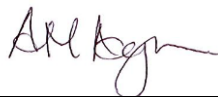




Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2024-25

Date of Board Approval	September 2024
Version	6
Next review date	September 2025
	
Responsible Officer	Chief Executive Officer

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 Safeguarding and 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 Safeguarding and 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.

2. Scope

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 Safeguarding and 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.

3. Equality Statement

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.

4. Policy and Procedures

- 4.1 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 2023. 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.
- 4.2 An individual school's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy must be made available via the school's own website.

5. Governance

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 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.
- 5.3 In addition, Directors, through the executive 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.

The executive 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. Local Governing Bodies, supported by the executive team, are responsible for overseeing and ensuring that all 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.

- 5.4 Local Governing Bodies, supported by the executive team, are responsible for the content of the PHSE (Personal, Health, Social, Economic), SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural) and RHSE (Relationships Health & Sex Education) curriculum and must ensure that it meets the needs of all young people.
- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 Directors and local governors should recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers and must ensure child protection policy includes procedures to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse, including child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment, and the procedure for investigating and responding to such incidents. Child-on child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:
- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
 - abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers;
 - physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse);
 - sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);
 - sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
 - causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party;
 - consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery);
 - up skirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm; and
 - initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).
- 5.7 Directors and local governors must ensure that schools have clear arrangements in place to respond quickly to cases where children are missing from education.
- 5.8 The Competency Framework for Governance states that everyone on the Board should understand the duties relating to safeguarding, including the Prevent Duty.
- 5.9 To ensure Directors have knowledge and information to perform their functions and understand their responsibilities, governors and directors should receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training at induction, and then at regular intervals. Training should provide them with the knowledge to ensure their school's safeguarding policies and procedures are effective

6. Safeguarding Report to Directors and Governors

- 6.1 The Safeguarding Report to Directors and local 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.
- 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 Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership (CSAP) for each school's local area (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 governing body 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.

7. Designated Safeguarding Lead

- 7.1 All schools must appoint a member of staff 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 (2023) and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024.
- 7.5 The expectation of all staff is that any concerns relating to significant harm are reported immediately to the DSL. In exceptional circumstances, if the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken. Staff should consider speaking to a member of the senior leadership team and/or take advice from local children's social care.
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.
- 7.6 During term time the DSL (or a deputy) should be available during school hours, for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. 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 2 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.

8. Who is a child?

Children includes everyone under the age of 18. A child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th 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 2023, Appendix A)

9. The difference between safeguarding and child protection?

9.1 All staff should have an understanding of the difference between safeguarding and child protection. Safeguarding and child protection is about managing risk.

9.2 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.

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

9.4 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 2024),

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

- Emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Domestic abuse

(These and other useful definitions can be found in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and KCSIE 2024)

9.6 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 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

10. What is effective safeguarding?

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

10.1 Establishing a Culture: 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.

10.2 Safeguarding and 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 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy should be published on the school website and be reviewed at least annually. It is important that the policy is dated.

The Safeguarding and 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, Gangs and Child-on-Child Abuse, Domestic Abuse, child criminal exploitation, mental health, serious violence and online safety.

- 10.3 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 extensively used to develop consistency across the school.
- 10.4** All staff must read 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 and reflect on it to demonstrate the move from compliance to impact. The DSL must keep an updated training tracker for staff having received training, when and of which type, such as basic, advanced, safer recruitment
- 10.5** 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. All staff should be aware of their local early help process and understand their role in it. All staff should be aware of the process for making referrals to children's social care and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, that may follow a referral, along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments. All staff should know what to do if a child tells them they are being abused, exploited or neglected. Staff should know how to manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality.
- 10.6** All staff must have PREVENT training to understand the duties on schools from the Counter Terrorism and Security Act.
- 10.7 Safer Recruitment:** The Headteacher must know who is in the school and that they have been suitably vetted. 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. Safer recruitment training must be completed by all relevant staff. This training should be renewed on a regular basis.
- 10.8** The Trust will ensure that there is an updated Single Central record of all Trust staff. Each school will maintain its own updated Single Central Record, which will be reviewed and audited at least every half term.
- 10.9** 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 of the Trust if it is regarding the Headteacher) through the Whistleblowing Policy.
- 10.10** 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.
- 10.11** The Staff Code of Conduct, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, and Behaviour Policy must be read by all staff at the beginning of each academic year (in addition to statutory guidance).
- 10.12 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 should have appropriate fencing and buffer zones that must be kept in good order.
- 10.13** Use of CCTV cameras must be used in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations to satisfy prevention of misuse or challenge.

- 10.14** All visitors must be identified and recorded. Visitors that do not have DBS clearance must be supervised at all times.
- 10.15** 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.
- 10.16 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.
- 10.17 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.
- 10.18 On line safety:** Individual schools should ensure IT systems in schools are protected and schools must ensure equipment is used safely in accordance with corporate policies. Governors should regularly review the effectiveness of school filters and monitoring systems. Schools should use communications with parents and carers to reinforce the importance of children being safe online. S
Schools should share information with
- parents/carers about: what systems they have in place to filter and monitor online use,
 - what they are asking children to do online, including the sites they will be asked to access,
 - who from the school (if anyone) their child is going to be interacting with online.
- 10.19 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.
- 10.20 Education off site:** 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.
- 10.21 Health and Safety regulations:** 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.
- 10.22 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.
- 10.23** 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.
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. It should also help children and young

people understand the concept of consent. . The curriculum must cover all aspects of the safety and well-being of young people and in particular focus on giving them a 'voice'. It will also include pupils being aware of the Protected Characteristics set out in the Equalities Act 2010

- 10.24 Pupil's voice:** 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. Staff should understand that a child may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused
- 10.25 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.
- 10.26 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.
- 10.27 Transfer of Child Protection Files:** 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.
- 10.28 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.