



## Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

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<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Chief Executive Officer</b>

## **Introduction**

1.1 This policy provides the overarching ethos for safeguarding and child protection within all schools of Romero Catholic Academy Trust. It provides the standard that must be adhered to by all staff.

1.2 The Trust promotes a shared approach to safeguarding and child protection that is universal across all schools and must be written in the respective Child Protection Policy for each school.

1.3 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone that comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals must ensure their approach is child centred. This means they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

1.4 All schools must have their own Child Protection Policy (please refer to paragraph 11.3) that meets local arrangements and which is specific to each school. However, each policy must respect and adhere to this guidance.

## **Scope**

2.1 All staff working with our children and young people, whether or not employed by the Trust are expected to comply with this ethos and to have regard to the child protection policy and procedures, within each school. This includes all directors, governors, employees, including casual and agency staff, self-employed or contractual workers and volunteers.

## **Equality Statement**

3.1 This policy applies fairly to all employees irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

## **The Legal Framework**

4.1 The overarching responsibilities to safeguarding are set out in legislation, as follows:

- The Children Act 1989, provides the section 17 duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are in need and provides the section 47 duty to investigate whether a child is at risk of serious harm.
- The Local Government Act 2000, establishes effective joint working across local authority sectors.
- The Education Act 2002 (section 175 (maintained schools), the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulation 2014 (including Academies/Free Schools) and the Education Non Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulation 2011, sets out the standards for safeguarding functions for children and young people in all settings, which schools have a statutory duty to ensure that they meet.
- The Children Act 2004, established under section 11 a duty for partner agencies to participate with the local authority in a range of safeguarding and child protection provisions.

- Children & Social Work Act 2017, set up local safeguarding partnerships and further provision about the regulation of social workers.

#### 4.2 Policy and Procedures

- All Romero Catholic Academy Trust policies and procedures in respect of safeguarding children will be up to date and in line with DFE Statutory Guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019. Policies are accessible to all staff through the Schools' websites and the staff areas of the schools' IT network, or the Romero Catholic Academy Trust website. School policies and procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure compliance with statutory requirements and good practice.
- Safeguarding/child protection policies must be made available via the schools own website.

### **Governance**

5.2 The Trust has a responsibility to ensure that the arrangements for safeguarding within each school under the responsibility of each Headteacher are secure and robust and that any shortfall is rectified. Directors need to have an awareness and understanding of all of the policies that underpin safeguarding.

5.3 The Trust will ensure that arrangements must be shared across any additional leadership and support that is provided in circumstances of need to a setting. This may include, cover arrangements for when the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputies may not be available in school and clarity over Whistleblowing and Allegations of Abuse Against a Member of Staff or Volunteer policies and procedures.

5.4 In addition, directors, through the Trust's Central Services Team, are responsible for ensuring that legislation and guidance is adhered to by the Headteacher and senior leaders within a school and that all of the necessary safeguarding policies and procedures are in place within the setting. Failure to comply with Trust policy in respect of safeguarding may result in disciplinary action. Directors also have responsibility for ensuring that headteachers and senior leaders are held to account for all aspects of safeguarding and most importantly that all legislation, guidance and policies work effectively in practice by the whole workforce.

5.5 The Trust's Central Services Team and Headteacher have a responsibility to ensure that all staff members are recruited appropriately with necessary pre-employment checks undertaken. They also hold responsibility for ensuring that all staff adhere to the Staff Code of Conduct and Whistleblowing Procedures and that the Headteacher takes appropriate action when dealing with allegations.

5.6 Local Governing Bodies, supported by the Trust's Central Service Team, are responsible for overseeing and ensuring that all of the appropriate and necessary health and safety checks are in place to ensure both staff and young people are safe and secure both on and off site. They may also be part of the quality assurance audits in many of these areas.

5.7 Local Governing Bodies, supported by the Trust's Central Services Team, are responsible to quality assure the content of the PHSE (Personal, Health, Social, Economic), SMSC (Spiritual,

Moral, Social and Cultural) and RSE (Relationships & Sex Education) curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of all young people.

5.8 Directors and local governors need to champion the voice of the child by ensuring Headteachers and Senior Leaders are held to account for improving outcomes for young people through a diverse curriculum.

5.9 Governors should recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers and must ensure child protection policy includes procedures to minimise the risk of peer on peer abuse and the procedure for investigation of such incidents.

5.10 The Competency Framework for Governance states that everyone on the Board should understand the duties relating to safeguarding, including the Prevent Duty. To ensure Directors have knowledge and information to perform their functions and understand their responsibilities, everyone on the Board must have training about safeguarding.

### **Safeguarding Report to Directors and Governors**

6.1 The Safeguarding Report to Governors is a Statutory Duty arising out of section 157 of the Education Act 2002 and applies to academies. The report, often undertaken annually, ensures that governors can monitor the school's compliance, highlight issues and plan for improvements. After tabling the report to the Governing body, a copy must be filed with the minutes of the meeting.

6.2 The safeguarding report also provides information to the Local Authority, so they can fulfil their statutory duty under section 14B of the Children Act 2004. This Act states that schools and colleges must supply information to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (section 11 Children Act 2004) in order to perform its functions and for monitoring the compliance of schools to safeguard children and young people, regardless of the school status.

6.3 Each Headteacher will be responsible for reporting to their own LGB in line with the above requirements and for providing the Trust's lead officer with information to allow a summary of all activity to be reported to the Trust's Board, via the Catholic Life & Standards Committee on a termly basis. The Trust has appointed a Lead Director for Safeguarding who will oversee that local governors responsible for safeguarding are working effectively with each of our schools' Designated Safeguarding Leads, to ensure all our children and young people are safeguarded from harm and abuse, and that where concerns arise these are dealt with swiftly and professionally.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

7.1 All schools must appoint a member of staff who will usually be from the senior leadership team to the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Where there are Deputy DSL's, these people should be trained to the same standard as the DSL and the role should be detailed on their job description.

7.2 The DSL must have the appropriate authority and be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child

protection matters, to take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings, or support other staff to do so, and contribute to the assessment of children and young people.

7.3 The DSL (and any Deputies) must undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. This training must be taken fully every 2 years and updated annually. Prevent awareness training must also be undertaken.

7.4 The DSL must liaise with the local authority and work with other agencies in accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018). See Flow Charts.

7.5 The expectation of all staff is that any concerns relating to significant harm are reported immediately to the DSL and only in the event the DSL cannot be contacted, or the member of staff remains concerned about the decision made, should they directly contact the appropriate services, e.g. Children's Social Care or the police. If the concern relates to the Headteacher who is the DSL, the Trust's CEO\* (\*or officer nominated by the CEO) should be informed, who will also notify the Chair of Governors for information. (Appendix A):

7.6 During term time the DSL (or a Deputy) must always be available during school or college hours, for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Whilst availability is expected to be in person, in exceptional circumstances availability can be via phone, Skype or other such mediums (in accordance with security of information systems). The DSL must ensure adequate and appropriate cover arrangements for any out of hours or out-of-term activities.

7.7 The DSL must ensure that all staff are inducted into the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures, ideally in two weeks of starting work in the school.

7.8 In the DSL's safeguarding report to Governors, a statement should be made that refers to the training opportunities and the effectiveness of the training.

7.9 The DSL should ensure there is regular supervision of case files.

### **Who is a child?**

8.1 Children includes everyone under the age of 18.

8.2 A child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change their status or entitlements to services or protection.

(Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, Appendix A)

### **The difference between safeguarding and child protection?**

9.1 All staff should have an understanding of the difference between safeguarding and child protection.

9.2 Safeguarding and Child Protection is about managing risk.

9.3 In essence, safeguarding applies to all children and young people. It is much broader than child protection and encompasses all elements of the protection and welfare of children and young people in every circumstance during the school day and beyond. It is what we do for all children and young people to keep them safe.

9.4 Child Protection describes the policy and procedures specifically for those young people who are at risk of serious harm or have been seriously harmed.

**Definition: Safeguarding and Child Protection**

10.1 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as

- Protecting children from maltreatment;
- Preventing impairment of children’s health or development;
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

(Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019)

10.2 Child Protection considers the four categories of Child abuse, namely

- Emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

(These and other useful definitions can be found in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018)

10.3 There will be times when early intervention is not an appropriate option, in particular when there is clear evidence that a young person is at risk of or likely to suffer significant harm. Under these circumstances immediate support and intervention is required which is clearly directed under each school’s Child Protection Policy.

**What is effective safeguarding?**

11.1 Schools are expected to evidence the following to ensure there is effective safeguarding policy and practice.

11.2 **Establishing an Ethos:** All schools must adopt the Trust ethos demonstrating a shared responsibility towards safeguarding practice. This ethos must be evident throughout the school, clearly visible to children, staff, parents and visitors.

11.3 **Child Protection Policy:** Each school must set out its statutory duties and its procedure for staff to raise concerns. This must be personalised and relevant to the school setting. The Child Protection Policy must be published on the school website and be reviewed at least

annually. It is important that the policy is dated. All schools must use the standardised format provided under the Trust's agreement with Safeguarding First Ltd. (Appendix B)

11.4 The Child Protection Policy must cover all aspects of child abuse and neglect inclusive of issues regarding Female Genital Mutilation, Prevent, Child Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment, County Lines and Peer on Peer Abuse. A full list can be found in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018.

11.5 **Continuous Professional Development:** Building capacity to safeguard through CPD will be supported by the Trust, however, schools will be expected to work in teams to disseminate knowledge. Learning events should be regularly used to develop consistency across the school.

11.6 All staff must read 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 (part one) and reflect on it to demonstrate the move from compliance to impact. This must be a standing agenda item at every staff meeting. The Designated Safeguarding Lead must keep an updated training tracker for staff having received training, when and of which type, such as basic, advanced, safer recruitment

11.7 All staff must receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training which is regularly updated. In addition, all staff must receive safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, via emails, e-bulletins and staff meetings), as required, and at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

11.8 All staff must have PREVENT training to understand the duties on schools from the Counter Terrorism and Security Act.

11.9 **Safer Recruitment:** The Headteacher must know who is in the school and that they have been suitably vetted. HR corporate services will undertake all administrative aspects for recruitment and ensure the 'safeguarding commitment' of the Trust is noted on all recruitment materials. All relevant staff must be up to date with safer recruitment training. Romero Catholic Academy Trust meets statutory requirements in relation to Disclosure & Barring Service – all staff and volunteers who work with children are required to have a DBS check. In the vast majority of cases they are required to undergo an enhanced DBS check. Where people are working or seeking to work in regulated activity with children, this allows an additional check to be made as to whether the person appears on the children's barred list. Each term the Safeguarding Lead will audit the record for accuracy purposes.

11.10 Each school must ensure there is an updated Single Central Record, in accordance with policy and practice, which will be reviewed and audited on a regular basis by the Trust's HR team.

11.11 All staff have a responsibility to ensure that both their own conduct and that of others is safe. Although all staff may not have particular responsibilities around recruitment, they do have a responsibility to ensure that the conduct of themselves and others does not put young people at risk and if it does this needs to be reported immediately to the Headteacher (or CEO\* if it is regarding the Headteacher) through the Whistleblowing Policy.

11.12 The expectations of all staff on site will be shared both during the recruitment and selection process and through a thorough induction, which should occur prior to commencing the job role and also for those members of staff who have been on long term absence on their return to work.

11.13 The Staff Code of Conduct, Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy and Child Missing Education Policy must be signed by all staff at the beginning of each academic year.

11.14 **Safer Perimeter:** Schools are encouraged to aim for one single point of entry (and exit) and any additional entry/exit points must be supervised by adults. Traffic and road safety of pupils is paramount and pupils and vehicles must be separated, recognising that the start and end of the school day is most risky to children. The school perimeters must have appropriate fencing and buffer zones that must be kept in good order.

11.15 Use of CCTV cameras must be used in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations to satisfy prevention of misuse or challenge.

11.16 Where necessary there must be security measures in place that prevent pupils bringing dangerous or unsuitable items to school e.g. knives, drugs or extremist materials.

11.17 All visitors must be identified and recorded with the appropriate lanyard (Green with DBS/Red without DBS). Visitors that do not have DBS clearance must be supervised at all times.

11.18 All staff are accountable for ensuring that wherever young people are, they are safe. This means that they are responsible for not only ensuring that classroom and working areas are safe but also that shared areas e.g. hall, outdoor area, reception area are safe and must responsibly report any issues or concerns.

11.19 **Understanding Community:** All schools must consider risks to children from the school community and the wider local community and any prevailing socio-economic issues. Communities may also be sources of support and considered in any risk assessment.

11.20 **Beyond Community:** This is the online world. All schools must have regard for this featuring strongly in sexual exploitation and grooming, radicalisation and financial scams and have measures in place to prevent this.

11.21 The Trust's Corporate Services team will ensure IT systems in schools are protected and schools must ensure equipment is used safely in accordance with corporate policies.

11.22 **Assessing & Managing Risk:** Schools must undertake an annual assessment of risk. Consideration must be given to local, national and international prevailing issues looking at internal and external risks and determining the most frequent and serious risks to children in the school. Risk assessments must be evolving to ensure the effectiveness of assessment processes. Critical Incident Planning must be robust and practised at least annually without alarming pupils, staff, parents or the local community. This includes practising lock down procedure and having regular fire alarm testing.

11.23 The responsibilities in safeguarding are about the sites that young people are educated on. This includes any places where children and young people are taken to be educated off-site or for residential trips or visits or work experience. Any trips and visits must be appropriately risk assessed but staff must be aware to adapt and change plans in the event that risks occur that have not been planned for e.g. bus breaks down, venue is inappropriate.

11.24 All staff must operate within the health and safety regulations of the school or setting including fire regulations, building regulations and procedures for legionella or asbestos. The Headteacher and the key holders for the site are responsible for the letting or transfer of control to other agencies for use of the premises.

11.25 **Curriculum:** The curriculum, both structured and unstructured, goes hand-in-hand with risk and should help pupils to recognise, understand, cope and develop resilience to the risks around them.

11.26 It is important that through a wide ranging curriculum including PHSE, SMSC and RSE that young people are given the opportunity to learn about diversity including, faith, democracy, the law and British values.

11.27 Through such a curriculum children and young people are given opportunities to explore their understanding of life and their own experiences, for example around issues such as healthy and positive relationships, family life or making safe decisions. It is sometimes not until these discussions that they will be given an opportunity to consider the world around them and where they may disclose they are at risk of harm. The curriculum must be there to support young people in having these healthy discussions in order to help them to manage current and future risks e.g. attending parties or engaging in online behaviours and to develop resilience and an ability to manage difficult situations. The curriculum must cover all aspects of the safety and well-being of young people and in particular focus on giving them a 'voice'.

11.28 All staff are responsible for ensuring the safety and well-being of children and young people, in particular to give young people opportunities to have their voice heard and feel safe.

11.29 **Developing Partnerships:** These are important for continuous professional development with traditional partners such as schools, local authority, health, social care and police. In the local area, Designated Safeguarding Leads should consider attending a forum with such agencies that may lead to a better understanding of risk in the local area.

11.30 **Transition Planning:** It is important that children do not 'fall through the net' at times of transition, whether this is between key stages, schools, colleges or from mainstream to special settings, such as Alternative Provision. There must be timely sharing of information that prevents a 'start again' syndrome. Information must be shared in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations.

11.31 The Designated Safeguarding Lead should ensure a child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible and must be transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure transit and confirmation of receipt must be obtained. In

addition the DSL must consider if it would be appropriate to share information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving.

**11.32 Monitoring & Evaluation:** This is essential to ensure the effectiveness of processes and is usually done through surveys, focus groups and discussions. Consideration should be given to the use of trios (staff, pupil, parent or governor) requesting each to respond collectively to pre-written questions to discuss their common understanding or misconceptions of different aspects of safeguarding.

## **Publications**

12.1 The main publications that must be referenced in accordance with this policy are:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019.  
Directs all staff in schools, Directors, Governors and Designated Safeguarding Leads around their roles and responsibilities in safeguarding in schools. This is inclusive of the statutory duties regarding the PREVENT strategy (1<sup>st</sup> July 2015) to have due regard to prevent young people from being drawn into terrorism and the statutory duty to report all cases of Female Genital Mutilation (31<sup>st</sup> October 2015).
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Information Sharing: advice for safeguarding practitioners 2018
- Governance Handbook & Competency Framework 2017
- Children Missing Education 2016

12.2 Other relevant information is contained in:

- Inspecting safeguarding in the early years, education & skills settings, Ofsted, September 2018
- School Inspection Handbook, September 2019
- Disqualification under the Childcare Act (2006) (as amended 2018)
- Searching, Screening & Confiscation, January 2018
- Sexual Violence & Sexual Harassment between children in schools and colleges (2017)
- Child Sexual Exploitation: definition & guide for practitioners 2017
- Criminal exploitation of children & vulnerable adults: County Lines (Home Office) 2017
- County Lines Gang Violence, Exploitation & Drug Supply (National Crime Agency) 2016
- Multi-agency statutory guidance on Female Genital Mutilation, April 2016
- Responding to Incidents of Sexting (UK Council for Internet Safety) (2016)
- The Prevent Duty, June 2015
- Guidance for Safer Working Practices 2015
- The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- The Safe Use of New Technologies, Ofsted 2010
- Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005