



ST SOPHIA'S
SCHOOL

Greek Cathedral, Moscow Road, London W2 4LQ

Registered Charity No. 1138475
Head Teacher: Dr Olga Fakatseli
Email: head@stsophiaschool.com
www.stsophiaschool.com

SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT

The Safeguarding Team

The Designated Safeguarding Leads for St Sophia's School are:

Dr Olga Fakatseli Head of School

Dr Ailina Gkoratsa Deputy Head

St Sophia's School aims to create a safe and secure learning environment for all students. All staff have a responsibility to safeguard the wellbeing of all the children in the school and if any member of staff has concerns about the welfare of any child, or the conduct of any adult on site, they have a responsibility to contact the Deputy Head or the Head of School/Headteacher. Any concerns will be dealt with in the strictest confidence.

Aim: the aim of this policy is to draw together a number of school policies that are related to the safeguarding of children and young people. According to the DfE Safeguarding is defined as follows:
Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined as:

- © protecting children from maltreatment
- © preventing impairment of children's health or development
- © ensuring children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.

Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

Effective child protection is essential as part of wider work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. However, all agencies and individuals should aim to proactively safeguard and promote the welfare of children so that the need for action to protect children from harm is reduced.

Rationale: The safety and welfare of the children and young people at School should always be the first priority when planning and delivering programmes, events and the daily life of the school. It is not exhaustive as no safeguarding policy can ever anticipate all possible circumstances how the principles should be applied by all staff at all times. Staff should always err on the side of caution and seek advice whenever there is uncertainty.

Vetting and Pre-Employment Checks

All staff are subject to vetting and pre-employment checks. An enhanced DBS check is conducted on all staff who are offered an appointment at St Sophia's School.

References are always sought and one reference must be from the previous employer (the Headteacher of the school, if the person worked in a school).

All staff must complete the School's application form and as part of the safer recruiting policy the application form is subject to scrutiny and questions are posed at interview that relate to safeguarding.

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False declarations on an application form will normally lead to the termination of employment.

No member of staff may commence work for the School until pre-employment checks are completed. If there is a delay in securing DBS clearance the Headteacher/Head of School will complete a Risk Assessment to determine if a person may commence work. If the appointment is for a Headteacher /Head of School any risk assessment will be completed by the Board of Governors.

Advice to Staff

General

All staff receive regular training on Safeguarding and Child Protection.

All Staff are trained to know the types of abuse and what they should do if they suspect a child is being abused or a child makes a disclosure. In addition, staff are advised that they should take care that relationships with students reflect the age, gender and maturity of the students and to ensure that demeanour, language and attitudes do not give rise to misunderstandings

Categories of Child Abuse

These include

- ☉ Physical abuse
- ☉ Emotional abuse
- ☉ Neglect
- ☉ Sexual abuse (CSE – Child Sexual Exploitation)
- ☉ The risk of radicalisation
- ☉ Involvement in crime
- ☉ Involvement in a gang
- ☉ Cybercrime- such as cyber-bullying and grooming

Staff having concerns should refer their concern to a member of the Safeguarding Team.

Reporting incidents

If staff have a concern.

The concern must be reported to a member of the Safeguarding Team without delay using the school systems or by email or in person. Such a duty overrides any other obligation.

If a child makes a disclosure

If a student makes a disclosure to a member of staff, the member of staff is required to write a factual

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account of the disclosure and pass this onto one of the Safeguarding Team. It is essential that full records are kept at all stages.

During occasions as these staff should

- not ask any leading questions, let the child speak as much as possible.
- avoid expressing any opinion about any individual being discussed.
- not agree to keep anything a secret but explain they will need to speak to someone who can help.

An incident that could give rise to a concern

Staff should report any concerns they may have following any incident where actions may have been misinterpreted. This report should be made to the Deputy Head as soon as possible. The Deputy Head will advise the Headteacher/Head of School.

For example, if it is necessary to restrain a pupil to prevent injury or maintain order. This must be reported to the Deputy Head without delay. The Deputy Head will inform the Headteacher/Head of School.

Staff should be aware that if an allegation is made about them by a child, the system, underpinned by statutory guidance, is that the Headteacher has to consult the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer). The LADO may either call a strategy meeting or decide that the issue can be dealt with internally. In either case a member of staff may be suspended or given duties that mean they have no unsupervised contact with children. Both are 'neutral' acts designed to preserve the evidence gathering system but also prevent any system being compromised. Staff should always seek the advice of their union or professional association if such an allegation is made. If you are in doubt, please speak to the Headteacher/Head of School.

The procedure for dealing with allegations against staff depends on the circumstances surrounding the allegation. All concerns around poor practice or possible child abuse by staff should be reported to the Headteacher/Head of School or the Head of Primary Phase. Concerns about the Headteacher/Head of School or the Head of Primary Phase should be reported to the Chief Executive (or to the Chair of Trustees where the Chief Executive is the subject of concern), who will then contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). A discussion will then take place to decide on the best course of action. The school will share information with the LADO on the allegation itself, the child concerned and the person against whom the allegation has been made and decide whether a Police investigation or strategy discussion is required. Representatives from other agencies such as health, social care, the GP or police may be invited into the discussion.

Related Policy Statements

Physical Contact

Physical contact may be misconstrued by a student, parent or observer. Touching students, including well-intentioned informal and formal gestures such as putting a hand on the shoulder or arm can unfortunately lead to questions being raised. However, there will be occasions when physical contact will be acceptable, such as:

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- Action to prevent harm or injury to the student or to others. Minimum force and contact necessary to prevent harm or injury is acceptable and defensible in this situation. Such incidents must always be reported to the Deputy Head.
- Comforting a student in distress. There is no easy definition of what is acceptable since much will depend on the circumstances, the age of the student, the extent and cause of the distress and the alternative means of providing comfort. Staff will need to use their professional judgement and discretion in relation to these factors. Record the incident.

Corporal Punishment

Any form of physical punishment is prohibited under disciplinary procedures and potentially actionable in law.

Private meetings

Private meetings provide opportunities for students to make malicious allegations. Staff must therefore recognise this possibility and plan such meetings accordingly. It is advisable to avoid remote areas of the school and to ensure that wherever possible the door is left open or visual contact with others is maintained. Under no circumstances should meetings with individual students be arranged off the school premises without the prior approval of the Headteacher/Head of School. This includes the transporting of individual children in private cars.

Where it is not possible to meet in the circumstances referred to above another member of staff should be told of the meeting beforehand. Steps to prevent others entering a room by the use of 'Meeting in Progress' are especially likely to be open to misinterpretation.

Comments and Discussions with Students

Staff must avoid comments to or about students which could be taken to have sexual overtones. It is equally unacceptable for staff to encourage debate and discussion between groups of students, which could be interpreted as having sexual overtones which are not justified in the context of the teaching programme. However, staff may from time to time need to engage in conversation with students which cover sensitive matters. Note that the persistent and hurtful use of sarcastic, demeaning or insensitive comments towards young people may also be regarded as a form of abuse which is potentially very damaging and is incompatible with the duty of staff to protect.

Infatuations and Crushes

These unfortunately do develop and can involve students and teachers of both sexes on both a heterosexual and homosexual basis. They need to be handled sensitively. Careless and insensitive reactions have been known to provoke false accusations. It is therefore in the interest of all parties to avoid adding to the student's problems by encouraging the crush or making jokes about the situation. In such situations the advice of a senior colleague must be sought. Other members of staff have a part to play too, in alerting a colleague to the possibility of an infatuation in order that appropriate steps can be taken to minimise hurt and distress and the risk to the teacher concerned.

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Racial, Homophobic, Implicit Bias and other forms of discrimination

Comments by staff or students that are disrespectful of a person's race, colour, religion, gender preference, sexual orientation or lifestyle choice are not accepted. Whilst we celebrate the right to choose a lifestyle, we must recognise others' rights. Therefore, staff should be discreet regarding their personal arrangements. If staff or students feel victimised, threatened, bullied or are unhappy about remarks, looks, comments that are related to this issue, the advice of a member of the Leadership team should be sought. It is important that we all adapt a zero-tolerance attitude to discrimination.

Implicit bias is an unconscious association, belief, or attitude toward any social group. Due to implicit biases, people may often attribute certain qualities or characteristics to all members of a particular group, a phenomenon known as stereotyping.

While people might like to believe that they are not susceptible to these biases and stereotypes, the reality is that everyone engages in them whether they like it or not.

This reality, however, does not mean that you are necessarily prejudiced or inclined to discriminate against other people. It simply means that your brain is working in a way that makes associations and generalizations.

It is important to understand that implicit bias is not the same thing as racism, although the two concepts are related. Overt racism involves conscious prejudice against members of a particular racial group and can be influenced by both explicit and implicit biases.

Other forms of discrimination that can be influenced by unconscious biases include ageism, sexism, homophobia, and ableism.

One of the benefits of being aware of the potential impact of implicit social biases is that you can take a more active role in overcoming social stereotypes, discrimination, and prejudice.

In addition to the fact that we are influenced by our environment and stereotypes that already exist in the society into which we were born, it is generally impossible to separate yourself from the influence of society. You can, however, become more aware of your unconscious thinking and the ways in which society influences you.

Teaching materials

The use of books, videos and films of an explicit or sensitive nature must be given careful consideration to ensure that its selection is not subsequently misinterpreted. Teachers should follow classification guidelines when using videos or films.

First Aid

The existence of any life threatening or serious condition will determine the suitability and necessity of physical contact.

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Personal letters and on-line communication

It will rarely be appropriate for teachers to write personal notes or letters, or to send e-mail, to individual students.

This advice is not intended to curtail the use of e-mail where schools have agreed the use of this medium for submission of work, advice over aspects of subjects being covered or other professional matters. All staff using e-mail in this context need to be aware of the less formal style that can characterise this form of communication and should ensure that responses do not convey an inappropriate tone.

Staff should keep passwords secure and ensure that no other person can gain access to their e-mail account and maliciously send messages which appear to have been written by them. Staff should use a school e-mail address school even if they are sending messages while working at home.

Footnote

The purpose is to promote the highest standards of care for young people and to protect staff from the potentially devastating consequences of false allegations. All staff are urged to consider how they can safeguard their own position in the light of this advice without giving up important personal principles of care and trust. Whenever doubt exists staff should seek the advice of the Headteacher/Head of School.

Implementation

In general, any concerns should be referred to the Leadership Team member with responsibility for the year group.

The following school policies are relevant to this Safeguarding Policy:

Annually: There will be an updating meeting on Child Protection and Safeguarding. All new staff will receive training and briefing.

Daily:

- ☉ All staff should wear their identity lanyard at all times when on school premises or working with children (for example accompanying children to the theatre/museum)
- ☉ All visitors to school must be under the direct supervision of a member of staff at all times. Contractors should wear a school visitor's sticker or be under the direct supervision of a member of staff at all times.
- ☉ Members and Governors should wear their identity lanyard when in school.
- ☉ If a person is seen in school without a visitor's lanyard they should be asked politely to report to the Head. If possible, staff should accompany the person.
- ☉ All staff are required to have the DBS, qualifications and identity check and two written references before they commence working. Only the Headteacher/Head of School can agree for a person to start work before these checks have been completed.

☉ If there is a safeguarding issue that arises from the recruitment process, the Headteacher/Head of

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School will conduct a risk assessment and there are three outcomes 1) the person is allowed to work with no control measures in place 2) the person may work subject to control measures that are therefore contractually binding and 3) the risk to the school cannot be reduced significantly by control measures and so any offer of employment is withdrawn.

☉ Any member of staff who becomes subject to a criminal procedure is required to report this to the Headteacher/Head of School at the earliest opportunity. Staff should report arrest, reprimand, caution and convictions to the Headteacher/Head of School (the Headteacher/Head of School)

The Headteacher/Head of School will conduct a risk assessment and there are three outcomes 1) the person is allowed to work with no control measures in place 2) the person may work subject to control measures that are therefore contractually binding and 3) the risk to the school cannot be reduced significantly by control measures and the disciplinary process will be invoked. Failure to disclose will normally be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

Safeguarding in the classroom

☉ All staff should wear their lanyard at all times

☉ Staff should be punctual to class and take reasonable steps to safeguard the children in class. This includes taking a register, recording absences and ensuring that the classroom is a safe environment for learning

☉ Control over the class should be such that children are safe

☉ Staff should not leave their classes unattended unless there is an urgent cause

☉ Staff should teach their classes and dismiss the class in an orderly manner at the correct time. Students should not be permitted to leave the lesson early.

☉ Students may only visit the toilet during lessons if there is urgency.

☉ It is sometimes appropriate for a child to be sent out of class for a 'cool-down'; this should be for no longer than a couple of minutes. Students should not be left standing outside a classroom. If a child's behaviour is such that they cannot stay in the lesson the child should be sent with a note and work to do, to the Deputy or Head's classroom. The matter must then be followed up by the teacher and a readmission meeting held between the teacher and student.

☉ Staff should brief classes on the escape route from the classroom in the event of an emergency evacuation. If the alarm bell sounds the Evacuation procedure must be followed.

ICT, Mobile phones and the internet

☉ Under no circumstances should a personal mobile phone number be given to a child.

☉ Also, staff should not engage in social networking activity with students. Any messages or contact made by a child via social networking or personal email must be reported to the Head.

☉ As members of staff working with children we have a responsibility that is set down in legislation but most particularly in *'Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 2- information for all school and college staff-*

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September 2021'

© As members of staff who work with children we have to be aware that exposure to images and other material that might be considered unsuitable and is the cause of harm to children is covered by the Children's Act of 1989 (Section 31). The definition of "harm" is the ill treatment or the impairment of health or development (including, for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another). The definition of development is physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development; the definition of "ill treatment" includes sexual abuse and forms of ill treatment which are not physical.

In order to guide and protect children all staff should ensure that:

© Any use of material that might be considered unsuitable is discussed in advance with the Deputy Head. If necessary, the Deputy Head will raise this with the Headteacher/Head of School. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in disciplinary action, including a charge of gross misconduct.

© Staff should not send, read or respond to emails when teaching. Also, staff should not browse the internet when teaching. The use of the internet and email for personal use should be minimal during the working day. The use of the internet for personal use is subject to monitoring.

© If a member of staff has concerns about another member of staff 's use of ICT then they should raise this with the Headteacher/Head of School.

Contact with children and young people outside school

© Under no circumstances may staff socialise with pupils at the school where there is alcohol present. Under no circumstances may a member of staff provide a student with alcohol, even where the student is above the age for legal consumption. If a member of staff has their own children at the school, they should consider carefully the contact they have with their child's friends. Any possible issues should be referred to the Headteacher/Head of School.

© In general, staff should not socialise with pupils at the school and should exercise extreme caution should it happen accidentally or inadvertently. Any possible issues should be referred to the Headteacher/Head of School.

© Physical contact between staff and pupils except where justified for teaching purposes, to prevent harm or maintain order is not permitted. Where there is physical contact between a member of staff and student, the matter should be referred to the Deputy Head by the end of the working day.

© In general, staff are in a position of trust and should therefore be aware that their actions may be misinterpreted by a child. Therefore, staff should exercise caution and report any possible or actual concerns.

Maintaining records

© From time to time, the school receives confidential information on a child that is not for general release but on a 'need to know' basis.

© The Deputy Headteacher holds a Monitoring File. This file is for logging concerns.

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Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Governors. In the event of a safeguarding concern this policy will be reviewed.

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