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SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

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1. Introduction

Safeguarding and child protection are central to the mission of St. David's Catholic College. As a Catholic community, we affirm that every learner is created in the image and likeness of God and deserves safety, respect, and love. Safeguarding means protecting children, young people, and adults at risk from harm, neglect, exploitation, radicalisation, and unsafe practices.

Child protection refers specifically to the legal and pastoral duties owed to those under 18. Together, safeguarding and child protection are fundamental to our Catholic mission to create a safe environment where every learner can flourish.

2. Purpose and Scope

- i. This policy sets out how St. David's Catholic College protects children, young people, and adults at risk. It provides a framework to prevent harm, respond effectively to concerns, and uphold the dignity and safety of every learner.
- ii. The policy applies to all learners, staff, governors, volunteers, contractors, agency staff, visitors, and partners across all College sites, activities, and digital platforms.
- iii. Particular emphasis is placed on supporting learners who are disadvantaged or at greater risk of harm, reflecting the Catholic option for the poor.

3. Definitions

- i. Safeguarding is protecting children, young people, and adults at risk from harm, neglect, exploitation, or abuse, ensuring they live and learn in safety.
- ii. Child Protection is the specific legal duties to safeguard children under 18 from significant harm.
- iii. Adult at Risk includes individuals aged 18+ who may be at risk of abuse or neglect and who cannot protect themselves.
- iv. Abuse may be physical, emotional, sexual, financial, institutional, or discriminatory.
- v. Exploitation is taking advantage of a person for financial, criminal, or personal gain, including county lines and sexual exploitation.
- vi. Prevent Duty is a statutory responsibility to protect learners from radicalisation or extremism, rooted in our Catholic values of peace and dialogue.
- vii. Trauma-Informed Practice is recognising the impact of trauma and ACEs and responding with compassion and support.

4. Legal and Policy Framework

This policy operates within Welsh and UK law, including:

- i. Education Act 2002
- ii. Children Acts 1989 and 2004
- iii. Social Services & Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
- iv. Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019
- v. Keeping Learners Safe (Welsh Government 2022)
- vi. Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and Prevent Duty Guidance 2023
- vii. Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998
- viii. Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- ix. Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
- x. Keeping Young Performers Safe (Welsh Government 2023)

5. Roles and Responsibilities

i. All Adults

Every adult in the College - staff, governors, volunteers, contractors, and agency workers shares responsibility for safeguarding. All concerns, however small, must be reported through the College's safeguarding procedures and the MyConcern platform. Adults are expected to act with vigilance, place learner welfare first, and reflect the Catholic ethos of dignity and respect. Annual safeguarding and Prevent training ensures awareness of emerging risks such as exploitation, online harm, and radicalisation.

ii. Pastoral Staff

Pastoral tutors and leads support learner wellbeing, monitor attendance, and build inclusive communities where learners feel safe to speak. They work closely with the Safeguarding and Wellbeing team to ensure concerns are promptly recorded and learners receive appropriate support.

iii. Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP)

The DSP, Assistant Principal – Learner Culture, leads safeguarding strategy and practice. They report to governors and the Archdiocese, oversee audits and compliance, and ensure procedures meet statutory requirements while remaining faithful to the College's Catholic mission.

- iv. Deputy Designated Safeguarding Persons (DDSPs)
Deputies support the DSP by managing cases, making referrals, and providing cover when required. They also chair Fitness to Study meetings and help embed restorative approaches into safeguarding practice.
- v. Safeguarding and Wellbeing Manager
The Manager coordinates safeguarding operations, including reviewing MyConcern reports, referrals to agencies, staff training, and record-keeping. They also oversee support for priority groups such as learners in care and young carers.
- vi. Safeguarding Governor
The Governing Body appoints a Safeguarding Governor to oversee safeguarding arrangements. Meeting regularly with the DSP and Manager, the Governor ensures compliance, provides accountability, and helps maintain transparency with the Archdiocese and wider College community.
- vii. Principal
The Principal carries ultimate responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. They ensure policies are resourced, reviewed, and consistently applied. Working closely with the DSP and governors, the Principal embeds safeguarding in strategy and culture, modelling openness, accountability, and compassion in line with the College's Catholic values.

6. Safeguarding Procedures

- i. The College follows a Recognise, Record, Report, Respond, Review process.
- ii. Concerns are logged in MyConcern and triaged within 24 hours.
- iii. Actions may include early help, referral to statutory agencies, or emergency response.
- iv. Allegations against staff are handled in line with national guidance.
- v. Learners are supported with compassion and confidentiality in line with Catholic values.
- vi. All staff members are required to raise concerns related to safeguarding, behaviour, and wellbeing through the MyConcern platform.
- vii. Concerns reported via MyConcern will be reviewed by the Safeguarding Manager and triaged to the appropriate staff for further action.

- viii. Where necessary, teaching staff will be informed of safeguarding concerns related to individual learners to ensure appropriate support and monitoring.
- ix. The College will contact the learner's Next of Kin to inform them of any safeguarding concerns if the learner is under 18 and the College deems it safe to do so.
- x. If deemed necessary, the College may invite the Next of Kin to participate in a multi-party meeting to discuss safeguarding concerns and collaboratively develop support strategies. This could be in the form of completing a Health and Additional Support Plan, if safeguarding concerns are affecting attendance.
- xi. The College will inform relevant external agencies, including Social Services, the Police, and Prevent, as necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the learner.
- xii. In instances where the safety of other learners is at risk, the College will act in accordance with its Fitness to Study Policy.
- xiii. All records and communications regarding safeguarding concerns will be securely stored in MyConcern and maintained in compliance with GDPR regulations. All staff with access to MyConcern are expected to uphold the confidentiality of sensitive information.
- xiv. In the case of self-harm, the College will require the learner to go home if safe to do so or seek medical treatment. They will not be permitted to return until a risk assessment has been conducted to keep the learner and others safe.
- xv. In the event of an overdose, the learner will be transported to the Accident & Emergency department, or emergency services will be contacted as necessary. In the case of recurrent incidents the College will act in accordance with its Fitness to Study Policy.
- xvi. The safeguarding team will monitor college-wide patterns of behaviour and will ensure that all staff are informed and provided with guidance regarding relevant protocols.
- xvii. All learners identified with safeguarding concerns will be highlighted on the College MIS system and their attendance will be monitored as a priority to ensure their ongoing wellbeing.
- xviii. Learners identified as 'In care' at enrolment or through their time at college will be put on a 'risk register' to be monitored and supported by the Safeguarding and Wellbeing team.

- xix. Learners who have identified as being 'Young Carers' will have a Care and Support Plan completed by the Safeguarding & Wellbeing Manager. This will be monitored throughout the year.
- xx. Further details of reporting routes, record keeping, and case management are outlined in the College's **Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures**, which accompany this policy.

7. Key Themes and Emerging Risks

The College recognises that safeguarding risks evolve and can affect learners in different ways. The following areas are given particular attention in our safeguarding practice:

- i. Looked After Children and Care-Experienced Learners: Learners in care or with care experience often face greater risks of harm, disruption, or isolation. The College prioritises pastoral support, consistent monitoring, and positive attachment relationships to help them thrive.
- ii. Young Carers: Learners with caring responsibilities may struggle with attendance, concentration, or wellbeing. Staff are alert to these pressures, and support plans are developed to balance their learning and caring roles.
- iii. Peer-on-Peer Abuse, Sexual Violence and Harassment: The College recognises that harm can occur between learners. We ensure early identification, victim support, and appropriate recording and referral in line with Welsh guidance.
- iv. Online Safety and Cyber Harm: Risks such as grooming, image-based abuse, exposure to extremist content, and cyberbullying are monitored closely. The College promotes digital literacy and resilience as part of its safeguarding curriculum.
- v. Radicalisation and Extremist Ideology: In line with the Prevent Duty, the College is vigilant to signs of radicalisation. We aim to protect learners from extremist influence while promoting Catholic values of dialogue, peace, and human dignity.
- vi. Criminal or Sexual Exploitation: The College recognises the dangers of county lines, trafficking, modern slavery, and online exploitation. Staff are trained to identify vulnerabilities and respond in partnership with external agencies.

- vii. Substance Misuse, Alcohol and Vaping: Substance use can be linked to poor mental health, exploitation, or absenteeism. The College addresses this through education, support, and proportionate intervention.
- viii. Domestic Abuse and Teen Relationship Violence: Learners may be affected by abuse in their own relationships or homes. Staff respond sensitively, ensuring referrals are made when necessary.
- ix. Self-Harm, Suicidal Ideation and Mental Health Crisis: The College ensures early support and appropriate use of risk assessments and Fitness to Study procedures to keep learners safe.
- x. Honour-Based Abuse, Forced Marriage and FGM: Staff are alert to cultural forms of abuse and comply with mandatory reporting duties in cases of forced marriage or female genital mutilation.
- xi. Learners Missing Education: Unexplained absence may be an indicator of exploitation, neglect, or disengagement. The College follows up promptly to safeguard learners.
- xii. Serious Violence and Weapons: The College monitors local trends and works with the police to address risks of violence or weapons in the community.
- xiii. Health, Disability and Medical Needs: Learners with healthcare needs are supported through appropriate planning and reasonable adjustments. Safeguarding includes ensuring their medical safety and full inclusion.
- xiv. Performing Arts (“Performance-Safe”): Activities such as drama, dance, music, and theatre may involve physical contact, sensitive material, or heightened emotion. The College applies Welsh Government guidance on keeping young performers safe.
- xv. These themes are integrated into safeguarding practice and tutorial delivery, reflecting our Catholic mission to uphold the dignity of each learner and ensure their safety, wellbeing, and growth. Further details are outlined in the College’s **Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures.**

8. Safer Recruitment

- i. The College is committed to safer recruitment as a core safeguarding measure. All adverts, job descriptions and person specifications highlight our duty to protect

learners, and candidates are expected to demonstrate their suitability to work safely with young people.

- ii. Interview panels include at least one member trained in safer recruitment, ensuring questions explore safeguarding attitudes, professional boundaries, and understanding of responsibilities.
- iii. Before employment begins, the College completes all statutory checks, including enhanced DBS, barred list, identity, right to work, references, and prohibition checks where required. No one may start until these checks are satisfactorily completed.
- iv. All new staff and regular volunteers undertake safeguarding and Prevent induction, which introduces both statutory duties and the Catholic ethos underpinning our practice. Staff are also required to disclose any changes in circumstances that could affect their suitability.
- v. By embedding these measures, the College ensures safer recruitment is more than a process; it is part of a culture of vigilance that keeps learners safe.

9. Training and Awareness

All staff complete safeguarding and Prevent training at induction and refresh this annually. Designated Safeguarding Persons (DSPs) and Deputies receive advanced training every two years. Learners are introduced to safeguarding themes such as online safety, consent, and healthy relationships through the tutorial programme, reflecting both statutory duties and the College's Catholic ethos.

10. Information Sharing and Confidentiality

- i. Confidentiality is not absolute where safety is at risk.
- ii. Safeguarding information is shared lawfully and proportionately under UK GDPR.

11. Governance, Oversight, and Review

- i. The Governing Body carries ultimate accountability for safeguarding and child protection across the College. Governors ensure that statutory responsibilities are met and that safeguarding is embedded in the College's ethos and daily life.

- ii. The Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) provides termly reports to the Governing Body, outlining case trends, emerging risks, staff training, and areas for development. The Principal works alongside the DSP to ensure that safeguarding remains a priority at a strategic level and that sufficient resources are allocated to support staff and learners effectively.
- iii. An annual safeguarding report is presented to the Governing Body and the Archdiocese, offering assurance that the College is fulfilling its responsibilities in line with both statutory duties and Catholic values.
- iv. This policy is reviewed annually or sooner if required by changes in legislation or in response to incidents. Learner and staff voice are included in this review, ensuring that safeguarding arrangements remain both effective and rooted in the lived experience of the College community.

12. Linked Policies

This policy should be read alongside: Anti-Bullying Policy, Prevent Policy, Online Safety Policy, Fitness to Study Policy, Equality and Anti-Racism Action Plan, Attendance Policy, Health & Safety Policy, Substance Misuse Policy, and Safer Recruitment Policy.

13. Complaints

- i. All safeguarding concerns should be raised with the Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) or a Deputy DSP.
- ii. Formal complaints will follow the College's Complaints Policy.
- iii. Complaints relating to staff will be managed in line with national guidance and College policy.

Appendix 1: Statutory Framework

The following legislation and statutory guidance underpin this policy:

- Children Act 1989
- Education Act 2002 (Section 175)
- Children Act 2004
- Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
- Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019
- Keeping Learners Safe (Welsh Government, 2022)
- Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 & Prevent Duty Guidance 2023
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Keeping Young Performers Safe (Welsh Government, 2023)

Appendix 2: Signs and Indicators of Abuse and Neglect

- Abuse can present in many forms. Staff should remain alert to the following potential signs:
- Physical Abuse: unexplained injuries, bruises or burns, reluctance to change clothes for sport, fear of physical contact.
- Emotional Abuse: excessive withdrawal or aggression, developmental delay, low self-esteem, overreaction to mistakes, fear of failure.
- Sexual Abuse: sexual knowledge inappropriate to age, difficulty walking or sitting, sexually explicit behaviour, avoidance of certain people.
- Neglect: constant hunger or tiredness, poor hygiene, untreated medical conditions, frequent absence, inadequate clothing.
- Exploitation: sudden acquisition of possessions, missing episodes, associations with older individuals, secrecy about online activity.
- Other Forms: honour-based abuse, forced marriage, FGM, domestic abuse, exposure to radicalisation.
- Staff should report any concerns immediately through the College's safeguarding procedures, even if there is uncertainty about whether abuse has occurred.