

Child Protection Policy - Safeguarding Children

St. Philomena's fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection.

Our policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in the school. These are the main elements of our policy:

- Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children.
- Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe.
- Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
- Supporting pupils who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan.
- Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.

The health, safety and well being of all our children are of paramount importance to all the adults who work in our school. The Governing Body takes seriously its responsibility under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; and to work together with other agencies to ensure adequate arrangements within our school to identify, assess and support those children who may suffer harm. The children have the right to protection, regardless of age, gender, culture or disability. They have a right to be safe in school.

The pupils are respected in our school community. The school's Vision Statement reflects clearly our shared understanding of the Gospel teachings regarding our obligations to one another.

Our teaching of personal, moral and social education is set out in the school's RE and Sex Education and Personal Relationships Policy documents and helps the children develop appropriate attitudes towards each other as well as self respect. They are taught how to recognise different risks in different situations and how to behave in response to them.

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children's Act 1989 and in line with the following:-

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006

Framework & Assessment of Children in Need & their Families 2000

Response to Section 175 of the Education Act 2002

Safeguarding Children in Education Guidance 2004

What to do if you are worried a child is being Abused 2003

All staff believe that St. Philomena's should provide a safe, caring positive environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child.

Aims & Objectives

This policy is designed to ensure that all staff in the school (full, part-time and visiting staff, including volunteers, involved with the children) are clear about the actions necessary with regard to a child protection issue. Our policy has three main aims:

Prevention	Through the development of a positive ethos, through teaching and pastoral support.
Protection	By following agreed procedures, ensuring staff are trained and supported appropriately and sensitively.
Support	Provided for pupils and staff through effective teaching and learning and pastoral support programmes.

We aim to:

Raise awareness of all staff and identify responsibility in reporting possible cases of abuse; ensure effective communication between all staff when dealing with child protection issues; lay down the correct procedures for those who encounter an issue of child protection.

Prevention

We require all adults employed in the school, agency teachers, all governors and regular voluntary helpers to be vetted through CRB in order to ensure that there is no evidence of offences involving children or abuse. Recruitment procedures comply with Independent School Standards Regulations.

At St. Philomena's we will establish and maintain a culture and ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to. We do this through:

- Agreed school aims.
- Religious Education programme throughout the school.
- Positive behaviour management strategies.
- Anti bullying strategies.
- Drama, role play and external productions & visits.
- Residential visits.
- Prefect system of care & assistance for younger pupils.

Ensuring that children know there are adults in school whom they can approach (their class teacher or any adult within the school context) if they are in difficulty. This is achieved through

- Positive modelling in all school contexts.
- Development of positive relationships amongst children of all age groups.
- Development of positive relationships with all adults working throughout the school.
- Listening carefully to children.

Including curriculum activities and opportunities for personal development which help to equip the children with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse. This information is included in the:

- Religious Education Policy documents
- The Equal Opportunities Policy
- Special Needs Policy
- Teaching & Learning Policies
- Pupil Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Staff Induction Policy
- Sex Education Policy

Including in the curriculum material aspects, which will help children develop positive attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life. We do this through:

- First hand learning opportunities
- Role play & drama
- Pupils undertaking school responsibilities
- School offices including prefects
- External agency input

Protection

- (i) St. Philomena's School does not operate in isolation. Child Protection is the responsibility of all adults, especially those working with children. The development of appropriate procedures and the monitoring of good practice are the responsibility of the Child Protection committee. Child Protection will be added to the agenda of all staff meetings to act as a prompt to all staff about their duty of care.
- (ii) The Child Protection Officer for the school is the Head, Bernadette Buck or in her absence the Deputy Head, Neil Whitfield. The nominated governor with special responsibility for Child protection is Avril O'Sullivan.
The school's designated person is Elizabeth O'Kane, Form II class teacher, who is the Named Child Protection Adult (NCPA), and for EYFS is Nicola Smith.
- (iii) If any teacher suspects that a child in his/her class may be a victim of abuse, they immediately inform the named person of their concerns. Abuse may be of a sexual, emotional or physical nature. It can also be the result of neglect.
If any other adult has serious concerns regarding any child they should share these with the NCPA, officer or nominated governor, Avril O'Sullivan. All staff have access to Safeguarding Children forms (in the Main Office) or have access to an electronic copy. Where abuse occurs by one or more pupil against another, the matter is taken seriously and fully investigated and dealt with. Refer to the school's Anti-bullying Policy.

- (iv) Any action that the named person takes when dealing with an issue of child protection must be in line with the procedures outlined in the LEA Child Protection Guidelines.
- (v) The school's named co-ordinator should work closely with the social services department and the Area Protection Committee when investigating any allegations of abuse. All parties involved handle such investigations in a sensitive manner, but the best interest of the child is of paramount importance. The asking of leading questions is avoided.
- (vi) If a child alleges sexual abuse, the school makes referral without communicating with the parents first. If other allegations are made for example physical or emotional abuse or neglect, we inform the parents first.
- (vii) If a child protection referral is made, a case conference is held within eight working days of the decision. The case conference offers the opportunity to share information and formulate a plan of action. Staff are expected to attend and participate in all case conferences and meetings held under LEA guidelines.
- (viii) We regard all information relating to individual child protection issues as confidential, and we treat them accordingly. We only pass information on to appropriate persons.
- (ix) There may be times when staff in school, in the course of their duty, use physical intervention to restrain children. The head requires the adult involved in any such incident to report this to him/her immediately, and to record in the book held by the head.
- (x) The school ensures that the NCPA attends all training relevant to their role at least every two years. The head and designated governor have also undertaken training and have a full understanding of Child Protection issues, policy & procedures.
- (xi) Staff in the school receive regular input to raise their awareness of abuse and their knowledge of local child protection procedures. It is a requirement of induction that staff are familiar with agreed procedure. It is our intention to ensure that all NQTs attend a basic awareness training course during their induction period. Routinely all staff should receive refresher training on safeguarding children on a 3 year cycle. Staff to be kept informed of any current Child Protection issues. Part-time and voluntary staff are made aware of all arrangements.
- (xii) 'St. Philomena's School Terms & Conditions' outlines our duties and responsibilities under Child Protection legislation. This ensures that parents are aware of the school's legal duties.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be discussed and understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of Child Protection. The only purpose of confidentiality in this respect is to benefit the child. The LEA guidance on confidentiality is specific & detailed.

- Confidentiality is crucial but staff must **never promise** a child that they will “**keep a secret**” as the information may need to be shared with others for the child’s protection.

Records & Monitoring

Teachers own notes about children are useful, but it is important to follow agreed procedure by filling in the school’s pro forma and drawing NCPA’s attention to the concern.

Well kept records are essential to good child protection practice. The school is clear about the need to record any concerns held about a child or children within our school, the status of such records and when these records should be handed over to other agencies.

Teachers (and other adults working with children) who have any concerns about a child in respect of Child Protection **MUST** share those concerns with the named protection adult. The NCPA will also share the concerns with the head. Advice will be sought from the LEA or social services. The teacher and the NCPA will carry out an initial assessment following that advice.

- Teachers may have an initial concern about a child, which requires monitoring. Staff must discuss this concern with the NCPA/head who will agree, after seeking advice from LEA/social services (within 24 hours of a disclosure or suspicion of abuse) whether a monitoring record should be kept or whether the concern requires immediate action under the Child Protection procedure.
- Monitoring records must be kept on an agreed monitoring format and must be kept separate from a child’s teacher’s general notes. A monitoring period is agreed with a teacher and the results of the monitoring are reviewed at the end of the period. A decision is reached at the end of the period as to whether to, move into the Child Protection Procedure, seek further advice, to continue to monitor or to cease the monitoring system.
- A central record of Child Protection ‘Incidents’ and the Child Protection Register is marked ‘Confidential’ and held in a locked cabinet in the head’s office. Access to this record is limited to the NCPA & the head.
- Staff must report Child Protection incidents on the agreed format, which must be shared with the NCPA.
- Child Protection Records must not form part of the class teacher’s general record as all Child Protection records may, at a later stage form part of a legal procedure.
- Disclosure of information without consent is covered by the European convention of Human Rights under Article 8.

Attendance at Child Protection Conference

The LEA guidelines cover the formal procedure for Child Protection Conferences and who should attend.

Supporting Pupils at Risk

It is made clear to parents in our “Terms and Conditions” in their Welcome Pack that safeguarding children is the school’s main priority at **all** times.

- (i) We recognise that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth and to view the world in a positive way. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of the children at risk. Whilst at school their behaviour may be at times challenging and defiant. Some children who have experienced abuse, in turn may abuse others.
- (ii) At St. Philomena’s we will be sensitive to individual need and endeavour to support all children through:
 - The Catholic ethos which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and which gives pupils a sense of being valued.
 - The curriculum to encourage self esteem and self motivation
 - The implementation of the school’s behaviour policies
 - A consistent approach, which recognises and separates the cause of behaviour from that which the child displays, is vital to ensure that all children are supported within the school setting.
 - Regular liaison with other professionals who support the pupils and their families.
 - The development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable staff group trained to respond appropriately in child protection situations.
- (iii) The school’s policy on bullying is set out in the Staff Handbook and is available to all parents.
- (iv) Where it is considered that immediate protective action of a child is required a referral will be made by phone to the relevant authorities and followed up immediately by fax for confirmation.

Allegations against members of staff

Staff are advised about sensible procedures when working one to one with a child and are encouraged to avoid situations where they may be vulnerable to a “misunderstanding” at a later date.

All staff are to be supportive of each other and need to identify any concerns which could lead to a child protection issue at a later date. Staff need to advise the NCPA or named adults so that a matter can be dealt with sensitively before it becomes a problem.

In the event of an allegation against a member of staff there is agreed legislation that directs us to share the information with the LEA. In the first instance there needs to be immediate investigation within the school following relevant procedures and guidelines to collect information. After the initial gathering of information the Head teacher would arrange a meeting between the member of staff, the NCPA and any governors with responsibility for Safeguarding Children.

The Governors' position regarding roles and responsibilities for Safeguarding Children and the importance of confidentiality are clear.

The LEA has a specific set of guidelines to deal with allegations made against members of staff. The guidelines have been agreed with and formulated by LEA representatives and six teacher organisations in England & Wales.

The St. Philomena's Safeguarding Children Policy was fully reviewed in January 2009 and will be constantly monitored and updated in response to any new legislation or deficiencies and weaknesses in child protection arrangements and subject to a full review by the governing body in January 2010.

St Philomena's School Ltd. Inc. No. 2071112
Charity Registration No. 298635
Registered Office: Hadleigh Road, Frinton-on-Sea, Essex, CO13 9HQ.
Tel: 01255 674492