

# **ST CATHERINE'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL**



## **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

November 2009

## **To be read in conjunction with the school's Child Protection Policy**

### **Introduction**

St Catherine's Catholic High School recognises its legal duty under the 1989 Children Act and takes seriously its responsibilities to protect and safeguard the interests of all children. The school recognises that effective child protection requires sound procedures, good inter-agency co-operation and a workforce that is competent and confident in responding to child protection situations.

This procedures document and the school's Child Protection Policy provide the basis for good practice within the school for child protection. Child protection has to be considered within professionals' wider "safeguarding" responsibilities that include a duty to co-operate under the Children Act 2004. Within the context of Every Child Matters, this takes account of the need for children "being healthy and staying safe".

These procedures provide a framework to ensure that all practice in the area of child protection is consistent with stated values and procedures that underpin all work with children and young people.

### **Underpinning values**

- A child's welfare is paramount. Each child has a right to be protected from harm and exploitation and to have their welfare safeguarded.
- Each child is unique. Action taken by all organisations should be child-centred, taking account of a child's cultural, ethnic and religious background, their gender, their sexual orientation, their individual ability and any special needs.
- Children, parents and other carers should be made aware of their responsibilities and their rights, together with advice about the power of professionals to intervene in their family circumstances.
- Each child has a right to be consulted about actions taken by others on his/her behalf. The concerns of children and their families should be listened to and due consideration given to their understanding, wishes and feelings.
- Individual family members must be involved in decisions affecting them. They must be treated with courtesy and respect and with due regard given to working with them in a spirit of partnership in safeguarding children's welfare.
- Open-mindedness and honesty must guide each stage of assessment and of operational practice. The strengths of individual family members, as well as their needs, should be given due consideration.
- Personal information is usually confidential. It should only be shared with the permission of the individual concerned, or unless the disclosure of confidential personal information is necessary in order to protect a child. In all circumstances, information must be confined to those people directly involved in the professional network of each individual child and on a strict "need to know" basis.
- Professionals should be aware of the effects of outside intervention upon children, upon family life and the impact and implications of what they say and do.

- Explanations by professionals to children, their families and other carers should be plainly stated and jargon-free. Unavoidable technical and professional terminology should be explained in simple terms.
- Sound professional practice is based upon positive inter-agency collaboration, evidence-based research and effective supervision and evaluation.
- Early intervention in providing support services under Section 17 of the Children Act (1989) is an important principle of practice in inter-agency arrangements for safeguarding the welfare of children.

## **Protecting staff against allegations of abuse**

Staff should seek to keep personal contact with children under review and seek to minimise the risk of any situation arising in which misunderstandings could occur.

The following sensible precautions should be taken when staff are working alone with children. They should:

- work in a room where there is a glass panel in the door or leave the door open;
- make sure that other adults visit the room occasionally;
- avoid working in isolation with children unless thought has been given to safeguards.

Staff must not:

- give out personal mobile phone numbers or private e-mail addresses;
- give students lifts home in their own transport;
- arrange to meet students outside of school hours;
- chat to students on the social networking sites.

Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 it is a criminal offence for anyone working in an education setting to have a sexual relationship with a student even when the student is over the age of consent.

Any use of physical force or restraint against students should be carried out and documented in accordance with the relevant Physical Restraint Policy. If it is necessary to use physical action to prevent a child from injury to themselves or others parents should be informed.

Children must not be punished by any form of hitting, slapping, shaking or other degrading treatment.

## **Allegations of abuse against a teacher or other staff**

Allegations of abuse against a teacher or other staff should be dealt with in accordance with the school's Policy for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and Other Staff.

## **Recruitment, supervision and training for staff**

When recruiting new members of staff the school will follow the guidance provided in the Safeguarding Children: Safer Recruitment in Education. The school ensures that CRB

checks are undertaken, that references are taken up and obtained and that qualifications are verified.

Newly appointed staff receive initial training in Child Protection as part of their induction programme. All staff are provided with a copy of the schools Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection policy.

### **E-Safety**

The growth of different electronic media in everyday life and an ever developing variety of devices including PC's, laptops, mobile phones, webcams etc place an additional risk on our children.

Internet chat rooms, discussion forums or social networks can all be used as a means of contacting children and young people with a view to grooming them for inappropriate or abusive relationships. The anonymity of the internet allows adults, often pretending to be children, to have conversations with children and in some cases arrange to meet them.

Access to abusive images is not a 'victimless' act as it has already involved the abuse of children. The internet has become a significant tool in the distribution of indecent photographs of children and should be a concern to all those working with students at this school.

Students can engage in or be a target of bullying using a range of methods including text and instant messaging to reach their target. Mobile phones are also used to capture violent assaults of other children for circulation (happy slapping).

Students will be made aware of these dangers through curriculum teaching particularly PSHCE and sex education.

At St Catherine's Catholic High School:

- software is in place to minimise access and to highlight any person accessing inappropriate sites or information
- students are encouraged to discuss openly their use of technology and anything which makes them feel uncomfortable. (If this results in child protection concerns the school's designated child protection teacher should be informed immediately)
- students are told not to give out their personal details, phone numbers, schools, home address, computer passwords etc
- mobile phones are not to be brought into school.

The police will be involved if there is any criminal element to misuse of the internet, phones or any other form of electronic media.

Signed: (Head)

Signed: (Chair of Governors)

Date ratified by Governing Body: 16 December 2009 ???

Date to be reviewed and evaluated (in consultation with staff): November 2010

The Designated Child Protection Teacher in this school is: Andrew Smith

The designated governor for Child Protection is : Chris Boyd