



Saint Pius X Catholic High School

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

MARCH 2011

Our Mission Statement:

"Saint Pius X Catholic High School is a Catholic School in which the Gospel message of the Kingdom of God is revealed through our work and through our relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ"

This is encompassed in the statement: 'Love one another as I have loved you' *John 13*

LA and Governors

All local authorities have a duty to enquire into allegations of abuse. The Education Act 2002 requires local education authorities and the governing bodies of maintained schools to arrange to ensure that their functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children

The arrangements in place at Saint Pius X Catholic High School:

The Governing Body has a named governor for Child Protection

The Headteacher oversees the arrangements within the school

The designated teacher is responsible for carrying out investigations and working with other agencies

Designated teacher for Child Protection: Mrs Lynn Kelly, Pastoral Support Manager

If designated teacher is not in school report to Head/Deputy Headteacher.

Designated governor for Child Protection: Rev Brian Davies

Under the recommendations of 'Every Child Matters' (September 2003) the school has more responsibility in the process of investigating matters of abuse. The school must be proactive in speaking to other agencies, parents and carers. These agencies include:

- Social Services
- Health Authority
- Police
- Education Welfare

Such agencies can become involved if the family is in need of further help or if other agency workers are working with the family e.g. Probation Service.

All members of staff must be aware of the categories of abuse. The school has a duty to train staff about the nature of child abuse and about the steps that should be taken to safeguard students on the school role or their siblings in another school. Training provided annually within the school and the Local Authority provides further training. It is a statutory requirement for the designated teacher to attend training each year.

Section 1

What is Abuse?

Working Together to Safeguard Children sets out four categories of abuse:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

Some kinds of abuse are more obvious and there are examples of behaviour that constitute abuse within these categories, and circumstances in which children may have a heightened vulnerability to abuse. The following lists cases of abuse that may not be so obviously recognisable or encountered less frequently than others are.

Drug/alcohol abusing parents

Drug and alcohol abuse by parents can have a serious effect on children. 70% of children taken into care have parents who are suspected of substance abuse. Not all parents who abuse drugs or alcohol mistreat or neglect their children, however sometimes such children can be put at considerable risk.

There is an increased risk of violence in families where parents abuse substances. Children can suffer from lack of boundaries, discipline, and live chaotic lives. This can seriously affect their psychological and emotional development and may cause problems with their relationships later on in life.

The children who are most vulnerable are those whose parents are violent, aggressive, neglectful and rejecting. These children can remain “invisible” from the services intended to support them unless their behaviour attracts attention at school or elsewhere outside the home.

Domestic violence

The effect of domestic violence on children is such that it must be considered as abuse. Either witnessing it or being the subject of it is not only traumatic in itself but is likely to adversely affect a child's behaviour or attendance patterns in school. Schools may see changes in behaviour or attendance patterns in students affected by domestic violence, and should treat it as physical or emotional abuse as appropriate. Further information is available at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk>. This site contains the consultation paper Safety & Justice: the government's proposals for domestic violence.

Child on child abuse

Abuse is not just an adult crime. Children can pose a threat either physical or sexual to other children. Even when sexualised behaviour is identified and a student is on a treatment programme, they still have to be educated and managed in a school setting. Management of this behaviour in school needs to be approached on a whole school, classroom/curriculum and individual level.

Child prostitution

Children involved in prostitution and other forms of commercial sexual exploitation are victims of abuse and should be treated as such. Their needs will require careful assessment as this problem is often hidden from view. Guidance about children involved in prostitution issued jointly by the Home Office and the Department of Health in 1998 stresses that all agencies should treat the child primarily as a victim of abuse and should work together to provide them with strategies to exit prostitution.

Forced marriage

Forced marriage is a human rights abuse and falls within the crown prosecution service definition of domestic violence. Young people at risk of a force marriage usually experience emotional and/or physical abuse at home. School often feel it is not their place to tackle this issue and that doing so intrudes on private and cultural family matters. This anxiety is unnecessary for the following reasons:

- No culture or religion sanctions forced marriage – this is quite different to an arranged marriage where parties consent of their own free will
- Forced marriage is a human rights abuse in the same way as child abuse and domestic violence and as such must not be ignored.

“Dealing with cases of forced marriage” is guidance produced jointly by the association of chief police officers, the foreign and commonwealth office and the home office, which provides more information on this subject and useful contacts.

Section 2 – Procedures for staff

What to do if you are concerned that a child is at risk of abuse or has been abused

If you are concerned that a child’s behaviour or appearance suggests signs of any category of abuse, discuss these concerns with the designated teacher, Mrs L Kelly, Pastoral Support Manager, who will be released from teaching timetable or other commitments to deal with serious issues.

If a child discloses a matter to you that pertains to abuse refer the matter to the designated teacher immediately. If this is not possible or the child continues to disclose listen carefully rather than questioning them. Ask open questions e.g. ‘How did you get that bruise?’ ‘What did you eat for breakfast this morning?’ and ‘You say someone has hurt your vagina. Who was that?’ Try if possible to note down exactly what has taken place and what the child says. If you are unable to write down immediately, write down as soon as possible. Do not photocopy the information or keep a copy. Give the information to the designated teacher. Ensure that any information given to you remains **confidential**.

Notes should be made of any marks signs or symptoms of abuse.

It is recommended that the child’s clothes are not removed if abuse is suspected. No further examination should take place in school, as the child may need a further professional examination as part of the investigation.

If the child confides in you and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important to tell the child sensitively that you have a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to someone who can help. Within that context, the child should be assured that the matter would be disclosed only to people who need to know about it.

The designated teacher will refer to the relevant agency. At this point, your notes are important, as a written referral must follow a verbal referral within 48 hours. Any written information will be kept on a separate recording system.

DO NOT INFORM PARENT OR CARER OF THE DISCLOSED INFORMATION OR YOUR SUSPICIONS. If appropriate, the designated teacher will contact parent or carer.

Child Protection Cases Conferences and Child Protection Register

Following the referrals appropriate action will be taken. In most cases, there will be a case conference where all agencies will attend to draw up an action plan to protect the child from further abuse. The designated teacher will be responsible for working within this plan and will meet with other agencies until the child is removed from the child protection register. This will take place when the child is deemed no longer at risk. The designated teacher will inform people on a need to know basis.

Governors Use Only:

Put on school website? NO

Adopted by Governing Body January 2009

Reviewed March 2011: Lynn Kelly, Pastoral Support Manager (minor amendments)

Next review: December 2011 (if designated staff /governor is changed)