

St. Austin's R.C. Primary School



Growing In Faith Together

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Approved by Full Governors on: 16/10/23

(To be reviewed annually)

St. Austin's R.C. Primary School

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

The school recognises its obligation under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to promote and safeguard the welfare of all its pupils and sees its Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy as fulfilling a key part of this duty. St Austin's believe that all children, regardless of ethnicity, nationality, religion, culture, family circumstances, gender and ability, have the right to be protected. We believe that every child has the right to be happy, healthy and safe. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as, in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 "protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of children's health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes".

In line with KCSIE (2023) the policy has been amended to include online safety and personal electronic devices.

As part of a broad and balanced curriculum, all pupils will be made aware of online risks and taught how to stay safe online.

Through training, all staff members will be made aware of:

- Pupil attitudes and behaviours which may indicate they are at risk of potential harm online.
- The procedure to follow when they have a concern regarding a pupil's online activity.

The school will ensure that appropriate filtering systems are in place on school devices and school networks to prevent children accessing inappropriate material, in accordance with the school's Cyber-security Policy. The school will, however, ensure that the use of filtering and monitoring systems does not cause "over blocking", which may lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what pupils can be taught online. The school will also ensure that it meets the filtering and monitoring standards published by the DfE.

Staff will be aware of the filtering and monitoring systems in place and will know how to escalate concerns where they are identified. Staff will be made aware of their expectations and responsibilities relating to filtering and monitoring systems during their induction.

Further information regarding the school's approach to online safety can be found in the Online Safety Policy.

INTRODUCTION

St Austin's R.C. Primary School fully recognises the contribution it makes to safeguarding children.

There are three main elements to our policy:

1. **Prevention** through teaching, pastoral support and strong and authentic relationships with pupils and families.
2. **Identification** -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 identify and act upon signs and indications of abuse.
3. **Support** for pupils who may have been subject to abuse and working with families and additional agencies in order to address and prevent any safeguarding issues and achieve positive outcomes.

Our policy applies to everyone in school and is explained to them during induction and re-visited regularly. This applies to all staff and volunteers working in the school, community, education staff and governors. Learning assistants, mid-day supervisors, office staff, as well as teachers can be the first point of disclosure for a child. Concerned parents, carers or members of the community may also contact school governors, the headteacher or deputy headteacher if they are concerned about a child. All staff are required to read, comply and sign that they have understood with Part 1 of the Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023.

Please note that if you are ever concerned about the welfare of a child or family you must contact the Safeguarding lead - **Mrs Wade.**

During out of school hours call Social Care on **01744 676600**

or the out of hours number on **0845 050 0148**



St Austin's is like a star where the light inside each one of us shines brightly.

As a team, we support, value and respect each other.

As a family, we use our talents to be the best that we can be;

following the path of Jesus as we:

Grow **I**n **F**aith **T**ogether

Our school mission statement underpins all our procedures in school which include child protection and safeguarding.

TYPES AND DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

Abuse can take many different forms. St Austin's R.C. Primary School staff receive training to understand the different forms of abuse and their signs and symptoms.

Definitions and examples of the different forms of abuse can be found in **Appendix 1**.

The four main categories of abuse are:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect

In relation to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023', St Austin's R.C. Primary School also recognises additional forms of abuse which children may be at risk of.

These include:

- Female Genital Mutilation or FGM
- Bullying including cyber-bullying
- Children missing from home or care
- Contextual safeguarding
- Domestic abuse (including violence, controlling and coercive behaviour)
- Drug and alcohol misuse
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Faith abuse and so-called honour-based violence
- Gangs and youth violence
- Gender based violence/ violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- Hate
- Mental Health
- Modern Slavery
- Radicalisation and Extremism.
- Forced Marriage

- Child Sexual Exploitation or CSE
- Private Fostering
- Child Missing in Education
- Peer on Peer abuse
- Sexting
- Trafficking
- Up skirting
- Children at risk from, or involved with serious violent crime including Child Criminal Exploitation

PREVENTION

St Austin's recognises high self-esteem, supportive friends and positive relationships with trusted adults support prevention and early intervention when it comes to safeguarding children.

The school will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure, encouraged to talk and are listened to;
- Ensure children know that there are adults in school whom they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty;
- Embed skills throughout school that help children to keep themselves safe. This includes throughout the curriculum, whole school initiatives and bespoke interventions/activities.
- Include in the curriculum, materials which will help children develop a realistic perspective and appropriate attitude to the responsibilities of adult life and the treatment of children.
- Teach specific safeguarding topics within the curriculum across all year groups. A comprehensive PSHE scheme is in place as well as specific issues dealt with through assemblies and lessons across the curriculum. E safety is a particular focus including "e-safety" designated weeks.

PROCEDURES

St Austin's follows the procedures set out by the St. Helens Safeguarding Children's Board, which are available at <https://sthelenssafeguarding.org.uk/scp>. The school strives to create a culture of vigilance within school. We have clear internal procedures for dealing with safeguarding issues; these must be adopted and followed by all staff members and volunteers.

The school will:

1. Ensure it has two Designated Safeguarding Leads who are responsible for dealing with safeguarding issues within school. Both staff will have undertaken the training course provided by the Local Authority as a minimum. Regular updates will also take place throughout the year and within weekly staff meetings.
2. Recognise the key role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead/ deputy and arrange all necessary support and training.
3. Receive additional training in order to best support children and their families and achieve positive outcomes regardless of individual circumstances or challenges.
4. Ensure every member of staff and every governor know the name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy DSL and their roles and that **disclosures** are reported directly to them .

At St Austin's R.C. Primary School they are:

Mrs Patsy Wade– Headteacher (safeguarding lead)

Mrs Jane Ramsey- Nursery Teacher (Deputy Safeguarding Lead)

Mrs Angela Shepherd – Business Manager (Deputy Safeguarding Lead)

Mr Daniel Whittaker – Deputy Headteacher (Deputy Safeguarding Lead)

Mrs Emma Hampson – Safeguarding Governor

All can be contacted through the school at staustinrc@sthelens.org.uk or by telephoning **01744 678000**

5. Ensure that all members of staff, visitors and volunteers are aware of the need to be alert to signs and symptoms of abuse and know how to effectively respond to a child **with immediate effect** who makes a disclosure. Staff complete a concerns sheet (blank copies located in staffroom. The name address, date of birth, day, date and time of incident or concern must be recorded along with a factually accurate account of the incident/concern. All concerns are then passed to the DSL who assesses the action to be taken. Individual files are locked in the cabinet in the meeting room. The information will also be logged on CPOMS and restricted view assigned.

Annually staff are issued with relevant policies and procedures through the staff handbook and associated training relating to child protection and safeguarding.

Ensure that parents and carers have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and staff to safeguard children in accordance with **Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018.)**

*Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone's** responsibility.*

***Everyone** who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals must make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they must consider, at all times, what is in the **best interests** of the child.*

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6. Provide refresher training for all staff every year and a Safeguarding Induction (including issuing the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy) for new staff and volunteers so that they know: i
7.
 - i. their personal responsibilities,
 - ii. the local policy and procedures,
 - iii. the need to be vigilant in identifying cases of abuse,
 - iv. the appropriate way to take action and support a child who makes a disclosure.
8. Notify the local Social Care team if:
 - a) There are concerns regarding a child's welfare or safety
 - b) It must have to exclude a pupil on a Child Protection Plan or who has involvement with social care, either for a fixed term or permanently.
 - c) There is an unexplained absence of a pupil on a Child Protection Plan or who has involvement with social care.
 - d) Parents and carers will always be notified and their consent requested when a referral to social care is necessary. However this may be overridden if it is deemed to put the child at further risk.
9. Work to develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding safeguarding matters including attendance at initial case conferences, core group meetings and child protection review conferences. (Information Sharing Policy)
10. Keep records of concerns about children (noting the date, event and action taken) even when there is no need to refer the matter to Social Care. (CPoms)
11. Ensure that current records are kept secure and in a locked location. All archived files of children who have left the school will be kept securely and stored for 18 years.
12. Adhere to the procedures set out by the St. Helens Safeguarding Children Board and their Safeguarding Procedures when an allegation is made against a member of staff. All allegations will be referred to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). Staff, parents, carers and members of the public may make a referral to the LADO on 01744 671265.
13. Employ robust and secure safer recruitment procedures which are always mindful of protecting children from unsuitable people. Staff and governor trained in 'Safer Recruitment'.
14. Ensure that all our practice is child centred and puts the voice of the child first.
15. Seek guidance from the safeguarding Children In Education Adviser at Atlas House.
16. Seek guidance from the Governing Body.

Managing allegations against staff members

Any allegation made against a staff member will always be taken seriously and dealt with immediately. At St Austin's it is important to ensure that any allegation is thoroughly investigated in order to effectively ensure the safety of the child but also the staff member involved.

All allegations must be reported to the headteacher. The headteacher and DSL will follow the Allegation Procedures of the LA adopted by the governing body. In the event of an allegation being made against the headteacher staff must either report to the deputy headteacher or to the Chair of Governors-Mr Mike Burke.

It may be necessary to contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for further advice. However, if it is evident that the allegation is true, or if we are advised by the LADO, then a LADO referral will be completed.

The LADOs share a duty rota they are:

Amanda Philp

Joanne Unsworth

Debra Shannon

All can be contacted through the **LADO Secretary on 01744 671265**

The Confidential Reporting/Whistleblowing Policy provides staff with an effective procedure for reporting concerns.

The purpose of the policy is to:

- encourage employees to feel confident in raising concerns and to question and act upon concerns about practice
- provide avenues for employees to raise those concerns and receive feedback on any action taken
- ensure that employees receive a response to their concerns and that they are aware of how to pursue them if they are not satisfied
- reassure employees that they will be protected from possible reprisals of victimisation if they have a reasonable belief that you have made any disclosure in good faith

False or malicious allegations will be taken extremely seriously and will not be tolerated under any circumstance. If the allegation turns out to be malicious, sanctions will be put in place at the Headteacher's

discretion. The LADO will also be contacted so the child's details can be recorded within the Local Authority in order to protect staff.

If an allegation is made against a member of staff, it does not mean that the staff member will automatically be suspended. The Headteacher or Chair of Governors where appropriate, will make decisions based on individual cases in conjunction with the LADO and HR.

Roles and responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead:

- The DSL has lead responsibility for dealing with any safeguarding and child protection concerns at school. It is important that someone is available at all times to deal with any concerns or offer support or guidance to staff. In St Austin's safeguarding systems are robust and allow an alternative appropriate member of staff such as the deputy DSL, the SENDCo, or the Pastoral Leader to deal with a child protection concern quickly and effectively in the DSL's absence.
- The DSL acts as a source of support, guidance and expertise when deciding how to deal with a child protection concern. This can include making a referral to an external agency, including Children's Social Care. • The DSL receives additional training, including Level 3 training which qualifies them as the Designated Safeguarding Lead. This needs to be updated a minimum of every two years however we recognise that it is good practice to update this annually and do so through our staff handbook procedures. The DSL also receives additional training on a wide variety of safeguarding topics to ensure they are confidently able to deal with a vast array of issues at a professional level. This is captured on the CPD spreadsheet.
- The DSL/deputy will deliver statutory Level 2 Safeguarding Training to all staff and long term volunteers or students on an annual basis. The school holds a CPD record of safeguarding and child protection training. For short term volunteers and members of staff, such as supply teachers, the visitors' handbook will be issued which covers safeguarding systems and an information sharing session with a member of staff.
- The DSL, along with all staff, will be able to recognise signs and symptoms of abuse. However it will be the DSL's responsibility to make an appropriate judgement on what action to take. This will be based on the concern raised and the DSL will always make decisions in collaboration with the deputy DSL or a member of the SLT.

- The DSL will make the decision of when to offer families support and at what level. The Early Help Assessment Tool (EHAT) can gather lots of information to support children and their families but requires parental consent.
- The DSL will attend regular training and network events and keep up to date with statutory guidance and changes in legislation.
- The DSL is responsible for writing and reviewing the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and ensuring it contains relevant and up to date information. All staff and parents/carers of children who attend St Austin's R.C. Primary School have a responsibility to read and adhere to the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- The DSL is responsible for creating and maintaining written records of child protection and safeguarding concerns. Some individual children will have an individual safeguarding file which provides a chronology for professionals. This includes any concerns that have been raised, meeting minutes or multi-agency referrals.
- Entries are made on Cpoms. The school adheres to GDPR data protection rules and regulations; this means that individual safeguarding files will be stored and retained securely, for 18 years. Information will be shared with other professionals if this is deemed to be necessary and in the best interest of the child's safety. This includes requests for information from other services such as the police or Children's Social Care. All individual safeguarding files must create an accurate and factual picture of a child and must be a tool in preventing any safeguarding concerns from escalating.
- The DSL will either complete or contribute to the S147 Audit which is reviewed and quality assured by the St. Helens Safeguarding Children's Partnership. This is a self-assessment tool which is used to ensure that school's safeguarding procedures are robust and effective.
- The DSL will attend multi-agency meetings and provide concise and accurate written reports stating the school's perspective and professional opinion on the situation. The DSL will work with class teachers and other relevant members of staff in order to comprise an accurate and factual report. The DSL will also seek to obtain the wishes and feelings of the child or young person so their views are incorporated and shape the report. The DSL will attend Child Protection Conferences and will be responsible for contributing to the decision as to whether a child must be subject to a child protection plan.
- The DSL will provide written reports and contributions to external agency assessments. This can include Child and Family Assessments (social care), CAMHS assessments and Family Action Meetings

(this is not an exhaustive list). Again, if sharing information is deemed to be necessary in order to ensure the safety or protection of a child, then the DSL will provide a report to the relevant agency.

Parents or carers consent will

be sought in most cases however there may be occasions where this is not appropriate or may compromise the safety of the child.

- The DSL monitors attendance and checks on the welfare of children who are not in school. The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is directly linked to and supports the school's attendance policy.

Roles and responsibilities of the Deputy Safeguarding Lead:

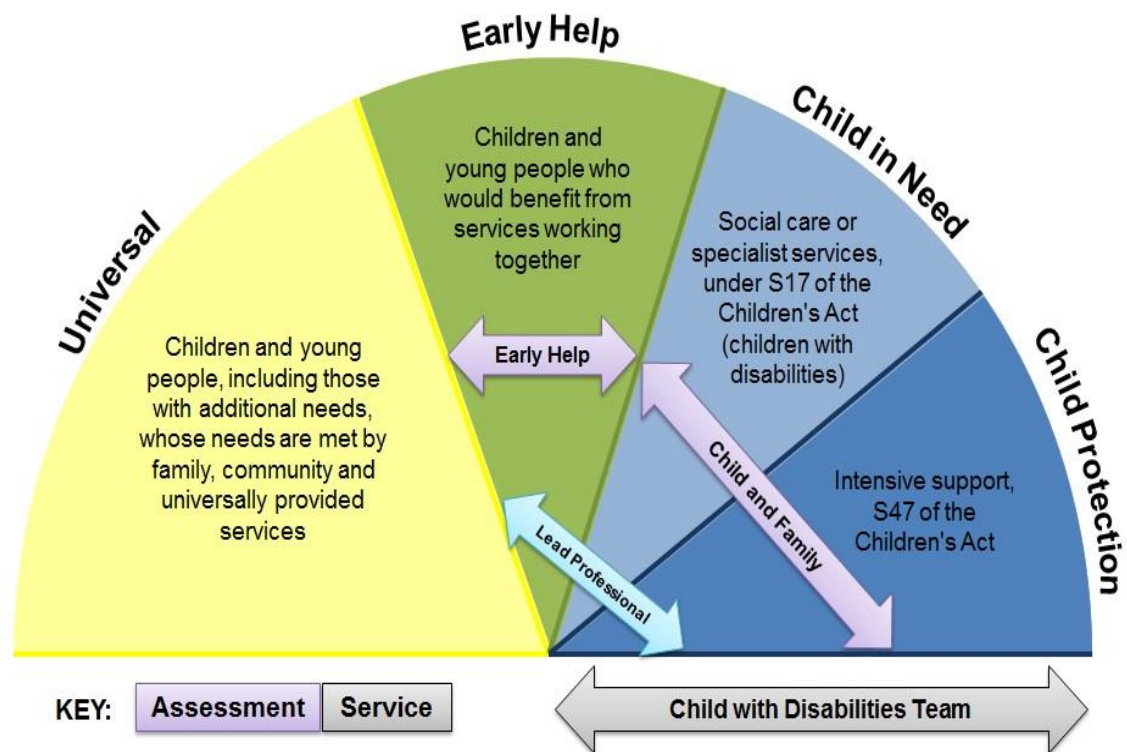
- The Deputy DSL is responsible for dealing with any child protection concerns in the absence of the DSL.
- The Deputy DSL is a strategic part in the development and implementation of the school's safeguarding policies and procedures.
- The Deputy DSL also receives additional training, including the Level 3 training which qualifies them as the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

EARLY HELP

St Austin's recognises that early intervention can have a positive impact for our families and can prevent children from significant harm. We also recognise that as a school we are in a strong position to support our children and families, due to the frequency of contact we have with them as well as our strong working relationships. Therefore, we promote an Early Help Offer which is a graduated structure aimed at providing support at the appropriate and earliest level. This is in accordance with St. Helens Borough Council's Family Support Model.

Level of Need	Intervention	Agencies who may be involved
<p>Level 1</p> <p>Children and young people who are achieving each of the 5 outcomes.</p>	<p>Whole school initiatives</p> <p>Informal contact with children, parents and carers to resolve low level issues.</p>	<p>The child and their family</p> <p>School staff</p>
<p>Level 2</p> <p>Children and young people who may need extra support in order to achieve the 5 outcomes.</p>	<p>School Support Meetings</p> <p>Informal meetings with parents and carers to resolve low level issues. These may require a referral to an additional agency and will be reviewed.</p>	<p>The child and their family</p> <p>School staff</p> <p>Possible involvement of an external agency.</p>
	<p>Early Help Assessment Tool (EHAT) A document completed by the family with support from the lead professional. The EHAT document brings together all agencies involved with a family to ensure that everyone is working together and information is shared. The EHAT could then be taken to a Level 2 Panel must further advice, guidance or professional involvement be needed. Parents and Carers or the child where appropriate, must agree to Early Help and this cannot be complete without parental consent.</p> <p>Family Action Meetings</p> <p>A co-ordinated, multiagency plan is put into place for families with more complex or multiple needs. This may be required as earlier forms of intervention have not been effective. Family Action Meetings bring the family and agencies together in order to put in place the best package of support and review its progress. Parents and carers or</p>	<p>The child and their family</p> <p>School staff</p> <p>Multiple external agencies including Health, Family Support Workers, CAMHS, housing, GP, dentist. This also extends to more targeted services such as counselling services, NSPCC or agencies associated with a particular condition.</p>

	the child where appropriate again must consent for this process to happen.	In some cases Social Care will be invited to Family Action Meetings.
<p>Level 3</p> <p>Children and young people who have complex needs and who may require co-ordinated support in order to achieve the 5 outcomes.</p>	<p>Child in Need</p> <p>These are meetings for families who require intensive support in order for the child to achieve their 5 outcomes. These meetings are led by Social Care and all agencies involved will be invited along with parents and carers. These meetings are not statutory and therefore do still require parental consent.</p>	<p>Multiple external agencies including Health, Family Support Workers, CAMHS, housing, GP, dentist. This also extends to more targeted services such as counselling services, NSPCC or agencies associated with a particular condition. Social Care would always attend Child in Need meetings</p>
<p>Level 4</p> <p>Children and young people who will not achieve the five outcomes without intensive support.</p>	<p>Child Protection</p> <p>These are meetings for families whose children are at risk of significant harm. These meetings are led by an independent chair and all agencies involved will be invited along with social care, parents and carers. These meetings will be reviewed every 6 weeks during core group meetings and between every 3- 6 months for review child protection conferences. These meetings are statutory and therefore do not require parental consent.</p>	<p>The child (where appropriate) and their family</p> <p>School staff</p> <p>Multiple external agencies including Health, Family Support Workers, CAMHS, housing, GP, dentist. This also extends to more targeted services such as counselling services, NSPCC or agencies associated with a particular condition. Social Care would always attend Child Protection conferences and Core Group meetings</p>



At St Austin's we recognise that children who are subject to abuse in whatever form may experience a significant effect of their social and emotional well-being as well as their academic attainment. St Austin's recognises that school is a stable and secure environment in the lives of our pupils. Therefore we strive to create a safe and consistent environment.

In accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 we recognise that some children may be considered more vulnerable than others.

These include a child:

- with specific additional needs
- who has special educational needs
- Is a young carer
- Is showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child such as substance abuse, adult mental health, domestic violence, and/or
- Is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect

Children with additional learning difficulties or disabilities can face additional barriers in regards to recognition of abuse. These barriers can include:

Barrier	Resolution / Additional Support
<p>Communication Difficulties</p> <p>It can be significantly more challenging and unlikely for a child to disclose abuse if they have difficulties with communication.</p>	<p>Speech and language interventions</p> <p>Utilising key members of staff who have good understanding and relationships of that pupil</p> <p>Alternative communication means such as sign language, Makaton, PECs etc.</p>
<p>Behavioural Difficulties</p> <p>Screaming, shouting, emotional distress, marks being ignored, overlooked or failure to investigate if this is considered to be 'regular behaviour for the child'.</p>	<p>Ensure that incidents are questioned and challenged. Understanding behaviours displayed such as triggers, relation to mood.</p> <p>Individual Behaviour Plans</p> <p>Gaining the views, wishes and feelings of the child.</p> <p>Always questioning any marks, bruises etc.</p>
<p>Physical Disabilities</p> <p>Physical disabilities can present a significant barrier for some children as it can limit their independence and personal ability to keep safe.</p>	<p>Always questioning any marks, bruises etc. – never assuming why an injury may be present. Using times such as during personal care to be vigilant against marks and bruises.</p> <p>Ensuring open dialogue and trusting relationships at all times.</p>
<p>Cognitive difficulties</p> <p>Some children may have difficulty understanding or recognising abuse.</p>	<p>Ensure PSHE and SMSC lessons are differentiated accordingly.</p> <p>Clear and direct conversations to be had regularly with those who are most vulnerable.</p>
<p>Marks and Physical Injuries</p> <p>Assumptions that marks relate to the child's physical disability or individual need without further exploration.</p>	<p>Always questioning any marks, bruises etc. – never assuming why an injury may be present.</p> <p>Seeking advice from external agencies including Children's Social Care.</p>

<p>Bullying and prejudice behaviours</p> <p>Children with learning difficulties and/or physical</p>	<p>Ensuring that equality, diversity and difference is taught to all children throughout school.</p>
<p>disabilities may be more at risk of bullying and prejudice behaviour.</p> <p>Children with SEND may be more prone to peer group isolation.</p>	<p>Challenging and dealing with anti-bullying incidents immediately.</p> <p>Supporting children with forming healthy friendships with their peers.</p>

The school will endeavour to support the pupil through:

- a) Our prevention procedures
- b) The school’s behaviour policy is aimed at supporting all pupils in our school especially those who are identified as being vulnerable. All staff will adopt a consistent approach which focuses on the offence committed by the child but does not damage the pupil’s sense of self worth. St Austin’s recognises that all behaviour is a form of communication and aim to address any underlying issues through pastoral intervention and reflection.
- c) St Austin’s is committed to working with the appropriate agencies that best our children and their families.
- d) We will continue to refer for children who are already open to Social Care and will exercise the St. Helens Local Authority’s escalation policy when deemed necessary.
- e) When any vulnerable pupil leaves our school, all information will be transferred to the school immediately and Social Care would be informed where necessary.

Safeguarding and Attendance

The Safeguarding Policy links directly to the schools Attendance Policy.

If a child is absent who is deemed to be vulnerable and contact is not made with the school regarding absence, then the Pastoral Leader or another member of staff may call to the family ensure the child's safety.

If a child is absent who is on a Child Protection Plan and contact is not made with the school regarding absence, then the DSL or another member of staff will inform Children's Social Care.

When a child is continually missing school, St Austin's will follow Local Authority procedures and will work with the appropriate agencies and seek support including Education Welfare.

The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is directly linked to the school's Attendance Policy.

At St Austin's we acknowledge that good attendance is essential not only for academic attainment, but also to ensure the safety of the child. As a result of this, we have set procedures in place to ensure the safety of pupils through their attendance.

If a vulnerable child is absent, then school will contact parents. A home visit may result.

- A child on Child Protection or is LAC is monitored carefully. The school will satisfy itself that there is no immediate risk of harm and will have attendance issues addressed through the CP Plan or Family Action meetings or the PEP in the case of LAC.
- When a Child is Missing Education (CME), St Austin's will follow **Education Welfare's Child Missing Education Policy and Procedures.**

<https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/media/5861/st-helens-la-procedure-for-locating-missing-children-december2016.pdf>

- There are named CME Officers within the Education Welfare Service. The named CME officers for St. Helens are: **Diane Russell– 01744 676636**
- There is also a dedicated CME email address for any enquiries relating to Children Missing Education. The email address is: cme@sthelens.gov.uk
- Children must be collected by a known adult from school. Passwords are used if the child is to be collected by anyone unknown to us. Although there is no specific age limit, older children in Y5 and Y6 may be considered

by their parents safe and responsible enough to make their own way to and from school. These children must not be responsible for younger children.

- Any adult with Parental Responsibility has the right to collect their child from school, unless there is a Contact, Residency or Child Arrangement Order in place, or if there are child protection concerns surrounding a parent or carer. For families with orders in place, we ask parents and carers to inform us of any such instance and provide paper evidence where necessary. **Please note we will not keep original copies of orders but may take photocopies which will be stored securely within the child's individual safeguarding file.**

St Austin's Primary will always strive to put the correct interventions into place to ensure that Persistent Absentees and low attenders improve their attendance.

If a pupil goes missing from the school site during the school day, the parent or carer and the Police will be informed immediately; it may also be appropriate to notify Children's Social Care.

Once a child has left the school premises, it is the responsibility of the Police and not staff to try and secure the child. St Austin's recognises that it may be more dangerous for both staff and the child, if staff were to try and secure the individual.

Use of Mobile Phones and Cameras in Schools

For pupils:

- Parents give their consent for access to technology at the start of school.
- Pupils taking and sharing images when in school will use the school's technology eg camera or I pad and will be supervised by a member of staff.
- Phones are not permitted to be used at other events without prior permission
- Pupils in years 5 and 6 may bring a mobile phone to school as some travel to and from school. Pupils place their phones in a box and they are stored away until home time. Photographs using mobile phones on the premises is not permitted.

Parental consent is sought for a child's image to be collected and/or shared

For parents and carers:

- Parents may take videos or photographs/images of their own child for personal use.
- Sharing of images on social media of children in school is **not** permitted.
- Complaints or grievances must not be aired and shared on social media.
- St Austin's has a parent conduct policy which is available on the school website
- St Austin's has a Complaints Policy which can address any parental concerns. The headteacher and senior leaders in the school are always willing to hear concerns before they become complaints in order to address any issues to a satisfactory conclusion.

For staff:

- Staff must not take images of pupils on personal mobile phones.
- Staff can use an I pad or camera to take images on trips and then download them immediately to photoshare so GDPR is not compromised.
- Staff must not use personal mobile phones during the school day unless they are in an area where children do not go eg staffroom at break times.
- All staff follow the policies that have been adopted by the governing body and subsequent consequences if policy is breached.

Reviewed:

Agreed and adopted by Governors: 16.10.23

Next review: 16.10.23

Appendix

CATEGORIES AND DEFINITIONS OF ABUSE

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is deliberately hurting a child causing injuries such as bruises, broken bones, burns or cuts.

Types of physical abuse include:

- ✦ Hitting or smacking
- ✦ Shaking
- ✦ Throwing
- ✦ Poisoning
- ✦ Burning and scalding
- ✦ Drowning
- ✦ Suffocating
- ✦ Fabricating or Inducing Symptoms of illness in a child
- ✦ Any other way of causing physical harm.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development. This may involve:

- ✦ Conveying they are worthless, unloved, inadequate or only valued insofar as they meet the needs of another person.
- ✦ Not giving a child opportunity to express their views, 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.
- ✦ Inappropriate expectations for their age or development – including overprotection.
- ✦ Seeing or hearing the ill treatment of other such as domestic violence or abuse.
- ✦ Serious bullying and causing the child to feel frightened or in danger.
- ✦ Exploitation or corruption of children.
- ✦ All types of ill-treatment of a child. Even if a child is subject to another abuse from another category, they will still experience a level of emotional abuse.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical, developmental and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. This can also occur during pregnancy as a result of parental substance misuse. This includes when a parent or carer fails to provide:

- ✦ Adequate food clothing or shelter (including exclusion from home and abandonment).
- ✦ Protection from physical and emotional harm and danger.
- ✦ Ensure adequate supervision.
- ✦ Access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- ✦ Meeting the child's basic emotional needs.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This includes:

- ✦ Physical contact including penetrative and non-penetrative acts.
- ✦ Involving children looking at or in the production of sexual images.
- ✦ Watching sexual activities
- ✦ Encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways
- ✦ Grooming a child in preparation for abuse.

Female Genital Mutilation or FGM

Female Genital Mutilation (sometimes referred to as female circumcision) refers to procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It occurs mainly in Africa and to a lesser extent, in the Middle East and Asia; however, children living in the United Kingdom are still at risk of this form of abuse. Although it is believed by many to be a religious issue, it is in fact a cultural practice. There are no health benefits to Female Genital Mutilation. Communities particularly affected by FGM in the UK include girls from: Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Egypt, Nigeria, Eritrea, Yemen, Indonesia and Afghanistan. In the UK, FGM tends to occur in areas with larger populations of communities who practice FGM, such as first-generation immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

Key Points:

- ✦ It is NOT a religious practice.
- ✦ Occurs mostly to girls aged 5-8 years old; but up to around 15.

- ✦ It has been a criminal offence in the United Kingdom since 1985.
- ✦ Offence since 2003 to take girls abroad
- ✦ Criminal penalties include up to 14 years in prison. Reasons for this cultural practice include:
- ✦ Cultural identity – an initiation into womanhood.
- ✦ Gender identity – moving from a girl to a woman – enhancing femininity
- ✦ Sexual control – reduce the woman's desire for sex
- ✦ Hygiene/cleanliness – un mutilated women are regarded as unclean. **Risk Factors include:**
- ✦ Low level integration into UK society
- ✦ Mother or sister who has undergone FGM
- ✦ Girls who are withdrawn from PSHE
- ✦ A visiting female elder from the country of origin
- ✦ Being taken on a long holiday to the family's country of origin
- ✦ Talk about a 'special' event or procedure to 'become a woman' High Risk Time

This procedure often takes place in the summer, as the recovery period for FGM can be 6 to 9 weeks. Schools must be alert to the possibility of FGM as a reason why a girl in a high-risk group is absent from school or where the family request an 'authorised absence' for just before or just after the summer school holidays.

Although it is difficult to identify girls before FGM takes place, where girls from these high-risk groups return from long periods of absence with symptoms of FGM, advice must be sought from the police or social services. It is a mandatory reporting duty under section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) there is a statutory duty upon school staff to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18.

Post FGM symptoms include:

- ✦ Difficulty walking, sitting or standing
- ✦ Spend longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet
- ✦ Unusual behaviour after a lengthy absence
- ✦ Reluctant to undergo normal medical examinations
- ✦ Asking for help, but may not be explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear.

Longer term problems include:

- ✦ Difficulties urinating or incontinence
- ✦ Frequent or chronic vaginal, pelvic or urinary infections
- ✦ Menstrual problems
- ✦ Kidney damage and possible failure
- ✦ Cysts and abscesses
- ✦ Pain when having sex
- ✦ Infertility
- ✦ Complications during pregnancy and childbirth
- ✦ Emotional and mental health problems

Forced Marriage

There is a clear difference between 'forced marriage' and 'arranged marriage'. Arranged marriages have worked well in society for many years. An arranged marriage is when families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice of whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.

A forced marriage is when one or both parties do not consent to the marriage, and people are forced into marriage against their will. Forced marriage is an abuse of human rights. Both physical and emotional abuse may be used to coerce people into the marriage.

In law both parties to a marriage must validly consent to the marriage, the minimum age a person is able to consent to a marriage is 16. A Force Marriage Protection Order can be obtained from a Family Court in order to protect victim, both adults and children from a potential forced marriage or people who are already in a forced marriage.

Potential warning signs or indicators that a child is at risk of Forced Marriage

- ✦ Absence and persistent absence
- ✦ Request for extended leave of absence and failure to return from visits to country of origin
- ✦ Fear about forthcoming school holidays
- ✦ Surveillance by siblings or cousins at school ▪ Decline in behaviour, engagement, performance.
- ✦ Poor exam results
- ✦ Being withdrawn from school by those with parental responsibility

- ✦ Removal from a day centre of a person with a physical or learning disability
- ✦ Not allowed to attend extra-curricular activities
- ✦ Sudden announcement of engagement to a stranger
- ✦ Prevented from going on to further/higher education

St Austin's acknowledges that persistent absence from school or requests for leave of absence can be an indicator of a potential safeguarding risk. The issues surrounding Forced Marriage link directly to the school attendance policy; any absences from school will be followed up in accordance with this policy.

This is to ensure that we make every effort to know a child's whereabouts and make sure they are safe to the best of our ability.

What to do if you have a concern regarding Forced Marriage?

Forced Marriage is an offence and if this is happening to a child under the age of 18 it is considered to be child abuse. If you suspect that a child or young person is being forced to marry then you must share your concerns with the Designated Senior Lead (DSL) who will make appropriate contact with Children's Social Care or the Police.

The Forced Marriage unit can be contacted for advice and help in making the referral.

Telephone **020 70080151**

Radicalisation and Extremism

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and/or extremism leading to terrorism.

Extremism is defined by the Government in the Prevent Strategy (2010) as:

Vocal or active opposition to fundamental British Values including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also include in our definition of extremism calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas.

Extremism is defined by the Crown Prosecution Service as:

The demonstration of unacceptable behaviour by using any means or medium to express views which: ■
Encourage, justify or glorify terrorist violence in furtherance of particular beliefs;

- ✦ Seek to provoke others to terrorist acts;
- ✦ Encourage other serious criminal activity or seek to provoke others to serious criminal acts; or
- ✦ Foster hatred which might lead to inter-community violence in the UK

Indicators of vulnerability include:

- ✦ Identity crisis – the pupil is distanced from their cultural / religious heritage and experiences discomfort about their place in society
- ✦ Personal crisis – the pupil may be experiencing family tensions, a sense of isolation; and low self-esteem; they may have dissociated from their existing friendship groups and become involved with a new and different group of friends; they may be searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging.
- ✦ Personal Circumstances – migration; local community tensions; and events affecting a pupil’s country or region of origin may contribute to a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of Government policy.
- ✦ Unmet Aspirations – the pupil may have perceptions of injustice; a feeling of failure; rejection of civic life
- ✦ Experiences of criminality – which may include involvement with criminal groups, imprisonment and poor resettlement/reintegration
- ✦ Special Educational Needs – the pupil may experience difficulties with social interaction, empathy with others, understanding the consequences of their actions and awareness of the motives of others

(This is not an exhaustive list, nor does it mean that all young people experiencing the above are at risk of radicalisation for the purposes of violent extremism).

St Austin’s work reflects the government **PREVENT** strategy (July 2015) in their approach to radicalisation and extremism. Staff are required to read elements of the prevent strategy relating to school and education. Any concerns regarding radicalisation or extremism in children and young people must be passed onto the school’s single point of contact or SPOC.

The SPOC will then refer on to the local PREVENT officer, Children’s Social Care and/or the Police. The PREVENT single point of contact (SPOC) in school is the Designated Senior Lead **Mrs P Wade**.

The PREVENT officer for St. Helens is **John Danher. Tel 0151 777 8383**.

In relation to the threat of terrorist attacks, St Austin's has considered advice from DfE in relation to risk assessments for out-of-school trips. All risk assessments are discussed with the headteacher before authorisation of the trip takes place.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child Sexual Exploitation is sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18. It involves situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive something (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example, being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/ mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/ economic and/or emotional vulnerability.

Warning Signs and Symptoms of Child Sexual Exploitation

- ✦ Can be difficult to identify and can be mistaken for 'normal' teenage behaviour
- ✦ Be involved in abusive relationships
- ✦ Hang out with groups of older people, anti-social groups or with other vulnerable peers
- ✦ Associates with other young people involved in sexual exploitation
- ✦ Get involved in gangs, gang fights, gang memberships
- ✦ Have older boyfriends or girlfriends
- ✦ Spend time at places of concern such as hotels or known brothels
- ✦ Not know where they are because they have been moved around the country
- ✦ Go missing from home, care or education
- ✦ Have expensive items such as mobile phones that they can't or won't explain. ▪ Be very secretive about what they are doing online ▪ Have access to drugs or alcohol.

How do we manage suspected cases of Child Sexual Exploitation?

St Austin's will respond to suspected cases of Child Sexual Exploitation in relation to St. Helens safeguarding procedures.

St. Helens Safeguarding Children's Board has its own subgroup dedicated to CSE known as Multi Agency Child Sexual Exploitation group (MACSE)

If a child or young person is at risk or suspected of being sexually exploited, concerns must be passed on to the Designated Senior Lead **Mrs P Wade or Ms Jane Ramsey** immediately. The child or young person will then be referred onto the Police and contact may also be made with Children's Social Care.

Referral forms can be found on St. Helens Safeguarding Children's Board website within the Merseyside Multi Agency Protocol Child Sexual Exploitation or a copy can be requested from the Designated Senior Lead within School.

Private Fostering

Private Fostering is where a child under the age of 16 (or 18 if they have a disability) goes to live with someone who is not a close relative for 28 days or more. It is a private agreement between a parent and another adult.

A close relative includes a parent, step-parent, grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (whether blood related or through marriage). Private foster carers may be from the extended family such as a cousin or great aunt, a friend of the family, the parent of a friend of the child or someone previously unknown to the child's family.

Examples of private fostering could include:

- ✦ Children or young people who are sent to this country for education or health care by their parents from overseas.
- ✦ Teenagers living with a friend's family because they do not get on with their own family.
- ✦ Children living with a friend's family because their parents' study or work involves unsociable hours, which makes it difficult to use ordinary day care or after school care.
- ✦ Children staying with another family because there has been bereavement, serious illness or their parents have divorced or separated.
- ✦ A child from overseas staying with a host family while attending school or overseas students at boarding school who do not stay with a host family during the holidays.

Education and other professionals have a duty to notify the Local Authority and Children's social care when they believe there is a private fostering arrangement and they are not satisfied that the Local Authority has been or will be notified by the parent or carer.

Private Foster carers also have a responsibility to notify the Local Authority.



If a member of staff or any individual believes that a child is being privately fostered, they must contact Children's Social Care or inform the Designate Senior Lead who will make the referral.

Whistleblowing

If you're a professional with concerns over how child protection issues are being handled in our school or another organisation, you can talk to us anonymously:

NSPCC WHISTLEBLOWING HELPLINE: 0800 028 0285

The Whistleblowing Advice Line offers free advice and support to professionals with concerns about how child protection issues are being handled in their own or another organisation.

E-Safety

ICT in the 21st Century is an essential resource to support learning and teaching, as well as playing an important role in the everyday lives of children, young people and adults. Consequently, at St Austin's we need to build in the use of these technologies to arm our young people with the skills to access life-long learning and employment. E-safety involves pupils, staff, governors and parents making best use of technology, information, training and the E - safety policy has been created to maintain a safe online and ICT environment. Wargrave refer to the **Education for a Connected World Framework** for specific advice about online knowledge and skills children must have the opportunity to develop at different stages of their lives. We ensure children are taught about safeguarding, including online, through teaching and learning opportunities as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum with Relationships Health and Sex Education. **(Mandatory from September 2020)**. St Austin's refer to the **DfE Teaching Online Safety in School June 2019 for guidance when planning curriculum and how online safety fits within it, including supporting vulnerable pupils. (page 24)** Please read this policy in conjunction with the E-safety policy. **Teaching online safety and harms is also taught to children as a whole school approach through assemblies and Safer Internet Weeks as per guidance on page 26.**

As part of a broad and balanced curriculum, all pupils will be made aware of online risks and taught how to stay safe online.

Through training, all staff members will be made aware of:

- Pupil attitudes and behaviours which may indicate they are at risk of potential harm online.
- The procedure to follow when they have a concern regarding a pupil's online activity.

The school will ensure that appropriate filtering systems are in place on school devices and school networks to prevent children accessing inappropriate material, in accordance with the school's Cyber-security Policy. The school will, however, ensure that the use of filtering and monitoring systems does not cause "over blocking", which may lead to

unreasonable restrictions as to what pupils can be taught online. The school will also ensure that it meets the filtering and monitoring standards published by the DfE.

Staff will be aware of the filtering and monitoring systems in place and will know how to escalate concerns where they are identified. Staff will be made aware of their expectations and responsibilities relating to filtering and monitoring systems during their induction.

"As in any other area of life, children and young people are vulnerable and may expose themselves to danger - knowingly or unknowingly - when using the Internet and other digital technologies. Indeed, some young people may find themselves involved in activities which are inappropriate or possibly illegal.

"To ignore e-safety issues when implementing the requirements of Every Child Matters could ultimately lead to significant gaps in child protection policies, leaving children and young people vulnerable."

Safeguarding Children in a Digital World. BECTA 2006

PEER ON PEER ABUSE

At St Austin's, we put in place safeguards to reduce the likelihood of peer on peer allegations. There is an established ethos of respect, friendship, courtesy and kindness with a clear, high profile Behaviour Policy which sets out our expectations, rewards and consequences for unacceptable behaviour together with visible staff presence.

DEFINITION

There is no clear boundary between incidents that must be regarded as abusive and incidents that are more properly dealt with as bullying, sexual experimentation etc. This is a matter of professional judgement.

If one child or young person causes harm to another, this must not necessarily be dealt with as abuse: bullying, fighting and harassment between children are not generally seen as child protection issues. However, it may be appropriate to regard a young person's behaviour as abusive if:

- There is a large difference in power (for example age, size, ability, development) between the young people concerned; or

- The perpetrator has repeatedly tried to harm one or more other children; or
- There are concerns about the intention of the alleged perpetrator.

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

RISKS

Children are vulnerable to abuse by their peers. Such abuse must be taken as seriously as abuse by adults and must be subject to the same child protection procedures.

Professionals must not dismiss abusive behaviour as normal between young people and must not develop high thresholds before acting.

Professionals must be aware of the potential uses of information technology for bullying and abusive behaviour between young people.

Professionals must be aware of the added vulnerability of children and young people who have been the victims of violent crime (for example mugging), including the risk that they may respond to this by abusing younger or weaker children.

The alleged perpetrator is likely to have considerable unmet needs as well as posing a significant risk of harm to other children. Evidence suggests that such children may have suffered considerable disruption in their lives, may have witnessed or been subjected to **physical or sexual abuse**, may have problems in their educational development and may have committed other offences. They may therefore be suffering, or at risk of suffering, **Significant Harm** and in need of protection. Any longterm plan to reduce the risk posed by the alleged perpetrator must address their needs.

Protection and action to be taken

It is not enough to respond to incidents as they arise: all agencies that work with children must strive to create an environment that actively discourages abuse and challenges the attitudes which underlie it. Agencies must have a policy on bullying, and on sexual and racial harassment. They must also consider the effect of adult behaviour on children who may view them as role models.

Any professional who feels that a young person has abused another child or young person must notify school's child protection officer, without delay.

The St Austin's safeguarding team will consider:

- Whether the alleged perpetrator seems to pose a continuing risk to any child;
- How to protect any child who appears to be at immediate risk of significant harm;
- Whether **Section 47 Enquiries** must be initiated (or continued if they have already begun) and how they must be handled; and
- What action must be taken in respect of the alleged perpetrator, for example arranging a risk management meeting.

It is important to co-ordinate action to address these issues: no agency must initiate action that has implications for another agency without appropriate consultation unless this is unavoidable in order to protect the safety of a child.

The management of safeguarding can be further explained in the Keeping Children Safe in Education Document 2023. At St Austin's, our 4 safeguarding partners are:

Local authority (LA)

Clinical commissioning group within the LA Chief

Office of police within the LA

Liverpool Archdiocese

In cases where peer on peer abuse is identified we will follow our child protection procedures, recognising that both the victim and perpetrator will require support.

We recognise that peer on peer abuse can manifest itself in many ways such as:

- ✦ Child Sexual Exploitation
- ✦ Sexting or youth produced digital imagery
- ✦ Bullying
- ✦ Radicalisation

- ✦ Abuse in intimate relationships
- ✦ Children who display sexually harmful behaviour
- ✦ Gang association and serious violence
- ✦ Technology can be used by for bullying and other abusive behaviour ✦ Child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment.
- ✦ Up skirting

There are a number of factors that make children more vulnerable to peer on peer abuse: experience of abuse within their family; living with domestic violence young people in care; children who go missing; children with additional needs (SEN and/or disabilities).

Research tells us girls are more frequently identified as being abused by their peers, girls are more likely to experience unwanted sexual touching in schools. Boys are less likely to report intimate relationship abuse. Boys report high levels of victimisation in areas where they are affected by gangs. There is an increasing evidence base emerging on the sexual exploitation of boys (both by adults and peers). We recognise that both boys and girls experience peer on peer abuse but they do so in gendered ways

Sexting

The school recognises that 'sexting' is a growing concern amongst professionals and parents as it can expose children to risks, particularly if the imagery is shared further. It can lead to embarrassment, bullying and increased vulnerability to sexual exploitation. Producing and sharing images of under-18's is also illegal.

There is no clear definition of what is 'sexting' and indeed many professionals, young people and parents have different interpretations ranging from sending flirty messages to sending nude or semi-nude photographs via mobiles or over the internet.

This guidance is based on the UKCCIS Sexting in Schools and Colleges guidance 2018. The full guidance is located at UKCCIS 2018 Guidance. This guidance covers:

- ✦ A person under the age of 18 creates and shares sexual imagery of themselves with a peer under the age of 18
- ✦ A person under the age of 18 shares sexual imagery created by another person under the age of 18 with a peer under the age of 18 or an adult
- ✦ A person under the age of 18 is in possession of sexual imagery created by another person under the age of 18 It does not cover:

- ✦ The sharing of sexual imagery of people under 18 by adults as this constitutes child sexual abuse and schools must always inform the police and CSC.
- ✦ Young people under the age of 18 sharing adult pornography or exchanging sexual texts which don't contain imagery.

The term youth produced sexual imagery has been adopted to provide some clarity and to distinguish it from imagery where there are adults involved in some manner.

The purpose of this guidance is to make expectations clear to pupils and their parents and carers as well as to be clear to staff about the school's policy and procedure in responding to incidents.

This policy forms part of our school's safeguarding arrangements and our response to concerns about 'sexting' will be guided by the principle of proportionality and our primary concern at all times is the welfare and protection of the children and young people involved.

The school recognises that it is an offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 to possess, distribute, show and make indecent images of children (a child being under 18 year) but it does not define what is indecent.

However, the police accept that the law which criminalised indecent images of children was created before the technological advances of today and it originally sought to protect children from adults. It was not intended to criminalise children. Despite this, children who share sexual imagery of themselves or peers are breaking the law and therefore we will seek to manage this type of case appropriately.

All professionals including the National Police Chiefs Council agree that incidents involving youth produced imagery must primarily be treated as a safeguarding issue. It is agreed that we must not unnecessarily criminalise children as the consequence of this can be significant in terms of their life chances in adulthood. Where children do share images, it is often as a result of natural curiosity and exploring relationships and in the context of the digital world we live in. The school is therefore empowered to deal with the majority of these incidents without involving the police.

Up skirting

The school recognises that up skirting is a growing concern amongst professionals and parents and it can expose children to risks. Definition of Up skirting: Up skirting is typically when a photograph is taken

under a person's clothing without them knowing, for sexual gratification or to cause the victim humiliation, distress or harm.

Victims will be re-assured and taken seriously and supported and kept safe. The referral process will take place as set out in paragraph 36 in Part one of the KCSE. If staff are in any doubt they would speak to the DSL or Deputy DSL

The school may become aware of the issue in a variety of ways i.e. from the child direct, a friend of parent or a member of staff. We recognise that the child is likely to be very embarrassed and worried about what might happen. We also recognise the pressure that is on a child can be under to take part in sharing such imagery but we will reassure them they are not on their own and will help and support them. We will also help them to understand what has happened and the context for the concerns. We will also discuss issues of consent and trust within healthy relationships.

All incidents will be followed in line with our safeguarding and child protection policy. Where an incident comes to our attention:

- ✦ The incident will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as soon as possible.
- ✦ An initial meeting with the appropriate school staff will be held to:
- ✦ Establish if there is immediate risk & what further information is needed, whether or not the imagery has been shared
- ✦ Consider facts about the children involved which could influence a risk assessment.
- ✦ A meeting with the young person will be held (if appropriate)
- ✦ Parents will generally be informed at an early stage

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

- ✦ The incident involves an adult
- ✦ The child has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed or if there are concerns about capacity to consent
- ✦ If the sexual acts are unusual for the developmental age or violent
- ✦ Children under 13 years are involved
- ✦ The child is at immediate risk e.g. suicidal or self-harming

Where the above do not apply then the school will generally deal with this matter without involving the police or children's social care although this will be subject to review.

This decision is made where we are confident that we have sufficient information to assess and manage any risks within our pastoral support and disciplinary framework. The decision will be made by the DSL and others as appropriate and will be recording.

Child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment

At St Austin's we have an effective preventative education programme with a whole school approach that prepares children for life in modern Britain. We have a clear set of values and standards, and these will be upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life. This is underpinned by the school's behaviour policy and pastoral support system, and by a planned programme of evidence based content delivered through the whole curriculum. The curriculum has been developed according to the appropriate age and stage of development. (especially when considering SEND children and their cognitive understanding), and may tackle such issues as:

- ✦ healthy and respectful relationships;
- ✦ what respectful behaviour looks like;
- ✦ gender roles, stereotyping, equality;
- ✦ body confidence and self-esteem;
- ✦ prejudiced behaviour;
- ✦ that sexual violence and sexual harassment is always wrong;
- ✦ addressing cultures of sexual harassment.

We follow guidance in **Part 5 of the Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023** on how we must respond to reports of child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment.

Further information can be found in the extra publication on sexual violence and harassment between children in schools and colleges - Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges which covers:

- ✦ what sexual violence and sexual harassment is
- ✦ schools' and colleges' legal responsibilities
- ✦ a whole school or college approach to safeguarding and child protection ✦ how to respond to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment. In the first instance this is reported and logged on cpoms.

SERIOUS VIOLENT CRIME

Staff have been made aware of indicators which may signal that children are at risk from or involved with serious violent crime. This may be:

- ✦ Increased absence from school
- ✦ A change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups
- ✦ A significant decline in performance
- ✦ Signs of self-harm
- ✦ Significant change in wellbeing
- ✦ Signs of assault, or unexplained injuries
- ✦ Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that individuals are involved with criminal networks or gangs.

Further advice for schools is provided in the **Home Office's Preventing Youth Violence and Gang Involvement March 2015 Criminal Exploitation of Children and Vulnerable Adult's County Lines Guidance Sept 2018**.

Other school documents that relate to this policy:

Child Protection flow chart

Allegations Procedures

Confidential Reporting/Whistleblowing Policy

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023

E – Safety Policy

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

Inspecting Safeguarding in the Early Years – Ofsted

The Prevent Duty

Safer Recruitment Policy

Children Missing Education

Behaviour Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Parent Conduct Policy

Induction pack

Sexual Violence and sexual harassment 2021

Information sharing advice 2015