtain factual information;
- speak with Children's Social Care where appropriate;
- consult the Police where necessary;
- complete risk assessments;
- maintain accurate records;
- support all children involved.

Children involved will be treated fairly throughout the process.

11.6 Supporting the Victim

The school recognises that victims may experience:

- anxiety;
- trauma;
- embarrassment;
- fear;
- reduced attendance;
- reduced educational progress.

Support may include:

- pastoral support;
- counselling referrals;
- safe spaces within school;
- adjustments to timetables;
- ongoing safeguarding monitoring;
- external specialist support.

The victim's education should continue wherever possible, and the school will avoid actions that disadvantage the victim.

11.7 Supporting the Child Displaying Harmful Behaviour

Children displaying harmful behaviour often have unmet safeguarding needs themselves.

Support may include:

- safeguarding assessment;
- Early Help;
- behaviour support;
- pastoral intervention;
- specialist services;
- therapeutic support.

Sanctions alone are unlikely to reduce future safeguarding risk.

11.8 Risk Assessments

Where appropriate, the DSL will complete individual risk assessments.

These may consider:

- supervision arrangements;
- movement around school;
- contact between pupils;
- transport;
- educational visits;
- online contact;
- classroom arrangements;
- pastoral support.

Risk assessments will be reviewed regularly.

11.9 Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

The school follows statutory guidance when responding to allegations of sexual violence or sexual harassment. Each case will be considered individually.

The school will work closely with:

- Children's Social Care;
- Police;
- health professionals;
- specialist support agencies.

The school recognises that reports of sexual violence and harassment should be managed carefully to avoid causing further trauma.

11.10 Online Child-on-Child Abuse

The school recognises that abuse increasingly occurs online.

Examples include:

- cyberbullying;
- sharing indecent images;
- AI-generated abuse;
- online coercion;
- image manipulation;
- impersonation;
- exclusion;
- anonymous abuse.

Online abuse is treated with the same seriousness as face-to-face abuse.

11.11 Recording and Monitoring

All incidents will be:

- recorded on CPOMS;
- reviewed by the DSL;
- monitored for patterns;
- used to inform safeguarding practice;
- reported anonymously to governors where appropriate.

Repeated concerns involving the same children will trigger review of safeguarding arrangements.

11.12 Working with Parents

Parents will normally be informed of safeguarding concerns involving their children.

However, where doing so may place a child at increased risk, advice will first be sought from Children's Social Care and/or the Police.

11.13 Multi-Agency Working

Where appropriate, the school will work with:

- Children's Social Care;
- Police;
- Health Services;
- Early Help;

- CAMHS;
- Youth Justice;
- specialist safeguarding services.

Safeguarding decisions will always place the welfare of children above all other considerations.

11.14 Monitoring and Review

The DSL will monitor:

- incidents of child-on-child abuse;
- trends;
- emerging safeguarding risks;
- curriculum effectiveness;
- staff training needs.

Lessons learned from incidents will inform ongoing safeguarding improvements.

12. Specific Safeguarding Issues

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School recognises that safeguarding encompasses a wide range of risks that may affect children. Staff will receive regular training to identify, respond to and report these concerns appropriately.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will ensure that emerging safeguarding issues are monitored and reflected in staff training, the curriculum and safeguarding practice.

12.1 Domestic Abuse

The school recognises that children may experience domestic abuse directly or indirectly.

Children who witness domestic abuse may experience:

- emotional trauma;
- anxiety;
- depression;
- behavioural difficulties;
- poor attendance;
- difficulties forming relationships.

Domestic abuse may include:

- physical abuse;
- emotional abuse;
- coercive control;
- financial abuse;
- technological abuse;
- sexual abuse.

Staff will remain alert to indicators that domestic abuse may be affecting a child and will report concerns promptly to the DSL.

Where appropriate, the school will work with Children's Social Care and partner agencies to provide support.

12.2 Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Child Criminal Exploitation occurs where an individual or group manipulates, coerces or deceives a child into criminal activity.

Examples include:

- county lines;
- drug distribution;
- theft;
- violence;
- carrying weapons;
- financial crime.

Children involved in criminal exploitation are victims of abuse. Indicators may include:

- unexplained money or gifts;
 - repeated missing episodes;
 - possession of multiple mobile phones;
 - association with older individuals;
 - unexplained injuries;
 - decline in educational engagement.
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12.3 County Lines

County lines is a form of child criminal exploitation.

Children may be exploited to transport:

- drugs;
- money;
- weapons.

The school recognises that exploited children often appear unwilling to seek help because of fear, coercion or loyalty to those exploiting them.

Any concerns will be referred immediately to the DSL.

12.4 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse.

Children may receive:

- gifts;
- money;
- accommodation;
- alcohol;
- drugs;
- affection;
- status.

in exchange for sexual activity.

The school recognises that:

- exploitation can occur online;
- exploitation may involve peers;
- boys and girls may both be victims.

All concerns will be treated as safeguarding matters.

12.5 Serious Violence

Staff should remain alert to indicators that children may be involved in serious violence.

Indicators may include:

- increased absence;
- unexplained injuries;
- carrying weapons;
- aggressive behaviour;
- gang association.

The school will work with safeguarding partners where concerns arise.

12.6 Radicalisation and Extremism (Prevent Duty)

The school fully supports the Prevent Duty and is committed to protecting children from radicalisation and extremism.

Radicalisation is the process by which a person comes to support extremist ideologies or terrorism.

Staff will receive Prevent training and remain alert to:

- extremist views;
- significant behavioural changes;
- intolerance;
- concerning online activity;
- isolation from peers;
- fixation on extremist material.

Concerns will be discussed immediately with the DSL. Where appropriate, referrals may be made to the **Channel** programme.

The school promotes:

- democracy;
- the rule of law;
- individual liberty;
- mutual respect;
- tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

These fundamental British values are embedded throughout school life.

12.7 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female Genital Mutilation is illegal and is a form of child abuse.

Staff will remain alert to indicators including:

- prolonged absence abroad;
- family discussions about ceremonies;
- difficulty sitting or walking;
- repeated urinary infections;
- reluctance to participate in physical activities.

Teachers have a statutory duty to report known cases of FGM involving girls under 18 directly to the Police. Concerns should also be reported immediately to the DSL.

12.8 Forced Marriage

Forced marriage differs from arranged marriage because it occurs without free and informed consent.

Indicators may include:

- anxiety regarding overseas travel;
- restrictions on personal freedom;
- sudden absence from school;
- family conflict;
- concerns expressed by the child.

The school will seek specialist safeguarding advice before contacting parents where forced marriage is suspected.

12.9 Honour-Based Abuse

Honour-based abuse may involve:

- violence;
- coercion;
- intimidation;
- emotional abuse;
- forced marriage.

Children may experience significant pressure from family or community members.

All concerns will be managed through safeguarding procedures.

12.10 Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Children may be trafficked for:

- criminal exploitation;
- sexual exploitation;
- forced labour;
- domestic servitude.

Indicators may include:

- unexplained travel;
- poor living conditions;
- fear of authorities;
- repeated missing episodes;
- controlling adults accompanying the child.

Any concerns will be reported immediately.

12.11 Missing Children

The school recognises that children who go missing may be at increased risk of:

- abuse;
- exploitation;
- trafficking;
- radicalisation;
- forced marriage.

The school will investigate unexplained absences promptly and work with relevant agencies where necessary.

12.12 Homelessness

Staff should understand that homelessness can significantly increase safeguarding risks.

Children experiencing homelessness may face:

- interrupted education;
- poor mental health;
- exploitation;
- neglect.

The school will work with local agencies to ensure families receive appropriate support.

12.13 Substance Misuse

Parental or child substance misuse may place children at increased safeguarding risk.

Staff should remain alert where substance misuse affects:

- supervision;
- attendance;
- emotional wellbeing;
- family functioning.

Early Help and safeguarding procedures will be implemented where appropriate.

12.14 Private Fostering

A private fostering arrangement occurs when a child under 16 (or under 18 if disabled) lives with someone who is not:

- a parent;
- a close relative;
- a legal guardian,

for 28 days or more.

The school has a duty to notify the Local Authority where such arrangements become known.

12.15 Children and the Court System

The school recognises that children may become involved in:

- family court proceedings;
- criminal court proceedings.

Such experiences can have significant emotional and safeguarding implications. Appropriate pastoral support will be provided.

12.16 Children with Family Members in Prison

Children affected by parental imprisonment may experience:

- anxiety;
- stigma;
- poor attendance;
- emotional distress.

The school will provide sensitive support where appropriate.

12.17 So-Called "Honour" Crimes

The school recognises that abuse committed in the name of so-called honour is child abuse.

No cultural, religious or traditional belief can justify abuse.

All concerns will be managed through safeguarding procedures.

12.18 Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies

The school recognises that emerging technologies continue to change the safeguarding landscape.

Staff will remain alert to risks arising from:

- AI-generated abuse;
- deepfakes;
- voice cloning;
- virtual reality environments;
- anonymous messaging platforms;
- emerging social media applications;
- encrypted communication;
-
- online financial exploitation.

The DSL will review emerging technologies regularly to ensure safeguarding procedures remain effective.

12.19 Professional Curiosity

Safeguarding requires professional curiosity.

Staff are expected to:

- notice changes;
- identify patterns;
- question unusual explanations;
- share concerns promptly;
- seek advice where unsure.

Professional curiosity helps ensure that vulnerable children are identified at the earliest opportunity.

12.20 Multi-Agency Working

The school recognises that safeguarding is most effective when agencies work together.

The school will work collaboratively with:

- Children's Social Care;
- Health Services;
- Police;
- Education Welfare Services;
- Early Help;
- CAMHS;
- Virtual School;
- the Warrington Safeguarding Partnership;
- voluntary organisations.

The child's welfare will remain the central consideration in all multi-agency decision-making.

13. Training, Monitoring and Quality Assurance

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is committed to maintaining the highest standards of safeguarding practice through regular training, effective monitoring and continuous quality assurance. Safeguarding is recognised as a dynamic area of practice requiring ongoing professional development and regular review.

13.1 Safeguarding Training

All staff will receive safeguarding and child protection training:

- at induction;
- at regular intervals in accordance with statutory guidance;
- whenever safeguarding procedures are updated.

Training will ensure that staff understand:

- their safeguarding responsibilities;
- indicators of abuse and neglect;
- child-on-child abuse;
- online safety;
- child criminal exploitation;
- child sexual exploitation;
- county lines;
- domestic abuse;
- Prevent Duty;
- mental health;
- children missing education;
- professional curiosity;
- information sharing;
- emerging safeguarding risks, including artificial intelligence.

Safeguarding updates will be provided throughout the academic year to ensure staff remain aware of current legislation and local safeguarding issues.

13.2 Designated Safeguarding Lead Training

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSLs will:

- complete specialist DSL training at least every two years, or more frequently where required by national guidance;
- undertake regular safeguarding updates between formal training;
- participate in local safeguarding network meetings where available;
- remain informed of national safeguarding developments.

The DSL will disseminate relevant safeguarding updates to staff promptly.

13.3 Governor Training

All governors will receive safeguarding training appropriate to their role.

Training will enable governors to:

- understand statutory safeguarding responsibilities;
- monitor safeguarding effectively;
- understand safer recruitment requirements;
- recognise safeguarding risks;

- provide strategic challenge and support;
- understand filtering and monitoring responsibilities;
- oversee safeguarding compliance.

The Safeguarding Governor will receive additional training appropriate to the role.

13.4 Safer Recruitment Training

At least one member of every appointment panel will have completed recognised safer recruitment training.

The school will ensure recruitment procedures remain compliant with statutory guidance.

13.5 Monitoring Safeguarding Practice

The Headteacher and DSL will monitor safeguarding practice through:

- safeguarding audits;
- CPOMS monitoring;
- safeguarding file reviews;
- attendance analysis;
- behaviour analysis;
- exclusion data;
- safeguarding supervision;
- learning walks where appropriate;
- pupil voice;
- staff feedback.

Monitoring findings will inform school improvement planning.

13.6 Safeguarding Audits

The school will undertake regular safeguarding audits to evaluate:

- statutory compliance;
- effectiveness of procedures;
- staff confidence;
- record quality;
- referral quality;
- curriculum provision;
- online safety arrangements;
- filtering and monitoring systems.

Audit findings will be reported to governors.

13.7 Quality Assurance of Records

The DSL will undertake regular quality assurance of safeguarding records to ensure they are:

- factual;
- timely;
- accurate;
- complete;
- securely stored;
- compliant with statutory guidance.

Chronologies will be reviewed regularly to identify emerging patterns of concern.

13.8 Supervision and Professional Support

The school recognises that safeguarding work can be emotionally demanding.

The DSL will have access to appropriate:

- professional supervision;
- safeguarding advice;
- opportunities for reflective practice;
- wellbeing support.

Staff involved in difficult safeguarding cases will receive appropriate support from senior leaders.

13.9 Learning from Safeguarding Practice

The school is committed to continuous improvement.

Learning may arise from:

- safeguarding practice reviews;
- child safeguarding practice reviews;
- local safeguarding partnership learning;
- serious incident reviews;
- internal safeguarding audits;
- complaints;
- safeguarding trends.

Lessons learned will inform:

- policy updates;
 - staff training;
 - curriculum development;
 - school improvement planning.
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13.10 Monitoring by Governors

The Governing Body will monitor safeguarding through:

- annual safeguarding reports;
- safeguarding governor visits;
- policy reviews;
- safeguarding audits;
- Single Central Record monitoring;
- training reports;
- attendance data;
- behaviour data;
- filtering and monitoring reports.

Governors will provide strategic challenge while maintaining confidentiality.

13.11 Policy Review

This policy will be:

- reviewed annually as a minimum;
- reviewed immediately following any significant safeguarding incident where appropriate;
- updated following changes to legislation or statutory guidance;
- amended where local safeguarding arrangements change.

Minor amendments may be approved by the Headteacher between full Governing Body reviews where necessary to maintain statutory compliance.

14. Local Safeguarding Contacts

School Safeguarding Contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

Alan Saunders

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s):

Carol Ford

Headteacher:

Alan Saunders

Chair of Governors:

Kathryn Price

Safeguarding Governor:

Paula Craig

Local Authority

Warrington Borough Council – Children's Social Care

- MASH: 01925 443322
 - Emergency Duty Team (out of hours): 01925 444400
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Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

- 01925 442079
- LADO@warrington.gov.uk

Police Emergency: 999

Non-Emergency: 101

Other Useful Contacts

- NSPCC Helpline
 - NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line
 - Childline
 - Prevent/Channel Referral Team
 - CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection)
 - CAMHS
 - School Nursing Service
 - Early Help Team
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15. Glossary of Safeguarding Terms

For the purposes of this policy:

- **Abuse** – A form of maltreatment of a child, including physical, emotional and sexual abuse, and neglect.
- **Child Protection** – Activity undertaken to protect children who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.
- **Safeguarding** – Protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of health or development, ensuring safe and effective care, and enabling the best outcomes.
- **DSL** – Designated Safeguarding Lead.

- **CPOMS** – The school's electronic safeguarding recording system.
 - **CCE** – Child Criminal Exploitation.
 - **CSE** – Child Sexual Exploitation.
 - **FGM** – Female Genital Mutilation.
 - **LADO** – Local Authority Designated Officer.
 - **Early Help** – Support provided as soon as concerns emerge to improve outcomes for children.
 - **Prevent** – The statutory duty to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.
 - **Channel** – A multi-agency programme providing support to individuals at risk of radicalisation.
 - **Contextual Safeguarding** – An approach recognising that abuse can occur beyond the family home, including within peer groups, schools and communities.
 - **Professional Curiosity** – The practice of asking questions, seeking clarification and remaining alert to indicators of abuse or neglect.
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16. Policy Approval and Review

Policy Title: Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Statutory Status: Statutory

Approved by: Governing Body

Date Approved: September 2026

Date of Implementation: 1 September 2026

Review Frequency: Annually (or earlier if required)

Next Review Date: July 2027

Responsible Officer: Headteacher

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Alan Saunders

Chair of Governors: Kathryn Price

Signature (Headteacher): Alan Saunders

Signature (Chair of Governors): _____