

St John Fisher Catholic Primary School



Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Autumn 2025

Next Review: Autumn 2026 - or as required

Revision led by: LM for ALL STAFF AND GOVERNORS

Includes summary and full policy

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (Summary)

St John Fisher Catholic Primary School fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection.

The purpose of this document is to assist all staff to protect and safeguard children who are at risk of abuse or neglect. This policy and procedures should be read in conjunction with the relevant sections of the London Safeguarding Children Procedures. This policy reflects the requirements of Working Together to Safeguard Children March 2018 and *Keeping Children Safe in Education Statutory Guidance for schools and colleges September 2025*.

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

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

We recognise that because of the day to day contact with children, school staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse.

The school therefore:

- Establishes and maintains an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Ensures children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Includes opportunities in the PSHE curriculum, including circle time, for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

We follow the procedures set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board and take account of guidance issued by the Department for Education and Skills to:

Have a designated senior person for child protection - [Laura Mc Laughlin Acting Head of School](#) -who has received appropriate training and support for this role, [Lynsey Baulch](#), [Anna Bennett](#), [Dawn Keto Edwards](#) and [Karin Brady](#) are also trained for this role.

Have a nominated governor responsible for child protection- [Esther Philips](#).

Ensure every member of staff (including temporary and supply staff and volunteers) and governing body knows the name of the designated senior person responsible for child protection and their role.

Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the designated senior person responsible for child protection- a minimum of bi-annual training will be given.

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.

Notify social services if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a pupil who is on the child protection register.

Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences.

Keep written records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.

Ensure all records are kept securely, separate from the main pupil file, and in locked locations. Develop and then follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.

Safe recruitment practices are always followed.

We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at school their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. The school will endeavour to support the pupil through:

The content of the curriculum.

The school ethos which promotes a Christian, positive, supportive and secure environment and gives pupils a sense of being valued.

The school behaviour policy that is aimed at supporting vulnerable pupils in the school. The school ensures that the pupil knows that some behaviour is unacceptable but they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred.

Liaison with other agencies that support the pupil such as Social Services, Child and Adult Mental Health Service, education welfare service and educational psychology service.

Ensuring that, where a pupil on the child protection register leaves, their information is transferred to the new school immediately and that the child's social worker is informed.

If a disclosure is made to a member of staff they will discuss the disclosure with one of the designated teachers and then the following process is followed.

Disclosure made by a child

Adult records what has been said on CPomms

Seek advice from designated teacher

Designated teacher to seek advice from Social Services or the LADO

On advice the school act:

1 Call and speak to the parents

2 Call and speak to parents and make referral

3 Make referral - Social Services will inform parents

(this is used in extreme cases where a child is in imminent danger)

Once a case has been taken on by Social Services the school is legally bound to follow their directives. If at this stage a child(ren) are removed from their home and are placed in the care of the local authority the school will liaise with Social Services on all matters concerning the child(ren).

Alternatively staff may contact:

Bexley MASH by ringing 020 3045 5440 if the pupil has a Bexley address.

Contact Greenwich social care by ringing 020 8921 3172 or Greenwich Early Help by ringing 020 8921 4590 if the pupil has a Greenwich address.

Contact the Police, by ringing 101 (non-urgent) or 999 (emergency).

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

This policy is taken directly from Bexley's suggested model policy amendments are made to keep abreast of guidance from the DFE.

The purpose of this document is to assist all staff to protect and safeguard children who are at risk of abuse or neglect. This policy and procedures should be read in conjunction with the relevant sections of the London Safeguarding Children Procedures. This policy reflects the requirements of Working Together to Safeguard Children March 2018 *and Keeping children safe in education statutory guidance for schools and colleges September 2025.*

The safeguarding of children is everyone's business and schools have a responsibility under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to ensure that their functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

This includes:

- Preventing the impairment of children's health or development
- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.

The Children Act 1989 defines a child as being up to the age of 18 years; it also defines significant harm and the roles and responsibilities of Children's Social Care and the Police.

The following procedures outline the action to be taken if it is suspected that a child may be being abused, harmed or neglected. There are four categories of abuse:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect

It is acknowledged that a child can be abused, harmed or neglected in a family, institution or community setting by someone known to them, or less commonly, by a stranger, this includes someone in a position of trust such as a teacher or other professional.

Safeguarding and the promotion of a child's welfare covers all aspects of the child's life and the school is committed to ensuring that all its actions in respect for a child are compatible with this aim. If there are concerns about a child's welfare that do not meet the thresholds of child abuse the school will consider whether the Signs of Safety Framework approach should be considered.

Policy Statement

We in St John Fisher Catholic Primary School are committed to practice, which protects children from harm.

Staff and volunteers in this organisation accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues, which cause children harm.

Aims

We will aim to safeguard children by:

- Adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and a code of conduct for staff and volunteers.
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents and carers, staff and volunteers.
- Sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately.
- Carefully following the procedures for recruitment and selection of staff and volunteers.
- Providing effective management for staff and volunteers through support, supervision and training.

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually. We recognise that because of the day-to-day contact with children, school staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse.

The school will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are confident to talk, and are listened to.
- Ensure children know they can approach adults employed in the school if they are worried.
- Include opportunities in the PSHE curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from harm or abuse.

Procedures

We will follow the procedures set out by London Child Protection Procedures and Bexley's Safeguarding Partnership for Children and Young People (SHIELD) and take account of guidance issued by the Department for Education to:

Ensure we have a designated teacher for child protection who has received appropriate training and support for this role. *The Designated Teacher at the time of writing this policy is Laura Mc Laughlin and the Deputy Designated Teachers are Anna Bennett (SLT) and Lynsey Baulch (SENCO).*

Ensure we have a nominated governor responsible for child protection. The nominated governor at the time of writing this policy is *Esther Philips.*

Ensure every member of staff (including temporary and supply staff and volunteers) and governing body knows the name of the Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teacher responsible for child protection and their role.

Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the Designated Teacher responsible for child protection.

Ensure that parents have an awareness of the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection by setting out its obligations in the school prospectus.

Notify Children's Social Care immediately if there is an unexplained absence of a pupil who is subject to a child protection plan.

Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences.

Keep written chronological records of concerns about children, even if it is assessed that a referral is not necessary; and if that is the case, consider whether a common assessment should be undertaken.

Ensure all records are kept securely; separate from the main pupil file.

Follow procedures laid down by the London Borough of Bexley's Safeguarding Partnership for Children and Young People (SHIELD) where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer.

Ensure safe recruitment practices are always followed.

When a child transfers to another school the Designated Teacher will contact the designated member of staff of the receiving school to inform them that there are concerns.

Helping children to safeguard themselves

Schools should ensure that children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, and recognise that one approach may not be appropriate for all children such as more vulnerable children, victims of abuse and some SEND children. Schools should consider this as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum. Education plays a crucial part in creating a culture that does not tolerate any form of prejudice or discrimination.

Assemblies, PSHE lessons and School Trip Risk Assessments are a common feature of how we educate pupils to keep themselves safe.

Posters are visible throughout the school to help children to understand that they need to speak up if they are unhappy with how someone is treating them or how someone else is being treated.

Circle Time is a tool used by all teachers to address issues often specific to the class involved, for example how safe children are feeling, issues relating to hygiene or resolving issues on the playground.

Road safety and Public Transport

Children are regularly reminded about road and railway safety, particularly when on school trips. In Year 3, the children follow a programme on keeping safe on the roads which is led by Walkability. We have an annual visit from TfL to explain about behaviour expectations when using public transport, as well as safety.

Definitions of abuse, neglect and exploitation

These definitions are based on those from '*Working together to Safeguard Children 2018*' & '*London Safeguarding Children Procedures 2010*' and '*Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025* - part 1

Abuse: *a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.*

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may take many forms e.g. hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child. It may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child. This unusual and potentially dangerous form of abuse is now described as fabricated or induced illness in a child.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development, and may involve:

- Conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person
- Imposing developmentally inappropriate expectations
- Causing children to feel frightened or in danger - e.g. witnessing domestic violence
- Exploitation or corruption of children

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in most types of ill treatment of children, though emotional abuse may occur alone.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening and includes penetrative (i.e. vaginal or anal rape or buggery) and non-penetrative acts. It may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of pornographic materials, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Neglect

Neglect involves the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health and development. This may involve failure to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing, failure to protect from physical harm or danger or failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of a child's basic emotional needs.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Professionals in all agencies and individuals and groups in relevant communities need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. Victims are likely to come from a community that is known to practise FGM (examples are countries in Africa and Asia).

Professionals should note that girls at risk of FGM may not yet be aware of the practice or that it may be conducted on them, so sensitivity should always be shown when approaching the subject.

All staff at St John Fisher Catholic School receive training in recognising and how to deal with disclosures regarding FGM. Whilst all staff should speak with a DSL there is a specific legal duty of all teachers to report any cases of FGM to the police.

Forced marriage - Arranged marriage

A forced marriage is where one or both people (Adult or Child) do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities, cannot) consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used. It is an appalling and indefensible practice and is recognised in the UK as a form of violence against women and men, domestic/child abuse and a serious abuse of human rights.

The pressure put on people to marry against their will can be physical (including threats, actual physical violence and sexual violence) or emotional and psychological (for example, when someone is made to feel like they're bringing shame on their family). Financial abuse (taking your wages or not giving you any money) can also be a factor. Any evidence will be passed on to the Bexley's Safeguarding Partnership for Children and Young People (SHIELD) to be investigated.

All staff at St John Fisher Catholic School receive training in recognising and how to deal with disclosures regarding forced marriages.

Child missing from education

The local authority must be notified when a school is to delete a pupil from its register under the above circumstances. This should be done as soon as the grounds for deletion are met, but no later than deleting the pupil's name from the register. It is essential that schools comply with this duty, so that local authorities can, as part of their duty to identify 8 Regulation 4 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 9 Regulation 12(3) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 14 children of compulsory school age who are missing education, follow up with any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse or neglect. All schools

must inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the school and the local authority (or in default of such agreement, at intervals determined by the Secretary of State)

Child Sexual Exploitation

Further information on child sexual exploitation (CSE) involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (for example food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts, money or in some cases simply affection) as a result of engaging in sexual activities.

Sexual exploitation can take many forms ranging from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for affection or gifts, to serious organised crime by gangs and groups. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power in the relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim which increases as the exploitative relationship develops. Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying including cyberbullying and grooming.

However, it is also important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse. This includes the distribution of pornographic images.

Radicalisation

Protecting children from the risk of radicalisation is part of our school's wider safeguarding duties and is similar in nature to protecting children from other forms of harm and abuse. During the process of radicalisation it is possible to intervene to prevent vulnerable people being radicalised. Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism. There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. It can happen in many different ways and 11 Section 5B (11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) provides a definition for the term 'teacher'.

Extremism is 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. Specific background factors may contribute to vulnerability which are often combined with specific influences such as family, friends or online, and with specific needs for which an extremist or terrorist group may appear to provide an answer. The internet and the use of social media in particular has become a major factor in the radicalisation of young people.

As with managing other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. School staff should use their professional judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and then report to the designated safeguarding lead, Laura Mc Laughlin who will gather the evidence, evaluate the situation and act proportionately which may include making a referral.

Breast Ironing

Breast Ironing also known as breast flattening is the pounding and massaging of a pubescent girls breasts, using hard or heated objects, to try to make them stop developing or disappear. Victims are like to come from a community that is known to practise Breast Ironing (examples are countries in Africa).

Professionals should note that girls at risk of Breast Ironing may not yet be aware of the practice or that it may be conducted on them, so sensitivity should always be shown when approaching the subject.

Physical Chastisement

As part of the school and the local authorities high focus on child protection the following statement is included in our 'Home School Agreement'. It is a reminder to parents that physical chastisement may be illegal in certain circumstances.

Schools have a statutory responsibility under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children both in and out of school.

As a parent/guardian I understand that I am responsible for disciplining my children or those under my care when they are not in school. I fully understand and am aware that the use of physical force in disciplining them may be illegal in certain circumstances. This may include where an implement has been used or where the use of that force has resulted in injury and the use of prolonged physical stress positions. (This is where children are placed in a position of discomfort for a long period of time). I understand in these circumstances the school has a statutory duty to report such incidents to Children's Social Care and that the police may be asked to investigate.

Child on Child Abuse

In some cases of child abuse the alleged perpetrator will also be a child.

In a situation where child abuse is alleged to have been carried out by another child, the child protection procedures should be adhered to for both the victim and the alleged abuser; that is, it should be considered a child care and protection issue for both children.

All abusers must be held accountable for their behaviour and work must be done to ensure that abusers take responsibility for their behaviour and acknowledge that the behaviour is unacceptable.

Professionals should be aware of the potential uses of information technology for bullying and abusive behaviour between young people - sharing of indecent images, sharing of violent videos, sharing of explicit messages and sexting

As with managing other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. School staff should use their professional judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of peer on peer abuse and then report to the designated safeguarding lead, Laura Mc Laughlin or a member of the safeguarding team - who will gather the evidence, evaluate the situation and act proportionately which may include making a referral.

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

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)

Gang Culture

Being part of a friendship group is a normal part of growing up and it can be common for groups of children and young people to gather together in public places to socialise. Belonging to such a group can form a positive and normal part of young people's growth and development. These groups should be distinguished from 'street gangs' for whom crime and violence are a core part of their identity, although 'delinquent peer groups' can also lead to increased antisocial behaviour and youth offending.

Although some group gatherings can lead to increased antisocial behaviour and youth offending, these activities should not be confused with the serious violence of a gang.

As with managing other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection from 'Gangs'.

Professionals should note that children at risk of being drawn into a 'Gang Culture' may not yet be aware of what is happening so sensitivity should always be shown when approaching the subject.

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children in Schools

St John fisher school fully understand the legal requirements in reporting any concerns around sexual violence or harassment between children. They use PSHE, Relationship and Sex Education lessons to educate and inform the pupils about any inappropriate behaviour between pupils or groups of pupils. (Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children in Schools May 2018)

Upskirting

Upskirting is when a person takes a photo under the clothing of another person without consent. The intention is for the perpetrator to be able to view the genitals or buttock of the victim to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.

County Lines

Criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity, drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market and seaside towns.

Key to identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes, when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism 15 should be considered.

Like other forms of abuse and exploitation, county lines exploitation:

- can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years;
- can affect any vulnerable adult over the age of 18 years;
- can still be exploitation even if the activity appears consensual;
- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and is often accompanied by violence or threats of violence;
- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and young people or adults; and
- is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should be aware of contact details and referral routes in to the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity.

Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property.

Whilst referrals and/or discussion with the Local Housing Authority should be progressed as appropriate, and in accordance with local procedures, this does not, and should not, replace a referral into children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

Mental Health

All staff should also be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem.

Staff however, are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood.

It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.

If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, following their child protection policy and speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others.

Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence, or entrap and coerce them into debt.

They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or begin to carry a knife for a sense of protection from harm from others.

As children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves, their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised by adults and professionals, (particularly older children), and they are not treated as victims despite the harm they have experienced. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to.

It is important to note that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys. The indicators may not be the same, however professionals should be aware that girls are at risk of criminal exploitation too.

It is also important to note that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

Serious Violence

Staff are aware of the indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries.

Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with; individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

Staff are aware of the range of risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence, such as being male, having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school, having experienced child maltreatment and having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery.

Advice for schools and colleges is provided in the Home Office's Preventing youth violence and gang involvement and its Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines guidance.

Domestic Abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021. The Act introduced the first ever statutory definition of domestic abuse and recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children, as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse.

The statutory definition of domestic abuse, based on the previous cross-government definition, ensures that different types of relationships are captured, including ex-partners and family members. The definition captures a range of different abusive behaviours, including physical, emotional and economic abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour. Under the statutory definition, both the person who is carrying out the behaviour and the person to whom the behaviour is directed towards must be aged 16 or over and they must be "personally connected" (as defined in section 2 of the 2021 Act).

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child to parent abuse.

Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home.

The government has issued statutory guidance to provide further information for those working with domestic abuse victims and perpetrators, including the impact on children.

All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Experiencing domestic abuse can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Young people can also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships. This form of child-on-child abuse is sometimes referred to as 'teenage relationship abuse'. Depending on the age of the young people, this may not be recognised in law under the statutory definition of 'domestic abuse' (if one or both parties are under 16).

However, as with any child under 18, where there are concerns about safety or welfare, child safeguarding procedures should be followed and both young victims and young perpetrators should be offered support.

Filtering and monitoring

The updated guidance makes it clear that all staff should receive training on the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring. The designated safeguarding lead should take lead responsibility for understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place. Information on school child protection policies should include information on appropriate filtering and monitoring on school devices and school networks. The guidance signposts the Department for Education's new filtering and monitoring standards (DfE, 2023b), which support schools to have effective systems in place. Schools and colleges should consider meeting the DfE's Cyber security standards for schools and colleges (DfE, 2023c).

Children absent from education

The updated guidance highlights that being absent, as well as missing, from education can be warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns, including sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or child criminal exploitation.

Child abduction and community safety incidents

Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a minor from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. Child abduction can be committed by parents or other family members; by people known but not related to the victim (such as neighbours, friends and acquaintances); and by strangers.

Other community safety incidents in the vicinity of a school can raise concerns amongst children and parents, for example, people loitering nearby or unknown adults engaging children in conversation.

As children get older and are granted more independence (for example, as they start walking to school on their own) it is important they are given practical advice on how to keep themselves safe. Many schools provide outdoor-safety lessons run by teachers or by local police staff.

It is important that lessons focus on building children's confidence and abilities rather than simply warning them about all strangers. Further information is available at: www.actionagainstabduction.org and www.clevernevergoes.org.

Children and the court system

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. There are two age appropriate guides to support children 5-11-year olds and 12-17 year olds.

The guides explain each step of the process, support and special measures that are available. There are diagrams illustrating the courtroom structure and the use of video links is explained.

Making child arrangements via the family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. This can be stressful for children. The Ministry of Justice has launched an online child arrangements information tool with clear and concise information on the dispute resolution service. This may be useful for some parents and carers.

Children who are absent from education

All staff should be aware that children being absent from school or college, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods, and children missing education can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities.

This may include abuse and neglect such as sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental

health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, so-called 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage.

Early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. It is important that staff are aware of their school or college's unauthorised absence procedures and children missing education procedures.

Children with family members in prison

Approximately 200,000 children in England and Wales have a parent sent to prison each year. These children are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health.

The National Information Centre on Children of Offenders, NICCO provides information designed to support professionals working with offenders and their children, to help mitigate negative consequences for those children.

Vulnerable Pupils

We acknowledge that children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges. We are aware that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. This can include assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration; these children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children; the potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges. Further information can be found in the DfE's SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25 and Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions.

The School also acknowledges the additional need for support and protection of children who are vulnerable by virtue of homelessness, refugee/asylum seeker status, the effects of substance abuse within the family, those who are young carers, mid-year admissions, pupils who are excluded from school and pupils where English is an additional language, particularly for very young children, using the translation service if necessary.

Cybercrime

Cybercrime is criminal activity committed using computers and/or the internet. It is broadly categorised as either 'cyber-enabled' (crimes that can happen off-line but are enabled at scale and at speed on-line) or 'cyber dependent' (crimes that can be committed only by using a computer). Cyber-dependent crimes include:

- Unauthorised access to computers (illegal 'hacking'), for example accessing a school's computer network to look for test paper answers or change grades awarded
- 'Denial of Service' (Dos or DDoS) attacks or 'booting'. These are attempts to make a computer, network or website unavailable by overwhelming it with internet traffic from multiple sources, and,

- Making, supplying or obtaining malware (malicious software) such as viruses, spyware, ransomware, botnets and Remote Access Trojans with the intent to commit further offence, including those above.

Children with particular skills and interest in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into cyber-dependent crime.

If there are concerns about a child in this school, we will be referring into the **Cyber Choices** programme. This is a nationwide police programme supported by the Home Office and led by the National Crime Agency, working with regional and local policing.

Modern slavery and the National Referral Mechanism

Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms, including sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs.

Possible Signs & Symptoms of Abuse

Pupils may exhibit signs that may or may not be indicators that physical, emotional and/or sexual abuse, including neglect, has taken place, but the possibility should be considered.

What to do if you suspect that abuse may have occurred

You must report the concerns immediately to the Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teachers by completing a Safeguarding Concern form and handing it directly to him/her, and also explaining your concern. In the absence of the Designated Teacher, speak to the Deputy Designated Teacher. In his/her absence, speak to the most senior member of staff on the premises. Both the Headteacher and the Assistant Headteachers are contactable on their mobile phones when not on the school premises.

Role of the Designated Teacher

Obtain information from staff, volunteers, children or parents and carers who have child protection concerns and to record this information.

Assess the information quickly and carefully and ask for further information as appropriate.

They should also consult with London Borough of Bexley Children's Social Care or Safeguarding Children Service to clarify any doubts or worries

The Designated Teacher should make a referral to Children's Social Care or the police without delay if it is agreed during the consultation or there is an immediate risk to the child.

The referral should be made to Children's Social Care in which the child lives, e.g. if a child lives in another borough, the referral needs to be made to the Social Care Department in that borough. In Bexley, depending on the child's address, referrals are made

to either East or West Child Care Teams. If the child is disabled, the referral should be made to the Disabled Children Service.

A telephone referral should be made and confirmed in writing using an interagency referral form (available on the school portal or through the London Borough of Bexley) within 48 hours.

When making a referral, the designated teacher should keep a written record of:

- Discussions with child
- Discussions with parent/s
- Discussions with staff
- Information provided to Social Care
- Advice given and decisions taken (clearly times, dated and signed)

Children's Social Care should acknowledge the referral within one working day and should be contacted if no acknowledgement has been received within 3 working days. Following referral, Children's Social Care should, within one working day, consider the next course of action, record their decision in writing and notify the Designated Teacher.

The Designated Teacher is [Laura Mc Laughlin](#) and has been nominated by the governing body of St John Fisher Catholic Primary School to refer allegations or suspicions of neglect or abuse to the statutory authorities. In the absence of [Laura Mc Laughlin](#), the matter should be brought to the attention of [Lynsey Baulch and Anna Bennett](#).

Suspicions will not be discussed with anyone other than those nominated above.

It is the right of any individual to make direct referrals to the child protection agencies. If for any reason you believe that the nominated persons have not responded appropriately to your concerns, it is then your responsibility to consider contacting the child protection agencies directly.

Responding to a child making an allegation of abuse

- Stay calm, listen carefully to what is being said
- Find an appropriate early opportunity to explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others-do not promise to keep secrets
- Allow the child to continue at his/her own pace
- Ask questions for clarification only, and at all-time avoid asking leading questions.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing in telling you
- Tell them what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared
- Record in writing what was said using the child's own words as soon as possible, note the date, time, any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that the record is signed and dated

- Pass this information on immediately to your Designated Teacher or Deputy Designated Teacher in his/her absence.

After a child has disclosed abuse, the designated teacher should carefully consider whether or not it is safe for a child to return home to potentially abusive situation. On these rare occasions it may be necessary to take immediate action to contact Children's Social Care to discuss putting safety measures into effect.

Responding to Allegations of abuse against a member of staff, other worker or volunteer.

The Bexley's Safeguarding Partnership for Children and Young People (SHIELD) procedures on allegations against school staff, other workers or volunteers will be followed in all such cases. It is available on the school portal and the Bexley's Safeguarding Partnership for Children and Young People (SHIELD) website.

Recruitment and appointment of workers and volunteers

Refer to standard recruitment and appointment policy for staff recruitment. In recruiting and appointing workers we, St John Fisher Catholic Primary School, will be responsible for following Bexley HR Service, Recruitment and selection guide for schools.

A summary of pertinent points follows:

- Identifying the tasks and responsibilities involved and the type of person most suitable for the job.
- Draw up the Selection criteria and put together a list of essential and desirable qualifications, skills and experience.
- All applicants should apply in writing and their application will cover their personal details, previous and current work/volunteering experience.

We will make sure that we measure the application against the selection criteria

All applicants need to sign a declaration stating that there is no reason why they should be considered unsuitable to work with children. The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974) requires that people applying for positions which give them "substantial, unsupervised access on a sustained or regular basis" to children under the age of 18 must declare all previous convictions which are then subject to police checks. They can then only be offered a job subject to a successful police check. This includes potential employees, volunteers and self-employed people such as sports coaches.

They are also required to declare any pending case against them. It is important that your applicant in this particular category understands that all information will be dealt with confidentially and will not be used against them unfairly.

We will ask for photographic evidence to confirm the identity of the applicant e.g. their passport & proof of address.

We will request to see documentation of any qualifications detailed by the applicant.

We will always interview our candidates for a job.

We will have at least two people from our organisation on the interview panel one of whom must have successfully completed Safer Recruitment training.

We will request two written references from previous employers. We will ask the referee to also comment on their suitability for working with children. If necessary we will also try and follow up written references with a telephone call.

The same principles apply to ex-pupils who have been involved with the organisation and have become volunteers.

We will ensure that our successful applicant obtains an Enhanced Criminal Record Certificate (ECRC) from the Criminal Records Bureau. We will need to see the ECRC before we confirm them in post and record details on the Central Register.

In line with new Childcare Disqualification Requirements all staff completes the new checklist and any concerns are raised with London Borough of Bexley.

In recruiting and appointing volunteers we, St John Fisher Catholic Primary School, will be responsible for the following:

All long term volunteers will be asked to provide a brief written application confirming their details, experience, etc. and will be interviewed.

All volunteers with regular contact with children will have enhanced CRB checks carried out.

All volunteers should receive an induction and be given clear written guidance on responsibilities, acceptable behaviour and limits to their role.

Further information regarding work experience students to be supplied by
Education Business Partnership

Supervisory arrangements for the management of St John Fisher Catholic Primary School out of school hours activities

We will aim to protect children from abuse and our team members from false allegations by adopting the following guidelines in line with the school's Safer Working Practices Policy and Code of Conduct:

We will keep a register of all children attending our activities.

We will keep a register of all staff / outside providers (both paid staff members and volunteers).

Registers will include arrival and departure times.

Our team members will record any unusual events on the accident/incident form.

Written consent from a parent or guardian will be obtained for every child attending our activities.

Where possible staff / outside providers should not be alone with a child, although we recognise that there may be times when this may be necessary or helpful.
Staff / outside providers should not be alone in a closed room with a child.

Staff / outside providers may escort children to the toilet but they should not go into the toilets. They are not expected to be involved with toileting, unless the child has a special need that has been brought to our attention by the parent/guardian, and a procedure for this has been agreed.

Physical contact should be avoided unless required for the child's safety and wellbeing or the safety and wellbeing of others. However our team members will be discouraged from this in circumstances where an adult or children are left alone.

All team members should treat all children with dignity and respect in both attitude language and actions.

Student who go missing on / off school site

While students are in school, we have a responsibility for duty of care to the students and act in loco-parentis by taking steps that are reasonable to ensure their safety and well-being. While on school visit, each student is issued an 'identification badge' with the student's name and the school's contact telephone number in case they go missing. Procedures are in place if a student should go missing in / out of school.

Education of students through Personal Social Health & Economic (PSHE) and Assemblies:

Students are encouraged to safeguard themselves by being educated on drugs, alcohols, sex and relationships through PSHE and Assemblies.

Additional Support Plans (Behaviour support)

This includes strategies that help to prevent safeguarding issues in school such as:

Positive physical intervention when necessary

Behaviour interventions

Specific strategies for students who are allocated to a member of staff they can talk to about issues of concern or another professional preferably a mentor that they can talk to

Students with 1:1 Teaching Assistant support

Management of Children with Child Protection Plan

If a child is subject to a Child Protection Conference, the Designated Teacher will attend the conference to share any relevant information.

If the child has a Child Protection Plan, the Designated Teacher is responsible for ensuring that the school participates appropriately in the Child Protection Plan and attends all Core Group Meetings and Child Protection Conferences.

Information will be shared with staff on a need to know basis but key personnel working with child should have sufficient information to support them in their work with that child.

If a child with a Child Protection Plan has an unexplained absence from school for two or more consecutive days, the Designated Teacher will inform the Social Worker.

Exclusions Policy

A student who physically or sexually harasses others may be excluded.

Support and Training of staff and volunteers

We at St John Fisher Catholic Primary School, are committed to the provision of safeguarding training for all our team members. In addition to the basic safeguarding training, the Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teacher undertake training in inter-agency working that is provided by the LSCB, and refresher training at 2 yearly intervals to keep his/her knowledge and skill up to date.

All other staff undertake appropriate training to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for child protection effectively, which is kept up to date by refresher training at 3 yearly intervals.

Record Keeping

Department of Education guidance says that the Designated Teacher should keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of referrals and concerns.

These should be kept separately from academic records, in a confidential file stored in a secure cabinet, accessible only by appropriate senior staff members. They are exempt from records available for examination by parents or children unless subject to a court order.

Bexley's Safeguarding Partnership for Children and Young People (SHIELD) promotes the use of a chronological record for concerns. If a child transfers to another school or other educational establishment, the Designated Teacher should forward the child protection file to a named person at the receiving school/establishment under separate cover from the academic records. The file should be marked 'confidential, to be opened by addressee only.'

The Designated Teacher should retain a copy of the child protection file, which should be stored in a secure cabinet accessible only by appropriate senior staff members. Child Protection records about a pupil who has ceased to become of compulsory school age should be archived and catalogued.

The referrer should confirm verbal and telephone referrals in writing within 48 hours, using the interagency referral form.

Confidentiality

We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential. The Designated Teacher will disclose personal information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need to know basis only.

However, all staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.

All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or well-being or that of another.

We will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to Children's Social Care with their parents /carers unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm, or impede a criminal investigation. If in doubt, we will consult with Bexley Safeguarding Children Service on this point.

Working together with parents / guardians to better safeguard children:

To better safeguard children, parents / carers will be asked to agree to an Information Sharing Protocol so that the school can liaise with other agencies involved. The school will also inform parents /carers (unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm), if their child is referred to another agency.

E-Safety in St John Fisher Catholic Primary School

Most young people experience the internet and mobile phones as a positive, productive and creative part of their activities and development of their identities. However, issues of E-Safety do arise as some students use the technologies negatively.

In St John Fisher Catholic Primary School, we have a robust filter for the internet and a system for monitoring computer usage, which takes screen shots if any word from our 'trigger' list is typed.

If a student is caught viewing inappropriate material on a computer or on their mobile phone via the School system during School hours, they will receive a serious sanction. However, out of School and particularly on mobile phones connected to the mobile networks, there is often no supervision, monitoring or filtering.

Cyber-bullying is unfortunately another area which is growing rapidly. It is different from more traditional forms of bullying.

Some students have 24 hour access to the internet or a mobile phone and so it can be hard to escape. The audience for the bullying can be potentially huge and comments and pictures are likely to stay online forever.

The school is committed to working within the Bexley's Safeguarding Partnership for Children and Young People (SHIELD) Combating Bullying Strategy - As with all forms of bullying, the School will deal with this in accordance with the Behaviour Policies (particularly the Anti-bullying and Cyberbullying policies), even if the cyber-bullying is happening outside School hours. A referral to the Antibullying Project will be made as appropriate.

If parents / guardians have any concerns that their child is being cyber-bullied, they should please print off any available evidence and report it to the School as soon as possible.

Whistle blowing

Staff should be aware that children may feel unable to express concerns in an environment where staff fails to do so.

All staff should therefore feel free to voice concerns about the attitude and actions of their colleagues in accordance with the council's whistle blowing policy. All staff receive annual Whistleblowing training.

The NSPCC whistle-blowing helpline number is 0800 028 0285.

Bomb threat

The most likely threat to the School is from someone with a desire to disrupt the running of the school rather than from a terrorist organisation wishing to cause an outrage by exploding a bomb on the premises. Unfortunately this cannot be assumed and all threats, however outlandish they may appear, must and will be taken seriously.

Immediate actions in school hours

The following actions will be taken in the event of a threat occurring during the school day:

1. Evacuate the School using the fire evacuation procedure. Any evacuation route should avoid passing the location of the suspect package. As soon as the roll call is complete, move the children up to the church in an orderly manner.
2. If the roll call is incomplete, one or two volunteer members of staff will search for the missing pupils or adults, whilst other staff will move the remainder of the children to designated area.
3. Ensure that no packages, bags or other possible bombs are removed during the evacuation unless staff are positive that the item has been in their personal possession since leaving home that morning.
4. Call the Police and give as many details as possible.
5. Under no circumstances are children or staff to re-enter the school once everyone has been accounted for until the Police confirm that it is safe to do so.

Immediate actions out of school hours

If a key holder (Tom Lloyd, Laura McLaughlin, Wayne Davie, Steve Pooley) is made aware of a bomb threat then they must inform the Police immediately. Equally, if the Police are made aware of a possible threat to the school, they will inform one of the key holders. Under no circumstances should a key holder or staff member carry out a search.

If we need to vacate the premises we will walk all of the children up to Lesness Abbey and the decision will be made by the designated person/persons LAURA MCLAUGHLIN or ANNA BENNETT as to if we need to seek shelter at 'Greenwich and Bexley Hospice'.

Equality Statement

St John Fisher Catholic Primary School is committed to promoting equality and prevents discrimination on the grounds of disability, ethnicity, gender, age, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

Information Sharing 2018

St John Fisher are fully compliant with GDPR regulations and fully understand that the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 DO NOT prevent, or limit the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. (Information Sharing 2018 - page 5)

Commitment of the Governing body of St John Fisher Catholic Primary School

The governors of St John Fisher Catholic Primary School are committed to safeguarding practices, which protect children from harm. This commitment is shared by the staff and volunteers of St John Fisher Catholic Primary School. We accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues, which cause children harm. We are supported by London Borough of Bexley in all child protection matters.

We have accepted this policy and will implement it. As part of our commitment, we, the governing body of St John Fisher Catholic Primary School, will ensure that this Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is reviewed on an annual basis.

We will also make child protection a standing agenda at all of our meetings and monitor this Policy by replying to reports, from the Head Teacher and staff, tabled at Full Governing Body meetings.

Signed:

Date: September 2025

CONTACT WITH OTHER AGENCIES

For general queries about Safeguarding or to arrange training

Contact Numbers Further info.

Bexley Safeguarding Children Service
safeguardingchildren@bexley.gov.uk

Tel: 0203 0453266
Fax: 01322 356 308
9 - 5 pm

Bexley Child Care Duty Team
childrensocialcare.admin@bexley.gov.uk

The LADO referral form can be downloaded from the Bexley S.H.I.E.L.D. website. See link below.

LADO and Safer Organisations Advisor
Bexley Council
Civic Offices
2 Watling Street
Bexleyheath
Kent DA6 7AT

Email: LADO@bexley.gov.uk

Bexley Emergency Duty Service
childrensdutyteam.admin@bexley.gov.uk
Tel: 0203 0455440
Fax: 0203 0455445

(Anti-Bullying Project) Tel: 0203 045 4022
9 - 5pm

NSPCC
Tel: 08088005000
Tel: 0800 028 0285

Police Child Abuse Investigation Team Tel: 0207 230 3700 8am -
6pm or at other times 999

E-SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS / GUARDIANS

Consider some of the points below to ensure that your child is using the fantastic new technologies available to them as safely as possible.

1. Please consider employing the strict "safe search" setting on Google. For more information on this and further guides you could look at www.candps.com/familysafety - a website full of useful material and advice on Online

Safety.

2. Look into setting Parental Controls on a Windows Vista, Windows 7 or Mac computer to restrict specific web sites and also the time when the computer can be used.

3. Mobile phones offer children an amazing amount of opportunity in what they look at and what they can text, including picture messaging. If your child has a smart phone, then please consider setting safe searches on Google and YouTube on these as well.

4. Please take time to talk to your child about their use of the internet. It will be impossible and perhaps not even desirable to ban everything; indeed they are often much more able than us at using the computer! Education and dialogue are the only realistic ways to protect young people.

5. Please encourage a balanced use of the computer and mobile phones- for example, setting expectations that computers are off at 10pm and phones aren't used at mealtimes or $\frac{1}{2}$ hour before bedtime (and not once in bed!).

Updates for KCSIE 2025

These include:

- the DfE's Working together to improve school attendance is now statutory guidance
- changes to the list of content risks under online safety, adding in disinformation, misinformation and conspiracy theories
- more information on the DfE guidance on generative artificial intelligence (AI)
- additional information on, and clarity around, alternative provision guidance
- clarity on Virtual School Heads and their non-statutory responsibilities around children in kinship care.