

Child Protection/ Safeguarding Policies



2016/2017

Board of Governors responsible: *Mr J Stuart & Fr P Delargy*

CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFE GUARDING POLICIES

St Louis Grammar School seeks to protect vulnerable children and young people by ensuring that all staff, employed by the Education Authority have guidance on the detection and multi-disciplinary management of situations where abuse or neglect is evident or suspected.

St Louis Grammar School have a primary responsibility for the care, welfare and safety of the pupils in our charge, and we will carry out this duty through our pastoral care policy, which aims to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment, valuing individuals for their unique talents and abilities, in which all of our young people can learn and develop to their full potential.

One way in which we seek to protect our pupils is by helping them learn about the risks of possible abuse, helping them to recognise unwelcome behaviour in others and acquire the confidence and skills they need to keep themselves safe.

The purpose of the following procedures on Child Protection is to protect our pupils by ensuring that everyone who works in our school - teachers, non-teaching staff and volunteers - has clear guidance on the action which is required where abuse or neglect of a child is suspected. The overriding concern of all caring adults must be the care, welfare and safety of the child, and the welfare of each child is our paramount consideration. The problem of child abuse will not be ignored by anyone who works in our school, and we know that some forms of child abuse are also a criminal offence.

Types of child abuse

Neglect - the persistent or significant neglect of a child, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold or starvation, or persistent failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive.

Physical - physical injury to a child, whether deliberately inflicted or knowingly not prevented.

Sexual - the sexual exploitation of a child or young person for an adult's or another young person's own sexual gratification; the involvement of children or young people in sexual activities of any kind (including exposure to pornography) which they do not understand, to which they are unable to give informed consent or that violate normal family roles.

Emotional - persistent or significant emotional ill-treatment or rejection, resulting in severe adverse effects on the emotional, physical and/or behavioural development of a child.

Bullying - Bullying is a highly distressing and damaging form of abuse and is not tolerated in our school. All staff are vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring, and will take immediate steps to stop it happening, to protect and reassure the victim and to discipline the bully. Parents of both victim and bully will be personally contacted immediately when bullying behaviour is identified.

Any complaint by a parent that their child is, or may be, being bullied will be fully investigated by Mr Whiteford (Vice Principal)/Mrs Toner (Deputy Designated Child Protection Officer) and Senior Leadership Team. Action will be taken to protect the victim.

This will usually include ensuring that another child or small group of children befriends and supports the child being bullied during the school day.

A parent making a complaint about bullying will have a personal response from the designated teacher within one week of making the complaint, indicating the investigation which has been carried out and the action being taken.

The sanctions taken against a pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case, but will include the loss of any privileges or position of responsibility he/she holds in the school. His/her behaviour will be carefully monitored until staff is satisfied that the problem has stopped.

If a pupil's bullying behaviour persists, the second stage will be to investigate using the child protection procedures described below.

Procedures for reporting suspected (or disclosed) child abuse

1. Mr Whiteford is in charge of Child Protection. In his absence, Mrs Toner will assume responsibility for child protection matters.
2. If a child makes a disclosure to a teacher or other member of staff which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a child, the member of staff must act promptly.
3. He/she should not investigate - this is a matter for the Social Services - but should report these concerns immediately to Mr Whiteford/Mrs Toner, discuss the matter with them and make full notes.
4. Mr Whiteford will discuss the matter with Mrs Toner/Mr Rafferty as a matter of urgency to plan a course of action, and ensure that a written record is made.
5. Mr Whiteford, in consultation with Mrs Toner/Mr Rafferty, will decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to Social Services. If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral. Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed immediately.
6. Mr Whiteford may seek clarification or advice and consult with the Education Authority or the Senior Social Worker before a referral is made. No decision to refer a case to Social Services will be made without the fullest

consideration and on appropriate advice. The safety of the child is our first priority.

7. Where there are concerns about possible abuse, after consultation the Principal will inform:

- The Social Services
- The local Education Authority and Child Protection Services

This will be done in an envelope marked '**CONFIDENTIAL - CHILD PROTECTION.**'

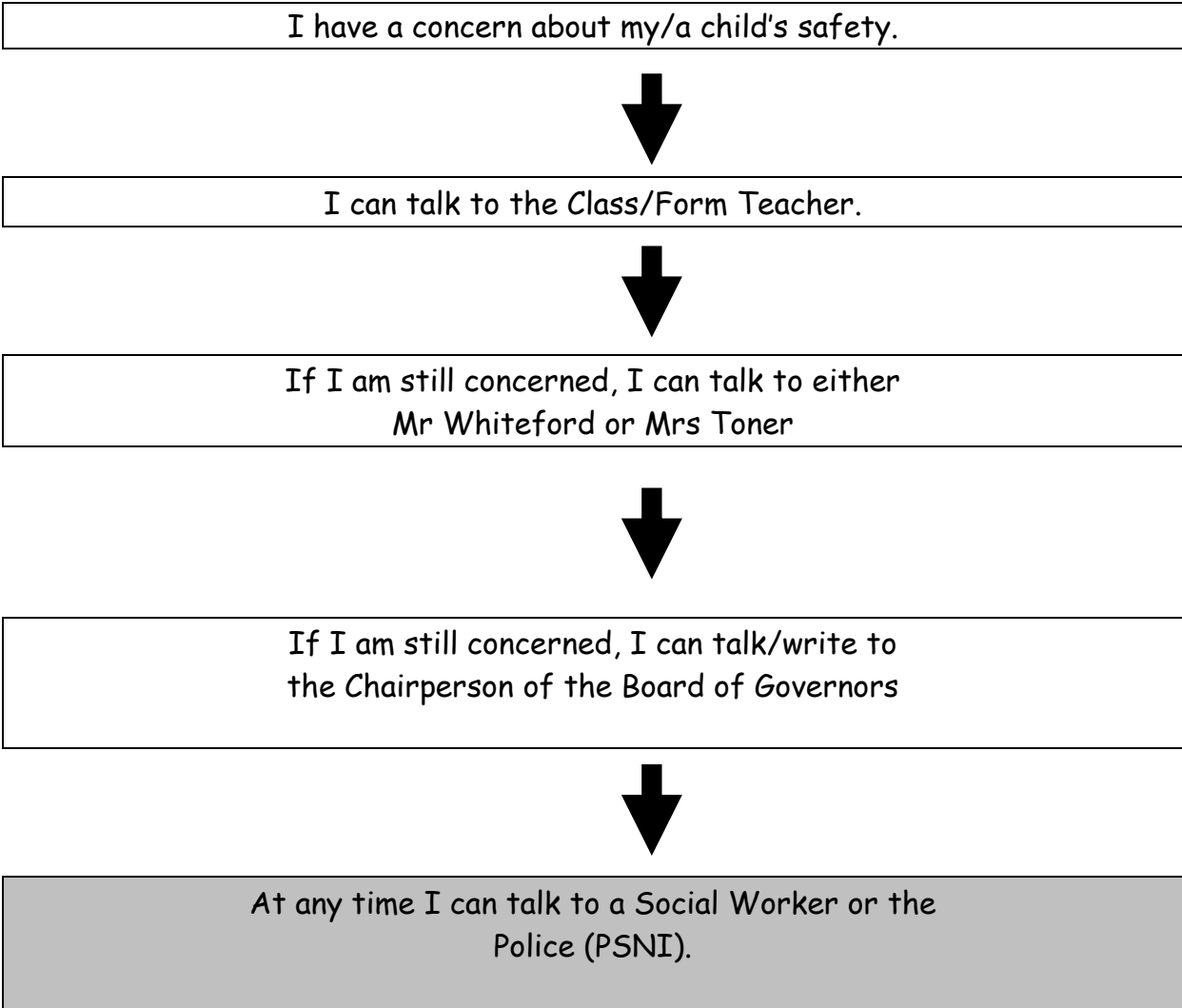
If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, Mr Whiteford (or Mr Rafferty, if he is not available) must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply (unless the complaint is about Mr Whiteford). If a complaint is made against the Principal, Mr Whiteford must be informed immediately. He will inform the Chairman of the Board of Governors and together they will ensure that necessary action is taken.

Where the matter is referred to Social Services, the member of staff will be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils, and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by the Social Services. The Chairman of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

If any member of staff feels unsure about what to do if he/she has concerns about a child, or unsure about being able to recognise the signs or symptoms of possible abuse, he/she should speak to Mr Whiteford or Mrs Toner.

It should be noted that information given to members of staff about possible child abuse cannot be held 'in confidence'. In the interests of the child, staff may need to share this information with other professionals. However, only those who need to know will be told.

How a parent/teacher makes a complaint:



PROCEDURES for Reporting Suspected (or Disclosed) Child Abuse

Mr Whiteford is the Designated Child Protection Officer in St Louis Grammar School. In his absence, Mrs Toner will assume responsibility for child protection matters. Both Child Protection staff will work closely together on matters affecting any child protection issues in the school.

If a child makes a disclosure to a teacher or other member of staff which gives rise to concerns about possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a child, the member of staff must act promptly.



Listen ...

Without displaying any shock, do not question what is being said or interrupt and make brief notes.



Reassure ...

You could say 'you are not to blame'; 'it will be alright'
You cannot promise confidentiality.



React ...

Do not investigate or interrogate.
Do not ask leading questions.

You could say 'anything else to tell me?'



Record ...

Use your notes to write up the conversation including the date, time and actual words if possible record non-verbal behaviour.

Attach the original notes to your statement



Refer ...

Explain to the child what you have to do next and report the matter to Mr Whiteford/Mr Rafferty

Mr Whiteford will decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to Social Services. **If there are concerns that the child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral.** The Child Protection Support Service for Schools Team [CPSSS] will be contacted also.

The case is referred to Social Services and the school will be advised of further action e.g. PSNI involvement.

If a complaint about possible child abuse is made against a member of staff, the Principal must be informed immediately. The above procedures will apply. When the matter is referred to Social Services, the member of staff will be removed from duties involving direct contact with pupils, and may be suspended from duty as a precautionary measure pending investigation by Social Services. The Chairman of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

If a complaint is made against the Principal, Mr Whiteford must be informed immediately. He will inform the Chairman of the Board of Governors and together they will ensure that the necessary action is taken.

If any member of staff feels unsure about what to do if he/she has concerns about a child, or unsure about being able to recognise the signs or symptoms of possible abuse, he/she should speak to Mr Whiteford or Mrs Toner.

SUMMARY OF GUIDELINES FOR STAFF

Private Meetings with Pupils

Be aware of potential dangers and where possible interviews should take place:

- In a room with windows
- With the door open
- In a room likely to be frequented by others
- Inform another adult the interview is taking place
- Where possible another adult/pupil should be nearby

Physical Contact

- Do not make unnecessary physical contact with pupils
- Physical contact which may be misconstrued should be avoided
- Obvious or more intimate contact should never occur
- Use your discretion with a distressed child to ensure that what is said/seen by others is normal, natural contact

Physical Education

- PE teachers should be aware of the limits within which contact may take place e.g. using equipment, demonstrations etc.

School Trips

- See policy on school trips/extracurricular outings and completion of Risk Assessment.
- The school should have a mobile phone that teachers on school trips can use to contact parents in case of emergencies.
- If a child on a school trip makes a disclosure of child abuse to a teacher he/she will immediately contact:

GATEWAY

028 9442 4459 or 0300 1234 333

GATEWAY OUT OF HOURS

028 9504 9999