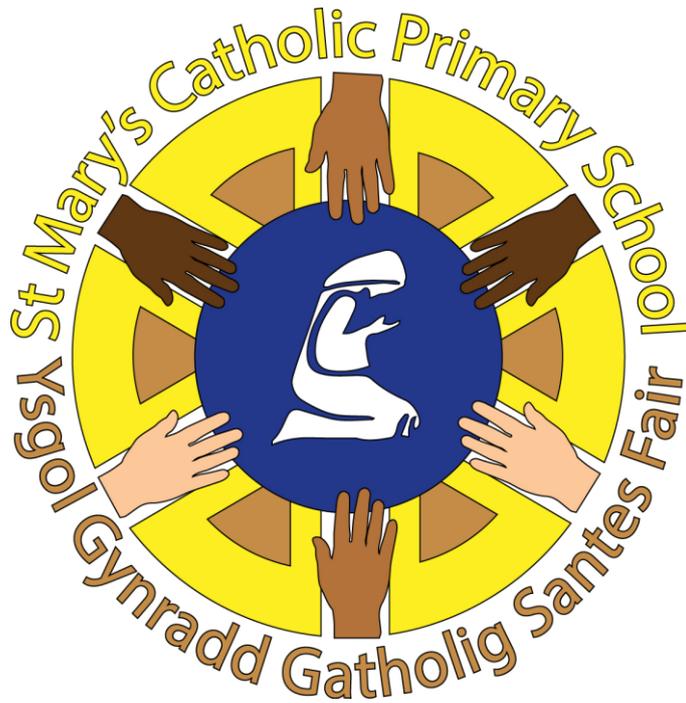


# St Mary's Catholic Primary School



*We are one living, learning and growing together in Christ's love.*

## Child Protection Policy

## **Introduction.**

*St Mary's Catholic Primary School* fully recognises the contribution it makes to child protection.

There are three main elements to our policy:

- prevention through the teaching and pastoral support offered to pupils
- procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse. Because of our day to day contact with children school staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse,
- support to pupils who may have been abused.

Our policy applies to **all** staff, governors and volunteers working in the school.

Our school will annually review the policy and is committed to following any new guidance received from the LA/ERW/WG.

## **Confidentiality.**

Confidentiality issues need to be understood if a child divulges information they are being abused. A child may only feel confident to confide in a member of staff if they feel that the information will not be divulged to anyone else. However, education staff have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with the designated statutory agencies when a child is experiencing child welfare concerns.

It is important that each member of staff deals with this sensitively and explains to the child that they must inform the appropriate people who can help the child, but that they will only tell those who need to know in order to be able to help. They should reassure the child and tell them that their situation will not become common knowledge within the school. Be aware that it may well have taken significant courage on their part to disclose the information and that they may also be experiencing conflicting emotions, involving feelings of guilt, embarrassment, disloyalty (if the abuser is someone close) and hurt.

Please remember the pastoral responsibility of the education service. Ensure that only those with a professional involvement, e.g. the Designated Senior Person and the headteacher, have access to the child protection records. At all other times they should be kept securely locked and separate from the child's main file.

The Designated Senior Person for child protection in this school is:

***Mrs Alison Howells or Mr Christopher Williams***

The Governor with child protection responsibilities is:

***Mr Michael Donovan***

## **Prevention**

We recognise that high self-esteem, confidence, supportive friends and good lines of communication with a trusted adult helps to safeguard pupils.

The school will therefore:

- establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to
- ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty
- include in the curriculum, activities and opportunities for Personal Social Education (PSE) which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from abuse and to know to whom to turn for help
- include in the curriculum, material which will help children develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly with regard to childcare and parenting skills.

## **Procedures**

### **These should be followed in the event of a child protection disclosure/concern**

We will follow the All Wales Child Protection Procedures that have been endorsed by the Regional Safeguarding Children Board. The school will:

- ensure it has a **Designated Senior Person** for child protection who has undertaken the appropriate training. These people are Mrs Alison Howells (Head teacher) and Mr Christopher Williams
- recognise the role of the Designated Senior Person and arrange support and training. (See Appendix A) <http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150114-keeping-learners-safe.pdf>
- ensure every member of staff and every governor knows:
  - the name of the Designated Senior Person and their role and the designated governor for child protection
  - that they have an individual responsibility for referring child protection concerns using the proper channels and within the timescales agreed with the Local Safeguarding Children Board

➤ how to take forward those concerns where the Designated Senior Person is unavailable.

- ensure that members of staff are aware of the need to be alert to signs of abuse and know how to respond to a pupil who may disclose abuse
- ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection by setting out its obligations in the school prospectus
- Ensure all staff undertake any agreed local authority child protection training relevant to their role
- provide a child protection briefing at least termly for all staff so that they know:

their personal responsibility

the agreed local procedures

the need to be vigilant in identifying cases of abuse

how to support a child who discloses abuse

any new child protection issues or changes in procedures

- notify local social services if:
  - a pupil on the child protection register is excluded either for a fixed term or permanently
  - if there is an unexplained absence of a pupil on the child protection register of more than two days duration from school (or one day following a weekend)
- work to develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters; including attendance at strategy meetings, initial/review child protection conferences and core group together with the submission of written reports to the conferences.
- keep written records of concerns about children (noting the date, event and action taken), even where there is no need to refer the matter to social services immediately
- ensure all records are kept secure and in locked locations
- adhere to the procedures set out in the Welsh Government circular  
<http://learning.gov.wales/docs/learningwales/publications/140410-safeguarding-children-in-education-en.pdf>
- ensure that recruitment and selection procedures are made in accordance with Welsh Government guidance 'Keeping Learners Safe'  
<http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150114-keeping-learners-safe.pdf>
- designate a governor for child protection who will oversee the school child protection policy and practice. (See pages Appendix A-Responsibilities of Governing Bodies/Proprietors)

## **Making a child protection referral**

**All child protection referrals go to the**

## Central Referral Team-

☎ 01554 742322

✉ CRTChildren@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

Out of Hours- ☎ 01558 824283.

### **Definitions of child abuse, protecting children in specific circumstances:**

The definitions of abuse are found in the All Wales Child Protection Procedures but can also be found for easy reference in Appendix A- Definitions and Indicators of Child Abuse.

Our school acknowledges that some children can be more vulnerable to abuse and we have specific child protection duties and responsibilities in relation to these. The specific circumstances are outlined in more details in Chapter 4 of the Welsh Government 'Keeping Learners Safe' guidance. <http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150114-keeping-learners-safe.pdf>

### **Dealing with a disclosure made by a child.**

#### **Receive**

- Listen carefully to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Accept what is said. The child making the disclosure may be known to you as someone who does not always tell the truth. However do not let your past knowledge of this person allow you to pre-judge or invalidate their allegation.
- Do not attempt to investigate the allegation. Your duty will be to listen to what is being said and to pass that information on.

#### **Reassure**

- Provide the child with plenty of re-assurance. Always be honest and do not make promises you cannot keep, for example: "I'll stay with you", or, "Everything will be all right now".
- Alleviate guilt, if the pupil refers to it. For example, you could say: "You're not to blame. This is not your fault".
- Do not promise confidentiality. You will be under a duty to pass the information on and the child needs to know this.

#### **React**

- You can ask questions and may need to in certain instances. However this is not an opportunity to interrogate the child and go into the territory of in depth and prolonged questioning. You only need to know the salient points of the allegation that the child is making. Any questions must be open and not leading.

- Do not criticize the perpetrator as the pupil may still have a positive emotional attachment to this person.
- Do not ask the pupil to repeat their allegation to another member of staff. If they are asked to repeat it they may feel that they are not being believed and / or their recollection of what happened may change.

### Record

- Take notes as soon as it is practical to do so. Record the actual words spoken by the child – do not re-translate them into the way that adults speak or try to make sense of the structure of what was said). Do not be offended by any offensive language or words used to describe the abuse).
- Time and date your notes and do not destroy them in case they are required by a court.
- If you are able to do so then draw a diagram to indicate the position of any bruising but do not ask the child to remove any clothing for this purpose.
- Record statements and observable things, rather than your interpretations' or assumptions.

### Final Steps

- Once you have followed the above guidelines, pass the information on **immediately** to the Designated Senior Person or the person with responsibility for Child Protection. They will then have a number of options open to them, including contacting the local Social Services Team to seek their advice as to what should happen next.

### Managing allegations against adults who work with children

In the event of a child protection allegation being made against a member of staff, the person in receipt of that allegation must **immediately** pass details of the concern to the **Headteacher** or in their absence the **member of staff with Headteacher responsibilities**. The Headteacher will then contact the **Central Referral Team** to discuss the next steps in accordance with local arrangements.

If a potential child protection allegation is made against the Headteacher the member of staff in receipt of that allegation must contact the **Chair of Governors**. The Chair of Governors will then-

- Contact the **Central Referral Team** to discuss the next steps in accordance with local arrangements. **☎ 01554 742322**  
**✉ CRTChildren@carmarthenshire.gov.uk**
- Contact the **Chief Education Officer**  
**☎ 01267 246450**      **✉ EDGMorgans@carmarthenshire.gov.uk**

**In addition the following will be able to advise when these situations arise-**

Bethan Tinney, Senior Practitioner Schools

☎ 01267 246154

✉ BJTinney@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

Rebecca Copp, Local Authority Designated Officer

☎ 01267 246595

✉ RCopp@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

### **Abuse of position of trust**

Welsh Assembly Government Guidance indicates that all Education staff need to know that inappropriate behaviour with, or towards, children is unacceptable. In particular, under the Sexual Offences Act, 2003, it is an offence for a person over 18 (for example teacher, youth worker) to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if the relationship is consensual. This applies where the child is in full-time education and the person works in the same establishment as the child, even if he/she does not teach the child. (See Appendix A – Abuse of Trust)

### **Supporting the pupil at risk**

Child abuse is devastating for the child and can also result in distress and anxiety for staff who become involved. We recognise that children who are at risk, suffer abuse or witness violence may be deeply affected by this. This school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. Nevertheless, when at school their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. The school will endeavour to support the pupil through:

- taking all suspicions and disclosures seriously
- nominating a link person who will keep all parties informed and be the central point of contact. Where a member of staff is the subject of an allegation made by a pupil, separate link people will be nominated to avoid any conflict of interest
- responding sympathetically to any request from pupils or staff for time out to deal with distress or anxiety
- maintaining confidentiality and sharing information on a need-to-know basis only with relevant individuals and agencies
- keeping records and notifying Social Services as soon as there is a recurrence of a concern
- storing records securely
- offering details of helplines, counselling or other avenues of external support
- cooperating fully with relevant statutory agencies

The content of the curriculum encourages self-esteem and self-motivation as outlined in Chapter 2 of the Welsh Government 'Keeping Learners Safe' guidance.

- promote a positive, supportive and secure environment
- give pupils a sense of being valued

The school will support positive behaviour strategies aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the school; we recognise that some children actually adopt abusive behaviours and that these children must be referred on for appropriate support and intervention.

The school will endeavour to ensure that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but s/he is valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred;

- All staff will agree on a consistent approach which focuses on the behaviour of the offence committed by the child but does not damage the pupil's sense of self-worth.
- liaison with other agencies who support the student such as Social Services, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, the Educational Psychology Service, Behaviour Support Services, the Education Welfare Service and advocacy services

When a pupil on the Child Protection Register leaves the school, in addition to the standard transfer of information to the new school, the Designated Senior Person for Child Protection will make immediate contact with the Designated Senior Person for Child Protection in the new school in order to inform them that the child is on the Child Protection register and will seek urgent agreement from the Child Protection Conference Chair for the transfer of minutes of Child Protection Conference meetings and Core Groups, together with other relevant Child Protection information, to the new school.

### **Use of physical intervention**

Our policy on physical intervention is set out in *(a separate document)* and is reviewed annually by the governing body and is consistent with the Welsh Government guidance on Safe and effective intervention – use of reasonable force and searching for weapons 097/2013 <http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/130315safe-effective-en.pdf>

### **Review**

This policy and Appendix A will be reviewed and ratified annually at a full governing body meeting at least once a year and recorded in the minutes. In preparation for this review, the Designated Senior Person for Child Protection may wish to provide the Governing Body with information on the following:-

- changes to Child Protection procedures;
- training undertaken by all staff and governors in the preceding 12 months;
- the number of incidents of a Child Protection nature which arose in the school within the preceding 12 months (without details or names);
- where and how Child Protection and Safeguarding appear in the curriculum;
- lessons learned from cases.