

**ST. MARK'S CE SCHOOL**  
ONE SCHOOL - SERVING ALL - THROUGH EXCELLENCE

# **Safeguarding Policy**

## **Policy Statement and Guidelines**

Policy Date: Spring 2026

Review Date: Spring 2027

## Useful Contacts

<b>DSL</b>	<b>Mr Amir Fakhoury</b>
<b>DDSL</b>	<b>Mrs Laura Slade Mrs Stephanie Bryant Mrs Lorraine Hoad Mr Ben Godber Mr Stephen Causley Miss Lydia Veals</b>
<b>Children's Resource Service</b>	<p>If you are a professional you can contact the Children's Resource Service on 02380 83 2300 (Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5pm and Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm) or 02380 23 3344 (weekends, Bank Holidays and outside of office hours)</p> <p>If you are a young person, parent, carer or member of the public you can contact the Children's Resource Service on 02380 83 3004 (Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5pm and Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm) or 02380 23 3344 (weekends, Bank Holidays and outside of office hours)</p> <p>If you are a child, young person, parent or carer, and you would like to discuss your worries or seek advice and support please get in touch! You can contact the Children's Resource Service on 02380 83 3004 (office hours) or 02380 23 3344 (outside of office hours).</p> <p><a href="https://www.southampton.gov.uk/children-families/childrens-social-care/report-a-concern-about-a-child/childrens-resource-service/">https://www.southampton.gov.uk/children-families/childrens-social-care/report-a-concern-about-a-child/childrens-resource-service/</a></p>
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<b>PREVENT</b>	<b>PREVENT Lead – Mr Amir Fakhoury</b>
<b>Chair of Governors</b>	<b>Hugh Evans and Gerry Gibbs</b>
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## Definitions

Safeguarding and the promoting the welfare of children is defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) as:

- 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 children's mental and physical 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 Child Protection is the intervention that occurs when children have been significantly harmed or are at risk of significant harm.

**'Child'** refers to everyone under the age of 18.

**'Parent'** refers to birth parents and other adults in a parenting role, for example, adoptive parents, stepparents and foster carers.

**'Staff'** or 'members of staff' refers to all teaching, non-teaching, support, supply, peripatetic, contract staff, governors, volunteers and trustees working in or on behalf of St Mark's CE School

Within this policy, we use the term **'victim'**, although it is recognised that not everyone considers themselves to be a victim or would want to be described in this way. We also recognise the importance of not using the terminology of **'perpetrator'** in relation to children in cases where the behaviour can be harmful to both parties. The appropriate use of terminology will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

## **Introduction**

We recognise that safeguarding and child protection and promoting the welfare of children is an essential part of our duty of care to all students. As such, all staff and governors have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn. We understand that safeguarding, child protection and promoting the welfare of all children is everyone's responsibility and everyone has a role to play in protecting children. We recognise that our school is part of a wider safeguarding system for children and work closely with other agencies to promote the welfare of children. We maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' and will consider what is in the best interests of each child in line with and upholding the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equality Act 2010.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- promote safeguarding and child protection and to demonstrate St Mark's commitment to keeping children safe;
- provide all members of staff with the information required to meet their safeguarding duty and protect children from harm;
- provide stakeholders with clear information relating to St Mark's safeguarding and child protection procedures;
- ensure that staff understand, can recognise and can respond to the indicators of abuse, exploitation or neglect;
- ensure that all staff are aware of their mandatory reporting duty in relation to Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003;
- ensure that children are protected from maltreatment or harm.

St Mark's CE School is committed to the following principles:

- All children have the right to be protected from harm.
- Children should feel safe and secure and cannot learn unless they do so.
- All staff are responsible for keeping children safe and have a responsibility to act if they think a child is at risk of harm.
- All staff take on a responsibility to promote children's welfare.
- Providing support to families and/or children as soon as a problem emerges is essential to improving outcomes for children and families.

## **Safeguarding Aims**

The safeguarding aims of St Mark's School in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2025) are to:

- work to identify children who are suffering or likely to suffer abuse, exploitation or neglect and act to protect them;
- work with relevant services and agencies to ensure that children are protected from harm;
- provide a learning environment for children which is safe and secure;
- teach children how to keep themselves safe and provide structures for them to raise concerns if they are worried or at risk of harm;
- support children's mental health and wellbeing;
- ensure that we adhere to safer recruitment guidance and legislation, deal promptly with allegations of abuse against staff and take bullying and harassment seriously;
- train staff effectively in all safeguarding issues (including online safety) and in their responsibilities for identifying and protecting children that are or may be at risk of harm;
- have a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and designated deputies (DDSL) who will provide support to staff, students and families;

- recognise that all children may be vulnerable to abuse, but be aware that some children have increased vulnerabilities due to special educational needs or disabilities or particular protected characteristics (LGBTQ+, etc);
- maintain a robust recording system for any safeguarding or child protection information;
- ensure that everyone in St Mark's community understands the safeguarding procedures; and,
- to regularly review policies and procedures to ensure that children are protected to the best of our ability.

This policy adheres to the following documents:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people in education settings (Feb 2022) [Safer recruitment consortium]
- What to do if you are worried a child is being abused: Advice for practitioners (2015)

We continue to work closely with the Local Authority and the Southampton Safeguarding Children Partnership to safeguard children across the city.

Please note that there are a number of other documents (statutory and non-statutory) that inform our policy and practice. A list of these can be found in Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2025)

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Part 1 and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025
- Annex B (KCSIE 2025)
- St Mark's Behaviour Policy
- St Mark's Online Safety Policy
- St Mark's Staff Code of Conduct
- St Mark's Attendance & Punctuality Policy
- St Mark's Staff Handbook
- Working together to improve school attendance 2024

All staff will also be expected to complete online Safeguarding and Child Protection module annually and within two weeks of their start date.

**Safeguarding topics:** advice and practical guidance, a coherent portal for advice on key topics, and toolkits covering neglect, child-on-child abuse as well as serious violence can be found here: <https://www.southampton.gov.uk/children-families/childrens-social-care/southampton-safeguarding-children-partnership/professionals/themes-guidance-and-toolkits/>

## Scope

This policy applies to all teaching, non-teaching, support, supply, peripatetic, contract staff, governors, volunteers and trustees working in or on behalf of St Mark's School. All references in this document to 'staff' or 'members of staff' should be interpreted as relating to the aforementioned unless otherwise stated.

Rather than duplicating content from Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2025) in this policy, it should be understood that St Mark's will always refer to this document as the benchmark for all safeguarding practice.

## Safeguarding Summary

The school is committed to safeguarding children and will always make safeguarding decisions that are in the best interests of each child. For further information or if you have any queries about this policy, please contact the school.

This policy may need to be read in conjunction with the School policies listed

- Equality Act 2010.
- Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003.
- Section 1 of the Protection of Children Act 1978.
- Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales 2023.
- Admissions Policy
- Allegations Against Staff or Volunteers
- Anti-Bullying Policy

The school will act if we believe a child is at risk of or is suffering from abuse. Abuse is not limited to physical, emotional, sexual abuse and neglect. For further information on the definitions of the types of abuse below, please refer to Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025), Annex A. Indicators of Abuse See below for possible indicators of abuse. (Taken from 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused', 2015):

- children whose behaviour changes – they may become aggressive, challenging, disruptive, withdrawn or clingy, or they might have difficulty sleeping or start wetting the bed;
- children with clothes which are ill-fitting and/or dirty;
- children with consistently poor hygiene;
- children who make strong efforts to avoid specific family members or friends, without an obvious reason;
- children who don't want to change clothes in front of others or participate in physical activities;
- children who are having problems at school, for example, a sudden lack of concentration and learning or they appear to be tired and hungry;
- children who talk about being left home alone, with inappropriate carers or with strangers;
- children who reach developmental milestones, such as learning to speak or walk, late, with no medical reason;
- children who are regularly missing from school or education;
- children who are reluctant to go home after school;
- children with poor school attendance and punctuality, or who are consistently late being picked up;
- parents who are dismissive and non-responsive to practitioners' concerns;

- parents who collect their children from school when drunk, or under the influence of drugs;
- children who drink alcohol regularly from an early age;
- children who are concerned for younger siblings without explaining why;
- children who talk about running away; and,
- children who shy away from being touched or flinch at sudden movements.

The school recognises that the above list of indicators is not exhaustive, and staff will receive training on indicators of abuse.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **The Role of the Governing Body**

St Mark's CE School has a designated member of the governing body who takes leadership responsibility for safeguarding

Part 2 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2025) sets out the responsibilities of governing bodies. As part of these overarching responsibilities the Governing Body will:

- have a strategic leadership responsibility for safeguarding arrangements;
- ensure all Governors and trustees receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) at induction and that is regularly updated;
- be aware of the obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty;
- ensure that they comply with their duties under legislation;
- ensure a whole school approach to safeguarding, including the use of mobile technology in schools;
- ensure that policies, procedure and training at St Marks are effective and comply with the law at all times and that they allow concerns to be responded to in a timely manner;
- ensure the School considers local authority and Southampton Safeguarding Children Partnership policies and supply information as requested by the safeguarding partners (the Local Authority, a clinical commissioning group for an area within the local authority and the chief office of police for a police area within the local authority);
- ensure the School has an effective Child Protection Policy, that it is published on the school website or available by request and this policy is reviewed at least annually;
- ensure we have a Staff Code of Conduct which refers to low level concerns, allegations against staff and whistleblowing procedures alongside acceptable use of technologies;
- ensure that all staff and governors undergo safeguarding and child protection training on induction (including online safety and filters and monitoring processes) and this is regularly updated;
- ensure the School contributes to multi-agency working in line with statutory guidance;
- ensure that there are clear systems and processes in place for identifying when children may be experiencing mental health problems;
- ensure that children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety as a whole school approach and curriculum planning but recognising that a one size fits all approach may not be appropriate for all children.
- put in place and follow appropriate safeguarding responses for children who are absent from education;

- appoint an appropriate member of staff from the Senior Leadership Team to the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead;
- recognise the importance of information-sharing between practitioners and local agencies but take a risk-based approach to the level of information that is provided to temporary staff, volunteers and contractors;
- ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place to keep children safe online and share information regarding online abuse and risks including where to access advice with parents and carers;
- respond to allegations of abuse against the Principal whilst ensuring there are procedures in place to manage safeguarding concerns, or allegations against staff (including supply staff, volunteers and contractors);
- ensure safer working practice is embedded and effective within policies;
- complete appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) at induction; complete refresher and/or new training as required to remain up to date with the latest guidance and training.

### **The Role of the Executive Headteacher**

The Executive Headteacher will:

- lead and embed a culture across the school in which it is understood that safeguarding, child protection and the promotion of the welfare of all children is everyone's responsibility; everyone understands the role they play in protecting children;
- hold overall accountability for the safeguarding of all pupils and staff
- ensure there are effective policies, procedures and training to enable all staff to fulfil their obligations and duties under legislation;
- ensure staff recognise schools are part of a wider safeguarding system for children and contribute to multi-agency working in line with statutory guidance to promote the welfare of children;
- ensure all staff maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' and will always consider what is in the best interests of each child in line with and upholding the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equality Act 2010
- manage allegations of abuse against staff whilst ensuring there are procedures in place to manage safeguarding concerns, or allegations against staff (including supply staff, volunteers and contractors);
- ensure safer working practice is embedded and effective within policies;
- ensure all Governors receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) at induction and that this is regularly updated; and, that any newly released training is provided as necessary.
- ensure that all recruitment follows the 'Safer Recruitment' guidance, and a single, central record is maintained with details of all members of staff who are in contact with children;
- refer cases where a person is dismissed or has left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required;
- ensure that the school works with Children's Resource Services (CRS), the police, health services and other services to promote the welfare of children; provide a co-ordinated offer of early help when need is identified; contribute to inter-agency plans for children subject to children protection plans and to protect children from harm;
- ensure that Children's Resource Services (from the host local authority or placing authority) have access to the school to conduct, or to consider whether to conduct a section 47 or section 17 assessment, as per Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2025)
- ensure that this policy is reviewed annually at a minimum and ratified by the governing body;

- ensure that this policy and associated procedures are adhered to by all staff;
- ensure that all staff are made aware of the named governor for safeguarding and the Designated Safeguarding Lead;
- organise appropriate cover for the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead for any out of hour/out of term activities;
- appoint a lead for online safety;
- promote a whole school approach to safeguarding;
- promote resilience to social and emotional wellbeing which is tailored to the needs of the children;
- safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties (Teaching Standards, 2012);

### **The Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) at St Mark's School is Mr Amir Fakhoury.

The Deputy Designated Safeguard Lead (DDSL) Cover in the DSL's absence are:

Mrs Bryant, Mr Godber, Mrs Hoad, Mr Causley, Mrs Hoad, Mrs Slade and Miss Lydia Veals.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will:

- take overall lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and filters and monitoring) at St Mark's
- liaise with the safeguarding partners and work with other agencies in line with Working together to Safeguard Children (2023);
- always be available during term time (during school hours) for staff to discuss safeguarding concerns. In the event that they are not available, a deputy DSL will be made available;
- undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out this role updated a minimum of biannually; this will include inter-agency training for example, DSL briefings and attendance at Police Panel meetings;
- act as a source of support and expertise on matters relating to safeguarding and child protection to ensure that other members of staff can carry out their safeguarding duty;
- be best placed to advise on the response to safeguarding concerns;
- identify if children may benefit from early help;
- act as a point of contact with the safeguarding partners;
- make referrals to Southampton's Children's Resource Service (CRS) where children have been harmed or are at risk of significant harm;
- support the school with regards to their responsibilities under the Prevent duty and provide advice and support on protecting children from radicalisation;
- refer cases to the police where a crime may have been committed;
- update their knowledge and skills regularly and keep up with any developments relevant to their role;
- provide staff in school with the knowledge, skills and support required to safeguard children;
- take responsibility for the accurate and timely recording of safeguarding and child protection concerns and take overall responsibility for safeguarding and child protection files;
- take responsibility for the transfer of safeguarding files when a child leaves the school;
- attend or ensure an appropriate representative attends multi-agency safeguarding or child protection meetings;
- promote supportive engagement with parents and/or carers in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children;

- work closely with other relevant education professionals (e.g., SENCO, Virtual School Head) to ensure children with additional vulnerabilities are safeguarded;
- help to promote educational outcomes of children who have experienced or are experiencing safeguarding or child protection issues by sharing relevant information with teachers and the school leadership team where appropriate;
- promote a 'culture of safeguarding', in which every member of the community acts in the best interests of the child;
- ensure staff are aware of the cohort of children or those who have or had a social worker, understanding their academic progress and attainment, and maintaining a culture of high aspirations;
- regularly meet with the safeguarding link governor and/or Chair of Governors to review safeguarding at St Mark's
- liaise with the HOSP and HOSS regarding safeguarding cases and issues;
- liaise with the senior mental health lead when safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health;
- be aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult – PACE code C 2019;

Further details on the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead can be found in Annex C of Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2025).

### **The Role & Responsibilities of all Staff within School**

School staff play a particularly important role because they are in a position to identify concerns early in order to provide help for children.

#### **All staff:**

- have a responsibility to provide a safe environment where children can learn;
- should know what to do if a child tells them that he/she is being abused, exploited or neglected;
- will be able to identify indicators of abuse, exploitation or neglect; with an awareness of safeguarding issues that put children at risk of harm and behaviours associated with these risks;
- should know what to do if a child tells them that he/she is being abused, exploited or neglected but that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited or neglected and/or recognise their experience as harmful;
- will be aware of indicators of Child on Child abuse and procedures to deal with this;
- all staff, but especially the DSL and deputies, will also consider whether children are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families;
- will be made aware of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; the School's Behaviour Policy; the Staff Code of Conduct; information about the safeguarding response to children missing in education; the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead and systems that support safeguarding and child protection;
- will be provided with a copy of Part 1 and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2024) annually and receive annually updated training on their safeguarding roles and responsibilities; those that work directly with children e.g., classroom teachers, should also read Annex B.
- should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that put children at risk of harm and behaviours associated with those risks;
- should know what to do if a child makes a disclosure of abuse and never promise confidentiality when a child makes a disclosure;
- will be made aware of the early help assessment process and understand their role in it;

- should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help and will discuss early help requirements with the safeguarding lead in the first instance;
- may be required to support social workers and other agencies following a referral;
- will be made aware of the process for making referrals to Children's Resource Services (CRS) understand statutory assessments and the role that they may be expected to play in such assessments;
- should be prepared to make referrals to the CRS if they have concerns about a child's welfare and understand the role that they may be expected to play in such assessments;
- will receive safeguarding updates throughout the year as part of continuous professional development;
- should be able to contribute to the development of safeguarding policy and practice.
- should always seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead if they are unsure; and,
- all teachers should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties (Teaching Standards, 2012)

### **Multi-Agency Working**

St Mark's is committed to multi-agency working and operates under Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) and local safeguarding arrangements.

Staff will work with Children's Services the police, health services, local Early Help practitioners and other relevant agencies to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

## **Types of Abuse (Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024)**

As outlined above, all staff will be trained in indicators of abuse, exploitation and neglect and should be able to recognise signs of these. We recognise that abuse, exploitation and neglect along with other safeguarding issues are complex and often multi-dimensional and therefore do not fall solely under one category.

Types of abuse or harm can take many forms including directly inflicting harm on a child or failing to protect a child from harm online as well as face to face both inside and outside of the School as well as online, including the multi-faceted occurrence of factors causing emotional harm. The four main types of abuse that staff are trained to recognise are:

- Physical abuse;
- Sexual abuse;
- Emotional abuse;
- Neglect

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

Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

**Physical abuse-** A form of abuse which 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 or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**Emotional abuse-** the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent 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 participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), 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, though it may occur alone.

**Sexual abuse** -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 oral sex) 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

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) -CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

**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 or carer 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. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

If a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral will be made to Children's Resource Service or 999 depending on the circumstance at hand. Any member of staff can make this referral. A Designated or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead should be available at all times, but in exceptional circumstances the member of staff should speak to a member of the Senior Leadership Team or seek advice directly from Children's Services and then take appropriate action. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should be made aware as soon as possible.

Staff, parents and the wider community should report any concerns that they have about the welfare of children, however minor or seemingly insignificant. Staff should not assume that someone else will report concerns.

We recognise that any child can be the victim of abuse and may benefit from early help. However, schools will be particularly vigilant to potential need for early help if a child:

- 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 showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines;
- is frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home;
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual or criminal exploitation;
- is misusing drugs or alcohol themselves;
- has a family member in prison, or is affected by parental offending
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems or domestic abuse;
- has returned home to their family from care;
- is showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect;
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited;
- is at risk of 'honour-based' abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage;
- is persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day;

- is a privately fostered child.

There are other familial issues that can have a detrimental impact on children. We work with other agencies in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) to support children and families in the following circumstances:

- children facing the court procedures and/or children in the court system;
- children with family members in prison
- children who are homeless;
- children who need a social worker.

### **Children Potentially at Greater Risk of Harm**

Some children need a social worker due to abuse, neglect or complex family circumstances and that abuse and trauma can leave children vulnerable to further harm, as well as educational disadvantage. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will hold information relating to social workers working with children in the school. This information will inform decisions about safeguarding and promoting welfare including the provision of pastoral and/or academic support)

### **Contextual Safeguarding**

Contextual Safeguarding is a framework for understanding and addressing young people's experiences of harm beyond their families or home. The different relationships that young people form in their communities, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. It recognises that parents and carers often have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships. Contextual Safeguarding approaches focus on making the context or environment safer by working with those who shape them whilst recognising the role of social inequalities. It promotes an ecological, collaborative, rights-based and strengths-focused approach to safeguarding. More information can be found [here](#).

**Early Help** (Locally known as Family Help <https://www.southampton.gov.uk/children-families/childrens-social-care/early-help-for-families/>)

We are committed to supporting families as soon as a possible problem arises. It is more effective to support a family through early help than reacting to a problem later. Any child may benefit from early help, but as guided by KCSIE (2024) all staff will be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for 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 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 experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from school
- 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.

## **Responding to Signs of Abuse**

If a member of staff, parent or member of the public is concerned about a child's welfare, they should report it to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible.

On occasions when the Designated Safeguarding Lead is not available, it should be reported to the Deputy Safeguarding Lead without delay. Although any member of staff can make a referral to Children's Services where possible there should be a conversation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If anyone other than the Designated Safeguarding Lead makes a referral to Children's Resource Services or to the police, they should inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible.

All staff will be alert to indicators of abuse and will report any of the following to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately:

- any concern or suspicion that a child has sustained an injury outside what is reasonably attributable to normal play;
- any concerning behaviours exhibited by children that may indicate that they have been harmed or are at risk of harm, including unusual changes in mood or behaviour, concerning use of language and/or concerning drawings or stories;
- any significant changes in attendance or punctuality;
- any significant changes in a child's presentation;
- any concerns relating to people who may pose a risk of harm to a child; and/or
- any disclosures/allegations of abuse that children have shared.

There will be occasions where a child discloses/alleges abuse directly to a member of staff. If this happens, the member of staff will:

- listen carefully to the child and believe what they are saying;
- not promise confidentiality as information may need to be passed on so the child and family can receive additional support;
- only ask for clarification if something is unclear and will not ask 'leading' questions;
- report disclosure to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will decide about the action that needs to be taken following a member of staff raising a concern about a child or following a direct disclosure recording a clear rationale.

The DSL may consider the following options:

- manage support for the child within school
- seek advice from CRS Parental consent will be obtained wherever possible before referring cases to the CRS. However, if there is concern that telling parents will mean the child is at greater risk of harm, we may do this without informing them;
- if parents do not consent to a referral but the school believes that a child is at significant risk of harm, a referral will still be made to Children's Resource Services.

See the flowchart of actions that will be taken where there are concerns about a child (taken from Keeping Children Safe in Education, (September 2025).

## Reporting a concern

All concerns, discussions and decisions made will be recorded in writing and kept confidential and stored securely. A secure, online record of all safeguarding and/or child protection concerns, will be recorded on the CPOMS System. This will be separate from the main school file and will only be accessed on a need to know basis. Staff should report all concerns verbally to a DSL at the earliest opportunity followed by in writing on CPOMS. **The voice of the child, and their wishes are included in the decision making where relevant.**

In the event that a child moves school, the safeguarding file and assessment information, will be transferred to the new setting securely and separately from the main school file in a timely manner (within 5 days for in-year transfers). Once received by the new school, this school will not retain the information.

The school will seek to hold **at least three** emergency contacts for every child. All data processed by St Mark's is done so in line with the General Data Protection Guidelines and the Data Protection Act (2018). Further information regarding information sharing and data processing in relation to safeguarding can be found in Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2024).

## Children Missing Education

The school is aware of those children who are persistently absent or missing from school as this may be an indicator of welfare concerns.

Our attendance policy clearly states who needs to be notified and what action should be taken and any relevant timescales.

The school refers to Southampton's Children Missing from Education Policy and HIP's advice on 'missing children' protocol which provides further details.

Where a parent notifies the school that they are removing the child so they can be educated at home, the following notifications are made:

- The Education Welfare Service is notified of all decisions
- A referral to Southampton's Missing Child Officer will be made and communication shared and updated as appropriate with any new information
- If the child is already known to HIPS, their allocated social worker is notified immediately
- If the child is not known to HIPS, but the school has concerns about their welfare or academic needs, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will meet, where possible, with the receiving school with paper copies of our incidents, referrals, academic tracking and interventions to share with that school.

If the child is not known to social services and there are no concerns for welfare or academic needs the school will telephone the receiving school to share all information appropriate with them including past attainment and progress.

Children who are absent from education for prolonged periods and/or repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and criminal exploitation – particularly county lines.

We will report information to the Local Authority when problems are first emerging and if there is a need for the removal of a child from roll.

Where reasonably possible, more than one emergency contact number for each pupil or student should be held on file. This gives the school additional options to contact a responsible adult when a child missing from education is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

### **Elective Home Education**

Many home-educated children have a positive learning experience, and the decision is one with the child's best interests at heart; however, elective home education can mean that some children are not in receipt of suitable education. Since 2016, St Mark's School has a statutory duty to inform the Local Authority of all deletions from roll. When Elective Home Education is the reason for this removal, the Local authority and other key professionals will work alongside staff to coordinate a meeting with parents where possible, ideally before a final decision is made. All EHE requests must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead before processing the request further.

### **Children requiring Mental Health Support**

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children includes preventing the impairment of children's mental health or development. All staff will be aware that mental health problems may be an indicator that a child is suffering or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Staff will not attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem unless they are appropriately trained.

Staff are well-placed to observe behaviour that may indicate that a child is experiencing a mental health problem or is at risk of developing one. There are clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible mental health problems. If staff are concerned that a child is suffering a mental health problem, they should arrange to speak with the Designated Safeguarding Lead

If staff are concerned that a child is experiencing a mental health problem that is also a safeguarding concern, they must report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads) immediately. The Designated Safeguarding Lead holds Designated Mental Health Lead status and has attended Mental Health Training funded by the DfE in 2023.

The school also has two Emotional Literacy Support Assistants and access to Mental Health in Schools Team (MHST) where appropriate.

### **Children who are Lesbian, Gay, Bi or Trans (LGBT+)**

The fact that a child or a young person may be LGBT+ is not in itself an inherent risk factor for harm. However, children who are LGBT+ can be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived by other children to be LGBT+ (whether they are or not) can be just as vulnerable as children who identify as LGBT+. In line with updated Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) guidance, it is important to consider the Cass review, which identified that caution is necessary for children questioning their gender as there remain many unknowns about the impact of social transition and children may well have wider vulnerabilities, including having complex mental health and psychosocial needs, and in some cases additional diagnoses of autism and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. It is recommended that when families/carers are making decisions about support for gender questioning children, they should be encouraged to seek clinical help and advice. When parents are supporting pre-pubertal children, clinical services should ensure that they can be seen as early as possible by a clinical professional with relevant experience. As such, when

supporting a gender-questioning child, schools should take a cautious approach and consider the broad range of their individual needs, in partnership with the child's parents (other than in the exceptionally rare circumstances where involving parents would constitute a significant risk of harm to the child), including any clinical advice that is available and how to address wider vulnerabilities such as the risk of bullying. Risks can be compounded where children who are LGBT+ lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. It is therefore vital that staff endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced and provide a safe space for them to speak out or share their concerns with members of staff. LGBT+ inclusion is part of the statutory Relationships Education, Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education curriculum and there is a range of support available to help schools counter homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying and abuse.

### **Private Fostering**

The school has a duty to refer any children who are living in a private fostering arrangement to the local authority. Private fostering is when a child under the age of 16 (or under 18 if disabled) is cared for by someone who is not their parent or a close relative. This is a private arrangement made between a parent and a carer, expected to last 28 days or more, or the school are aware the 28 days has been exceeded.

### **Child on Child Abuse (including sexual harassment and violence)**

Both adults and other children can perpetrate abuse (those within school and those beyond our school, e.g. children who attend other schools, therefore knowing any such information is key in order to be able to conduct enquiries or information share), and that abuse can happen inside and outside of school, online or face to face. Child on Child abuse is taken very seriously and can include bullying (including cyber-bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying), abuse in intimate, personal relationships between children, physical abuse, sharing of consensual or non-consensual images or videos, causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, sexual violence and/or harassment, upskirting, and initiation/hazing ceremonies. The school recognises that safeguarding issues can manifest as Child on Child abuse.

All members of staff will be made aware of the school's policy and procedures with regards to Child on Child abuse. The school will ensure staff understand what is meant by Child on Child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to: bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying); abuse in intimate, personal relationships between peers; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair-pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse); sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence); sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse; 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 sharing of nudes and semi-nudes images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth-produced sexual imagery); upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or causing the victim humiliation, distress or alarm; and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

The issue of Child on Child abuse is taken very seriously and in a proactive manner. Appropriate education and guidance are provided through our Personal Development and PHSE lessons, whole school/year assemblies, Pupil Surveys and Student Council meetings. We recognise that children with special educational needs, disabilities and those from the LGBT+ community can be more prone to Child on Child abuse and group isolation than other children and will consider extra pastoral support for those children. Where an issue of pupil behaviour or bullying gives 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, staff should follow the procedures below rather than the school's Anti-Bullying and Behaviour policies:

- a pupil against whom an allegation of abuse has been made may be suspended from the school during the investigation;
- the school will take advice from the relevant Safeguarding Children Partnership on the investigation of such allegations and will take all appropriate action to ensure the safety and welfare of all pupils involved including the alleged victim and perpetrator;
- if it is necessary for a pupil to be interviewed by the Police in relation to allegations of abuse, the school will ensure that, subject to the advice of the relevant Safeguarding Children Partnership, parents are informed as soon as possible and that the pupils involved are supported during the interview by an appropriate adult and until the investigation is completed;
- confidentiality will be an important consideration for the school and advice will be sought as necessary from the relevant Safeguarding Children Partnership and/or the Police as appropriate;
- consideration must be given to informing the Police of any harmful sexual behaviours which are potentially criminal in nature, such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia. Allegations of rape assault by penetration, sexual assaults and upskirting will be passed to the police. If the Deputy Safeguarding Lead decides to make a referral to children's social care and/or a report to the police against a victim's wishes, the reasons should be explained to the pupil and appropriate specialist support offered.

St Mark's approach to non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth-produced sexual imagery) is:

- to consider each situation on a case-by-case basis whether to take disciplinary action and/or whether it is appropriate to refer the matter to the police or CRS;
- the Designated Safeguarding Lead will decide whether the incident is high risk, depending on the nature of the image and the family circumstances of the pupil involved;
- communication with parents will be determined in the best interests of the young person involved;
- where a child has been found to distribute indecent images of themselves or others, the Designated Safeguarding Lead has a duty to report such activity to either Children's Resource Services or the Police (Section 1 of the Protection of Children Act 1978 and Section 160 of the Criminal Justice Act.)

In the event of disclosures about Child on Child abuse:

- all children involved (both victim and perpetrator) will be treated as being at risk and safeguarding procedures in accordance with this policy will be followed;
- victims will be supported by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and support from external agencies will be sought, as appropriate;
- when there has been a report of sexual violence, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will make an immediate risk and needs assessment;

- where there has been a report of sexual harassment, the need for a risk assessment should be considered on a case-by-case basis. The risk and needs assessment should consider:
- the victim;
- the alleged perpetrator;
- the other children (and, if appropriate, staff) at the school.

Risk assessments will be recorded and kept under review. In relation to a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will reassure any victim that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. The victim will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment; nor would a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider the risks posed to pupils and put adequate measures in place to protect them and keep them safe. This may include consideration of the proximity of the victim and alleged perpetrator and considerations regarding shared classes, sharing school premises and school transport.

We will work to prevent Child on Child abuse by adopting an 'it can happen here' approach, including a zero-tolerance culture to Child on Child abuse behaviours; Personal Development/PHSE programmes, signposting to in school, local and national agencies; whole school and year assembly themes and cross-curricular links on healthy relationships. Staff vigilance both in and outside the classroom environment, and especially during indirect supervision when on duty before, during or after-school. Toilets and changing room areas are likely to be areas of school where Child on Child abuse behaviours could occur. PE Staff and our Duty Staff members should periodically visit these areas to monitor behaviour. In the event that an allegation of Child on Child abuse is made, we will investigate this as per the School's Behaviour Policy.

Although it is recognised that if there are no reported cases, such abuse may still be taking place and in the event that an allegation of Child on Child abuse is made, victims and alleged perpetrators will be supported by the safeguarding team, pastoral staff, trusted adults and if needed, external agencies.

St Mark's has a clear procedure for investigating Child on Child abuse. Once the investigation is complete a referral to the CRS will be considered.

We will never pass off Child on Child abuse as 'banter', 'having a laugh', 'part of growing up' or other such terminology that does not recognise the harm caused. This should be a zero-tolerance approach as this could lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours. It is recognised with this, that all Child on Child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

We will adhere to guidance set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024) and Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment in Schools (September 2021) when responding to incidents of Child on Child abuse. All staff will be made aware that upskirting is a criminal offence.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)**

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse that occur when an individual or group take advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator through violence or threat of

violence. CCE and CSE can affect both males and females and can include children that have been moved for the purpose of exploitation (trafficking).

CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting or pickpocketing, vehicle crime, threatening violence on others or even carrying weapons.

The school is responsible for recognising children involved in CCE are victims of exploitation and should be recognised as such due to the harm they have experienced even if they appear to have consented to the criminal activity.

CSE is a form of child sexual abuse including physical contact and non-contact online activities including the internet or by phone. This can happen over time or as a one off and may happen without the child recognising this as abuse or harmful. The school recognises that children of the age of 16 and 17 who can legally consent to a sexual relationship may also be the victims of CSE but may not recognise this.

The new full CERAF (Child Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework) is now available for professionals to use [At St Mark's this should be used in agreement with the DSL or delegated to a suitable member of staff by the DSL]. A CERAF should be completed as soon as potential concerns regarding any form of child exploitation are identified; this update and replaces the previously used CERAF risk assessment tool. (See <https://www.southampton.gov.uk/children-families/childrens-social-care/southampton-safeguarding-children-partnership/professionals/themes-guidance-and-toolkits/child-exploitation/>)

CPI online forms which are the key way for professionals to share intelligence confidentially with the Police. CPI online forms are available [here](#).

### **Sharing of Consensual or Non-Consensual Nude and Semi-Nude Images or Videos**

“Sharing of consensual or non-consensual nude and semi-nude images or videos” refers to any sharing of youth-produced sexual imagery between children.

This includes:

- a person under the age of 18 creating and sharing sexual imagery of themselves with a peer under the age of 18;
- a person under the age of 18 sharing sexual imagery created by another person under the age of 18 with a peer under the age of 18 or an adult;
- a person under the age of 18 being in possession of sexual imagery created by another person under the age of 18.

The school has a responsibility to educate children in the risks relating to ‘sharing consensual or non-consensual nude images or videos and how to keep themselves safe online. See E Safety Policy.

The school has a responsibility to educate children in the risks relating to ‘sharing consensual or non-consensual nude images or videos’ and how to keep themselves safe online. Any incidents or suspected incidents of ‘sharing consensual or non-consensual nude images or videos’ should be reported to the DSL without delay. In line with DfE

Advice

([https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/674416/Searching\\_screening\\_and\\_confiscation.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/674416/Searching_screening_and_confiscation.pdf) p.13) any material found on a device that is suspected to be evidence relevant to an offence, or that is a pornographic image of a child or an extreme pornographic image, should not be deleted prior to giving the

device to the Police. Colleagues should follow advice from UKCIS, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudesand-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people>

In summary:

- Never view, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery yourself, or ask a child to share or download – this is illegal.
- If you have already viewed the imagery by accident (e.g. if a young person has showed it to you before you could ask them not to), report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or equivalent) and seek support.
- Do not delete the imagery or ask the young person to delete it.
- Do not ask the child/children or young person(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery. This is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Do not share information about the incident with other members of staff, the young person(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers.
- Do not say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved.
- Do explain to them that you need to report it and reassure them that they will receive support and help from the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Once reported, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will decide on the appropriate course of action.

This could include:

- referrals to the CRS in regards to all parties involved (also, the Police if an urgent response is required);
- confiscation of mobile phones in line with guidance 'Searching, Screening and Confiscation, (January 2018);
- support for young people involved to prevent reoccurrence;
- sanctions in accordance with the School's Behaviour Policy.

Any incidents of 'sharing consensual or non-consensual nude images or videos' involving the following will result in a CRS and sometimes, police referral:

- adult involvement;
- coercion or blackmail;
- children under the age of 13;
- extreme, or violent content;
- immediate risk of harm.

Staff will not view images or videos on pupil devices. Confiscated devices will be stored securely and passed to the relevant agencies. We will work with parents as necessary if their child is involved in the sharing of consensual or non-consensual nude images or videos. We operate a culture of safeguarding and young people should feel confident to disclose if they have sent an inappropriate image of themselves. Children will always be supported to retrieve and delete the images.

### **Domestic Abuse**

Domestic Abuse can be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. It can also include psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional acts of abuse. The school recognises that children can be a victim of domestic abuse by seeing, hearing or experiencing the effects or suffering domestic abuse in their own personal relationships. These all have a detrimental impact on children's health, well-being, development and ability to learn. St Mark's CE School works in partnership with the Police around Domestic Abuse and receives an alert via a scheme known as 'Operation Encompass'. This involves school receiving

notification of domestic incidents so staff can remain vigilant around the child/children's behaviour.

### **Searching, Screening and Confiscation**

Where necessary, searching, screening and confiscation will be used to safeguard a child/child in our school. Staff adhere to 'Searching, Screening and Confiscation: Advice for Schools (January 2018).

### **Online Safety**

The school recognises that in today's world, children need to be safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material with many children having unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via their mobile phone. The breadth of issues can be categorised currently into four areas of risk as taken from Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025:

1. Content – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories.
2. Contact – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.
3. Conduct – online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying, and
4. Commerce – risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If you feel your pupils, students or staff are at risk, please report it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group (<https://apwg.org/>).

***[gaming should also be considered when the above are explored for safeguarding concerns]***

The school understands that the above can take place on a student's phone or smart device (including smart watches) while at school or elsewhere. The school has responded to this by having a whole school approach to online safety which aims to protect and educate students, parents and staff in their use of technology. St Mark's students are not permitted to use their mobile phones during school day; this includes smartwatches and other smart devices.

All desktop computers across the school premises are monitored using software that captures keystrokes associated with inappropriate content. Appropriate conversations and enquiries are then conducted between the child and a pastoral lead. The school has also established mechanisms to identify, intervene in and escalate any concerns highlighted through our filter and monitoring systems for both staff and students. The effectiveness of this is regularly reviewed with staff aware of how to escalate concerns.

### **Safer Recruitment**

St Mark's is committed to providing children with a safe environment, in which they can learn. We take safer recruitment seriously and all staff are subject to the following checks:

- Proof of Identity check;
- DBS clearance;
- Prohibition from Teaching checks (where required);

- Barred List check;
- Section 128 checks (as required - leadership and management);
- Reference check (two references required);
- Professional qualifications check;
- Right to Work in the UK check;
- Further checks for those who have lived outside the UK;
- Disqualification Under the Childcare Act 2006 checks (as required);
- Verification on the candidate's mental and physical fitness may also be checked.

A record of all checks completed on members of staff will be recorded on the Single Central Record. All new members of staff will be required to obtain DBS clearance. St Mark's reserves the right to recheck DBS clearance for any member of staff where information is received that indicates that they may pose a risk to children and may ask candidates to be registered on the DBS update service. At least one member of every interview panel will have undergone Safer Recruitment training which will be refreshed every 2 years. We take proportionate decisions on whether to check individuals above and beyond what is legally required dependant on individual circumstance.

### **Visitors**

Any visitor to the school who has not been subject to the necessary checks will be asked to sign in electronically, issued with a lanyard showing their details and supervised at all times. Visitors are to be clear that if they have a safeguarding concern that they are to ask to speak to a DSL while onsite.

### **Allegations of Abuse against Staff**

St Mark's School takes all safeguarding matters including low level concerns and/or allegations of abuse against staff (including agency, volunteers and contractors) seriously and will manage them in line with this policy, Part Four of Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2025) and the Guidance, 'Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers'. In accordance with the Whistleblowing Policy, staff are encouraged to express any concerns to the Executive Headteacher (EHT) Or Mr Godber (HOSS) or Mrs Hoad in the EHT's absence. The EHT will then determine if it meets the harm threshold and take appropriate action in accordance with KCSIE 2025. Allegations or concerns that meet the harm threshold include:

- staff having behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- staff possibly committing a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- staff behaving towards a child or children in a way that indicates that he or she may pose a risk of harm to children;
- staff behaving or possibly behaving in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children (including behaviour outside of work). This is known as 'Transferable Risk'.

If a concern or allegation of abuse arises against the EHT or should there be a conflict of interest to the EHT, it will be immediately reported to the Chair of Governors.

'Low-level' concern does not mean it is not significant. This is a term used for any concern (no matter how small) that an adult working with a child may have breached the Staff Code of Conduct and does not meet the harm threshold. Examples of which may include:

- being overly friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door;

- humiliating pupils.

The details of the LADO can be found on page 2 of this policy under contact details. Concerns should be reported to the LADO within 24 hours. In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024, the school will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered. If a child has suffered or may have suffered abuse or harm, a CRS referral will also be made.

In the instances where an allegation is dealt with internally, the Local Authority Designated Officer will provide information and support in managing the allegation. A referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service will be made if a member of staff is dismissed or removed from their post as a result of safeguarding concerns, irrespective of whether they have resigned. St Mark's will make every reasonable effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity whilst an allegation is being investigated or considered. Allegations found to be malicious will be removed from the individual's personnel records. In all other circumstances a written record will be made of the decision and retained on the individual's personnel file in accordance with KCSIE 2024 and a copy will only be provided to the individual concerned. Allegations proven to be false, unsubstantiated, unfounded or malicious will not be included in employer references. If an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the EHT will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against a pupil who made it; or whether the Police should be asked to consider if action might be appropriate against the person responsible even if they are not a student. A referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service and the Teaching Regulation Agency will be made if a member of staff is dismissed or removed from their post as a result of safeguarding concerns or would have been removed if they had not resigned.

Supply Teachers and All Contracted Staff - Although the school does not directly employ supply teachers and contractors, the school will ensure that any concerns or allegations are referred to LADO and the relevant agency informed as the employer. The school will inform supply agencies of its process for managing allegations, including inviting the agency's Human Resource Manager (or equivalent) to meetings and regularly updating agencies on relevant school policies. The school will usually take the lead because agencies do not have direct contact with children or staff, so will not be able to gather information.

If an allegation of abuse or concern arises about a Governor (other than the Chair of Governors), it must be reported to the EHT and Chair of Governors without delay and should not be discussed directly with the Governor involved.

If an allegation of abuse or concern arises about the Chair of Governors, it should be reported to the EHT without delay and should not be discussed with the Chair of Governors.

Volunteers - Risk assessments will be completed (and, if necessary, an Enhanced DBS check requested) for all volunteers. Under no circumstances will a volunteer prior to satisfactory checks being completed be alone with children unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

### **Whistleblowing**

St Mark's operates a culture of safeguarding, and all staff should report any concerns about poor or unsafe practice, or our safeguarding processes to the Executive Headteacher. Appropriate whistleblowing procedures are in place whereby the Executive Headteacher will take all concerns seriously. In the event that a member of staff is unable to raise an issue with senior leadership in school, they should refer to Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 for additional guidance on whistleblowing procedures.

## **Complaints Procedure**

The School operates a complaints procedure which will be followed where a student or parent/carer raises a concern about poor practice towards a student that initially does not reach the threshold for safeguarding action. Poor practice examples include unfairly singling out a student or attempting to humiliate them, bullying or belittling a student or discriminating against them in some way. Complaints are managed by the EHT, HOSS / HOSP, other members of the Senior Leadership Team, and Governors. Complaints from staff are dealt with under the school's complaints and disciplinary and grievance procedures. Complaints which escalate into a safeguarding concern will automatically be managed under the school's safeguarding procedures.

## **Promoting Safeguarding and Welfare in the Curriculum**

St Mark's recognises the importance of teaching children how to stay safe and look after their mental health and is committed to equipping children with the skills and knowledge to have successful and happy lives. The school will teach children about safeguarding, including online safety. As part of a broad and balanced curriculum, the school will cover relevant issues in line with government guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education. See RSE Policy for further information. [revised guidance on Relationships, Sex, and Health Education was published July 2025 for introduction September 2026]

Schools play a crucial role in preventative education. Preventative education is most effective in the context of a whole-school approach that prepares students for life in modern Britain and creates a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobic and sexual violence/harassment. The school will have a clear set of values and standards, upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life. These will be underpinned by the school's behaviour policy and pastoral support system, as well as by a planned programme of evidence based PSHE/ RSHE delivered in regularly timetabled lessons and reinforced throughout the whole curriculum.

## **Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities or Physical Health Needs**

As outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024), St Mark's is aware that children with additional needs or disabilities may be more vulnerable to abuse both online and offline and additional barriers may exist when recognising abuse and neglect.

This could be because:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children;
- the potential for children with SEN and disabilities or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs;
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers; and,
- being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content.

Any reports of abuse involving children with SEND will therefore require close liaison with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and SENCO. Staff will also be trained in recognising signs of abuse in children with SEN and disabilities or certain medical conditions. Staff will consider the needs of a child when responding to concerns of abuse or when taking a disclosure. We recognise that some children require specialist intervention to communicate and advice from the SENCO will be sought in these circumstances.

Safeguarding learning opportunities within the curriculum will be appropriately differentiated to ensure all children can access it.

### **Pupils with medical conditions in school**

There is a separate policy outlining the school's position on this:  
Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs Policy

As a school we will ensure that sufficient staff are trained to support any pupil with a medical condition. All relevant staff will be made aware of the condition to support the child and be aware of medical needs and risks to the child. An individual healthcare plan may be put in place to support the child and their medical needs. In addition, PEEPS have been completed for any child with a disability meaning that there may need to be alternative evacuation procedures made.

### **Pupils with medical conditions out of school.**

There will be occasions when children are temporarily unable to attend our school on a full-time basis because of their medical needs. These children and young people are likely to be:

- children and young people suffering from long-term illnesses
- children and young people with long-term postoperative or post-injury recovery periods
- children and young people with long-term mental health problems (emotionally vulnerable)

Where it is clear that an absence will be for more than fifteen continuous school days the Education and Inclusion Service will be contacted to support with the pupil's education

### **Work Experience**

St Mark's will continue to be responsible for the safeguarding of students placed with an alternative provision provider or work experience and will be satisfied that this provider meets the needs of the student. Written confirmation from the provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out will be sought on individuals working at the establishment, i.e., those checks that the school would otherwise perform in respect of its own staff. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will continue to have oversight of all pupils accessing any part of their learning from an alternative provider or delivery online or offsite provided by any organisation or individual not employed by the school. The DSL will ensure that robust arrangements are in place for timely and effective information sharing of safeguarding information between the school and alternative/external providers. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will also take responsibility for ensuring that robust procedures are in place to confirm attendance and to enable the swift reporting of non-attendance and children going missing from alternative/ external providers at any time when they should be with that provider.

### **Visiting Speakers**

St Mark's has clear protocols for ensuring that any visiting speakers are appropriately supervised and suitable. The school's responsibility to students is to ensure that they can critically assess the information they receive as to its value to themselves, and that the information is aligned to the ethos and values of the School and British values. Each school is required to undertake a risk assessment at least two weeks prior to the visit taking place before agreeing to a visiting speaker being allowed to attend the school in person or virtually. This will consider any vetting requirements considered appropriate in the circumstances and may include a DBS check if relevant. The staff member is to notify main reception including to provide contact details for the proposed visit. The teacher in charge then emails the visiting speaker requesting a copy of any slides or other presentation

material to be used. After viewing the materials, the teacher in charge, completes the risk assessment and submits it to the HOSP / HOSS at least two weeks prior to the visit. The HOSS/HOSP will review the risk assessment to determine if the visit can take place. Visiting speakers will be expected to understand that, where appropriate, their session should actively promote the British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and at no point undermine these. In some cases, the school may request a copy of the Visiting Speaker's presentation and/or footage in advance of the session being provided. Visiting speakers, whilst on a school site, will be supervised by a school employee. On attending the school, visiting speakers will be required to show original current identification documents including a photograph such as a passport or photo card driving licence. If presenting virtually, the speaker should present the same original photographic identification on camera, ensure their background when presenting to pupils is appropriate and aligned to the ethos and values of the school. The school shall also keep a formal register of visiting speakers retained in line with its Data Protection Policy.

### **Use of School Premises for Non-School Activities**

The School may hire or rent out school facilities/premises to organisations or individuals. Safeguarding is still considered with this, and the school will seek assurance that the provider has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in place including liaising directly with the school on these matters where appropriate. This applies whether the children in attendance are on the school's roll or not. The governing body/proprietor will ensure safeguarding requirements are included in any transfer of control agreement and that failure to comply with this would result in termination of the agreement. Keeping children safe in out-of-school settings offers guidance on this. In the event of an incident, the school will follow its own policy including informing the LADO.

### **Children and the Court System**

The school will work alongside CAF/CASS to ensure that the child is supported within school. This often involves arranging meetings with the allocated social worker and offering mentoring support for missed work.

### **Children with Family Members in Prison**

Often, school only receives notification after the event when a member of the family is released. However, if we are made aware that a family member is serving a custodial sentence (in particular a parent) we will support the child/children in school.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation**

We will support children who have been victims of CSE and act on any concerns immediately via CRS referral, Community Protection Information referrals and working closely with the school's allocated PCSO.

### **PREVENT**

Since 2015 The Prevent duty requires all education settings 'to help prevent the risk of people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism'. This includes safeguarding learners from extremist ideologies and radicalisation. St Mark's School will consider the needs of children and young people at each stage of the safeguarding process. The PREVENT Lead is: Mr Amir Fakhoury.

## **Radicalisation and Extremism**

Radicalisation -Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism. Extremism is vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. It can also call for the death of members of the armed forces, whether in this country or overseas. There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. It can happen in many ways and settings. Specific background factors may contribute to vulnerability which are often combined with specific influences such as family, friends or online, and with specific needs for which an extremist or terrorist group may appear to provide an answer. The internet and the use of social media have become major factors in the radicalisation of young people. As with other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may need help or protection. Staff should follow St Mark's normal referral processes when there are concerns about children who may be at risk of being drawn into terrorism, as set out above. This may include a referral to Channel or CRS depending on the level of risk. However, if staff have concerns that there is an immediate/significant risk of a child being drawn into terrorism they must call 999. Serious Violence Staff should follow St Mark's normal referral processes when there are concerns about children who may be at risk of or experiencing serious violent crime. All staff will be made aware of indicators which may signal that children are at risk of or are involved with serious violent crime. All staff will be made aware of the risks associated with serious violence, criminal networks and gangs and understand the measures in place to prevent

## **Bullying, including cyber- or online-bullying**

The school takes all forms of bullying seriously and will respond sensitively and quickly to any reported bullying. Students should report any bullying to their form tutor, Pastoral Lead, Designated Safeguarding Lead or to any trusted member of staff and we will work to resolve it; We also teach children about the dangers of bullying through our curriculum. Bullying can take many forms and we have several policies that cover different aspects of bullying. Please see the Anti-Bullying Policy, the Behaviour Policy for more information.

## **Upskirting**

Upskirting refers to the act of positioning a camera or mobile phone beneath a person's clothing, aiming to capture images of their genitals, buttocks, or undergarments without their consent. Contrary to its name, this act is not limited to individuals wearing skirts or dresses; it applies regardless of attire or gender identity. Upskirting is recognised as a criminal offence since the 2019 Voyeurism Act.

## **Private Fostering**

Is when a child or young person spends 28 days or more at an address other than that of their parent/carer:

- Some examples of private fostering are situations you may not consider out of the ordinary, such as:
- Children living with a friend's family because of parents separating, divorce or arguments at home
- Teenagers living with the family of a friend or partner
- Children sent to this country for education or health care by parents overseas

St Mark's School understands its duty to refer any children who are living in a private fostering arrangement to the local authority.

## **Gangs or Youth Violence Gangs and Youth Violence and Child Criminal Exploitation**

Defining a gang is difficult. They tend to fall into three categories: peer groups, street gangs and organised crime groups. It can be common for groups of children and young people to gather together in public places to socialise, and although some peer group gatherings can lead to increased antisocial behaviour and low-level youth offending, these activities should not be confused with the serious violence of a street gang. A street gang can be described as a relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of children who see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group for whom crime and violence is integral to the group's identity. A street gang will engage in criminal activity and violence and may lay claim over territory (not necessarily geographical for example it could include an illegal economy territory). They have some form of identifying structure featuring a hierarchy usually based on age, physical strength, propensity to violence or older sibling rank. There may be certain rites involving antisocial or criminal behaviour or sex acts to become part of the gang. They are in conflict with other similar gangs. An organised criminal group is a group of individuals normally led by adults for whom involvement in crime is for personal gain (financial or otherwise). This involves serious and organised criminality by a hard core of violent gang members who exploit vulnerable young people and adults. This may also involve the movement and selling of drugs and money across the country, known as 'county lines' because it extends across county boundaries and is coordinated using dedicated mobile phone lines. It is a tactic used by groups or gangs to facilitate the use of vulnerable people or children to sell drugs in an area outside of the area in which they live, which reduces their risk of detection.

Child criminal exploitation, like other forms of abuse and exploitation, is a safeguarding concern and constitutes abuse even if the young person appears to have readily become involved. Child criminal exploitation is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation and usually involves some form of exchange (e.g., carrying drugs in return for something). The exchange can include both tangible (such as money, drugs or clothes) and intangible rewards (such as status, protection or perceived friendship or affection). Young people who are criminally exploited are at a high risk of experiencing violence and intimidation and threats to family members may also be made. Gangs may also target vulnerable adults and take over their premises to distribute Class A drugs in a practice referred to as 'cuckooing'. Young people can become indebted to the gang/groups and then exploited in order to pay off debts. Young people who are criminally exploited often go missing and travel to other towns (some of which can be great distances from their home addresses). They may have unexplained increases in money or possessions, be in receipt of an additional mobile phone and receive excessive texts or phone calls. Children are often targeted because gangs perceive they are more likely to evade police detection and some children may be as young as 12, although 15 to 16 years old is the most common age range. The young people involved may not recognise themselves as victims of any abuse and can be used to recruit other young people. Staff who have concerns that a child may be at risk of harm as a consequence of gang activity including child criminal exploitation should discuss their concerns with the DSL or make a direct referral to CRS or the Police.

All staff will have an awareness of child criminal exploitation and behaviours linked to criminal exploitation.

Serious Violent Crime All staff should be aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at a risk from or are involved with serious violent crime.

These may include:

- increased absence from school
- a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups
- a significant decline in performance
- signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing or signs of assault or unexplained injuries.
- Unexplained gifts or possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by or are involved with individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

### **Trafficked children**

Some children may have been illegally brought into the UK for the purpose of commercial gain, for example as domestic servants or forced labour. They will be heavily controlled by their exploiters and likely to be moved frequently in order to avoid detection by the authorities. To avoid suspicion, traffickers may enrol a child on entry to the UK posing as a family member but remove the child from school shortly after. The school will take action for any child who suddenly “disappears” off the school roll with no prior explanation, or applications for a place at the school for several unrelated children from the same address is made. Any concerns about a child will be referred to HIPS.

Unaccompanied migrant children and child victims of modern slavery, including trafficking, can be some of the most vulnerable children in the country.

Unaccompanied children are alone, in an unfamiliar country and may be surrounded by people unable to speak their first language. Advice should be taken from CRS and where appropriate the Police if trafficking or modern slavery is suspected or known. The NRM (National Referral Mechanism) is a framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support.

Modern Slavery is a term that covers

Slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour, human trafficking

From 31 July 2015, potential victims of slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour in England and Wales recognised with a positive reasonable grounds decision, may also have access to support previously offered to potential victims of human trafficking. The child's details should be provided using the forms available on the National Referral Mechanism website.

### **Children Looked After**

<https://hipsprocedures.org.uk/qkyyht/children-in-specific-circumstances/looked-after-children-and-other-children-living-away-from-home>

<https://www.gov.uk/topic/schools-colleges-childrens-services/looked-after-children>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children>

- All staff have a responsibility to keep all children safe. Staff need to be aware of the child's care arrangements including the levels of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after him or her. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will have all details of the child's social worker, the name of the Virtual School Head Teacher in the authority that looks after the child.
- The Designated Teacher in our school is a qualified teacher, and has received training to undertake their role with regards for looked after and previously looked after children. The role is clearly set out in their job description and includes the need to promote the educational achievement of these children. They have been appointed into role. The designated teacher will ensure that they liaise with the relevant Virtual School and ensure that a personal education plan (PEP) is in place and regularly reviewed. Appropriate staff will have the information they need in relation to a child's looked after legal status and contact arrangements in place for the child.

**The Designated Teacher for our school is:** Mr Amir Fakhoury

**The name of the Virtual School Head Teacher in Southampton is Maria Anderson.**  
Contact details: [maria.anderson@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:maria.anderson@southampton.gov.uk)

### **Homelessness**

Homelessness advice number: 02380 832327

Being homeless or at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and any deputies) will be aware of contact details and referral routes to the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. Whilst referrals and/or discussion with the Local Housing Authority should be progressed as appropriate, this does not, and will not, replace a referral into SCFSC where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm. 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 following factsheets usefully summarise the new duties. [Homeless Reduction Act Factsheets](#). The new duties shift focus to early intervention and encourage those at risk to seek support as soon as possible, before they are facing a homelessness crisis.

### **Young carers** -[www.family-action.org.uk](http://www.family-action.org.uk)

Young carers are children who frequently take on responsibility for looking after parents or younger siblings, carrying out household tasks such as cleaning and cooking beyond what would normally be expected of a child of their age. This may be due to parental disability or ill health. Being a young carer can severely restrict a child's life and can lead to poor educational outcomes and social isolation. If school has concerns about a pupil they believe to be a young carer, they will contact No Limits Young Carers to provide help and support.

### **Providing Intimate or Personal Care to Pupils**

Staff may need to provide intimate or personal care for pupils, for example helping a child who has soiled themselves or supervising pupils who are changing for P.E./Games. The school has a written policy in place in order to promote safe working practices for staff and ensure children's privacy; Intimate Care Policy.

Children are encouraged to carry out self-care tasks for themselves where appropriate, but where adult intervention is needed, the following should be observed;

- Staff should follow the agreed school policy when providing intimate or personal care.
- When taking pupils to the toilet, staff should make colleagues aware of the task to be undertaken and explain to the child what will happen.
- Parents should always be notified if intimate care has been provided.
- When providing intimate care, staff should carefully and sensitively observe the child's emotional response and report any concerns to the designated teacher.
- When children are changing, levels of supervision should be appropriate to the pupil's age.
- Staff should avoid any physical contact unless a child needs help.
- Staff should ensure that changing areas are private and that others are not able to enter whilst children are changing.
- Refer to the child's Individual Health Care Plan

### **Restraint and restrictive intervention**

In the rare circumstances that it becomes appropriate to use physical intervention, it will be used as an act of care and not punishment, and staff will follow the guidelines outlined below. Staff are required, whilst taking any of the action detailed in this policy, to ensure

that the child understands that this is a last resort and that the security of the child should be continually maintained.

Circumstances when physical intervention might be appropriate -The Department for Education Non-statutory Guidance was issued in July 2013. It states the following:

- Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder.
- In a school, force is used for two main purposes – to control pupils or to restrain them.
- The decision on whether or not to physically intervene is down to the professional judgement of the staff member concerned and should always depend on the individual circumstances. The Department for Education states that schools can use reasonable force to:
  - Remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so
  - Prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others:
  - Prevent a pupil from attacking another member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground; and
  - Restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

It may be necessary to engage in physical interventions to move a child in the above situations, but only when all other possible tactics outlined in our Behaviour for Learning Policy have been tried. In either of these cases, physical interventions will be limited to a request to leave the classroom and then physical presence only (i.e. a blocking stance with the use of arms to direct the child to the door). A member of staff will sometimes need to rely on their professional judgement about whether or not to physically intervene by placing her/himself in a hazardous situation, or stand back and by that allow a child or colleague to face a potential hazard. Staff must balance the level and duration of their intervention against the seriousness and likely consequences of the incident

Procedures for staff before and during any physical intervention staff will:

- remain calm and attempt to engender calm
- tell the child to stop and explain to them what will happen if they do not
- use a range of non-physical alternatives aimed at calming or defusing situations in order to prevent further escalation.

These might include:

- continuing to speak and listen to the child/children
- employing an appropriate level of eye contact during any dialogue
- diverting, distracting, cajoling or humouring the child where appropriate
- reasoning with and offering appropriate choices to the child/children.

Sometimes a teacher should not intervene in an incident without help. For example, when dealing with physically large children, or with groups of children, or if the teacher believes he or she may be at risk of injury, the teacher should remove other children who may be at risk and summon assistance from a colleague or colleagues, or where necessary telephone the police. The teacher should tell the child/children that he or she has sent for help. Until assistance arrives the teacher should continue to attempt to defuse the situation through talking to the children and try to prevent the incident from escalating. Whilst physically intervening, staff will:

- Use the minimum amount of force required to achieve the desired result.
- Tell the child that physical restraint will stop as soon as it is no longer necessary

- Continue to use a range of non-physical alternatives aimed at calming or defusing situations in order to prevent further escalation, as above.
- Remove the rest of the class when a child persistently refuses to leave or offers any kind of resistance to being removed from a classroom.
- Communication with the child concerned can continue in isolation.

### **Ways in which staff may use reasonable force**

Whilst there is no legal definition of reasonable force, DFE Guidance July 2013 advises that 'The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point during their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.' During a potentially dangerous situation' staff may be required to:

- physically step in between children
- block a child's path
- hold a child
- lead a child by the hand or arm
- guide a child away by placing a hand in the centre of the back

In more extreme circumstances use more restrictive holds. Staff are not permitted to act in a way that might cause injury, for example by:

- holding a child round the neck, or by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict the child's ability to breathe
- slapping, punching, pushing, pulling or kicking a child
- twisting or forcing limbs against a joint
- tripping up a child
- holding or pulling a child by the hair or ear
- Holding a child face down on the ground. The use of any degree of force is unlawful if the particular circumstances do not warrant the use of physical force. Physical force cannot be justified in a situation that could clearly be resolved without force, for example to prevent a child from committing a trivial offence.

### **Staff who are permitted to use reasonable force to control or restrain children**

Section 550A of the Education Act 1996 permits adults who have lawful charge or control of children to use reasonable force to control or restrain them. These include: teachers · teaching assistants · midday supervisors

Any incident where it has been necessary to use 'physical restraint' is logged and assessed by the EHT/ HOSP / HOSS. For pupils who have been restrained on more than two occasions it will be necessary to create a 'Physical Restraint Plan' in consultation with Parents/Carers. Staff who regularly support /teach the child involved will receive training in 'Team Teach' techniques.

### **Taking, use and Storing of Images**

Under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998, images of pupils (or staff) must not be displayed in a public place without consent. This includes publications such as the school prospectus, website or areas in the school where visitors have access. On admission of a pupil to the school, Parents / Carers will be asked to sign a Consent Form for Photographs which will explain in particular: How and where photographs will be used and the period of consent. The school will contact Parents / Carers annually with the option to change their preferences. This can, of course, be done at any time by contacting the school office. The school will ensure that:

Parental consent is obtained using the Consent Form for Photographs

- Only images of children in suitable dress will be used. Photos of children engaged in swimming, for example, present a greater risk of potential misuse in these cases the content of the photograph should focus on the activity, not a particular child and should avoid full face and body shots (e.g. photographs of children in a pool, or from the shoulders up, would be appropriate)
- Where we have been informed that a child is subject to a court order then we will endeavour not to use their image
- Images are stored securely and only on equipment or storage media belonging to St Mark's School, especially where electronic, and used only by those authorised to do so.
- Images must not be taken using the staff's personal equipment (e.g. mobile phones/cameras)

The appropriateness of photographic images also applies to video / film images. We recognise that Parents / Carers and family members wish to record events such as school plays, sports days, etc., to celebrate their child's achievements. It is important, however, that such records remain private and for their own personal use. Parents / Carers are informed that they should not share images of a child on social media sites.

On occasion where school allow newspaper reporters into school and providing parental consent has been obtained, newspapers may publish photographs of pupils but must not publish names alongside them, unless otherwise agreed and permission has been sought. They may, however, refer to group photographs collectively (e.g. Class AB or St Mark's Year 6 Football Team) Pupils must not be photographed whilst at school (or engaged in school activities outside school) without the permission of the Executive Headteacher. The school cannot be held responsible if Parents / Carers themselves allow their children to appear in publications relating to school activities or send photographs direct, without the school's knowledge.

**Websites:** The consent form for photographs will explicitly include publication on the school website.

**Camera Phones:** Camera phones must not be used by the school's staff at school. It should also be noted that staff working with younger children who need support to go to the toilet or in some cases when changing a child, should not take a mobile phone or camera with them. Any staff member who is aware of such practice should inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible.

**Commercial and External Photographers:** Commercial and external photographers are invited into school on a routine basis to take official photographs of children. These can often be purchased by Parents / Carers or family members.

Such photographers will:

- Be given a clear brief about what is considered appropriate in terms of content and behaviour
- Wear identification at all times
- Never have unsupervised access to children or one-to-one photo sessions at events
- Never solicit photo sessions outside the event or at a pupil's home

### **Off site visits**

A particular strand of health and safety means assessing risks when undertaking off site visits. Some activities, especially those happening away from the school and residential visits, can involve higher levels of risk. If these are annual or infrequent activities, a risk assessment will be completed by the 'lead' teacher. All relevant information regarding any child attending the off-site visit will be passed to the 'lead' in addition to any medical equipment or information around medical procedures to follow in the event of an emergency.

The 'lead' will be given all of the pupils' contact details and a mobile phone and will be made aware of the 'point of contact' in school. If it is a new activity, a visit involving adventure activities, residential, or an 'Open Country' visit, a specific assessment of significant risks will be carried out in addition to the procedure listed above. All risk assessments for trips should be entered onto EVOLVE and signed off by an EVC before the trip takes place. For high risk trips this will also be signed off by Hampshire County Council.

### **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. Guidance on the warning signs that FGM may be about to take place, may have already taken place, can be found in the Multi-agency statutory guidance on FGM. To give an example of indications that a girl has already been subjected to FGM:

- a student may have difficulty walking, sitting or standing and may even look uncomfortable;
- a student may have frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems or spend longer than normal in the bathroom due to difficulties urinating;
- there may be prolonged or repeated absences from school and/or noticeable behaviour changes (e.g., withdrawal or depression) on the pupil's return;
- a student is reluctant to undergo medical examination.

There is a statutory duty on staff to personally 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. Following reporting to Police, unless the member of staff has a good reason not to, they should still consider and discuss any such case with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and involve CRS as appropriate. Where a teacher suspects that a student is at risk of being subjected to FGM either in the UK or abroad they must consider the need to contact the police urgently to safeguard the child and ensure that they are not taken abroad by family members.

### **Harmful Practices**

Possession or witchcraft - Sometimes faith /belief issues are believed to be linked to accusations of 'possession' or 'witchcraft'. Whilst this is not common, children can suffer damage to their physical and mental health. Any concerns in this context will be followed by the normal referral route through CRS if necessary without consent

### **Children at risk of Breast Flattening/ Ironing**

Much like FGM breast ironing is a harmful cultural practice and is child abuse. Staff will be able to identify the signs and symptoms of girls who are at risk of or have undergone breast ironing and refer to Executive Headteacher immediately (or DSL in the EHT's absence) Similarly, to FGM, breast ironing is physical abuse therefore any child at risk of or who has experienced breast ironing will be referred to SCFSC

### **Children at risk of forced marriage**

Any young person who is being forced into a marriage that they do not consent to is a victim of child abuse and should be protected. They are likely to be in conflict with their family and may have little trust of adults, especially those from their own community. The family may have made plans to take the young person abroad for the marriage and once this has happened, it becomes more difficult for the authorities in the UK to intervene. Where school are concerned or aware that a young person is about to be taken out of the UK for the purposes of a forced marriage, they will notify the Executive Headteacher (or DSL in her absence) must be notified immediately and a referral will be made to SCFSC This will not be

discussed with parents prior to a referral or in any way and\_ seeking the services of a translator will only be done following advice from SCFSC.

School will remain aware of a family's plans to go overseas for a period of time, and also if an older sibling has been known to have been forced to marry. Forced marriage - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage>

### **Honour Based Violence: HBV**

**Honour based violence is a violent crime or incident which may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family or community. Southampton has a very high number of HBV cases each year.**

It is often linked to family members or acquaintances who mistakenly believe someone has brought shame to their family or community by doing something that is not in keeping with the traditional beliefs of their culture. For example, honour based violence might be committed against people who:

- become involved with a boyfriend or girlfriend from a different culture or religion
- want to get out of an arranged marriage
- want to get out of a forced marriage
- wear clothes or take part in activities that might not be considered traditional in their culture

**Women and girls are the most common victims of honour based violence however it can also affect men and boys.** Crimes of 'honour' do not always include violence. Crimes committed in the name of 'honour' might include:

- domestic abuse
- threats of violence
- sexual or psychological abuse
- forced marriage
- being held against your will or taken somewhere you don't want to go
- assault

In cases relating to HBV concerns, immediate discussion with the Designated Lead is essential advice from SCADS will be sought as to how to proceed to safeguard the child or adult involved. This will not be discussed with any other member of staff or parent/carer

**St Mark's School is committed to safeguarding and will endeavour to support any child, young person or adult at risk of or who has undergone any forms of Honour Based Violence, FGM, Breast Ironing and Forced Marriage**

### **Prejudiced Based Abuse**

A prejudiced based incident is any incident which is perceived by the victim, or any other person, to be prejudiced towards and individual due to one or more of their protected characteristics which are: Age, disability, faith, gender, identity/reassignment, marriage and civil partnership status, pregnancy /maternity status, race and sexual orientation.

### **Faith Abuse**

The number of known cases of child abuse linked to accusations of "possession" or "witchcraft" is small, but children involved can suffer damage to their physical and mental health, their capacity to learn, their ability to form relationships and to their self-esteem. Such abuse generally occurs when a carer views a child as being "different", attributes this difference to the child being "possessed" or involved in "witchcraft" and attempts to exorcise him or her. A child could be viewed as "different" for a variety of reasons such as, disobedience; independence; bed-wetting; nightmares; illness; or disability. There is often a weak bond of attachment between the carer and the child. There are various social reasons

that make a child more vulnerable to an accusation of “possession” or “witchcraft”. These include family stress and/or a change in the family structure. The attempt to “exorcise” may involve severe beating, burning, starvation, cutting or stabbing and isolation, and usually occurs in the household where the child lives. If the school become aware of a child who is being abused or at risk of abuse in this context, the DSL will refer to SCFSC

### **Hate crime**

Hate crime is any crime or offence which is perceived by the victim, any other victim or any other person to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person’s real or perceived disability, faith, gender identity, race or sexual orientation.

We recognise the harmful effects of bullying and prejudice in society. These can unfairly limit the life chances of young people and exclude them from full participation in social, economic, political and cultural life. We believe in celebrating diversity and that eradicating all forms of prejudice and promoting equality for all must be an integral part of our school life in line with our core values of: Love, equality, respect and inclusion. St Mark’s children will be taught this via the curriculum Any offence of this nature will be reported to police.

### **Parental Mental Health**

The term "mental ill health" is used to cover a wide range of conditions, from eating disorders, mild depression and anxiety to psychotic illnesses such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder. Parental mental illness does not necessarily have an adverse impact on a child's developmental needs, but it is essential to always assess its implications for each child in the family. It is essential that the diagnosis of a parent/carer's mental health is not seen as defining the level of risk. Similarly, the absence of a diagnosis does not equate to there being little or no risk. For children the impact of parental mental health can include:

- The parent / carer's needs or illnesses taking precedence over the child's needs
- Child's physical and emotional needs neglected
- A child acting as a young carer for a parent or a sibling
- Child having restricted social and recreational activities
- Child finds it difficult to concentrate- impacting on educational achievement
- A child missing school regularly as (s)he is being kept home as a companion for a parent / carer
- Adopt paranoid or suspicious behaviour as they believe their parent’s delusions
- Witnessing self-harming behaviour and suicide attempts (including attempts that involve the child)
- Obsessional compulsive behaviours involving the child If staff become aware of any of the above indicators, or others that suggest a child is suffering due to parental mental health, the information will be shared with the DSL to consider a referral.

### **Parental Substance Misuse Substance**

Misuse applies to the misuse of alcohol as well as 'problem drug use', defined by the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs as drug use which has: 'serious negative consequences of a physical, psychological, social and interpersonal, financial or legal nature for users and those around them. Parental substance misuse of drugs or alcohol becomes relevant to child protection when substance misuse and personal circumstances indicate that their parenting capacity is likely to be seriously impaired or that undue caring responsibilities are likely to be falling on a child in the family.

For children the impact of parental substance misuse can include:

- Inadequate food, heat and clothing for children (family finances used to fund adult’s dependency)
- Lack of engagement or interest from parents in their development, education or wellbeing

- Behavioural difficulties- inappropriate display of sexual and/or aggressive behaviour
- Bullying (including due to poor physical appearance)
- Isolation – finding it hard to socialise, make friends or invite them home
- Tiredness or lack of concentration
- Child talking of or bringing into school drugs or related paraphernalia
- Injuries /accidents (due to inadequate adult supervision)
- Taking on a caring role
- Continued poor academic performance including difficulties completing homework on time
- Poor attendance or late arrival

These behaviours themselves do not indicate that a child's parent is misusing substances, but should be considered as indicators that this may be the case. If staff believe that a child is living with parental substance misuse, this will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead for referral to be considered for children's social care

### **Perplexing Presentation (Formerly known as Fabrication of Illness) in a Child**

The definition of a perplexing presentation in a child is as follows.

There are three main ways of the carer fabricating or inducing illness in a child. These are not mutually exclusive and include:

- fabrication of signs and symptoms This may include fabrication of past medical history;
- Falsification of hospital charts and records
- Falsification of specimens of bodily fluids.
- This may also include falsification of letters and documents; induction of illness by a variety of means.

If we are concerned that a child may be suffering from a perplexing presentation we will follow the established procedures of SCFSC.

## **Completing a Body Map**

Body Maps should be used to document and illustrate visible signs of harm and physical injuries.

Always use a black pen (never a pencil) and do not use correction fluid or any other eraser. Do not remove clothing for the purpose of the examination unless the injury site is freely available because of treatment.

**At no time should an individual teacher/member of staff or school take photographic evidence of any injuries or marks to a child's person, the body map below should be used. Any concerns should be reported and recorded without delay to the appropriate safeguarding services, e.g. Social Care direct or child's social worker if already an open case to social care.**

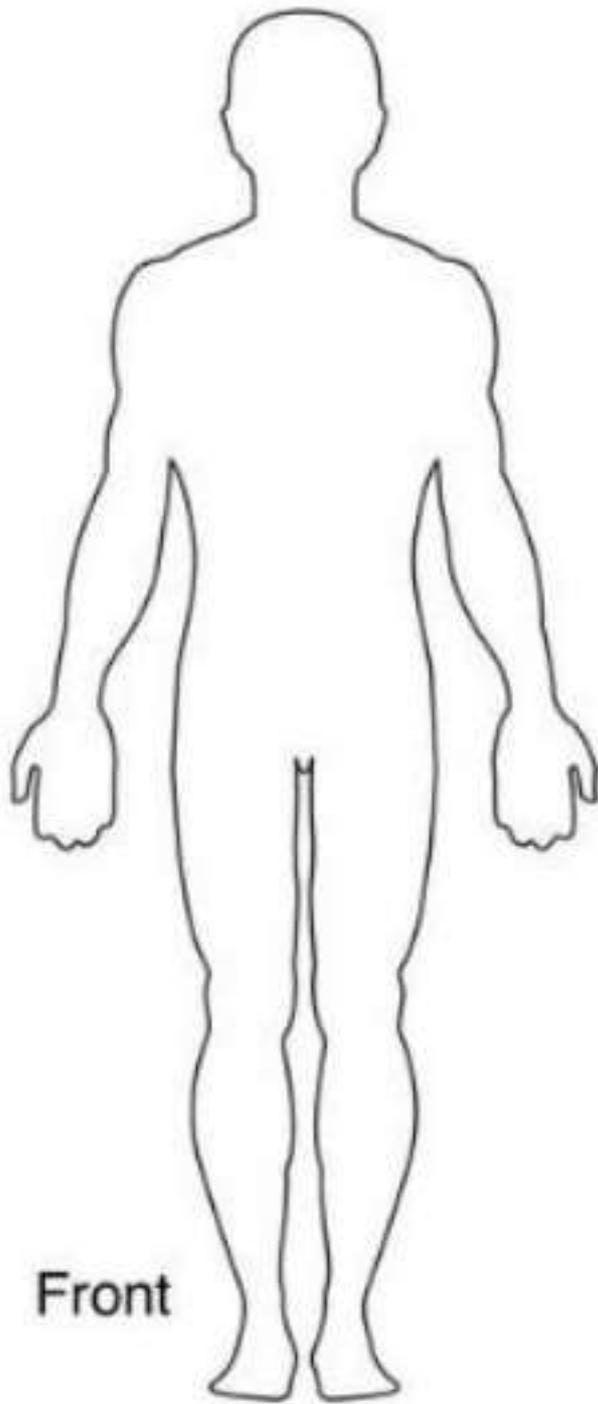
**When you notice an injury to a child, try to record the following information in respect of each mark identified e.g. red areas, swelling, bruising, cuts, lacerations and wounds, scalds and burns:**

- Exact site of injury on the body, e.g. upper outer arm/left cheek.
- Size of injury - in appropriate centimetres or inches.
- Approximate shape of injury, e.g. round/square or straight line.
- Colour of injury - if more than one colour, say so.
- Is the skin broken?
- Is there any swelling at the site of the injury, or elsewhere?
- Is there a scab/any blistering/any bleeding?
- Is the injury clean or is there grit/fluff etc.?
- Is mobility restricted as a result of the injury?
- Does the site of the injury feel hot?
- Does the child feel hot?
- Does the child feel pain?
- Has the child's body shape changed/are they holding themselves differently?

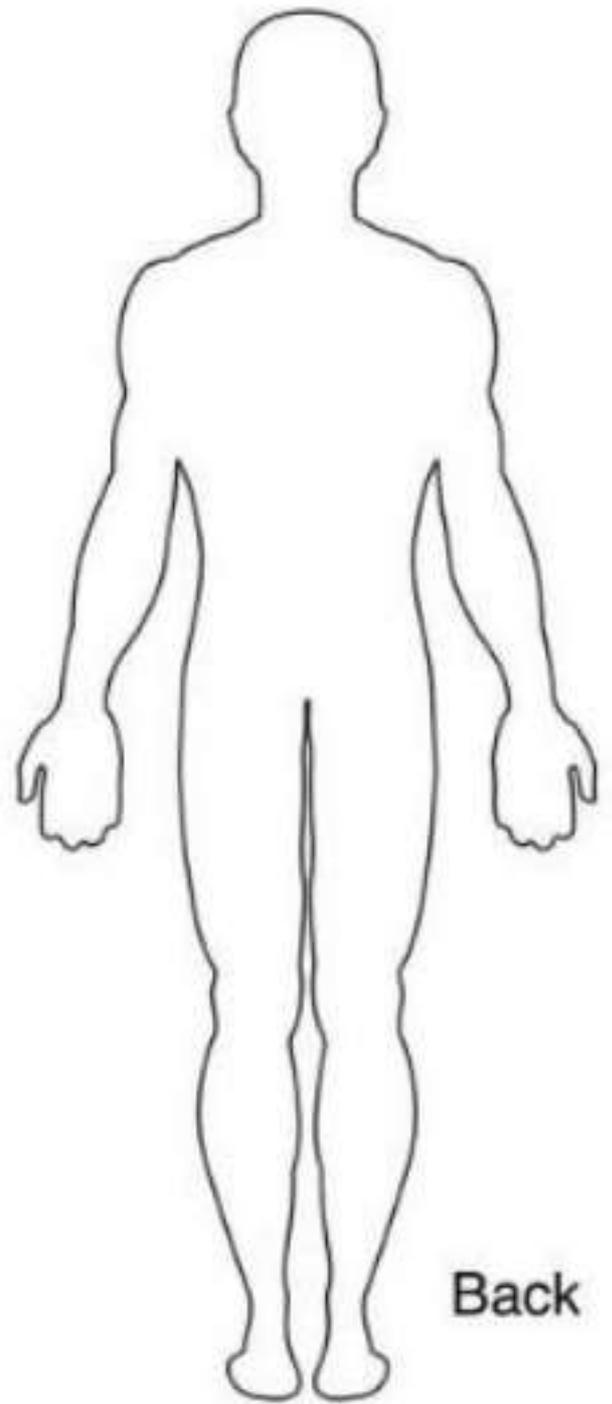
Importantly the date and time of the recording must be stated as well as the name and designation of the person making the record. Add any further comments as required.

**Ensure First Aid is provided where required and record**

A copy of the body map should be kept on the child's concern/confidential file  
There is a Body Map option on CPOMS



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## **Filtering and monitoring**

The Department for Education's filtering and monitoring standards set out that schools and colleges should:

- identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems.
- review filtering and monitoring provision at least annually.
- block harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning.
- have effective monitoring strategies in place that meet their safeguarding needs.
- schools can use the department's 'plan technology for your school service' to self- assess against the filtering and monitoring standards and receive personalised recommendations on how to meet them.

**Filtering and monitoring requirements apply to the use of generative AI in education.**