

St Mary and St Michael Catholic Primary School

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy



'Learning together hand in hand without friend Jesus.'

Approved by	Governing Body
Date	25 th November 2026
Signature	
Next Review Date	September 2027



CONTENTS

1.	CORE SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES	3
2.	PURPOSE OF POLICY	4
3.	SAFEGUARDING LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE	4
4.	PAN LONDON & TOWER HAMLETS SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP GUIDANCE	5
5.	TOWER HAMLETS SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP	6
6.	LOCAL AUTHORITY STRATEGY	7
7.	KEY DEFINITIONS	7
8.	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	8
9.	RIGHTS OF THE CHILD	10
10.	CHILDREN WHO MAY BE POTENTIALLY MORE AT RISK OF HARM	12
11.	CHILDREN IN NEED OF A SOCIAL WORKER	13
12.	CHILDREN REQUIRING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT	14
13.	LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN, PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN & CHILDREN IN KINSHIP CARE ARRANGEMENTS	15
14.	CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES	16
15.	CHILDREN ABSENT FROM EDUCATION & CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION	18
16.	ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION	20
17.	WHISTLEBLOWING	20
18.	REPORTING OF ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF & CONCERNS THAT DO NOT MEET THE HARM THRESHOLD	21
19.	STAFF SAFEGUARDING TRAINING INCLUDING TRAINING FOR GOVERNORS	23
20.	VISITORS	25
21.	VOLUNTEERS	26
22.	ALTERNATIVE PROVISION PROVIDERS	27
23.	EXTENDED SCHOOL AND OFF-SITE ARRANGEMENTS	27
24.	IDENTIFYING ABUSE	28
25.	INDICATORS OF ABUSE	29
26.	VOICE OF THE CHILD	30
27.	SAFEGUARDING ISSUES	31
28.	CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION	31
29.	CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION INCLUDING COUNTY LINES	33
30.	SERIOUS YOUTH VIOLENCE	35
31.	ONLINE HARMS	36

32.	DOMESTIC ABUSE	41
33.	SO-CALLED HONOUR-BASED ABUSE	42
34.	RADICALISATION AND EXTREMISM	44
35.	CHILD-ON-CHILD ABUSE (INCLUDING HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE)	46
36.	CHILD-ON-CHILD SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT	52
37.	YOUTH PRODUCED SEXUAL IMAGERY	57
38.	BULLYING (INCLUDING CYBERBULLYING)	59
39.	HOMELESSNESS	59
40.	CHILDREN AND THE COURT SYSTEM	60
41.	CHILDREN WITH FAMILY MEMBERS IN PRISON	60
42.	PRIVATE FOSTERING	60
43.	YOUNG CARERS	61
44.	CHILD ABDUCTION AND COMMUNITY SAFETY INCIDENTS	62
45.	MODERN SLAVERY	62
46.	TAKING SAFEGUARDING ACTION	63
47.	EARLY HELP	63
48.	HANDLING THE REPORTING OR SHARING OF CONCERNS	65
49.	CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING	67
50.	REFERRING TO CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE	68
51.	ESCALATION PROCEDURES	70

At St Mary and St Michael Catholic Primary School we are committed to safeguarding children and young people and we expect everyone who works in our school to share this commitment. Adults in our school take all welfare concerns seriously and encourage children and young people to talk to us about anything that worries them. We will always act in the best interest of the child

The Child Protection Policy is made available and accessible to staff, parents and visitors and communicated via the school website, shared drive, staff induction, staff training, and the school office

This policy and other safeguarding policies will be reviewed at least annually unless an incident, new legislation or guidance calls for the need for an immediate review. The procedures within the CP policy apply to all staff, volunteers, visitors and governors and have been written in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

At St Mary & St Michael Catholic Primary School, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. We are committed to providing a safe, inclusive and nurturing environment where every child is protected from harm, abuse and neglect. We maintain a culture of vigilance and act promptly on any concerns, working in partnership with families and relevant agencies to ensure children's safety and wellbeing.

The procedures set out in this Child Protection Policy apply to all staff, volunteers, visitors and governors within St Mary & St Michael Catholic Primary School. Everyone has a shared responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and is expected to understand and follow the school's safeguarding procedures, including recognising, responding to and reporting concerns promptly and appropriately, in line with statutory guidance and school policy; all procedures have been written in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and reflect local safeguarding arrangements including the Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership Supplementary Guidance documents on Child Protection Procedures and the Management of Allegations and Concerns that do not meet the Harm Threshold.

1. CORE SAFEGUARDING PRINCIPLES

- The welfare of the child is paramount and underpins all discussions, decision making, and actions taken at the school.
- All concerns shared and reported by children will be taken seriously.
- All children have the right to have a life free from harm, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity,

all have equal rights to protection. This includes children's lives in digital and online environments.

- The child's wishes and feelings will always be taken into account at the school when determining what action to take and what support to provide.
- All staff including supply staff, **trainee teachers**, contractors and volunteers have an equal responsibility to act immediately on any suspicion or concern shared that may suggest a child is at risk of harm or has been harmed.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that all pupils and staff involved in safeguarding and child protection issues will receive appropriate support.

These 6 core principles are embedded within the school's safeguarding arrangements; underpin the school's safeguarding policies, procedures and systems; and pervade the whole school approach to safeguarding at **St Mary and St Michael Catholic Primary School**.

2. PURPOSE OF POLICY

- To ensure all pupils on the school roll are effectively safeguarded including those pupils in Alternative Provision placements.
- To provide all staff with key information to enable them to identify safeguarding concerns and know what action to take in response.
- To ensure consistent good practice throughout the school.
- To demonstrate the school's commitment to safeguarding to the whole school community: pupils, parents/carers and other partners.

3. SAFEGUARDING LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

The following legislation and government guidance have informed the content of this policy:

Legislation

- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 (Local maintained schools only)
- The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (as amended)
- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Equality Act 2010

- Data protection legislation including the Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Guidance

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 (HM Government December 2023, Updated 18th March 2026)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (Department for Education, 1st September 2026)
- Information Sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services (Department for Education, 2015, Updated May 2024)
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused 2015 (Department for Education, March 2015)
- Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework for group and school-based providers (July 2025)
- The Equality Act 2010 and schools: Department advice for school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and local authorities (Updated 28th June 2018)
- The Teacher Standards 2012 (Updated 13th December 2021)

4. PAN LONDON & TOWER HAMLETS SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP GUIDANCE

The following Pan-London and Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership guidance has informed the content of this policy:

- London Child Protection Procedures revised 8th Edition (London Safeguarding Children Board, 30th March 2026)
- Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership Levels of Need Guidance (September 2023)
- Tower Hamlets SCP Supplementary Guidance for Schools and Education Settings on Child Protection Procedures - September 2026
- Tower Hamlets SCP LADO Procedures and Flowchart re Allegations made against staff working in the children's workforce - Information about reporting and managing allegations

- Tower Hamlets SCP Supplementary Guidance for Schools and Education Settings on Managing Allegations of Abuse against Staff and Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold – September 2026
- Tower Hamlets SCP Multi-Agency Escalation and Resolution Policy

5. TOWER HAMLETS SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP

The Children Act 2004 as amended by the Children and Social Work Act 2017 has brought about the establishment of the Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership (THSCP). The Partnership coordinates the work of all agencies and ensures that this work is effective in achieving the best outcomes for Tower Hamlets children. The three statutory safeguarding partners have published arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs. More information about the Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership can be found on the website: www.thscp.org.uk

In accordance with *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023*, the school is a protective factor for all children especially the most vulnerable and has a pivotal role to play in local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. The school's contribution, insight and co-operation are vital to the successful delivery of these arrangements. The school has been named as a 'relevant agency' and as such is under a statutory duty to cooperate with the THSCP multi-agency arrangements. This includes responding to safeguarding audits of quality and compliance, as requested by the local authority and/or local safeguarding partners.

The school is committed to engaging with the THSCP multi-agency safeguarding training offer and the borough's Designated Safeguarding Leads Forums, participating in THSCP/LA's Section 175/157 School Safeguarding Audit Cycles, providing key information about children relevant to keeping children safe, participating fully in the Rapid Review process and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, and supporting the agreed safeguarding priority areas for 2025-2027, which are Think Family and Adolescent Safeguarding.¹

¹ For more information on the Rapid Review process, Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Child Death Reviews, *Working Together To Safeguard Children 2023* Chapters 5 and 6 should be consulted. *Working Together 2023* paragraphs 76-81, 125-130, and 230-233 provide more information on the expectation of school's role within the safeguarding partnership arrangements. For further information on the THSCP's priority areas, please visit www.thscp.org.uk

6. LOCAL AUTHORITY STRATEGY

In recognition of the school's pivotal role in the local safeguarding system, the implementation of this Child Protection policy and other related policies to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils, will support the school's continued central contribution in driving improvements in outcomes for children in the borough, an overall objective set out in council strategy including:

- TH: Is Accelerate: The Tower Hamlets Children and Families Partnership Strategy 2024-2029
- Tower Hamlets Special Educational Needs, Disabilities and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2029
- Tower Hamlets Early Help Strategy 2025-28: [Going further to make support easy to access for all families](#)
- VAWG and Women's Safety Strategy 2024-2029
- Tower Hamlets Serious Violence and Exploitation Strategy

7. KEY DEFINITIONS

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- preventing the impairment of a child's physical and mental health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

The phrase 'child protection' refers to the processes followed to protect children who have been identified as suffering or being at risk of suffering significant harm.

Child includes everyone under the age of 18.

Parent refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, carers, foster carers, and adoptive parents.

Staff refers to all those who work for the school or on behalf of the school, full time or part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Governing Body have the strategic leadership responsibility for safeguarding arrangements at the school. As a collective body Governing Body/Trustees/Proprietor must have regard to all relevant statutory guidance issued, including *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, ensuring that school's safeguarding policies and procedures, including the current Child Protection Policy, are compliant with legislation and statutory guidance, reflect local safeguarding arrangements and are effective for the education setting.

In accordance with the statutory requirement for a named member of the Governing Body to take leadership responsibility for safeguarding at the school, the Safeguarding Link Governor are **Ian Jones and Mike Killington.**

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that the school's Child Protection Policy and other safeguarding policies are communicated to all staff, understood by all members of staff, and followed by all members of staff.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead takes the ultimate lead responsibility for safeguarding arrangements within the school on a day-to-day basis, including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place.

Designated Safeguarding Lead:

Sue-Helen Steyn

ssteyn@sm-sm.co.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s):

Marie McMahon

mmcmahon@sm-sm.co.uk

Isabel Hamilton

ihamilton@sm-sm.co.uk

Headteacher: Sue-Helen Steyn

Pastoral Care Lead: Marie McMahon

SEND/CO: Jadedene French

Inclusion Manager: Amy Clough

Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked after Children: Isabel Hamilton

Mental Health Lead: Marie McMahon

Safeguarding Link Governors: Mike Killington and Ian Jones

Chairs of Governors: Mike Killington

During term time, the DSL will be available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. The DSL can also be contacted out of school hours by email. When the DSL is absent, the deputies **Marie McMahon** (Pastoral Care Lead), **Isabel Hamilton** (Deputy Head), can be contacted.

If the DSL and DSL deputies are not available, concerns should be reported to the most senior member of staff on site.

During out of school hours/term activities DSLs should be contacted via phone/email and the headteacher must be notified. If a DSL is not contactable they will set up an automated email informing which DSL is available to contact.

The DSL takes the lead on supporting pupils during standard and non-standard transition points and ensuring that relevant information for the safeguarding of these children is shared. This includes ensuring that safeguarding files are sent separate from the main pupil file to the new school within the first 5 days of the child starting there and that appropriate follow-up is done if the school is not receiving safeguarding information from the previous school the child attended.

If the school has not received the safeguarding records for new pupils within the first 5 days of the pupil starting during standard and non-standard transition points, then the school will proactively reach out to the previous school for the transfer of safeguarding files.

All staff should recognise that as frontline workers they are in a vitally important position to identify concerns early, provide help and support to children, promote children's welfare, and prevent concerns from escalating.

All staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.

All staff have a responsibility to report safeguarding concerns immediately to the DSL. The adult should as soon as possible record the concern/conversation on CPOMs and alert the DSL group or make a written record of their conversation on the yellow 'Record of Concern/Disclosure form and pass on to the Designated/Deputy Safeguarding Lead or designated member of staff on an off-site visit.

All members of staff take responsibility for writing up clear and comprehensive safeguarding concerns using the school's safeguarding record system. Through the DSL's oversight safeguarding records include:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved, and
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

If in doubt about recording requirements, staff should discuss with the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy).

If in doubt about any safeguarding matter, staff should **always** speak to the DSL.

All staff are expected to keep the school values at the core of their daily conduct and understand that they have a legal duty to safeguard the child. Ultimately, the best interests of the child must be at the centre of all decision making, behaviours and actions taken in relation to children.

The school has robust arrangements to ensure safeguarding leadership is available during school hours and during out-of-hours activities. Appropriate systems are in place to enable safeguarding concerns to be received, monitored and responded to during periods when the DSL is unavailable.

9. RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

The school upholds the Human Rights of the child in accordance with the Human Rights Act 1998.² It is unlawful for schools to act in a way that is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. Specifically, the school embeds and upholds the following Convention rights of the child across its safeguarding policies and procedures:

- Article 3: the right to freedom from inhuman and degrading treatment (an absolute right)
- Article 8: the right to respect for private and family life (a qualified right) includes a duty to protect individuals' physical and psychological integrity
- Article 14: requires that all of the rights and freedoms set out in the Act must be protected and applied without discrimination
- Protocol 1, Article 2: protects the right to education.

² <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/human-rights>

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the school must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, or sexual orientation (protected characteristics). **Staff should read and be familiar with the school's Equality policy (copies of which are available on the school's website and in the shared school policies folder).** The school is committed to supporting and taking positive action towards children with regard to particular protected characteristics - including disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and race- who may be at a disadvantage and be disproportionately vulnerable.

In fulfilment of the school's Public Sector Equality Duty, the school has due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation (and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act), to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.

St Mary & St Michael Catholic Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils, including those with protected characteristics. We ensure that pupils are treated with dignity, respect and fairness and are protected from discrimination, bullying, harassment and abuse. We make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils and provide appropriate support to meet individual needs. Where evidence identifies particular disadvantages or safeguarding risks affecting pupils with a protected characteristic, the school will take proportionate positive action to address these and promote equality, inclusion and safety for all pupils.

As evident through the Serious Case Review Child Q's findings, the school is aware that children from ethnically diverse groups are at risk of adultification whereby their vulnerability as a child is reduced or set aside because of racial bias and stereotypes impacting professional judgement.³ All staff share in the whole school's commitment to ensure equity, diversity and inclusion remain at the centre of the school's safeguarding culture, so that all children receive the care, support, and protection they have the right to receive.

The school shares the London Borough of Tower Hamlet's commitment to being an anti-racist borough and to tackle and eliminate race discrimination. The council's Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic Inequalities Commission (2021) concluded that racism still exists within institutions and structures in the borough and has developed an action plan to achieve race equality at pace.⁴

³ <https://chscp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Child-Q-PUBLISHED-14-March-22.pdf>

⁴ https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lqnl/community_and_living/Inequality-Commission/Black-Asian-and-Minority-Ethnic-Inequalities-Commission.aspx

The action plan recognises that schools have a powerful and significant role in changing narratives and bringing about social change through education. St Mary & St Michael Catholic Primary School is committed to promoting an inclusive, anti-racist culture in which every child and adult is valued, respected and treated fairly. Anti-racism is embedded across the curriculum, with diverse cultures, identities, histories and experiences represented positively in books, resources and teaching. Staff receive appropriate training and are expected to challenge racist language, stereotypes, discrimination and prejudice promptly. The school actively listens to pupils and families, responds to concerns and incidents of racism, and uses assemblies, collective worship, pupil voice and wider school initiatives to promote respect, equality, belonging and understanding. We monitor behaviour and safeguarding information to identify patterns or inequalities and take appropriate action where needed. Interim action is also taken in response to emerging issues where appropriate. The school along with other safeguarding partners is fully committed to implementing the [Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership's Anti-Racist Charter](#) (2025) across its safeguarding practice.

10. CHILDREN WHO MAY BE POTENTIALLY MORE AT RISK OF HARM

All staff should recognise that all children are vulnerable but that some children may be more vulnerable than others and at more risk of harm. Children known to a Social Worker, Looked After Children and Care Leavers are likely to have suffered abuse at some point in their childhood and may be more vulnerable to further abuse including exploitation. Staff need to be aware that other children who may be potentially more at risk of harm include

A Child who:

- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs;
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan);
- has a mental health need;
- is a young carer;
- is pregnant and/or is a parent themselves;
- has exhibited early signs of abusive, violent and/or harmful behaviours;

- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines;
- is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care
- has been repeatedly removed from the classroom, experienced multiple suspensions, is on a part-time timetable, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation;
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited;
- has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves;
- has returned home to their family from care; and
- is at risk of so-called honour-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage;
- is a privately fostered child;
- is persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day.

Staff must be more vigilant in their day-to-day work with children when the above vulnerabilities are known and report all concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

11. CHILDREN IN NEED OF A SOCIAL WORKER

Children who have been allocated a social worker may have experienced abuse including neglect and belong to a family that has many complex circumstances. Staff should recognise that these children will have experienced adversity and trauma that can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged, and have a negative impact on their attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health.

When making decisions about safeguarding, carrying out a risk analysis, making a safeguarding response to concerns such as unauthorised and persistent absence, and providing pastoral and academic support, the school will take seriously the fact that the child in need of a social worker will require enhanced pastoral and academic support alongside that provided by statutory services. School is also committed to providing further pastoral and academic

support to children who have had historic contact with a Social Worker, in recognition that the abuse and trauma is likely to have an impact on the child beyond the duration of the involvement of statutory services. The school will co-operate with the Tower Hamlets Virtual School, which now has a non-statutory responsibility for the strategic oversight of the educational attendance, attainment, and progress of children known to a social worker.

All staff have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are known to a social worker. Staff should be aware of the individual needs and circumstances of these children, remain alert to any changes or concerns, and report safeguarding concerns promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in accordance with school procedures. Staff must maintain appropriate professional curiosity, ensure relevant information is recorded accurately and shared appropriately, and contribute to agreed support and safeguarding plans where required. A child's status as being known to a social worker must never be viewed in isolation, and staff should continue to respond promptly to any new or emerging concerns. A named member of the Safeguarding team will take the lead for any child with a Social Worker and will liaise with other staff as needed and will ensure that suitable pastoral and academic support is in place.

12. CHILDREN REQUIRING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

All staff have an important role in supporting the mental well-being of children and to identify behaviour that may suggest a child is experiencing mental health problems. All staff need to recognise that mental health may be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect, or exploitation or other adverse experiences.

Staff should be aware of the impact that trauma, bereavement, family adversity, domestic abuse, bullying, discrimination and other safeguarding concerns can have on a child's emotional wellbeing and mental health

Staff should recognise that safeguarding concerns and mental health difficulties can often overlap and interact. Children experiencing mental health difficulties may be more vulnerable to safeguarding risks, whilst children who have experienced abuse, neglect, exploitation or trauma may present with emotional, behavioural or mental health needs. Early identification and appropriate support can help prevent concerns from escalating and promote positive outcomes for children.

Whilst all staff should be alert to behaviour, presentation and emotional responses that may indicate a child is experiencing difficulties with their mental health or wellbeing, only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health condition. Concerns about a child's mental health should be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and considered alongside any other safeguarding information known about the child.

The school is committed to promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing through a whole-school approach. Appropriate support will be provided at the earliest opportunity, and where necessary the school will work in partnership with parents/carers and relevant agencies to ensure that support is coordinated and proportionate to the child's needs.

Support for children with mental health problems will be coordinated by Marie McMahon, (Pastoral Care & Mental Health Lead) and supported by Sue-Helen Steyn (DSL), a member of the Senior Leadership team. All referrals should be made to Marie using the school's ELSA or P2B referral form. Appropriate support, including wider agency involvement if appropriate, will then be put in place for the child. Support will be provided by the Pastoral Care Team, additional members of staff who have received relevant training and qualifications (ELSA and P2Be). Wider agencies will be involved as appropriate to meet the needs of the child. Where appropriate, Jadedene French (SENCO) will make referrals to CAMHS. Marie McMahon, Pastoral Lead Care, is also available to provide appropriate support to children and families and will make onward referrals as agreed with families. Children are taught about mental health and wellbeing through the curriculum

13. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN, PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN & CHILDREN IN KINSHIP CARE ARRANGEMENTS

The most common reason for children becoming looked after by the Local Authority is as a result of abuse including neglect.

Staff need to have the skills, knowledge and understanding to safeguard Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children in recognition of their heightened vulnerability.

The school's Designated Safeguarding Lead and Designated Teacher will work together alongside relevant agencies and take immediate action to safeguard and provide support to this vulnerable group of children. The Designated Teacher will work with the Tower Hamlets Virtual School to discuss how funding can be best used to support the progress of looked after

children in the school and meet the needs identified in the child's personal education plan.

Isabel Hamilton is the named member of staff responsible for Looked After Children. In the event of there being a LAC in the school, she will liaise with the Virtual School Headteacher.

A PEP will be put in place and regularly monitored for a Looked After Child. This will be shared with relevant members of staff, including the child's teacher and will detail the actions they need to take in their day-to-day roles. Further details of the work the school does to safeguard and promote the educational outcomes of Looked After Children and Care Leavers are detailed in the school's Policy for Looked after and previously Looked after Children.

The school's Designated Safeguarding Lead will work with the Local Authority's Personal Advisor appointed to guide and support Care Leavers, so that any issues or concerns affecting the care leaver can be explored and effective support put in place.

The school will work with the Tower Hamlets Virtual School to promote and champion the attendance, attainment and progress of children in kinship care arrangements. Since September 2024, the Virtual School has a non-statutory responsibility to promote the education of children in kinship care arrangements regardless of whether the children have been previously looked after by the Local Authority. Kinship Care is any situation in which a child is being raised in the care of a friend or family member who is not their parent. The arrangement may be temporary or longer term. Examples of kinship care arrangements include Private Fostering Arrangements, Special Guardianship Order, and Child Arrangements Order, where the child is being cared for by a relative or friend who is not a parent.

14. CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or physical health issues can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children, which can include:

- professionals and other adults making assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration

- the potential for children with SEN and disabilities or certain medical conditions being vulnerable to experiencing peer exclusion and isolation and being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying (including prejudice-based bullying), without outwardly showing any signs
- children not understanding that what is happening to them is abuse; and
- communication barriers when reporting abuse and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.
- the need for intimate care or that these children are isolated from others and that these children are more likely to be dependent on adults for care, and
- children with SEN and disabilities may have issues understanding the impact of their behaviour or the consequences they receive. They may be unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeat the content/behaviours in school or college.

For some disabled children, their dependency on parents and carers for practical assistance in daily living, including intimate personal care, may increase their risk of exposure to abusive behaviour. Some children may also have an impaired capacity to resist or avoid abuse. Looked After Disabled Children may be particularly susceptible to possible abuse because of their additional dependency on residential and hospital staff for day-to-day physical care needs.

Further information on safeguarding SEND children is available in the non-statutory guidance [Safeguarding Disabled Children](#) (2009); [NSPCC Safeguarding Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities](#) (May 2022), and [NSPCC Safeguarding d/Deaf Children and Children who have disabilities at greater risk of abuse](#) (September 2025). Staff should speak with the DSL and SENDCO in the first instance.

All staff are regularly trained to understand and be aware of the additional barriers that exist when safeguarding children with SEND. All staff need to be aware that children with SEND may be more vulnerable when online and using digital platforms, and it is important that Online Safety lessons and related advice are tailored to their individual needs.

St Mary & St Michael Catholic Primary School recognises that children with SEND and physical health conditions may face additional barriers to recognising, communicating and reporting safeguarding concerns. Staff must maintain heightened awareness and professional curiosity, recognising that changes in behaviour, communication, presentation or attendance may indicate a safeguarding concern. The school ensures that safeguarding systems are accessible to all pupils through appropriate communication methods, visual resources, trusted adults, adapted language and reasonable adjustments. Individual risk assessments, healthcare plans, EHCPs and support plans are used where appropriate to identify and reduce potential risks. Staff must never assume that a child's SEND or health condition explains changes in behaviour or presentation and should report any concerns promptly to the DSL. Staff are expected to understand and remove known barriers, listen carefully to pupils, provide additional time and appropriate communication support, and ensure that all children have meaningful opportunities to express their wishes and concerns and are able to access help and protection.

CHILDREN WITH MEDICAL CONDITION

Children with medical conditions may face additional safeguarding vulnerabilities, particularly where their condition affects communication, independence, emotional wellbeing or attendance. Staff should be mindful that safeguarding concerns may present differently and should work alongside health professionals and parents to support these children.

Children with medical conditions may be at an increased risk of being neglected, abused or exploited by persons inside or outside of their family unit because of their medical condition. This might occur where relevant information about a child or young person's medical condition is not provided to a school or where they are repeatedly sent without essential medication, thereby putting the individual at risk. In these cases, the school will take appropriate action and make referrals to the Children Social Care.

15. CHILDREN ABSENT FROM EDUCATION & CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION

The school closely monitors attendance, absence, suspensions, and exclusions. A child absent from education, whether prolonged or on repeat occasions, can be a vital warning sign of a wide range of safeguarding issues and is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including child sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation, and child criminal exploitation (county lines).

In accordance with the DfE's statutory guidance [Working together to improve school attendance](#), the school follows up on absences and addresses persistent and severe absence as part of its safeguarding duty. Such an approach prevents the risk of these children becoming children missing education in the future. Staff address daily absence and persistent absence as soon as these problems emerge as part of school's early help response. Staff should be alert to children already known to be vulnerable especially Children known to a Social Worker and Looked After Children, since absence from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community. Staff must also be alert to signs of children at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

Knowing where children are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of Safeguarding. Missing school can be an indicator of abuse and neglect and may also raise concerns about other safeguarding issues, including the criminal exploitation of children.

We monitor attendance carefully and address poor or irregular attendance without delay, including through first day calling and home visits where contact cannot be made. Further details of the processes and procedures to be followed can be found in the school's attendance policy. Copies of the policy are available on the school's website and in the shared school policies folder.

We will always follow up with parents/carers when pupils are not at school. This means we need to have at least two up to date contact numbers for parents/carers. Parents should remember to update the school as soon as possible if numbers change.

The school has:

- a) staff who understand what to do when children do not attend regularly
- b) Appropriate policies, procedures and responses for pupils who go missing from education (especially on repeat occasions).
- c) Staff who know the signs and triggers for travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.
- d) Procedures to inform the local authority when we plan to take pupils off-roll when they:
 - I. Leave school to be home educated
 - II. Move away from the school's location
 - III. Remain medically unfit beyond compulsory school age
 - IV. Are in custody for four month or more (and will not return to school afterwards)
 - V. Are permanently excluded

We will ensure that pupils who are expected to attend the school, but fail to take up the place will be referred to the local authority.

When a pupil does not return to school and the whereabouts of the child and their family are not known, the school will make reasonable enquiries and refer the child to the Attendance & Welfare Advisor to support with those enquiries to ascertain the child's whereabouts, and only after these steps have been taken refer to the Local Authority using a Missing Children referral form.

Contact: LBTH CME Officer, Tower Hamlets Education Safeguarding Service,
Saadia.Anwer@towerhamlets.gov.uk 020 7364 3426 / 07562 431 817

Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

16. ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION

The school recognises that parents have a legal right to electively home educate their child at home; however, it is expected that the parents' decision to do this is made with their child's best education and best interests at its heart. Staff should be aware that even though most home educated children have a positive experience, this is not the case for all, and home education can mean some children are less visible to the services that are there to keep them safe and supported in line with their needs.

When a parent informs the headteacher of their intention to electively home educate their child, the school will convene and coordinate a meeting between the LA, relevant school staff, parents and all key professionals currently working with the child and family. In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education and LBTH Policy this meeting has to occur before any final decision is made by the parents, to ensure that the best interests of the child have been taken fully into account and carefully considered. The occurrence of this meeting is especially important when the children have known vulnerabilities including Children known to a Social Worker and children with SEND.

17. WHISTLEBLOWING

All staff members have a responsibility to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in any aspect of the school's safeguarding arrangements and staff should feel confident that such concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.

All staff must read and be familiar with and follow the school's Whistleblowing policy. This is also shared with staff at annual training and as part of induction arrangements. Copies of the policy are available on the school's website and in the shared school policies folder.

Where a staff member feels unable to raise an issue with their employer, or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, they should consider other channels available to employees as set out in [Government's guidance on whistleblowing](#). To raise whistleblowing concerns externally school staff are advised to report to the Prescribed Bodies in the Government's List of Prescribed Bodies and Persons, which includes for safeguarding related concerns the NSPCC: Whistleblowing Advice Line 0800 028 0285 which is free & anonymous, more information can be found at nspcc.org.uk/whistleblowing.

18. REPORTING OF ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF & CONCERNS THAT DO NOT MEET THE HARM THRESHOLD

Allegations of harm may indicate that a person who works with children might pose a risk of harm to children if they continue in that role. When an allegation is made against a member of staff including supply staff, **trainee teachers** and volunteers, the school's Managing Allegations Procedures should be followed, and all action taken needs to be in line with **KCSIE 2026** Part 4 and the THSCP Supplementary Guidance- Managing Allegations of Abuse against Staff – September 2025.

An allegation is made against a member of staff including supply staff, volunteers, contractors and governors, when an individual has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

All staff must report all allegations, irrespective of the source, directly to the headteacher and ensure that it is put in writing, signed and dated. If the subject of the allegation is the headteacher, then the allegation should be directly reported to the Chair of Governors.

On receipt of a report of an allegation, the headteacher will make immediate contact with the Local Authority Designated Officer for an initial discussion. If the allegation concerns the headteacher, then the Chair of Governors shall make contact with the LADO.

When an allegation is made against a supply member of staff, the headteacher will be the case manager and take the lead in contacting the LADO.

When schools receive a report of an allegation relating to an incident that happened when an individual or external organisation was making use of the school premises for activities involving children, the headteacher should seek the advice of the LADO.

Allegations concerning staff who no longer work at the school, or historical allegations will be reported to the police.

LBTH Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): Melanie Benzie

Email: Melanie.Benzie@towerhamlets.gov.uk or
LADO@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Telephone: 0207364 0677

In accordance with the Early Years Framework registered Early Years settings must notify Ofsted of serious allegations of harms and the actions taken by the setting as soon as is reasonably practicable but no longer than 14 days. A registered provider who, without reasonable excuse, fails to comply with this requirement, commits an offence.

Concerns about staff that do not initially seem to fulfil the allegation criteria set out above are known as Concerns that do not meet the Harm Threshold, sometimes called low-level concerns, not because they are insignificant but because they do not initially seem to meet the harm threshold. Staff should report and self-report such concerns in accordance with the school's procedures, which are found in the school's Staff Code of Conduct. Contact will be made with the LADO for advice and guidance when appropriate as part of the Headteacher's or Chair of Governor's response to the report.

All staff must read and be familiar with and follow the school's Staff Code of Conduct. This is shared with staff at annual training and as part of induction arrangements. This includes a section on Concerns that do not meet the Harm Threshold. Copies of the policy are also available on the school's website and in the shared school policies folder.

All staff should understand their responsibility to report **all concerns** about staff conduct which has taken place at the school or outside of the school including online environments, no matter how small or insignificant they might be perceived to be.

19. STAFF SAFEGUARDING TRAINING INCLUDING TRAINING FOR GOVERNORS

School staff, Governors and Trustees are required to have compulsory safeguarding training as part of their induction and to maintain their knowledge through regular safeguarding training and updates. The safeguarding training at induction and indeed as part of continuous professional development should include Online Safety covering among other things an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles, and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring systems in place at the school. Through regular safeguarding training and updates staff are given the relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively and governors/trustees will be empowered and equipped to provide strategic challenge and gain assurance that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place.

All staff and governors will have regular training on areas related to child protection. The key training elements are:

- the child protection policy;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- the behaviour policy;
- the staff behaviour policy (staff code of conduct);
- reporting of allegations against staff & concerns that do not meet the harm threshold
- the safeguarding response children absent from education & children missing education; and
- the role of the designated safeguarding lead (including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies). (see KCSIE, 2025)

New staff: Mandatory Induction Training. This will include:

- the child protection policy;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education

- the behaviour policy;
- the staff behaviour policy (staff code of conduct);
- reporting of allegations against staff & concerns that do not meet the harm threshold
- the safeguarding response children absent from education & children missing education; and
- the role of the designated safeguarding lead (including the identity of the designated safeguarding lead and any deputies). (see KCSIE, 2025)
- Teachers' Standards

Designated Safeguarding Leads: attend training every two years; and in addition to formal training, their knowledge and skills should be refreshed at regular intervals, at least annually.

All other staff and all governors: receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. This will include, but is not limited to, specific guidance in recognising signs of abuse, FGM, child trafficking and exploitation, child sexual exploitation, children at risk from extremism and radicalisation, domestic violence, online safety (use of ICT, the Internet and Social Media), forced marriage, violence against women and girls, child on child abuse, involvement in gangs, drugs and neglect.

All staff and governors will receive regular safeguarding and will be provided for staff (on a half termly basis) and governors (at least termly), and more frequently if required/in response to any new/emerging needs. We will also make use of serious case reviews in staff safeguarding sessions. At the end of training quizzes will be used to assess understanding.

Safer Recruitment training is available to all relevant staff and governors who are involved in the recruitment process. Updates will be provided through training and via the staff email group. A record of training attend by all staff will be maintained by the designated safeguarding lead. Any staff who are unable to attend training sessions will be provided with an alternative date/time to undertake the training. Identified key training will include an assessment of knowledge and understanding to be carried out by all staff following completion of the training. Registers will be kept for all training sessions and arrangements made for staff and governors who do not attend the training to complete it at an alternative time. Safeguarding Policies are shared as part of induction and professional development sessions. Copies of the policies are available on the school's website and in the shared school policies folder. Staff are asked to sign to say they have read and understood key policies as part of induction and at the start of each year, with the form providing staff with the

opportunity to identify where they have questions in relation to the policy and/or require further training ahead of signing. Child protection updates as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. The annual update includes a review of and training on the school's child protection policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education.

All staff and governors will be asked, on an annual basis following training, to sign to say they have read and understood the school's child protection policy and KCSIE 2026 part 1 and/or to indicate any questions they have/further training they would like. Follow up training. In addition to annual updates safeguarding briefings

20. VISITORS

Visitors are welcome to St Mary and St Michael Catholic Primary School. They make a contribution to the life and work of the school in many different ways. The learning opportunities and experience they bring are encouraged and appreciated. It is the school's responsibility, however, to ensure that the security and welfare of its pupils is not compromised at any time. The school is equally responsible to the whole school community for ensuring that visitors comply with the guidelines in our Visitor Policy and Visiting Speaker Agreement.

Permission should be granted by the Head teacher or member of the SLT before any visitor is asked to come into school. The Head Teacher and/or members of the Senior Leadership Team should be given a clear explanation as to the relevance and purpose of the visit and intended date and time for the visit.

All visitors must report to reception first-they must not enter the school via any other entrance.

- At reception, all visitors must state the purpose of their visit and who has invited them. They should be ready to produce formal identification where appropriate.
- All visitors will be asked to sign in using 'Electronic signing in system'.
- All visitors will be required to wear an identification label.
- Visitors will then be escorted to the point of contact or their point of contact will be asked to come to reception to receive the visitor. The contact will then be responsible for them while they are on site.
- At no point should a visitor be left on their own with children (if the visitor is meeting a member of staff).

- In the event of a fire alarm/drill, the visitor should be accompanied to the assembly point in the playground.
- On departing the school, visitors should leave via reception, sign out using the 'electronic signing in system' and return their identification label to reception.

All External Agencies and Speakers must read the Visiting speakers agreement. Our school will assess the suitability and effectiveness of input from external agencies or individuals to ensure that:

- Any messages communicated to students support fundamental British Values and our school values.
- Any messages communicated to students are consistent with the ethos of the school and do not marginalise any communities, groups or individuals
- Any messages communicated to students do not seek to glorify criminal activity or violent extremism or seek to radicalise students through extreme or narrow views of faith, religion or culture or other ideologies

Activities are properly embedded in the curriculum and clearly mapped to schemes of work to avoid contradictory messages or duplication

When a Social Worker, Police Officer or another professional visits the school to meet with a child as part of statutory investigations or other work, the ultimate safeguarding responsibility remains with the school. Visitors may include professionals, contractors, guest speakers, performers, family members and community organisations. The school will undertake appropriate checks, and supervision arrangements proportionate to the purpose of the visit.

The school is aware of the need for the child to have an appropriate adult when interviewed by the Police in accordance with the [PACE Code C statutory guidance](#).

21. VOLUNTEERS

From September 2026, volunteers undertaking teaching, training, instruction or supervision of children frequently, on more than three days in a thirty-day period, or overnight, are engaged in regulated activity and will require appropriate DBS checks, including children's barred list information where required.

Volunteers who are not undertaking regulated activity will be subject to a written risk assessment to determine the level of safeguarding checks required.

22. ALTERNATIVE PROVISION PROVIDERS

When the school places a pupil with an alternative provision provider in the best interests of the child, the school will continue to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil and will take action to be satisfied that the placement meets the pupil's needs.

In accordance with KCSIE and the statutory guidance Arranging Alternative Provision, as a minimum, the school will have a written record of where a child is based during school hours, the address of the alternative provider and any subcontracted provision or satellite sites the child may attend. The school will regularly review at least half termly the alternative provision placements to obtain assurance that the child is regularly attending, and the placement continues to be safe and meets the child's needs. Where safeguarding concerns arise, the school will immediately review the placement and consider termination, if necessary, unless or until those concerns have been satisfactorily addressed.

In fulfilment of its safeguarding responsibilities towards the pupil placed there, the school will obtain written information from the alternative provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at the Alternative Provider, for example, the checks that schools would otherwise perform on their own staff. The school will also obtain written confirmation that the alternative provider will inform the school of any arrangements that may put the child at risk (i.e. staff changes), so that the commissioning school can ensure itself that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on new staff.

23. EXTENDED SCHOOL AND OFF-SITE ARRANGEMENTS

All off-site activities are subject to a risk assessment.

Extended and off-site activities are subject to a risk assessment and the school's child protection policy and procedures apply. When pupils attend off site activities, including day and residential visits and work-related activities, risk assessments and safeguarding recruitment arrangements will be requested.

When pupils attend off-site activities, including day and residential visits and work related activities, the school will undertake checks ahead of the visit to

ensure they have the correct procedures in place, including safer recruitment procedures and if applicable the Childcare Disqualification 2018 Regulations.

Where other organisations provide service or activities on the school site the school will undertake checks ahead of the visit to ensure they have the correct procedures in place, including safer recruitment procedures and if applicable the Childcare Disqualification 2018 Regulations.

Where services or activities are provided separately by another organisation outside of normal school hours, the school will seek assurance that the organisation has effective safeguarding policies and procedures in place. This applies regardless of whether or not the children who attend any of these services or activities are pupils on the school register. The safeguarding standards expected of non-regulated external organisations are set out in the Department for Education's After-School Clubs, Community Activities and Tuition: Safeguarding Advice for Providers (September 2023, Updated 29 May 2025). The school will ensure that all safeguarding requirements are set out clearly in the lease or hire agreement with the organisation, as a condition of use and occupation of the school premises; and that failure to comply would lead to the termination of the agreement.

24. IDENTIFYING ABUSE

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse may be carried out by adults and other children.

The school is aware that children can be at risk of abuse, harm and exploitation outside of the family home. Such extra familial harms include sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, and abuse that occurs on digital and online platforms. All staff especially the DSL and Deputy DSLs must consider whether children are at risk of harm and exploitation in environments outside the family home. All staff should therefore apply a Contextual Safeguarding approach when safeguarding pupils, which includes applying a Contextual Safeguarding approach in the school context.

For further information on Contextual Safeguarding, the school may wish to signpost staff to the [Contextual Safeguarding Program](#), which also contains self-assessment resources for schools namely the [Beyond Referral Toolkit: Harmful Sexual Behaviours](#) and [Beyond Referral Toolkit: Extra-familial harms in schools](#). The council's Exploitation Team is providing training sessions for School DSLs on Harms outside the Home. To book please contact THESS

25. INDICATORS OF ABUSE

Physical - may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Sexual - involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or **penetration with an object**) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Further guidance and resources for schools on Child Sexual Abuse can be found on the [Centre for Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse website](#) which includes the guidance documents *Communicating with Children for Education Professionals* and *Communicating with Parents and Carers*.

Emotional - the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Neglect - 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 or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

The DSL is aware of the borough's LBTH Neglect Guidance toolkits and all school staff understand their important frontline role in identifying children who may be suffering from Neglect.

26. VOICE OF THE CHILD

All those with a responsibility to safeguard children need to recognise that it takes great courage for a child to share a concern and speak up about any form of abuse especially child sexual abuse.

There are many reasons why children are not able to articulate what they are experiencing. Children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or are currently being threatened by the perpetrator of abuse. Also, children may not feel ready or know how to tell a trusted adult that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected. They may not even realise that their experiences are harmful.

The barriers preventing a child communicating their concerns may be connected to their vulnerability, disability, sexual orientation, or language. The child's behaviour including misbehaviour may be the first sign that a child has experienced harm. Staff will therefore exhibit professional curiosity and understand that a child may be communicating a concern through their actions and behaviours and take a safeguarding approach when responding to behaviours.

Staff need to be aware of and promote the systems in place at the school which enable children to share their concerns and report abuse confidently. Children need to be assured that their concerns will be taken seriously by staff and action will be taken to safeguard and protect them. It is also important that staff determine how best to build safe and trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitates communication and the sharing of concerns.

Our school has an open environment where young people feel safe to share information about anything that is upsetting or worrying them. There is a strong and positive PSHE curriculum promotes awareness and tackles issues –

through this children have a voice which builds confidence to share their concerns and report abuse.

At St Mary and St Michael the staff are aware of the importance of the child's voice:

- Staff will take children's disclosures and concerns seriously and refer to the DSL and safeguarding team using CPOMs/Yellow Concern forms and with reference to school safeguarding procedures.
- Children are encouraged to share feelings/disclosures with trusted members of staff and the safeguarding team.
- Posters around the school identify the members safeguarding team for staff and children alike.
- Children are made aware of the school's Place2Be services, including self-referral through Place2Talk.
- The Place2Be Manager regularly visits classes to encourage them to use the service
- Mental wellbeing, healthy relationships and staying safe online are embedded into PSHE/Relationships education, relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education curriculum.

Class circle time provides opportunities for children to voice any concerns.

27. SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

28. CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. CSE occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. This can be committed or facilitated by an organised network or gang, and the victim may identify as being part of this group. CCE and CSE can affect children, both male and female, and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation. This may constitute modern slavery - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/modern-slavery-how-to-identify-and-support-victims/modern-slavery-statutory-guidance-for-england-and-wales-under-s49-of-the-modern-slavery-act-2015-and-non-statutory->

[guidance-for-scotland-and-northe](#). Where a child is identified as a potential victim of CSE or CSE, a child protection and modern slavery referral will be made.

The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Apart from age other factors that could make a child more vulnerable to exploitation, include gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, learning difficulties, communication ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

CSE can include both physical and non-physical contacts including assault by penetration (for example, rape or penetration with an object) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet. CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence and may occur without the child or young person's immediate knowledge (e.g. through others copying videos or images they have created and posted on social media).

CSE can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex. This can be committed by an individual or an organised network and most sexual abuse is committed by those previously known to the victim. Some children may not realise they are being exploited, as they may believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship. Children may also be exploited by other children, who themselves may be experiencing exploitation – where this is the case, it is important that the child perpetrator is also recognised as a victim.

Staff should be vigilant and be aware of the following indicators of CSE, which is by no means an exhaustive list, and report all concerns immediately to the DSL:

- Children who are in possession of multiple phones and overly anxious to check their phones
- Children who experience sudden changes in behaviour e.g. looking agitated, children who want to leave the school premises at lunchtime
- children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends;
- children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant.
- children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;

- children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
- children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being;
- children who misuse drugs and alcohol;
- children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

The PHSE and RSE curriculum will be used to ensure that children have age-appropriate understanding of risks.

For further information staff can read the [Home Office Statutory Guidance](#) on Child Sexual Exploitation as well as speaking to the DSL. The Children's Society has provided useful guidance on [Child Sexual Exploitation](#).

29. CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION INCLUDING COUNTY LINES

Child Criminal Exploitation is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. CCE does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

CCE can include children being forced to work in cannabis factories, being coerced into moving drugs or money across the country through County Lines, forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people. 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

All Staff should be aware that girls as well as boys can be risk of CCE. It is important for staff to note that boys or girls being criminally exploited are at higher risk of being sexually exploited.

Staff need to be aware of some of the indicators of CCE:

- Children who are in possession of multiple phones and overly anxious to check their phones
- Children who experience sudden changes in behaviour e.g. looking agitated, children who want to leave the school premises at lunchtime
- children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
- children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being;
- children who misuse drugs and alcohol;
- children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

County Lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. This activity can happen locally as well as across the UK - no specified distance of travel is required. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including schools (mainstream and special), further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, children’s homes and care homes. Children are also increasingly being targeted and recruited online using social media. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs can manufacture drug debts which need to be worked off or threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

Many of the indicators of children involved in County Lines are as described above under CCE. However, in addition they can include children who:

- go missing from education and/or home and subsequently found in areas away from their home;

- have been the victim or perpetrator of serious violence (e.g. knife crime);
- are involved in receiving requests for drugs via a phone line, moving drugs, handing over and collecting money for drugs;
- are exposed to techniques such as 'plugging', where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection;
- are found in accommodation that they have no connection with, often called a 'traphouse or cuckooing' or hotel room where there is drug activity;
- owe a 'debt bond' to their exploiters;
- have their bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing

Further information on the signs of a child's involvement in county lines is available in guidance published by the Home Office and The Children's Society [County Lines Toolkit For Professionals](#). Metropolitan Police information leaflets raising awareness about Cuckooing are available from the [council website](#) in English, Bengali and Somali.

When referring children at risk of Exploitation to MAST, the school will give consideration to completing an Exploitation Screening Tool to support the Local Authority's assessment of risk to the child.

[N.B. Primary schools should be alert to the increase vulnerability of children under 10 years old being exploited because they are under the age of criminal responsibility]

30. SERIOUS YOUTH VIOLENCE

All staff are aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include **disrupted education (e.g. suspensions, permanent exclusions, time in alternative provision) or a history of offending**, 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. **Children involved may be both victims and perpetrators of harm. School staff will consider whether involvement in serious violence forms part of a wider safeguarding concern.**

31. ONLINE HARMS

Children should have the right to explore the digital environment but also the right to be safe when on it. However, technology often provides the platform that facilitates harm, and the use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues. Examples of which include child sexual exploitation; child criminal exploitation; radicalisation; sexual predation/grooming; and forms of child-on-child abuse such as cyberbullying and **making or sharing** nudes and semi-nudes. The Online Safety Act 2023 among other things makes cyberflashing, threatening communications and the promotion of self-harm criminal offences. Artificial Intelligence is the current technological innovation evolving with speed, which will benefit society including the education sector but also generate great risks and challenges compromising the safety of children, for example, Generative Artificial Intelligence is being misused to create sexualised images and videos of children especially girls.

Schools are signposted to the Internet Watch Foundation's [Professionals Guide: Understanding and Responding to AI-Generated Child Sexual Abuse Material](#) and the IWF's [Report and Remove Tool](#) that may be useful for pupils

In many cases abuse will take place concurrently via online channels and in daily life. Children can also abuse other children online, which can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who do not want to receive such content. In accordance with Behaviour in Schools. Advice for headteachers and school staff (September 2022), the school promotes as part of its culture of excellent standards of behaviour that the same standards of behaviour are expected online as apply offline, and that every pupil should be treated with kindness, respect and dignity.

An effective approach to online safety empowers a school or college to protect and educate the whole school or college community in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any incident where appropriate.

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, but can be categorised into four areas of risk that should form the framework for school's approach to Online Safety:

- Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material; for example, pornography, fake news, racism, prejudice-based

content, misogyny, misinformation, disinformation, conspiracies, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism;

- Contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example, peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising as well as adults posing as children or young adults with the intention of grooming or exploiting them for sexual, criminal; financial or other purposes;
- Conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual or non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes), and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying.
- Commerce: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. When pupils are at risk of phishing, school can reports concerns to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (<https://apwg.org/>).

School is committed to reviewing and implementing its Online Safety Risk Assessment to keep staff and pupils safe when using technology including the use of Artificial Intelligence.

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).

When there are concerns about a child in this area, staff should notify the DSL, who will consider referring the child into the Cyber Choices programme (cyberchoices.uk), which provides early intervention where children are at risk of committing, or being drawn into, low level cyber-dependent offences and divert them to a more positive use of their skills and interests.

In accordance with the Prevent Duty the school has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place when children access the internet via school devices and when using the school network. The school meets the Department for Education's Filtering and Monitoring Standards through

- identifying and assigning roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems.
 - The effectiveness of filtering and monitoring systems will be formally reviewed at least annually by the senior leader responsible for filtering and monitoring, working alongside the DSL and IT support provider. Records of these reviews and checks will be maintained.

- blocking harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning.
- having effective monitoring strategies in place that meet their safeguarding needs.

The school has a robust filtering system in place, both at a school and service provider level. The school uses the London Grid for Learning filtering system- School Protect which includes the following: HTTPS Decryption SchoolProtect filters all HTTP and HTTPS websites by default but additional granularity for filtering and reporting can be achieved by enabling HTTPS decryption and installing certificates on school devices. This allows the filter to intercept the full URL for HTTPS websites, not just the domain name (as is the case without decryption).

Embedded Content Filtering: Many websites have content embedded from other sites that may be blocked. By using the embedded content functionality in SchoolProtect, only the specific videos/content used by the website can be allowed without allowing the whole external site. This functionality requires HTTPS decryption to be turned on. Enhanced User Identification SchoolProtect can identify users by several methods:

- IP address
- USO Username
- Active Directory Integration
- Chromebook Integration

Network- Level Filtering SchoolProtect runs in the LGfL core, filtering all web traffic from LGfL schools. This means that all devices connected to the school's network are protected. There is no installation or configuration required on devices.

AI Website Categorisation: Engine LGFL's partners Netsweeper scan over 100 million websites each day, assigning each one a category. SchoolProtect has over 80 categories that schools can choose to allow or block and every website will fall into one of these categories.

Extensive Reporting: Schools can run a variety of reports on a schedule or on demand to check the filtering is working as intended, look for patterns in student browsing activity or to perform detailed investigations into specific activities. Scheduled reports can be run monthly, weekly, daily or as often as once per hour. Example reports include: Adult categories, Prevent, User Summary and Detail.

Please click below for more information about LGFLs WebScreen 'appropriate filtering' as per KCSIE 2025

<https://d1xsi6mgo67kia.cloudfront.net/uploads/2020/01/LGfL-AppropriateFiltering-Provider-Response-August-2023-LGfL.pdf>

Suitable filtering is in place to ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in schools. SafeSearch is enabled and cannot be disabled.

At St Mary and St Michael, we have decided that a constant combination of all the following monitoring options is appropriate to keep the children as safe as possible:

- Physical monitoring by staff watching screens of users
- Network monitoring using log files of internet traffic and web access
- Individual device monitoring through software or third-party services- SENSO and regular checks of search history on assigned iPads. SENSO alerts are checked daily by Sue-Helen Steyn, Isabel Hamilton and Joanna Hannan. The assigned iPads' search histories are checked at least once per half term. Any concerns are dealt with immediately in line with our safeguarding policy and behaviour policy.

Staff know the importance of filtering and monitoring but not over blocking so as to limit teaching opportunities. The school has the right to amend its filtering settings, but some cannot be changed due to safeguarding concerns. The Computing Lead, headteacher and IT technician have the necessary access rights, and they also receive training from LGFL. The school chooses to share its access rights with the SBS / LA and seeks appropriate support in applying bespoke filtering policies. We are careful to not over block which can impede children's education.

We have SENSO Monitoring software is installed on all computers, laptops and Chromebooks and on the Set 3 iPads which sends immediate alerts by email to the head teacher, DSL and Online Safety Lead. Screenshots of the concern are taken by the program, dated, with the location of the computer and username of the student. Areas of concern are reported, investigated and action taken. If similar issues of concern are flagged, then an additional online safety assembly/lesson is then delivered to address these concerns. Safeguarding concerns are logged in accordance with school policy.

Children are assigned their own iPad from each set to enable any concerning searches found in the search histories to be narrowed down to a small number of children who regularly use that iPad (set 1 and set 2 iPads). Search histories are checked at least once a half term. Areas of concern are reported, investigated and action taken. If similar issues of concern are flagged, then an additional online safety assembly/lesson is then delivered to address these concerns.

A clear policy and associated procedures are in place to ensure that Online Remote Learning is safe for both staff and pupils as and when it is done. These will be shared with children and their parents via Google Classroom if Online Remote Learning is required. Further Online Safety Training will be delivered to staff and parents/ support given as and when Online Remote Learning is needed.

At home, loaned school devices require the children to login using their USO details. When pupils log into any school system on a personal device, activity may also be monitored here. For example, our G Suite settings has a filtering extension which will apply when logging into a home Chromebook but also when logging into a Chrome profile on a Windows laptop. More than one member of staff is assigned to each Google Classroom. Further safety for remote/home learning can be found at <https://lgfl.net/smartbuy/homeprotect>

School is committed to ensuring that Online Safety is a running and interrelated theme throughout its safeguarding arrangements including policy and procedure, the curriculum, staff training and induction, the role of the DSL, and parental engagement. This includes promoting an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring systems in place when children access the internet via school devices and the school network.

As part of a whole school approach the school is committed to ensure that all parents have the opportunity to be empowered and upskilled in keeping children safe online through the sharing of Online Safety information, advice and guidance including the offer of workshops to support parents for example in installing safeguards on to their children's digital devices.

Staff should read and be familiar with the school's Online Safety Policy, Pupil Behaviour Policy, and the school's Acceptable User Policies for staff and pupils (copies of which are available on the school's website and in the shared school policies folder). Online Safety guidance and resources can be found on [THESS's resources page](#) and the [THSCP's website](#).

In accordance with Department for Education's guidance, Mobile Phones in Schools (February 2026), the school prohibits the use of mobile/smart phones throughout the school day as set out in the Behaviour Policy. [The school's Mobile Phone Policy forms part of the wider safeguarding framework and sets out expectations relating to pupils, staff and visitors concerning the safe and appropriate use of mobile devices.](#)

Staff should report Online Safety concerns about pupils to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as with all other safeguarding concerns. When it comes to the safety and well-being of the child, the response to the risks and harms that children may experience in the online or digital environment should be no different than the offline, face to face world. For most children there is little distinction between the online and face to face interactions as the two environments often intersect with one another in their daily lives. Staff should recognise that children's experience of abuse in the digital environment may be even more pronounced, where the identity of the abuser is unknown and the abuse can continue 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Staff should be aware that children with known vulnerabilities such as SEND, LAC and PLAC children and Children known to a Social Worker, may be more vulnerable to harm and exploitation in the online and digital environments.

32. DOMESTIC ABUSE

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 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 recognises that domestic abuse may occur in different types of relationships, including ex-partners and family members and is not restricted to the family home. According to the definition the person perpetrating the abuse and the person to whom the abusive behaviour is directed towards must be aged 16 or over and be "personally connected". Domestic Abuse may involve a range of abusive behaviours, which may be a single incident or a pattern of abuse, including physical, sexual, emotional and economic abuse, and coercive and controlling behaviour.

Staff should be aware that 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 and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children and have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home because of the abuse. Children 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'.

In response to safeguarding reports received about children involving Domestic Abuse, the school will make contact with Children's Social Care for

advice and guidance. Where appropriate school will complete a DASH Risk Assessment with the individual reporting as a victim of Domestic Abuse.

The school has signed up to the Metropolitan Police's Operation Encompass project. Operation Encompass ensures that when police are called to an incident of domestic abuse, and where there are children in the household, the police will notify the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead before the child arrives at school the following day, so that the school can provide 'silent support' to the child and follow up with Children's Social Care where appropriate.

Schools can contact the Tower Hamlets Violence Against Women and Girls Team for support required on any of the VAWG strands including training needs and workshops for parents. Please contact the VAWG Training Officer: Amy-Kate.Garwood2@towerhamlets.gov.uk. Schools can also sign up to the VAWG Pledge.

33. SO-CALLED HONOUR-BASED ABUSE

So-called 'honour'-based abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving 'honour' often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. All forms of so-called Honour Based Abuse are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of Honoured Based Abuse, or already having suffered Honour Based Abuse.

If staff have a concern regarding a child who might be at risk of Honour Based Abuse or who has suffered from Honour Based Abuse, they should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will follow local safeguarding procedures.

Female Genital Mutilation

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, FGM is a criminal offence under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003.

Staff should have read and be familiar with the HM Government Multi-Agency Statutory Guidance on FGM, updated 30th July 2020.

Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon teachers, along with regulated health and social care professionals in England and Wales, to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases may face disciplinary sanctions. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should **not** be examining pupils or students. Teachers **must** personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. However, teachers should notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead of this action as well as reporting the disclosure of FGM in line with school's safeguarding procedures.

The duty on teachers to report to the police does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases (i.e. where the teacher does not discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) or in cases where the woman is 18 or over. In these cases, teachers should follow local safeguarding procedures and report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If in doubt, staff should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Forced Marriage

In England and Wales, the practice of Forced Marriage is a criminal offence under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. Since February 2023 it has also been a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence, threats or another form of coercion are not used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages. Schools and colleges play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage.

School and college staff should contact the Forced Marriage Unit if they need advice or information: Contact: 020 7008 0151 or email fm@fcdo.gov.uk.

Staff should have read and be familiar with the Forced Marriage Unit's Statutory Guidance and Multi Agency Guidelines **The Right to Choose** updated April 2023

Testing and Hymenoplasty

The government has made it illegal to carry out, offer or aid and abet virginity testing or hymenoplasty in any part of the UK, as part of the Health and Care Act 2022.

It is also illegal for UK nationals and residents to do these things outside the UK.

In response to any reports of a child/young person being subject to or at risk of virginity testing or hymenoplasty, the DSL will take action in accordance with the government's non-statutory guidance [Virginity testing and hymenoplasty: multi-agency guidance](#) (August 2025).

34. RADICALISATION AND EXTREMISM

Children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk is part of the school's safeguarding approach.

- Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.
- Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.
- Terrorism is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

There is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Background factors combined with specific influences such as family and friends may contribute to a child's vulnerability. Similarly, radicalisation can occur through many different methods (such as social media or the internet) and settings (such as within the home).

The school follows Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty 2023 (Updated March 2024), which explains schools' duties under the Counter-Terrorism and

Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism. Paragraphs 141-207 pertain to Education.

This should be read in conjunction with The Prevent duty: safeguarding learners vulnerable to radicalisation. Support for those working in education settings with safeguarding responsibilities (Department for Education, October 2022]

The Prevent Risk Assessment and Prevent Checklists are reviewed and updated at least annually.

The Prevent Risk Assessment covers the following areas:

- National Risks
- Local Risks
- Leadership and Partnership
 - o Leadership
 - o Working in partnership
- Capabilities
 - o Staff training
 - o Information sharing
- Reducing Permissive Environments
 - o Building children's resilience to radicalisation
 - o IT policies
 - o Visitors

An action plan is drawn up and implemented as part of the risk assessment.

The SMSC policy and British Values statements and Protected Characteristics in the Curriculum documents detail the relevant parts in the curriculum that enable pupils to discuss issues of religion, ethnicity and culture and how the school promotes fundamental British Values as part of SMCS (spiritual, moral, social and cultural education).

All staff receive Prevent training from the LBTH Prevent Education Officer, at least every two years. The Prevent Lead, DSL and DDSs access additional training which is available at least annually

LBTH Prevent contact

Tom Llewellyn-Jones - Tom.Llewellyn-jones@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Prevent, Hate Crime and Protective Security Programme Manager

In LBTH all Prevent related concerns should be referred through completing a National Referral Form (NRF) and sent to the Multi Agency Support Team and Prevent.referrals@towerhamlets.gov.uk

35. CHILD-ON-CHILD ABUSE (INCLUDING HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE)

Staff must be aware that children may be harmed by other children.

Child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for both the child who has experienced harm and the child displaying the behaviour. It is preventable and may involve serious physical violence, threats, intimidation or the use of weapons.

Child-on-child abuse can happen both inside and outside of school including online. It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of child-on-child abuse.

Staff should treat all reports of child-on-child abuse very seriously and make it clear that all forms are unacceptable. As with all forms of abuse the occurrence of child-on-child abuse is an infringement of a child's human rights. Abuse is abuse and will never be dismissed as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'. The school adopts a Zero Tolerance Approach to child-on-child abuse.

All staff should recognise that even though there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse among pupils, such abuse may still be taking place and that it is simply not being reported.

Staff should be aware that it is more likely that boys will be perpetrators of child-on-child abuse and girls will be victims of child-on-child abuse. However, all forms of child-on-child abuse are unacceptable and will not be tolerated at the school.

Staff should recognise that child-on-child abuse can take many forms and may be facilitated by technology, including:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- physical abuse such as biting, hitting, kicking or hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm,
- physical assault and harm, or the threat of harm with a weapon,
- harmful sexual behaviour, sexual violence and sexual harassment including misogyny/misandry,
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party

- consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes images and/or videos including those generated using AI,
- teenage relationship abuse – where there is a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual or emotional abuse, perpetrated against a current or former partner
- upskirting – taking a picture under a person’s clothing without their knowledge and/or permission with the intention of viewing their buttocks or genitals (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm. It is a criminal offence.
- initiation/hazing - used to introduce newcomers into an organisation or group by subjecting them to a series of trials and challenges, which are potentially humiliating, embarrassing or abusive.
- prejudice and discrimination - behaviours which cause a person to feel powerless, worthless or excluded originating from prejudices around belonging, identity and equality, for example, prejudices linked to disabilities, special educational needs, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, gender and sexual identity. This includes behaviours driven by misogyny, misandry and other forms of prejudice, discrimination or hostility

Different gender issues can be prevalent when dealing with child-on-child abuse, for example girls being sexually touched/assaulted or boys being subject to initiation/hazing type violence.

Although a child identifying as LGBTQ+ is not in itself a safeguarding concern, such children may be more vulnerable to forms of child-on-child abuse. This includes children who are perceived to be LGBTQ+ even though they do not identify as such. The school is committed to providing a safe space for LGBTQ+ children to share any concerns they may have and in ensuring an inclusive culture is maintained. In the support that is provided to children questioning their gender, the school will adhere to any specific guidance issued by the Department for Education.

The school recognises that some children may not identify with the terms ‘victim’ or ‘perpetrator’; therefore, careful consideration will be given to the language used when discussing incidents and support arrangements with children and their families.

The school’s Child on Child Abuse policy should be read alongside this policy. It details the following:

- procedures in place to minimise the risk of child on child abuse.

- how allegations of child on child abuse will be recorded, investigated and dealt with.
- clear processes how victims, perpetrators and other children affected by child on child abuse are supported at the school.

We recognise that child on child abuse can and will occur on any site even with the most robust policies and support processes. To minimise the risk of child on child abuse the school has and will continue to develop and implement appropriate strategies to proactively prevent child on child abuse.

This school has an open environment where young people feel safe to share information about anything that is upsetting or worrying them. There is a strong and positive PHSE/SMSC curriculum that tackles such issues as prejudiced behaviour and gives children an open forum to talk things through rather than seek one on one opportunities to be harmful to one another. The school makes sure that 'support and report' signposting is available to young people.

Staff will not dismiss issues as 'banter' or 'growing up' or compare them to their own experiences of childhood. Staff will consider each issue and each individual in their own right before taking action.

Young people are part of changing their circumstances and, through school council and pupil voice for example, we encourage young people to support changes and develop 'rules of acceptable behaviour'. We involve pupils in the positive ethos in school; one where all young people understand the boundaries of behaviour before it becomes abusive.

Incidents of child-on-child abuse should be reported on a record of concern form (yellow form/CPOMS) in the first instance. The school will then use the school's format to record the details of the investigation and carry out a risk assessment.

The following procedures will be followed.

An assessment of an incident between peers should be completed and consider:

- Chronological and developmental ages of everyone involved
- Difference in their power or authority in relation to age, race, gender, physical, emotional or intellectual vulnerability
- All alleged physical and verbal aspects of the behaviour and incident
 - Whether the behaviour involved inappropriate sexual knowledge or motivation
 - What was the degree of physical aggression, intimidation, threatening behaviour or bribery
- The effect on the victim

- Any attempts to ensure the behaviour and incident is kept a secret
- The child or young person's motivation or reason for the behaviour, if they admit that it occurred
- Whether this was a one-off incident, or longer in duration

It is important to deal with a situation of peer abuse immediately and sensitively. It is necessary to gather the information as soon as possible to get the true facts. It is equally important to deal with it sensitively and think about the language used and the impact of that language on both the children and the parents when they become involved. Avoid language that may create a 'blame' culture and leave a child labelled. Staff will talk to the children in a calm and consistent manner.

Staff will not be prejudiced, judgmental, dismissive or irresponsible in dealing with such sensitive matters.

a. Taking Action:

- Always take complaints seriously
- Gain a statement of facts from the pupil(s)
- Assess needs of victim and perpetrator
- Consider referral to Police or Social Care
- Contribute to multi-agency assessments
- Convene a risk management meeting
- Record all incidents and all action taken

b. Gather the Facts

Speak to all the young people involved separately, gain a statement of facts from them and use consistent language and open questions for each account. Ask the young people to tell you what happened. Use open questions, 'where, when, why, who'. (What happened? Who observed the incident? What was seen? What was heard? Did anyone intervene?). Do not interrogate or ask leading questions.

c. Consider the Intent

Has this been a deliberate or contrived situation for a young person to be able to harm another?

d. Decide on your next course of action

If you believe any young person to be at risk of significant harm you must report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately; they will follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

If MAST and the police intend to pursue this further they may ask to interview the young people in school or they may ask for parents to come to school to

be spoken to. It is important to be prepared for every situation and the potential time it may take.

e. *Informing parents/carers*

The best way to inform parents/carers is face to face. Although this may be time consuming, the nature of the incident and the type of harm/abuse a young person may be suffering can cause fear and anxiety to parents/carers whether their child is the child who was harmed or who harmed another.

Is the pupil 13+ and does not want to share with parents? Use the 'Gillick' test and the 'Fraser' guidelines. <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/legal-definition-childrights-law/gillick-competency-fraser-guidelines/>

In all circumstances where the risk of harm to the child is evident then the school should encourage the young person to share the information with their parent/carer (they may be scared to tell parents/carers that they are being harmed in any way).

Points to consider:

What is the age of the children involved?

How old are the young people involved in the incident and is there any age difference between those involved? In relation to sexual exploration, children under the age of 5, in particular 1-4 year olds who are learning toileting skills may show a particular interest in exploration at around this stage. This, however should not be overlooked.

Where did the incident or incidents take place?

Was the incident in an open, visible place to others? If so was it observed? If not, is more supervision required within this particular area?

What was the explanation by all children involved of what occurred?

Can each of the young people give the same explanation of the incident and also what is the effect on the young people involved? Is the incident seen to be bullying for example, in which case regular and repetitive? Is the version of one young person different from another and why?

What is each of the children's own understanding of what occurred?

Do the young people know/understand what they are doing? E.g. do they have knowledge of body parts, of privacy and that it is inappropriate to touch? Is the young person's explanation in relation to something they may have heard or been learning about that has prompted the behaviour? Is the behaviour

deliberate and contrived? Does the young person have understanding of the impact of their behaviour on the other person?

Repetition

Has the behaviour been repeated to an individual on more than one occasion? In the same way it must be considered has the behaviour persisted to an individual after the issue has already been discussed or dealt with and appropriately resolved?

Next Steps

Once the outcome of the incident(s) has been established it is necessary to ensure future incidents of abuse do not occur again and consider the support and intervention required for those involved.

For the young person who has been harmed

What support they require depends on the individual young person. It may be that they wish to seek counselling or one to one support via a mentor. It may also be that they feel able to deal with the incident(s) on their own or with support of family and friends; in which case it is necessary that this young person continues to be monitored and offered support should they require it in the future. If the incidents are of a bullying nature, the young person may need support in improving peer groups/relationships with other young people, or some restorative justice work with all those involved may be required.

Other interventions that could be considered may target a whole class or year group for example a speaker on cyber bullying, relationship abuse etc. It may be that through the continued curriculum of PHSE and SMSC that certain issues can be discussed and debated more frequently.

If the young person feels particularly vulnerable it may be that a risk assessment can be put in place for them whilst in school so that they have someone named that they can talk to, support strategies for managing future issues and identified services to offer additional support.

For the young person who has displayed harmful behaviour

It is important to find out why the young person has behaved in such a way. It may be that the young person is experiencing their own difficulties and may even have been harmed themselves in a similar way. In such cases support such as one to one mentoring or counselling may also be necessary.

Particular support from identified services may be necessary through an early help referral and the young person may require additional support from family members.

Once the support required to meet the individual needs of the young person has been met, it is important that the young person receives a consequence for their behaviour. This may be in the form of restorative justice e.g. making amends with the young person they have targeted if this has been some form of bullying. In the cases of sexually harmful behaviour it may be a requirement for the young person to engage in one to one work with a particular service or agency (if a crime has been committed this may be through the police or youth offending service). If there is any form of criminal investigation ongoing it may be that this young person cannot be educated on site until the investigation has concluded. In which case, the young person will need to be provided with appropriate support and education elsewhere.

It may be that the behaviour that the young person has displayed may continue to pose a risk to others, in which case an individual risk assessment may be required. This should be completed via a multi- agency response to ensure that the needs of the young person and the risks towards others are measured by all of those agencies involved including the young person and their parents. This may mean additional supervision of the young person or protective strategies if the young person feels at risk of engaging in further inappropriate or harmful behaviour.

The school may also choose a punishment as a consequence such as exclusion or internal exclusion/inclusion/seclusion for a period of time to allow the young person to reflect on their behaviour.

After care

It is important that following the incident the young people involved continue to feel supported and receive help even if they have stated that they are managing the incident. Sometimes the feelings of remorse, regret or unhappiness may occur at a much later stage than the incident. It is important to ensure that the young people do not engage in any further harmful behaviour either towards someone else or to themselves as a way of coping (e.g. self-harm). For this reason, regular reviews with the young people following the incident(s) are imperative.

Schools are signposted to THESS's [safeguarding resource webpage](#) that contains links to key organisations that can support schools in their response to forms of child-on-child abuse

36. CHILD-ON-CHILD SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

All staff must be aware that sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex and it can happen in any environment including schools, the family home as part of intra-familial abuse and via online platforms. It can also occur when a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or a group of children. The abuse may be perpetrated by a younger child towards an older child because of an imbalance of power caused by factors such as height difference or cognitive ability.

As part of school's wider safeguarding culture, staff should maintain an '**it could happen here**' approach in regard to child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment and understand that children in the school and the local community may be experiencing such forms of child-on-child abuse, including that facilitated by technology, regardless of the number of reports the DSL receives.

In response to reports of child-on-child abuse school will reassure all victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor will a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. As part of the reassurance to children, it will be made clear to children that the law is in place to protect them from abuse rather than to criminalise them.

Staff should be aware that some groups of children are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows girls, children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and LGBTQ+ children are at greater risk.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- challenging inappropriate behaviours;
- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up;
- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as "banter", "part of growing up", "just having a laugh" or "boys being boys"; and
- challenging physical behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting upskirts.

Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours will help to normalise them.

Sexual violence offences are defined under the Sexual Offences Act 2003

Rape: A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Assault by Penetration: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Sexual Assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (Schools should be aware that sexual assault covers a very wide range of behaviour so a single act of kissing someone without consent, or touching someone's bottom/breasts/genitalia without consent, can still constitute sexual assault.)

Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally causes another person (B) to engage in an activity, the activity is sexual, B does not consent to engaging in the activity, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (This could include forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.)

Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs.

All Staff need to be aware of the following:

- children under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity;
- the age of consent is 16
- sexual intercourse without consent is rape.

Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this will be referred to the police. Whilst the age of criminal responsibility is ten, if the alleged perpetrator is under ten, the starting principle of referring to the police remains. In parallel to this the school will make a referral to Children's Social Care via the Multi Agency Support Team.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual Harassment is 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Sexual Harassment may include the following:

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names;
- sexual "jokes" or taunting;
- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes (schools and colleges should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature; and
- online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence such as:
 - consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes images and/or videos.
 - sharing of unwanted explicit content;
 - upskirting
 - sexualised online bullying
 - unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media
 - sexual exploitation, co-ercion and threats

On a case-by-case basis the school will liaise with Children's Social Care and the Police as well as specialist services as part of the immediate response to child-on-child sexual harassment and the ongoing support for all the children involved.

Harmful Sexual Behaviours

Children's sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, ranging from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. School recognises that Harmful Sexual Behaviours can, in some cases, progress on a continuum. It is therefore important for all staff to address inappropriate behaviours to help prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future. Children displaying harmful sexual behaviours have often experienced their own abuse and trauma.

School takes seriously its duty to respond appropriately to all reports and concerns about children's sexual behaviours both online and offline, in and outside of the school, including reports of sexual violence and/or sexual harassment. The DSL has completed relevant training in responding to and managing harmful sexual behaviours and will draw upon appropriate resources such as the AIM Checklists and Assessment Tools. The DSL will liaise where appropriate with Children's Social Care, the Police and other specialist services.

Any concerns about sexual violence and sexual harassment must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately, who will comply with Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 5 (2025).

The victim will be reassured:

- taken seriously and kept safe
- confidentiality not promised
- listened to, non-judgementally
- disclosure recorded
- two staff present, ideally the DSL
- victim sensitively informed about referral to other agencies
- parents of victim informed

Each report will be risk-assessed and be considered on a case-by-case basis, resulting in one or more of the following:

- internal management in line with behaviour and bullying policies, with follow on pastoral support
- a referral for Early Help services
- a referral to children's social care
- in partnership with children's social care, a referral to the police

Within the risk assessment, the emphasis will be on the victim being able to continue with normal routines. The alleged perpetrator may also be removed from class. Other children who witnessed the incident or become aware of the incident will also have to be considered.

Clear records will be kept on CPOMS and written risk assessments recorded and shared with appropriate staff/partners

We recognise that both the victim and the perpetrator will require follow on support. The perpetrator more than likely will have unmet needs. A risk assessment will need to be undertaken to minimise further risk to others as well as harm to the perpetrator themselves. Partnership with agencies outlined above will be essential in guiding our response to each individual case.

Schools may find the Lucy Faithfull Foundation's [Shore Space](#) resource useful for teenagers worried about sexual behaviours

To support its overall prevention of and response to harmful sexual behaviours the school will give consideration to the best practice resources such as that available through the [Contextual Safeguarding Program](#) in particular the [Beyond Referrals Toolkit: Harmful Sexual Behaviours](#)

37. YOUTH PRODUCED SEXUAL IMAGERY

Youth Produced Sexual Imagery is one of the terms professionals use to describe the sending or posting of nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams by children and young people under the age of 18 online. The term 'nudes' is used by children and covers all types of image sharing incidents. Alternative terms used by children include 'dick pics' or 'pics'.

The sharing of nudes and semi-nudes can happen publicly online, in 1:1 messaging or via group chats and closed social media accounts. It could also involve sharing between devices via services like Apple's AirDrop which works offline. Nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams may include more than one child or young person.

Incidents may also occur where:

- children and young people find nudes and semi-nudes online and share them claiming to be from a peer
- children and young people digitally manipulate an image of a young person into an existing nude online

- images created or shared are used to abuse peers e.g. by selling images online or obtaining images to share more widely without consent to publicly shame. Such images can be shared via web pages and social media accounts called 'Bait Out' pages/accounts.

Creating and sharing nudes and semi-nudes of under-18s (including those created and shared with consent) is illegal.

Nude and semi-nude images may also be digitally altered or wholly generated through artificial intelligence technologies, including so-called 'deepfake' or 'deep nude' images. Such images should be treated as safeguarding concerns and responded to in accordance with KCSIE 2026 and relevant UKCIS guidance.

When handling reports of Youth Produced Sexual Imagery, **staff must be aware that it is illegal for staff to view or share such imagery**. Staff should immediately inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will act in accordance with KCSIE 2026 and non-statutory guidance, [Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes. Advice for Education Settings working with Children and Young People](#) (Updated March 2024).

- When handling reports of Youth Produced Sexual Imagery, **staff must be aware that it is illegal for staff to view or share such imagery**.
- If the staff member has already viewed the imagery by accident (e.g., if a child has shown it to them before asked not to), this will immediately be reported to DSL (or equivalent).
- Not delete the imagery or ask the young person to delete it.
- Not ask the child or children involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery and not share information about the incident with other staff members, the child(ren) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers. This is the responsibility of the DSLs.
- Not say or do anything to blame or shame any children involved.
- Explain to child(ren) involved that they will report the issue to the DSL and reassure them that they will receive appropriate support and help.

St Mary and St Michael Catholic Primary School recognises that nude and semi-nude image sharing is a safeguarding issue; all concerns will be reported in line with our child protection policy to and dealt with by the DSL (or equivalent).

38. BULLYING (INCLUDING CYBERBULLYING)

Bullying is a very serious issue that can cause anxiety and distress. All incidences of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying should be reported and will be managed through the school's Anti-Bullying Policy/Pupil Behaviour Policy/Child-on-child abuse Policy, in accordance with [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026](#) and Behaviour in Schools. Advice for Head teacher and School Staff (September 2022).

Staff should have read, be familiar with and follow the school's anti-bullying policy and procedures, which includes the procedures to be followed when responding to incidents of Bullying/Cyberbullying. Copies of the policy are available on the school's website and in the shared school policies folder.

39. HOMELESSNESS

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. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a new legal duty on English councils so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to meaningful help including an assessment of their needs and circumstances, the development of a personalised housing plan, and work to help them retain their accommodation or find a new place to live.

The DSL will raise concerns at the earliest opportunity about a family at risk of homelessness through the [Tower Hamlets Homeless and Housing Options service](#).

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. However, it is also recognised in some cases 16 and 17 year olds could be living independently from their parents or guardians, for example through their exclusion from the family home, and will require a different level of intervention and support. Local authority children's social care will be the lead agency for these children and should be contacted in the first instance. For general enquiries about support for young people who might be at risk of or experiencing homelessness in the borough, please contact Tower Hamlets Housing Options: Host@towerhamlets.gov.uk

40. 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.

The DSL will ensure that the children concerned are supported and where appropriate make use of the guides provided by the HM Courts & Tribunals Service for [children 5-11-year olds](#) and [12-17 year olds](#).

Making child arrangements via the family courts following parental separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. This can be stressful for children too. Where appropriate parents can be signposted to the Department of Justice's [information toolkit](#) for families on making child arrangements which sets out each party's responsibility including the importance of putting the needs of the children first in the process.

41. CHILDREN WITH FAMILY MEMBERS IN PRISON

An estimated 310,000 children every year have a parent in prison in England and Wales and 10,000 visits are made by children to our public prisons every week. These children are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health.

The DSL will draw upon the resources and guidance offered through [The National Information Centre on Children of Offenders](#) (NICCO) to support the children involved and mitigate negative consequences for those children.

42. PRIVATE FOSTERING

Private fostering occurs when a child under the age of 16 (under 18, if disabled) is provided with care and accommodation by a person who is not a parent, person with parental responsibility for them or a relative in their own home. A child is not privately fostered if the person caring for and accommodating them has done so for less than 28 days and does not intend to do so for longer.

Staff should be vigilant about children who are in private fostering arrangements and report concerns to the DSL, who will notify the Local Authority through a MAST Request for Support Form, as set out in the [THSCP Multi-Agency Private Fostering Guidance](#) (January 2022). The Local Authority will check the arrangement is suitable and safe for the child in accordance with the [Private Fostering statutory guidance](#).

43. YOUNG CARERS

A young carer is a person aged 18 or under who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member. This can include, but is not limited to a person with:

- a long-term illness or condition
- a physical or learning disability
- a substance misuse condition
- a mental health condition

The support provided by a child can vary based on the condition of the person they are caring for, but typically young carers provide a combination of personal (such as helping to dress or bath them), practical (such as cooking, cleaning and shopping) and emotional care (such as talking through their concerns with them).

It is estimated by the Children's Society that 1 in 5 children are young carers and many are hidden and unidentified.

No young carer or young adult carer should take on caring roles which are inappropriate, excessive, or which negatively impact their life opportunities, health or wellbeing.

The school is committed to raising awareness about young carers, among staff, pupils and parents/carers, so that young carers can be identified and receive the support they need. The school will utilise the Young Carers in Schools program resources provided by the Carers Trust and the Children's Society: <https://youngcarersinschools.com/> alongside the Tower Hamlets guidance for schools, '[Young Carers in School: A guide for education practitioners to identify and support young carers in schools](#)' and other resources available from [THESS's safeguarding resource webpage](#).

The DSL will take the lead for Young Carers at the school and ensure that there is a whole school approach to improving the outcomes for young carers.

When young carers are identified, the DSL or Deputy DSL will have a conversation with the child using if helpful the [Tower Hamlets Young Carers Identification Tool](#).

School recognises that in accordance with the Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014 young carers have the right to an assessment by the Local Authority to identify needs and support and the person they are caring has the right to have a reassessment of their needs.

If the school thinks that the child or young person or a member of their family requires more support than the school alone can provide, the DSL/Deputy DSL should refer to the [Tower Hamlets Multi-Agency Support Team \(MAST\)](#), so that a Young Carers Assessment can be undertaken. This assessment can help to identify what additional support can be provided from other services including housing and adult social care. Schools should complete the [Tower Hamlets Young Carers Identification Form](#) and attach it to the MAST referral form that is sent.

44. CHILD ABDUCTION AND COMMUNITY SAFETY INCIDENTS

Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a child 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.

All incidents of Child Abduction should be reported immediately to the Police and Children's Social Care.

Other community safety incidents in the vicinity of a school can raise concerns amongst staff, children and parents, for example, people loitering nearby or unknown adults engaging children in conversation. All incidents that occur during the school day should be immediately reported to the DSL, and steps taken to ensure the safety and well-being of the children involved.

45. MODERN SLAVERY

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.

Child Sexual Exploitation may be committed by an individual or organised network. Victims may identify as belonging to the group exploiting them and may not recognise themselves as victims.

Child Criminal Exploitation may constitute modern slavery. Children who have been criminally exploited may commit offences while under coercion and should be recognised primarily as victims.

Further information on the signs that someone may be a victim of modern slavery, the support available to victims and how to refer to the National Referral Mechanism is available in the [Modern Slavery Statutory Guidance](#).

The DSL will refer all potential child victims of modern slavery to the Local Authority via MAST.

46. TAKING SAFEGUARDING ACTION

Any child, in any family in any school could become a victim of abuse. Staff should always maintain an attitude of “it could happen here”. Key points for staff to remember are:

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child (including calling 999)
- report your concern as soon as possible to the DSL, no later than the end of the day **Reports should be passed on to the DSL immediately so they can be followed up within the school day where possible**
- do not start your own investigation
- share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family
- complete a record of concern (**yellow form or CPOMS**) seek support for yourself if you are distressed.

47. EARLY HELP

All staff are trained and prepared to identify children who may benefit from Early Help, which is providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child’s life. This can be support provided through school’s internal pastoral system and resources and/or Local Authority services and other external agencies.

The Tower Hamlets Early Help Strategy recognises the important role schools have in identifying children and families who are at risk of poor outcomes without early intervention.

All staff need to recognise that all children may benefit from Early Help at any point in their childhood, but some children may benefit from Early Help more than others. These are children with known vulnerabilities, which are listed on page [11](#) of this policy.

The school recognises that support may be provided through universal services, community-based early help services and targeted Family Help arrangements. The DSL will work with relevant partners to ensure children and families receive the right support at the right time.

Where needs cannot be met through universal or community-based support alone, the DSL may work with partner agencies to access Family Help services. The school will contribute information to assessments, planning and reviews and will continue to support the child throughout any Family Help intervention.

At St Mary and St Michael DSLs hold half termly meetings to discuss and review vulnerable children. Extra pastoral support for SEND/vulnerable pupils is given such as social stories, social skills groups, Place2Be and ELSA. All pupils in Year 1 –Year 6 can self refer to Place2Talk.

We also support families via our Attendance and Welfare Advisor (AWA). We use Early Help Assessments (EHA) to help coordinate with other agencies and EHA reviews, and we also have Team Around the Child/Family (TAC/ TAF) meetings when there is a multi-agency approach. We refer to Children's Social Care if the threshold has been met.

The DSL will contact the LBTH MAST for support and advice if required: 020 7364 5006 (Option 3) 020 7364 3444/5601/5606/5358/7796

When an EHA has been completed and a Team Around the Family is in process, the school can refer to the borough's Social Inclusion Panel in support of a co-ordinated and targeted plan to bring about improvement in the child's outcomes.

The DSL will apply the THSCP Levels of Need Guidance to decide what level of safeguarding response is required as part of the Early Help response. If in doubt about the level of need the DSL will telephone the LBTH Multi Agency Support Team (MAST) for a discussion.

MAST:

020 7364 5006 (Option 3) 020 7364 5601/5606/5358/7796

Child Protection Advice Line

020 7364 3444

If a child has been receiving Early Help support from the school and other agencies and there is no improvement in the child's outcomes, then the DSL must refer the child to Children's Social Care.

48. HANDLING THE REPORTING OR SHARING OF CONCERNS

It is the responsibility of all members of staff to safeguard the children at St. Mary and St Michael Catholic Primary School and carry out their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse or neglect.

You're more likely to identify abuse from behavioural and/or physical signs, than from a disclosure. It is therefore important to report any concerns to the Designated/Deputy Safeguarding Leads.

If a child discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the member of staff / volunteer should:

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief;
- Accept what is being said;
- Allow the child to talk freely;
- Reassure the child, but not make promises which it might not be possible to keep;
- Not promise confidentiality – it might be necessary to refer to Children's Services: Safeguarding and Specialist Services;
- Reassure him or her that what has happened is not his or her fault;
- Stress that it was the right thing to tell;
- Listen, without prompting or asking the child leading questions. However, it is important for the welfare of the child that the adult seeks further clarification if necessary using TED.
 - T – tell me
 - E- explain to me
 - D – describe to me
- Not criticise the alleged perpetrator;
- Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told;
- The adult should as soon as possible record the conversation on CPOMs and alert the DSL group, but also verbally tell a DSL you have recorded a concern on CPOMs;
 - Or the adult should make a written record of their conversation on the yellow 'Record of Concern/Disclosure form and pass on to the Designated/Deputy Safeguarding Lead or designated member of staff on an off site visit. You can find a copy of this form in the staff room or main school office;

- When writing up your concern think who, what, where and when;
- If a pupil should divulge to any member of staff an incident that raises concern, or the member of staff has visually noted suspicious bruising/marks to the body, the adult should record their concerns on CPOMs or using the school recording forms and should specify where the injury is and the child/adult's account of how it happened;
- Pass the information to the Designated/Deputy Safeguarding Lead immediately. The completed recording sheet must be given (not left on a desk) to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately so they are able to take further action if required. If not on site it should be passed to one of the other named child protection coordinators;
- In the absence of the Designated/Deputy Safeguarding Lead Officers the form should be returned to the most senior member of staff on site.

When a child shares that they have been or are being abused including exploitation and neglect, they may feel ashamed, especially if the abuse is sexual, and may feel frightened lest their abuser finds out they have sought help and support from a professional. The child may have been threatened and may have lost all trust in adults; or they may believe that they are to blame for the abuse. Sometimes the child may not understand that what is happening is abusive.

All staff should reassure children that what they are sharing is being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A child should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a child ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the child. During their conversations with the pupils, staff will:

- allow the child to speak freely
- remain calm
- allow silences
- refrain from asking leading questions
- tell the pupil what will happen next
- inform the DSL as soon as possible
- seek support from their line manager if they feel distressed.

St Mary and St Michael School's approach to working with parents/carers is one of transparency and honesty and the school's responsibility is to safeguard and promote the welfare of all the pupils in its care. The school

aims to do this in partnership with its parents/carers. In most cases parents and carers will be informed when concerns are raised about the safety and welfare of their child.

Parents and carers should be given the opportunity to address any concerns raised. Parents and carers will be informed if a referral is to be made to an external agency as they will be asked to give consent. Parents/carers will not be informed if it is believed that by doing so would put the child at risk. In such cases the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads will seek advice from the Borough's Children's Social Care team before doing so.

In the case of allegations of abuse made against other children, we will normally notify the parents of all the children involved.

49. CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING

Staff should never assume a colleague or another professional will take safeguarding action through the sharing of information that might be critical in keeping children safe. Staff should be mindful that early information sharing is vital for effective identification, assessment and allocation of appropriate service provision. Serious Case Reviews have highlighted failures in safeguarding systems in which people did not share information at the earliest opportunity or did not share at all. If in any doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to their Designated Safeguarding Lead or a deputy.

All staff should understand that safeguarding requires a high level of confidentiality. Staff should only discuss concerns with the DSL, Deputy DSL or the headteacher.

Any member of staff can contact children's social care if they are concerned about a child but should inform the DSL as soon as possible that they have done so.

Staff will have due regard to the Data protection legislation including the [Data Protection Act 2018](#), [UK GDPR](#) and the [Data \(Use and Access\) Act 2025](#) to ensure that personal information is processed fairly and lawfully and they will adhere to the seven golden rules for sharing information. Information sharing will take place in a timely and secure manner.

[Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children. Staff should](#)

recognise that timely and proportionate information sharing supports effective safeguarding practice and must not be delayed through concerns about data protection legislation where there is a safeguarding need. The GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, as safeguarding and protecting children provide a legal basis for sharing information.

Where appropriate, the school will seek consent before sharing information or taking action in relation to a safeguarding concern. However, consent is not required where there is a lawful basis for sharing information, including where seeking consent would place a child at increased risk of harm, prejudice a safeguarding enquiry, or cause unnecessary delay. Staff should always consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) where there is uncertainty about whether consent should be sought. The safety and welfare of the child will remain the paramount consideration.

Information sharing decisions will be recorded, whether or not the decision to share has been taken. Child protection information will be stored securely separate from the pupil's school file. Child protection information is stored and handled in line with the school's Retention and Destruction Policy. Where safeguarding information is stored electronically and online, the school has cybersecurity measures in place, which meets the Department for Education's Cybersecurity Standards, to ensure the data is safe and not vulnerable to evolving cyber-crime.

50. REFERRING TO CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

The DSL will make a referral to Children's Social Care applying the THSCP Levels of Need Guidance if it is believed that a pupil is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm, or the child is considered to be in need, that is a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services.

LBTH Multi-Agency Support Team:

020 7364 5006 (Option 3) 020 7364 5601/5606/5358/7796

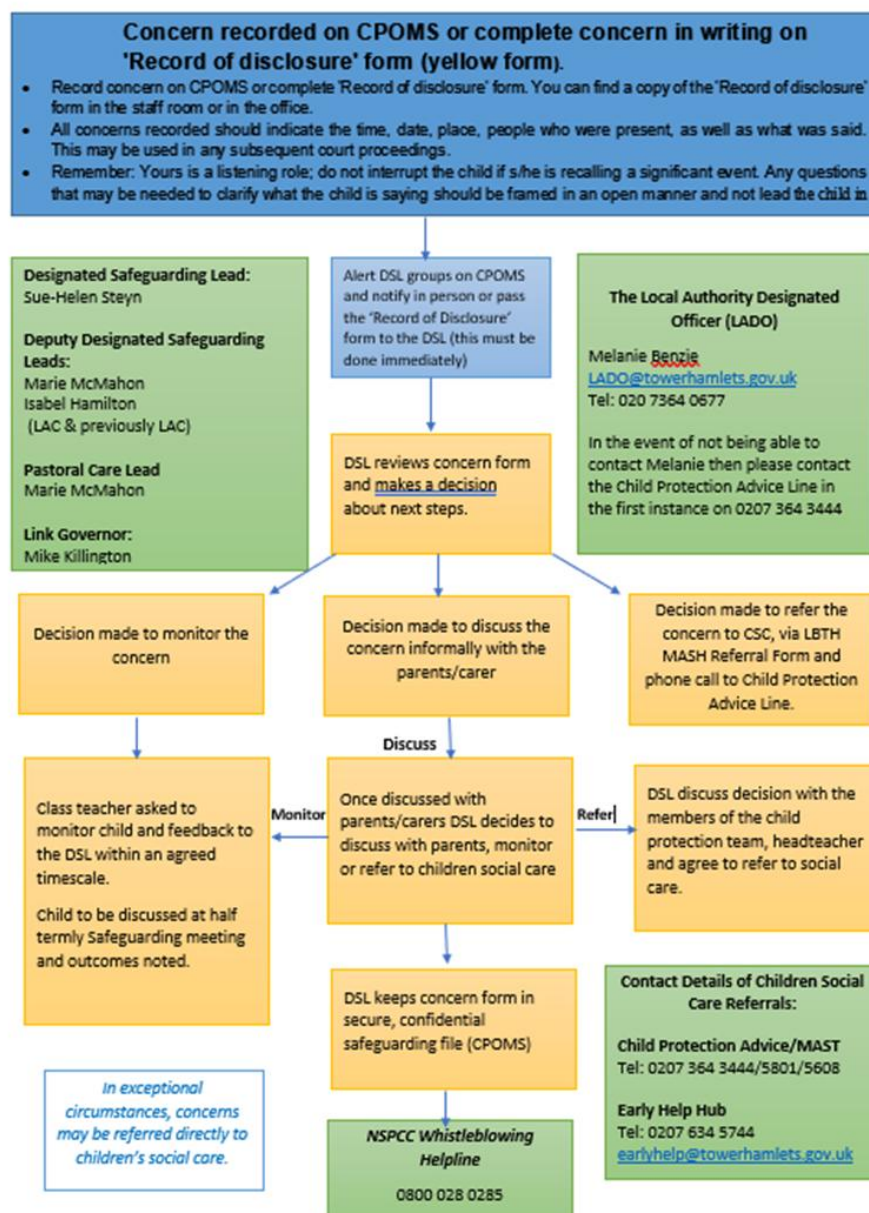
Child Protection Advice Line:

020 7364 3444

The DSL will contact CPAL/MAST in the first instance to seek advice and guidance. When the DSL completes a MAST Request for Support form and sends it securely to the Multi-Agency Support Team, the referral form will be accurate and sufficiently detailed to enable the MAST to make a decision on the level of response required in accordance with the THSCP Levels of Need Guidance.

If the child is already known to Children's Social Care, then the DSL will communicate safeguarding concerns to the allocated Social Worker.

Flow chart for raising safeguarding concerns about a child



51. ESCALATION PROCEDURES

If, after a referral to Children's Social Care, the child's situation does not appear to be improving, the DSL will consider following local escalation procedures to ensure their concerns have been addressed and that the child's situation improves.

In accordance with the [THSCP Multi-Agency Escalation and Resolution Policy](#) the DSL will first make contact in writing with the team manager followed by the service manager followed by the divisional director. At every level of escalation there should be discussion and concerted effort to resolve any professional difference. It is important that the DSL at each point of escalation puts the concerns in writing.

Appendix 1: MAST Poster

Appendix 2: School Record of Concern Form (if not online)

Appendix 3: [MAST Request for Support Form](#)

Appendix 1: MAST Poster



Multi-Agency Support Team (MAST)
020 7364 3444 / 5601 / 5606 / 5358 / 7796 /
3342 / 7828 / 6469 / 3181

If there is a concern about the welfare of a child or young person and you would like to talk it through then you should contact the Tower Hamlets Children Services' Multi-Agency Support Team (MAST).

The Duty Officer will be able to discuss the concern, assist in deciding whether a referral is appropriate and facilitate the reporting of a referral in accordance with Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership (THSCP) Procedures and to offer advice.

When there is a specific concern of a child protection nature whereby it is thought that a child has been harmed or at risk of being harmed then the MAST should then be contacted on 0207 364 3444 / 5601 / 5606 / 5358 / 7796 / 3342 / 7828 / 6469 / 3181 in the first instance to discuss the matter followed by the completion of the [LBTH MAST Request for Support Form](#) to MAST@towerhamlets.gov.uk.

The MAST operates between 9.00am and 5.00pm except at weekends and on public holidays. If the concern arises outside of the hours operated by the MAST and it is believed the child may be at immediate risk the Children's Social Care Emergency Out of Hours Duty Team or the Police should be contacted without delay.

Important contact information:

The Multi Agency Support Team (MAST) Note – information should only be emailed following prior discussion with the Duty Officer.	MAST@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Children's Social Care Emergency Out of Hours Duty Team (5.00pm onwards and weekends)	020 7364 4079

September 2026

Tower Hamlets
Safeguarding
Children
Partnership



MULTI – AGENCY SUPPORT TEAM (MAST)

0207 364 3444

/ 5601 / 5606 /

5358 / 7796 / 3342

/ 7828 / 6469 / 3181

direct line 9.00am – 5.00pm weekdays
(excluding bank holidays)

Designated
Safeguarding

Lead:.....Date.....

Appendix 2: School Record of Concern Form (if not online)

	St Mary & St Michael Catholic Primary School Record of Disclosure/Concern
Name and role of referrer: (please print)	Date Information received: Time Information received:
Child's full name: (please print)	Class:
This is a record of a disclosure made to me by the above child <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/> This is a record of something I have noted, that I am concerned about in respect of a child's safety or welfare <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/> This information came from a third party <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/> Name of third party: _____ (please print the name of the third party) (please tick relevant box)	
Details of concern (use body map if appropriate) Please write here the details of the disclosure or your concern -where? when? what? who? behaviours? If a child/adult has made an allegation to you please record what was said accurately)	
Signed:	Date Report Written:



St Mary & St Michael Catholic Primary School

Record of Disclosure/Concern

Body Map

Child's full name: _____

Class: _____ **D.O.B.** _____

