



Child Protection Policy

The Safeguarding of children and young people is everyone's responsibility.

The Governors of Saint Martin's recognise their statutory responsibility to make sure that appropriate arrangements are in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of children: Section 175 of the Education Act 2002.

This policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working at Saint Martin's and will be reviewed annually. This policy is in agreement with the Solihull agreed inter-agency policy and is available to parents on request.

Principles

- Saint Martin's school recognises its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of the girls entrusted to its care of establishing a safe environment in which they can learn and develop.
- The staff and governors of Saint Martin's are committed to establishing and maintaining an environment where girls feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- We will try to ensure that girls know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried.
- We recognise that because of the day to day contact with girls, school staff are well placed to observe the signs of possible abuse.
- Saint Martin's recognises its responsibility to discuss with Education and Children's Services' Duty, Assessment and Referral Team any significant concerns about a girl which may indicate physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect in accordance with the Local Safeguarding Children Board child protection procedures and to attend any child protection conferences, initial review, and core group meetings and child in need conferences that may be called.
- Saint Martin's recognises its duty to work with other agencies such as: Children's Services, Police Child Abuse Investigation Unit, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Education Welfare Service, Educational Psychology Service in protecting children from harm and in responding to concerns about possible abuse.
- Saint Martin's wishes to promote a positive, supportive and secure environment, giving girls a sense of being valued.
- Saint Martin's will ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on staff for child protection by setting out its obligations in the school prospectus.

The Designated Members of Staff for Child Protection

- The Designated Members of Staff (DMS) for Child Protection are members of the Senior Management Team: **Mrs K Woods (AH and JS)** and **Mrs J Parker (SS)**
- The DMS will co-ordinate action on child abuse within their section of the school, ensuring that all staff (including supply staff) know who the Designated Member of Staff is and that they are aware of their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and of their responsibility to discuss any concerns with the Designated Member of Staff.
- The governors support the Designated Members of Staff for Child Protection in carrying out their responsibilities as outlined in Safeguarding Children in Education. The Governing Body has a named governor who acts on their behalf.

Responding

- Any member of staff who has concerns about a child must report their concerns to the DMS for Child Protection.
- In accordance with the Local Safeguarding Children Board Procedures, the agreement of the family for a referral to Children's Services Duty Team should be sought where possible. However, if it is felt that seeking any such agreement would increase the level of significant risk to the child, the matter should be discussed with the Duty, Assessment and Referral Team and their advice sought.
- **Children's Services Duty, Assessment and Referral Team (DART): 0121 788 4333 (Working Hours), 0121 605 6060 (Evenings and Weekends Emergency Duty Team (EDT)). Steve Martin is the Chief Education Welfare Officer and Sheila Wyatt is the Senior Education Welfare Officer. The EDT commit to a response time of 60 minutes.**
- All referrals need to be confirmed in writing within 48 hours using the appropriate referral form.
- If the suspicions in any way involve another member of staff,
 - the girl must be listened to
 - a written, dated record should be made immediately or at least within 24 hours
 - the Head must be informed immediately
- If the suspicion in any way involves the Headmistress, the Chairman of Governors must be informed immediately.
- Advice in both cases will be sought from the Chief Education Welfare Officer. The final decision on whether to investigate an allegation under Local Child Protection Procedures rests with the child protection agencies. The Headmistress or, in the case of allegations made against the Headmistress, the Chairman of Governors, should be involved throughout.
- A summary document of the framework for managing cases of allegations of abuse against staff is held in the Head's office and the DMS with reference to *Working Together to Safeguard Children*.

Use of Physical Intervention:

- Teachers and other staff in schools have the right to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils in certain circumstances: Section 550A of the Education Act 1996.
- Additional guidance on the use of restrictive physical interventions with children who display extreme behaviour is contained in DfES document LEA/0242/2002
- It is important to allow girls to do what they can for themselves, but depending on age and circumstances (ie a girl who is hurt, girl who needs instruction in the use of a particular instrument/piece of equipment, safety issues such as the need to prevent a girl hurting themselves, running into the road) it may be necessary for some physical contact to take place.

Abuse of Trust

- The Sexual Offences (amendment) Act 2002 established a criminal offence of the abuse of trust affecting teachers and others who are in a relationship of trust with 16-18 year olds; a relationship of trust being one where a teacher, member of education staff or volunteer is in a position of power or influence over a pupil or student by virtue of the work or nature of the activity being undertaken.
- The legislation is intended to protect young people in education who are over the age of consent but under 18 years of age.
- The principle of equality embedded in the legislation applies irrespective of sexual orientation: neither homosexual nor heterosexual relationships are acceptable within a position of trust.

Record Keeping

- All records of a child protection nature (hand written or typed, dated and signed) will be given to the DMS for safekeeping. This includes case conference minutes and written records of any concerns. Access to any records will be on a “need to know” basis. All records must be securely held, separate from the main pupil file, and in a secure cabinet in the Headmistress’ study.
- When a girl who is on the Child Protection Register/has a Child Protection Plan leaves Saint Martin’s and/or transfers to another school, the DMS will inform the girl’s new school immediately and discuss with the girl’s social worker the transfer of any confidential information the school may hold.
- When girls who have been the subject of some concern in school transfer from primary to secondary school and/or move school part way through an academic year, any concerns that are being monitored need to be passed on to the DMS of the receiving school in writing. Any other historic information that is not part of either an ongoing child protection case or an active monitoring/situation should be shredded.

Supporting the Pupil

- Saint Martin’s will support pupils in accordance with her agreed Child Protection Plan.
- Saint Martin’s will notify any concerns about a girl whose name is on the Child Protection Register/who has a Child Protection Plan to the girl’s social worker (this includes any absences from school).
- We recognise that girls who are abused or who witness violence may experience difficulties which impact on their sense of self worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. Saint Martin’s may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of girls at risk. When at school their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn. Saint Martin’s will endeavour to support the girl through the content of the curriculum and the school ethos of valuing the pupil.

The Curriculum

- Through various aspects of the curriculum, staff will raise pupils’ awareness and build their confidence so that they have a range of contacts and strategies to ensure their own protection and that of others, recognising that pupils need opportunities to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.
- The principles embedded in this policy link into other policies relating to: Health, PSHE, RE, Sex Education, Bullying, Equal Opportunities, Special Educational Needs.

Training

- This school is committed to supporting and training all staff in matters of child protection.
- The governors will ensure that all staff receive child protection awareness training as part of their induction with subsequent three yearly updates as prescribed in government guidance (Section 175 of Education Act 2002) Whole school inset on child protection issues will be provided every three years.
- The governors will ensure that the Designated Members of Staff for Child Protection attend the multi agency child protection training organised through the LSCB as soon as possible after taking up their responsibilities, and that the DMS subsequently receive appropriate training on a yearly basis in accordance with governmental guidelines.

Recruitment of Staff and Volunteers

- The school will ensure that safe recruitment practices are in place and followed in checking the suitability of all staff and volunteers to work with children (see Safer Staff Recruitment Policy)

Useful Contact Details

These are kept by the DMS

Guidelines for all Staff

All staff have general pastoral care for all girls and, where abuse is suspected or a sustainable allegation is made, should report to the relevant DMS.

Should a girl wish to share a confidence with a member of staff, it must always be explained to her that members of staff have a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the DMS who will then co-operate, as necessary, with the appropriate agencies. **Staff cannot promise confidentiality.**

Staff members should be aware that they have an important role to play in recognising outward signs of abuse eg changes in behaviour.

- Abuse may be emotional, physical, sexual or due to deprivation
 - **Physical Abuse:** Physical abuse 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 feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as factitious illness by proxy or Munchausen syndrome by proxy.
 - **Emotional Abuse:** Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve 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 ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
 - **Sexual Abuse:** Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (eg rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
 - **Neglect:** Neglect is 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. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.
- **A girl may choose to disclose to anyone.** A member of staff may need to deal with the disclosure himself/herself, as a girl should not be stopped if freely disclosing events. Ideally it may help to have the DMS present, or for them to speak to the girl, but this is not always possible.

- **Confidentiality should never be promised.** Assurance should be given that what is most important is to keep them safe. Staff should be honest, calm, kindly, unshockable and confident. At the end of the conversation the child should be reassured that it's been good that they've been able to talk. What they say is to be believed (but an open mind should be kept). Reassurance should be given that the girl is not responsible for her abuse. Explain that help will be needed from others and what will happen next.
- **It is not appropriate for the girl to be interviewed on another occasion in school.** If Social Services decide further action is necessary, they or the Police will interview further.
- **Leading/closed questions must not be asked.** Care must be taken not to put words into a girl's mouth. Open questions which are appropriate are:
 - "What happened?"
 - "When did it happen?"
 - "Where did it happen?"
 - "How did it happen?"
 - Do **not** ask "Why did it happen?"
- It is only necessary to know enough to know if a referral or investigation is necessary. **An investigation should not be carried out.** The conversation should not be prolonged or repeated. Without interrogating, it can be helpful to discover if the girl has told anyone else. Some idea of future risk is useful, if this is possible to ascertain.
- **It is crucial to write down detailed notes.** This may not be possible during the interview but must be done **immediately** afterwards. Note the time, location, circumstances and who was present. Write down verbatim as far as possible, use the girl's words, including any references to parts of the body and actions. Draw a diagram if there are signs of physical abuse. Sign and date the report.
- Immediately after the disclosure, **it is imperative to contact the DMS** who will take the next step. The designated members of staff are aware that Social Services are available for advice if there is uncertainty (if they decide there is a case it will be taken on automatically). The designated members of staff may need to make a decision as to whether a girl should be allowed to go home. Parents may need to be contacted.

Absolute confidentiality must be maintained after the interview. Only the interviewer, the designated member of staff (if different) and the Head may be informed.

The Protection of Teachers

Because of their daily contact with children in a variety of situations, including the wider pastoral role, teachers are vulnerable to accusations of abuse.

Guidelines about appropriate behaviour **are given to all new staff**. These include advice on how and where to sit and behave if alone in a classroom with a pupil, on the kind of language and demeanour appropriate to a professional relationship with pupils towards whom a teacher acts in loco parentis, on physical contact with pupils which might be alleged to be assault.

Physical punishment of any kind is not permitted.

Reporting to the Secretary of State

Saint Martin's recognises the requirement to report to the Secretary of State, via the DfES, within one month of leaving the School any person (whether employed, contracted, or a volunteer or pupil) whose services are no longer used because he or she is considered unsuitable to work with children. In this context, ceasing to use a person's services includes: dismissal; non-renewal of a fixed term contract; no longer engaging/refusing to engage a supply teacher provided by an employment agency; terminating the placement of a student teacher or other trainee; no longer using staff provided by contractors; no longer using volunteers; resignation or voluntary withdrawal from supply teaching, contract working, a course of initial teacher training, or volunteering. The report made should contain as much evidence as possible.