



NSPCC Safeguarding Report

St Patrick's Catholic Voluntary Academy

20th July 2023

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1 - Introduction

St Patrick's Catholic Voluntary Academy (St Patrick's) is situated in Sheffield. The school caters for children from the early years up to Key Stage 2. The school is committed to providing a nurturing and holistic educational environment, emphasising both academic excellence and spiritual development.

The school serves a diverse and close-knit local community in Sheffield. With a rich tapestry of cultures, backgrounds, and traditions, St Patrick's prides itself on fostering an inclusive atmosphere, promoting understanding, and celebrating the uniqueness of each individual within its student body. The school's faith-based ethos underpins its educational philosophy, encouraging students to develop moral values and a strong sense of community responsibility.

Recently, St Patrick's Catholic encountered a challenge related to the organisational structure and responsibilities of its staff. A discrepancy between the Local Authority (LA) and the school arose when the Business Manager had pastoral and safeguarding responsibilities. The LA raised concerns that this arrangement did not adhere to the safeguarding guidelines set by Sheffield.

2 - Objectives

2.1 Activities undertaken

On Monday 20th July 2023, a comprehensive onsite visit was conducted at St Patrick's to assess the prominence and effectiveness of their Safeguarding policies and procedures. Before the visit, an in-depth review of the school's website was undertaken to gain insights into their approach to safeguarding. To ensure a comprehensive evaluation, a series of meetings were scheduled with key staff members, including the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), the DDSL, the governor responsible for safeguarding, as well as students and representatives of the staff, encompassing a diverse range of roles within the school community. A thorough site tour was carried out, providing an opportunity to observe the layout and assess the facilities across the premises.

2.2 Safeguarding policy and website information

The website of St Patrick's Catholic was found to be relatively easy to navigate, providing convenient access to various sections and policies. However, it was noted that the safeguarding policy was not available at the time of the review, which should be promptly addressed to ensure all essential policies are readily accessible to stakeholders. Other policies were easily accessible, though they were presented in word format.

The safeguarding page on the website had its own designated space, but improvements could be made to enhance user-friendliness. Reviewing the content and ensuring that the wording and contact details are presented as expected would contribute to a more coherent and informative section. Merging the online safety and overarching safeguarding page could simplify navigation and information retrieval for visitors.



The website currently lacks additional external links to outside agencies such as the NSPCC, which could provide valuable support to those in need. By incorporating such resources, the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the well-being of its students and families would be further emphasised.

Although the website features a dedicated email address for safeguarding concerns, discussions with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) revealed that it is not extensively utilised. To enhance its effectiveness, further consideration could be given to publicising the email address more prominently, encouraging stakeholders to use it when necessary.

Recommendations and suggestions

- › *Review the safeguarding section of the website to ensure that the information contained is up to date, easily accessible and informative.*
- › *Consider adding a bank of resources that parents/carers can access for information around safeguarding i.e., online safety or safe use of WhatsApp.*
- › *Ensure that policies and procedures that are available on the website are in PDF format.*
- › *Ensure that the safeguarding policy is available on the website.*
- › *Consider how the designated email address for the safeguarding team could be more widely publicised to encourage use as required.*
- › *Add a 'bounce back' option to the safeguarding email. To ensure that students/parents who use it are signposted to other sources of support and ensure that it states it is not an emergency email, and signpost police and MAST.*
- › *Review the wording used on the website that states the safeguarding team contact numbers are to be used in an emergency.*

3 – Site security, physical environment, visitor information

3.1 Access to the Site

The perimeter fencing is in good condition and has been altered strategically to ensure the safety of both staff and students. The school conducts regular reviews and perimeter walks to identify and address any potential risks, such as harmful debris from the outside community.

Despite the efforts to maintain a secure perimeter, there was a previous incident where an intruder managed to breach the tall fence, prompting the school to initiate its lockdown process to ensure the safety of everyone on-site. This incident highlights the school's commitment to responding promptly and effectively to security breaches.

To bolster security further, CCTV cameras are installed both internally and externally, providing comprehensive coverage of entrances and key areas of the school premises. This surveillance system enhances the overall security measures and assists in monitoring potential security threats.



3.2 Visitors

The process for welcoming and signing in visitors at St Patrick's involves an ID check and DBS procedure. Upon arrival, visitors are required to undergo an ID check to verify their identity. Additionally, the school follows a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) procedure to ensure that appropriate safeguarding measures are in place when dealing with visitors.

However, it was observed that while visitors undergo the ID and DBS checks, they are not provided with lanyards or additional information on safeguarding, such as a safeguarding leaflet. This area could be improved to ensure that visitors are adequately informed about the school's safeguarding protocols.

For visitor access during the day, there is a designated gate for visitors, but at the start of the school day, multiple entrances are open. These entrances are locked in a planned manner to manage access and ensure security throughout the day.

The Reception area of the school is separate from the main school and is secured by a locked door, creating a controlled and secure point of entry.

3.3 Staff access

Staff members park offsite and access the building through designated gates and doors. As part of the school's security and attendance management procedures, staff are expected to use the online system for signing in and signing out as required. This system helps track staff attendance and ensures that the school can account for their presence during working hours. By utilising the online signing-in system, the school maintains a secure and efficient method for monitoring staff access and movements on and off the premises.

3.4 School environment

Despite being an older building, recent renovations and maintenance work have created a fresh and updated atmosphere. The overall design of the building allows for smooth student flow and easy access to classrooms, encouraging collaboration among students and staff. There is a program of works planned to ensure continued upkeep in all areas of the building.

Throughout the school, displays are well-maintained and visually appealing. However, it was noted that there were no prominent safeguarding displays or signs indicating the safeguarding team's contact information for both students and staff. Including such information would enhance awareness and accessibility to safeguarding resources.

The outdoor spaces are well maintained, and the site team diligently work to ensure safety and cleanliness. Although challenges may arise due to the school's location, efforts are made to maintain a secure environment for all users. The school is equipped with CCTV systems both inside and outside the building. Robust procedures are in place for the drop-off and collection of students. This ensures a welcoming and supervised environment during these critical periods.



Recommendations and suggestions

- › *Safeguarding leaflet for visitors – consider the potential of implementing this with required information i.e. contact information for the safeguarding team, fire safety and use of mobile phones protocol.*
- › *Consider a lanyard system for visitors to distinguish who is a staff member etc and coloured to distinguish DBS checks. Implement this with the students and staff so that a challenge can be achieved to those who may be walking alone.*
- › *Ensure that all staff wear their lanyards.*
- › *Signage raising the profile of safeguarding could be increased across the school including in classrooms.*
- › *Consider a safeguarding board in the staffroom to help raise the profile in the school include a topic of the term or something similar to spark discussion and maintain staff interest.*
- › *Review the need for an evac chair to be able to evacuate those students who have additional needs.*
- › *Ensure that PEEPS are in place for those students and staff that need them.*
- › *Ensure that the site is tidy, for example, the scooter shed had a wheelbarrow and site equipment in. These should be stored in a more secure space.*

4 – Leadership and management of safeguarding

4.1 Safeguarding management structure

The school has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who is also the Headteacher, overseeing strategic aspects of safeguarding. Additionally, a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) plays a vital operational role in leading safeguarding efforts. The DDSL is a non-teaching staff member, ensuring a focus on safeguarding without conflicting teaching commitments. There is also a Governor assigned to oversee the governance of safeguarding and another with a focus on online safety, both collaborating with the DSL and DDSL in safeguarding initiatives.

Other key members of the safeguarding team include the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) and the Curriculum IT specialist, who also oversees online safety aspects. A Learning Mentor is actively involved in the Safeguarding Team, providing valuable support. Presently (due to maternity leave), one Learning Mentor position is covered by two temporary staff members, contributing non-teaching expertise to the team.

The pastoral structure within the school comprises the DDSL, who holds the role of Pastoral Lead. Working alongside the Headteacher and the SENCO, they form a cohesive team dedicated to supporting students' pastoral needs. The Pastoral and safeguarding teams are effectively combined, allowing for a holistic approach to supporting students' overall well-being and safety. This collaboration ensures that both the emotional and physical safety of students is addressed, creating a conducive environment for learning and personal development.



4.2 DSL/DDSL Training

Within the last two years, the DSL and DDSL at St Patrick's have undertaken a range of relevant training to stay current in their roles. The DSL has completed level 4 DSL training, there is a scheduled for an update in October 2023. Similarly, SRiE (Safer Recruitment in Education) training was completed but is also due for an update in the next academic year. The DDSL is booked to complete Advanced DSL training on 31st July 23 and completed SRiE training on 12th July 23.

Both the DSL and DDSL have received the following training:

- **Online safety training** was completed through National Online Safety, extending the knowledge and understanding of safeguarding in the digital realm. Notably, this training was also extended to all staff and governors at the school, ensuring a comprehensive approach to online safety.
- **Mental Health First Aid training** was undertaken, emphasising the importance of mental health awareness and support within the school community.
- **Trauma Informed Practice training** has been completed, ensuring that staff are equipped to respond sensitively to students who may have experienced trauma.

The DSL has additional training in the pipeline, with PREVENT training soon to be completed, reinforcing the school's commitment to preventing radicalisation and extremism.

In terms of keeping up to date with safeguarding developments, the DSL is subscribed to various resources, including Andrew Hall, NSPCC, and Online Safety updates, ensuring that the school remains informed about changes to policies and emerging issues in safeguarding.

Previously, the school has engaged in local training to strengthen its links with the Local Authority (LA) and Children's Social Care (CSC). Networking events are also attended by the safeguarding team as required, enhancing their collaboration with external partners and knowledge sharing.

Looking ahead, the school has identified the need for further training in Trauma Informed Practice, with a focus on implementing it effectively throughout the school.

4.3 DSL Capacity

The DSL at St Patrick's holds the role of Headteacher, taking on significant responsibilities within the school's leadership team. Alongside the Headteacher, the DSL collaborates closely with the DDSL, who is the Pastoral Lead and also serves as the Business Manager. This combination of roles allows for a cohesive approach to safeguarding and pastoral care, as both individuals contribute their expertise to support the well-being of students.

The DSL and DDSL feel that they have sufficient time, resources, and support to be effective in their safeguarding roles. However, given that the Headteacher holds the DSL position, there is a potential risk of them being taken away from their primary leadership duties if a significant safeguarding concern arises. It is essential to monitor this situation to ensure that



the distribution of responsibilities remains manageable and does not overly impact the Headteacher's ability to lead the school effectively.

Despite the potential challenge, both the DSL and DDSL understand the critical importance of their safeguarding roles within the context of their wider contributions to the school. Their leadership and pastoral responsibilities enable them to endeavour to create a safe and nurturing environment for students, fostering a positive learning experience for all.

4.4 Supervision and support

There is no formal supervision in place for the DSL and DDSL. However, they find support in each other, creating a supportive network within the safeguarding team. Despite the absence of formal supervision, their mutual collaboration and communication enable them to share experiences, insights, and concerns, contributing to their overall well-being and effectiveness in their roles.

In terms of additional support, the school provides access to an educational psychologist who can be consulted if needed. Additionally, the DSL and DDSL can tap into a network of other headteachers, offering a valuable resource for sharing knowledge and best practices in safeguarding.

Regarding their well-being, the school has occupational health support in place to address any concerns that may arise.

4.5 Day to day management of safeguarding

St Patrick's utilises CPOMS as its electronic system for reporting concerns, encompassing both behaviour and safeguarding matters. Notifications are sent directly to the DSL (Headteacher) and the DDSL (Pastoral Lead and Business Manager), ensuring that concerns are promptly received and addressed by the appropriate members of the Safeguarding Team.

Staff members primarily turn to the DDSL as their main source of support and advice if they have any safeguarding concerns. The DDSL's role as the Pastoral Lead provides a natural point of contact for staff seeking guidance on student well-being and safeguarding matters.

For out-of-hours concerns, including during holiday periods, the DSL and DDSL maintain dedicated work mobile phones to ensure accessibility and responsiveness. Additionally, there is a designated Safeguarding email address available for staff to report concerns. In situations where more specialised support is required, the school has arrangements with the MAST team (Local Authority Multi-Agency Safeguarding Team), ensuring that external assistance is readily available when needed.

The DSL, DDSL, and Safeguarding Team offices is situated in the middle of the school, providing convenient access for staff and ensuring that the team is accessible to all members of the school community when necessary.



4.6 Strategic Management of safeguarding

The responsibility and oversight for strategic safeguarding lie with the Headteacher. As the strategic lead, the Headteacher plays a crucial role in shaping the school's safeguarding policies, procedures, and long-term planning to create a safe and nurturing environment for all students.

Looking ahead, the school's future plans for development are focused on addressing Trauma and Mental Health. The aim is to prioritise the well-being of the whole child, encompassing emotional and mental health aspects beyond the traditional academic curriculum. By adopting a proactive approach, the school seeks to anticipate and address potential safeguarding issues before they become significant concerns.

The DSL plays a central role in driving the school's safeguarding agenda, particularly through the implementation of trauma-informed practice. This approach emphasises understanding and responding to the impact of trauma on students' well-being, guiding interventions and support accordingly.

To enhance safeguarding efforts, the school is looking to strengthen its relationships with parents and involve them in the safeguarding process from an early stage. This proactive engagement aims to foster collaboration between the school and parents, ensuring a holistic approach to student support.

4.7 Governance of safeguarding

There is a named Safeguarding Governor (SG) who holds a crucial role in overseeing safeguarding policies and procedures. The current SG, who is also the Chair of Governors (CoG), has been in the role for a significant period due to the church's requirements for governors.

In terms of safeguarding training, the CoG has completed online safeguarding training, along with all other governors, using resources provided by the school's solicitors. This training equips them to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities effectively.

The SG (CoG) meets with the DSL/Headteacher weekly on Monday mornings, establishing regular communication and collaboration between the two key safeguarding roles. While there is no explicit written report on safeguarding from the SG, the headteacher includes a safeguarding section in their regular reports to the governing body. Safeguarding visits are also verbally reported back to the governing body, ensuring ongoing oversight and awareness.

Safeguarding is a standing agenda item in governing body meetings, highlighting the importance of this topic in the school's governance process.

The SG recognises several strengths in the school's safeguarding work, particularly the effective structure of the safeguarding team, with the finance manager serving as the deputy lead. The school's commitment to a wide-ranging approach to safeguarding, including a focus on pastoral care and a trauma-informed approach, is also viewed positively.



However, one area of improvement noted by the SG is the desire to see staff demonstrate a deeper commitment to taking safeguarding seriously, ensuring that safeguarding remains a top priority throughout the school community.

Recommendations and suggestions

- › *Review the reporting process for the governors. Ensure that a safeguarding report is submitted at least on an annual basis.*
- › *Use a set format for site visits by the governing body around safeguarding to aid focus and ensure necessary areas are being covered.*
- › *Sign up to NSPCC Caspar update.*
- › *Regular review of the Headteacher capacity for being DSL and should be amended accordingly.*
- › *Consider formal external supervision moving forward.*
- › *Consider parent coffee mornings with a key focus to get them onside. Start this process slowly and consider how this can be used to bring people on side/increase capacity.*

5 - Safeguarding Procedures and Record Keeping

5.1 Staff know how to report a concern

Staff have a clear understanding of the process for passing on concerns, which aligns with the school's safeguarding policy. They are aware of the designated personnel to approach in case of concerns and are instructed to inform the DSL or DDSL as available.

In terms of recording concerns, staff have been provided with guidance on how to do so effectively. They have received training on what should be logged and the appropriate procedures to follow when documenting their concerns. If staff have concerns about another member of staff, they are instructed to report the issue to the Headteacher. In the case of concerns about the Headteacher, staff are directed to inform the Chair of Governors (CoG). The CoG's email address is available in the system, and staff are aware that she is present every Monday, making it accessible for them to reach out if needed.

5.2 Staff know how to escalate a concern

Staff at St Patrick's Catholic Voluntary Academy have clarity on the process for escalating concerns when necessary. They understand the appropriate steps to take if they encounter a safeguarding issue that requires further action or involvement from external parties.

The school's whistle-blowing policy is known to staff, and though they have been informed about it, they have not encountered a situation where it needed to be utilised.

5.3 Staff are given feedback and support

When staff at St Patrick's raise a concern, they may receive feedback depending on whether it is appropriate for them to be informed. The school takes into account the sensitive nature



of certain situations and provides "need-to-know" feedback accordingly, ensuring that staff are appropriately updated without compromising confidentiality.

For staff who have received a disclosure or have been involved in challenging situations, personal support is offered. The school recognises the potential impact such experiences can have on staff well-being and provides assistance as needed. Staff can access a counsellor who is available to offer support and guidance during challenging times, although it should be noted that there is no Employee Assistance Program (EAP) in place.

The DSL (Headteacher) plays a prominent part in school life, offering wider support and guidance on safeguarding issues. The DSL, along with the broader safeguarding team, takes a team-based approach to dealing with safeguarding matters. They are approachable and strive to provide the necessary help and assistance when addressing concerns. This collaborative effort aims to ensure that the school community is well-supported and that the safety and well-being of students and staff remain a top priority.

5.4 Record keeping

At St Patrick's Catholic Voluntary Academy, any paper records are securely stored in locked cabinets, ensuring that access to sensitive information is restricted to authorised personnel.

The records maintained by the school include comprehensive chronologies, actions taken, decisions made, and outcomes of safeguarding concerns. These details are recorded within the CPOMS system, which serves as a centralised platform for safeguarding information. These electronic student files in CPOMS may include relevant documents, such as minutes from meetings, further enhancing the completeness and accuracy of the records.

When students transfer to new settings, where possible their files are managed electronically through CPOMS. The school ensures that files are sent to the receiving setting within the expected timeframe of 5 days. To maintain accountability, a record is kept of the files that are sent and received during the transfer process.

5.5 Analysis of data

Safeguarding data is utilised to compile a safeguarding report, providing an overview of the school's safeguarding efforts and challenges. However, the data analysis process could be improved, and the school may consider liaising with CPOMS or other relevant platforms to enhance their analytical capabilities.

Recent analysis of safeguarding data has revealed some areas of concern, particularly regarding the accuracy of safeguarding tick-boxes. Some staff members may tick safeguarding indicators without complete certainty, leading to potential discrepancies in reporting. Addressing this issue and ensuring staff receive appropriate guidance may improve the accuracy and reliability of safeguarding data.

5.6 Single Central Record and Safer Recruitment

The school has established and operational processes for maintaining the Single Central Record (SCR), which are effectively ensuring its accuracy and completeness. The school



business manager holds the responsibility for managing the SCR, ensuring that it contains all relevant information pertaining to staff, volunteers, governors, and other individuals associated with the school.

Visitors, including contractors, health professionals, and counsellors, provide Letters of Assurance (as appropriate) as evidence of their commitment to safeguarding and adherence to the school's policies and procedures.

Both the Headteacher and the Safeguarding Governor regularly conduct checks on the SCR to verify its accuracy and comprehensiveness.

The school has implemented a Safer Recruitment policy, which outlines the key stages involved in the recruitment process. This policy ensures the strict adherence to safe recruitment practices, enhancing the school's commitment to safeguarding during the hiring process.

Recommendations and suggestions

- *Data usage. Running reports to show emerging data is something that the safeguarding team should utilise more regularly.*
- *Ensure that when reporting to the governing body, the data is compared to previous data to help spot potential trends.*
- *Staff training – ensure staff are confident in how to record on CPOMs and what they should select as categories.*
- *Review categories to ensure they are accurate and reflect the needs of the school and Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance.*
- *CPOMS: review what has been actioned for each active safeguarding case. All logs should have an action which is clear and once completed the log should be closed to demonstrate that all actions have been completed.*
- *Review how things are recorded on CPOMS with staff due to the use for pastoral categories etc. appropriately and to ensure the ability of accurate reporting/data analysis.*
- *SCR: Add a sheet called 'Checks' to show that they have been done.*
- *SCR: Ensure that any copies of original documents i.e., ID checks etc are signed, printed, dated, to ensure clear audit loop.*

6 - Multi-Agency Working

6.1 Engagement with the Local Authority

St Patrick's has established arrangements for referrals through the Multi-Agency Support Team (MAST). This team serves as the 'front door' or 'hub' for handling safeguarding referrals and coordinating multi-agency support. The DSL is familiar with the referral process and works closely with the MAST to ensure effective safeguarding practices.

The school receives support from the Local Authority (LA) through a link support worker who serves as a bridge between the safeguarding team and the LA. This support worker offers



advice and guidance as needed, strengthening the school's partnership with the LA in safeguarding matters.

Through its involvement in Operation Encompass, the school receives reports as expected, ensuring it is aware of and responsive to any relevant safeguarding concerns.

The DSL and DDSL play an active role in attending meetings and training sessions organised by the LA. This engagement fosters effective communication, learning, and networking opportunities, further enhancing the school's safeguarding capabilities.

6.2 Engagement with Children's Social Care

Currently, there are no children identified as Child Protection cases at the school, nor are there any children classified as Child in Need. However, the school does have two children designated as Looked After (LAC), and an additional three children are involved in a Team Around the Child (TAC) process. The SENCo also serves as the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children. In this capacity, they ensure that appropriate support and interventions are provided to meet the specific needs of Looked After Children.

The school collaborates with a single local authority, which consistently offers support in safeguarding and other related areas. Although no challenging decisions have been made by another agency at present, the DSL is well-versed in the procedures and expectations regarding escalation should such a situation arise in the future. This familiarity ensures that the school is well-prepared to address any complex safeguarding issues that may require inter-agency involvement.

6.3 Engagement with other organisations

Police: The school maintains a strong partnership with the local Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) through the establishment of a link PCSO. The school actively participates in Operation Encompass, and the PCSO also engages with the students, providing education on current topics.

Health: The school benefits from the support of school nurses and has provisions in place for hearing-impaired students. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) maintains connections with local hospitals, fostering a collaborative approach to student support. Additionally, the school offers Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) provision through the "Let's Verbalise" program.

Mental Health: To address mental health concerns, the school has an Educational Psychologist in place, providing valuable expertise and support.

Community Groups: The school collaborates with family learning initiatives facilitated by the local authority. These initiatives cover various topics, such as nutrition, and strengthen the school's ties with the community.

Faith Groups: The school welcomes faith leaders from different religious backgrounds to engage with students and provide educational sessions on their respective faiths.



Sports: The school maintains links with the local authority (LA) and actively participates in external sports competitions, fostering a sense of camaraderie and promoting physical well-being among students.

Recommendations and suggestions

- *Continue to source support to come and work with students (outside agencies) depending on the needs of the student population.*
- *Consider getting in touch with the Schools Service at the NSPCC to investigate what support can be provided to the school i.e., delivery of PANTS and Speak Out, Stay Safe.*

7 - Training and Induction

7.1 Induction

During the induction process for new staff, safeguarding plays a crucial role. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) meets with new staff members, ensuring that they are well-informed about the school's safeguarding practices. This includes familiarising them with the location of policies and outlining the expectations related to safeguarding responsibilities.

Although a formal checklist for the induction process is not currently in place, the safeguarding team takes charge of delivering the required training. New staff members are required to complete an online safeguarding training course provided by Browne Jacobson. This training covers essential aspects of safeguarding and equips new staff members with the knowledge necessary to fulfil their safeguarding duties effectively.

7.2 Annual staff training and updates

At the start of each school year, all staff undergo annual training based on the Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) guidelines. This training is crucial in ensuring that staff members are equipped with the necessary knowledge and understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities. The training is delivered through online platforms alongside the DSL/DDSL delivery, enabling staff to access it conveniently. In cases of staff absence during the training, they are expected to catch up at a suitable time, given the online accessibility of the training materials.

In addition to the KCSiE-based training, the school is beginning to provide specialised training in Trauma-Informed Practice. This training is an ongoing process, with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) having completed a 10-day course. Other staff members are being scheduled to undergo this training in a structured manner, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of trauma-informed approaches across the school.

Safeguarding remains a regular feature on the agenda of staff meetings, ensuring that staff members stay informed and updated on relevant safeguarding matters. Staff are kept up to date on safeguarding through emails and relevant communications, such as updates from Andrew Hall.



Records of staff training, including PREVENT training, are maintained, and any gaps in training are addressed accordingly. The responsibility for maintaining these records and ensuring staff training compliance lies with the Business Manager/DDSL.

7.3 Supporting students

During the review process, it was apparent that all staff were fully aware of their responsibilities regarding the support of children. Their passion for their work was evident, and it was clear that they are committed to ensuring a consistent approach.

7.4 Support and guidance from the DSL

In discussions with staff members, it was evident that the safeguarding team played a crucial role in providing substantial support. The team was praised for its proactive and approachable nature, consistently engaging with relevant staff to gather essential information. This dedication was perceived as instrumental in fostering a safe and secure environment for both students and staff. As a result, the school's positive atmosphere was further enriched, leading to contentment among students and staff within the school environment.

Recommendations and suggestions

- › *Think of ways to incorporate safeguarding training into other training sessions. i.e., scenario-based training. This will continue to help raise the profile of safeguarding across the school.*
- › *Consider using an induction checklist for accuracy of record keeping.*
- › *Consider creating a training file that contains all the training records of the staff and certification for the safeguarding team inc. first aid.*

8 – School Ethos and Pastoral Care

8.1 School ethos to support safeguarding and promote wellbeing

The stated values, ethos, and mission of St Patrick's Catholic Voluntary Academy revolve around the principles of love, care, kindness, compassion, and forgiveness. As a faith school, it strives to instil these virtues in its students through the promotion of "Virtues to live by." This focus on values is intertwined with safeguarding, as teaching students these principles contribute to creating a safe and supportive environment for all.

The school's pastoral structure plays a vital role in offering daily support to students. Through various initiatives, such as the "Early Birds Club," all children are provided with a free breakfast, fostering a nurturing start to their day. The school also ensures that all students are offered a free hot lunch.

The pastoral team plays a critical part in addressing issues and concerns that may arise. Their close connection with students allows them to identify signs of distress or potential safeguarding concerns promptly. By providing a strong support network, the pastoral team helps create a safe space where students feel comfortable expressing their feelings and



seeking assistance when needed. This proactive approach contributes to the overall safeguarding efforts within the school, reinforcing the core values and principles of care and compassion that the school upholds.

8.2 Student voice

Group 1, consisting of two Year 2 children and a Year 4 student, expressed positive sentiments towards their school experience. They appreciate the friendly atmosphere, approachable staff, and engaging lessons that help them envision their future careers. Overall, they feel safe within the school environment, finding security in the interconnectedness of all areas.

The DSL/DDSL and other teachers play a significant role in helping them stay safe. Although there are occasional instances of bullying, they believe that the school addresses such issues, even if some students do not always heed the teachers' advice. The students were unsure about the continuation of student council and eco warrior initiatives.

Class ambassadors shared similar views, expressing their fondness for learning, mathematics, and playtime. While they generally feel safe in school, they do have some concerns during crowded playtimes and school trips. Nevertheless, they feel supported by teachers, teaching assistants, friends, and lunchtime supervisors to ensure their safety. They perceive that bullying is dealt with, although not always perceived as a big issue.

The students receive essential education on online safety, positive relationships, friendships, and risk awareness. They are taught about healthy snacks and the importance of staying safe. The school is seen as inclusive, and the students feel their voices are heard through the school council. They suggested having an extra 5 minutes of playtime to provide room for calming down during moments of frustration and proposed the idea of a punching bag for that purpose.

8.3 Additional provision for vulnerable students

The school employs a multi-faceted approach to identify vulnerable students. The presence of a dedicated SENCo (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) ensures that students with specific needs are identified and provided with appropriate support. This support encompasses various strategies, including targeted teaching input, home visits to parents, and collaborative efforts with external agencies, all aimed at addressing individual student needs effectively.

Certain groups within the school may require additional support, and the school offers specific provisions to cater to their needs. The SENCo plays a crucial role in ensuring that students with SEND have access to appropriate safeguarding, Personal, Social, Health, and Economic Education (PSHEE), and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) information. This ensures that students with specific requirements receive tailored guidance on these critical aspects, promoting their overall well-being and safety.

The DSL and the SENCo work closely together, fostering good communication and collaboration. Both the SENCo and the Safeguarding teams are part of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), facilitating effective coordination between the two roles.



8.4 Attendance

The school has established procedures to address students who are absent without explanation. In the morning, registers are taken, and if any N codes (absences without explanation) are present, the attendance staff promptly initiate phone calls and leave messages to inquire about the reasons for the absence. If there is no contact within three days, home visits are conducted to check on the student's well-being and ascertain the reason for the absence. These home visits are rare and are carried out by the safeguarding team.

While there is no specific policy in place for home visits, the school takes proactive measures to ensure the safety and well-being of students who are absent for extended periods. The attendance officer works closely with the DSL to identify any vulnerable children or those on a Child Protection (CP) plan and promptly flag up their absences for further attention.

Regarding Child Missing Education (CME), the school follows the process outlined by the Local Authority (LA) to address cases where a child's education status becomes uncertain.

The school also has a process for responding to requests for Elective Home Education (EHE). Relevant paperwork is completed. The school undertakes analysis of EHE requests to gain insights into the reasons behind such decisions and ensure the best possible support is provided to families involved.

The attendance officer and DSL collaborate to support safeguarding and well-being efforts within the school. Their joint efforts help to ensure that students' attendance and welfare are closely monitored and aim for timely interventions to be put in place to address any safeguarding concerns that may arise.

Recommendations and suggestions

- › *Continue to work with the student voice to identify areas of improvement based on their experiences.*
- › *Review the necessary policy to ensure home visits are covered appropriately.*
- › *Consider the implementation of a Spreadsheet for CME – EHE processes to ensure full details of actions taken are recorded and can be easily accessed when needed.*
- › *EHE process should continue to be deterred through strategies such as ensuring that there is a face to face meeting with the headteacher etc.*

9 – What do children learn about safeguarding?

9.1 PHSEE and RSE

The school has a clear PSHE/RSE policy in place, which is accessible on the school website. The policy outlines the content of the curriculum and the topics that are taught. PSHE is taught on a weekly basis and follows a thematic approach based on the PSHE association format, which is tailored to meet the specific needs of the school. Parents are actively consulted on the curriculum to ensure transparency and alignment with their expectations.



The responsibility for RSE at the school lies with the SENCO, who also serves as the lead for PSHE. The delivery of RSE work is primarily carried out by class teachers, with additional enhanced lessons, particularly in areas like sexual health, also provided by the PSHE lead. Colleagues involved in delivering RSE undergo regular training sessions and meetings to ensure they are well-equipped to handle these sensitive topics effectively. An open-door policy is in place for staff who may require support with the delivery of RSE content.

The provision of PSHE/RSE is frequently monitored by the PSHE lead through methods such as student voice, assessing students' confidence in acknowledging the subjects taught, and identifying any areas that may need further attention or improvement. This helps to maintain the relevance and effectiveness of the curriculum.

The delivery of PSHE/RSE aligns closely with the work of the DSL and the wider safeguarding agenda. The curriculum incorporates significant signposting for students, allowing them to seek support and ask questions when needed. Emotionally available staff members are also available for students to confide in if they have any concerns or issues. This approach helps create a supportive and safe environment where students feel comfortable discussing sensitive topics and seeking help if required.

9.2 Online safety

The school has a policy relating to online safety, which was put in place in October 2022 and is based on key guidance. The staff member currently leading on online safety has been in the role since January 2023. Online safety is primarily taught through the computing curriculum, and the school has collaborated with an external local organisation, Learn Sheffield, to develop the curriculum. The school also has a dedicated section on its website for online safety, and it subscribes to the National Online Safety Resources to access relevant materials.

Incidents that happen outside of school are managed in a restorative way, with discussions held to educate those involved and to involve parents in managing the situation. The school aims to inform parents about the age requirements for various apps and platforms to ensure responsible use.

The year 6 teacher serves as the lead for the online safety curriculum, ensuring its effective implementation. Mobile phones are not allowed on school premises, and students who have them are encouraged to hand them over at the start of the day and have them returned at the end of the day to maintain a safe environment.

9.3 Child-on-child safeguarding

Over the past three years, the school has not taken specific actions or initiatives in response to the child-on-child agenda. There have been no staff training sessions, awareness programs, surveys, focus groups, or displays related to this topic during this period.

Records of child-on-child incidents are kept by the school, but there seems to be a lack of distinction between 'behaviour' incidents and 'safeguarding' incidents. It appears that there is no separate system to differentiate between the two, which may impact how incidents are addressed and reported.



Regarding incidents involving protected characteristics, the school has not had any such incidents to report to the local authority during recent times.

Risk assessments are in place for various aspects, including individual students and school trips, to ensure safety and appropriate precautions.

Currently, there are no specific plans in place to support or develop work in the area of child-on-child incidents. The school has not taken proactive measures to address this aspect of safeguarding, and it may be beneficial to establish a more comprehensive approach in the future to ensure the safety and well-being of all students.

Recommendations and suggestions

- *Ensure that the Child-on-Child agenda is addressed through a strategic and coordinated approach. This should not only include the necessary staff training but should also involve activities such as reviewing the current recording methods i.e., categorisation on CPOMS.*
- *Continue to monitor and review the curriculum to ensure that it is fit for purpose and reflecting current issues that are identified.*
- *Continue to source people to come and work with and/or deliver assemblies to the student population and staffing team.*

10 – Summary

10.1 What the school does well

The school is on a safeguarding journey, demonstrating a strong commitment to student well-being. They have an effective safeguarding team, ensuring processes such as providing comprehensive induction for new staff are in place. The school promotes a safe learning environment through its pastoral structure and mission values. Robust measures are in place for online safety, and parents are engaged through communication and online resources. While the child-on-child agenda needs more attention, risk assessments are used when appropriate. Overall, the school is dedicated to fostering a positive and secure environment, continuously seeking areas for improvement in their safeguarding practices.

10.2 Key Recommendations

Specific suggestions have been made within each section of the report. However, the key areas to address are:

- *Ensure that the Child-on-Child agenda is addressed through a strategic and coordinated approach. This should not only include the necessary staff training but should also involve activities such as reviewing the current recording methods i.e., categorisation on CPOMS.*
- *CPOMS: review what has been actioned for each active safeguarding case. All logs should have an action which is clear and once completed the log should be closed to demonstrate that all actions have been completed.*

- *Data usage: running reports to show emerging data is something that the safeguarding team should utilise more regularly.*
- *Regular review of the Headteachers capacity for being DSL and should be amended accordingly.*
- *Review the need for an evac chair to be able to evacuate those students who have additional needs.*
- *Ensure that PEEPS are in place for those students and staff that need them.*
- *Ensure that the safeguarding policy is available on the website.*
- *Review the safeguarding section of the website to ensure that the information contained is up to date, easily accessible and informative.*
- *Add a 'bounce back' option to the safeguarding email. To ensure that students/parents who use it are signposted to other sources of support and ensure that it states it is not an emergency email, and signpost police and MAST.*

10.3 Overall view of safeguarding

Across the school, safeguarding is approached with a strong commitment to student welfare and a drive for continuous improvement. The safeguarding team is proactive and approachable, providing significant support to staff and students alike. They conduct regular communications with relevant staff to ensure information is collected and acted upon appropriately. While staff demonstrate passion for their work and a clear understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities, there is a recognition that certain areas, like data analysis, need to be utilised more effectively to identify trends and emerging issues.

The school's ethos and values promote a safe and secure environment, underlining the importance of well-being and inclusivity. The induction process for new staff includes comprehensive safeguarding training, and ongoing training opportunities are offered, enhancing staff awareness and confidence in dealing with safeguarding concerns.

Online safety is taken seriously, with a policy in place and resources provided to students, parents, and staff. The school acknowledges the need for further attention to the child-on-child agenda and is eager to enhance support and awareness in this area.

The school is determined to address any gaps and challenges, ensuring that safeguarding remains a central aspect of their daily practices. They should strive to ensure that complacency never takes hold. As they continue their safeguarding journey, the school's dedication to fostering a safe and positive environment remains steadfast, with a clear focus on continuous improvement and enhancing the overall safeguarding framework.

