

STUDENT PROTECTION POLICY

1 Preamble

1.1 Saint Francis Xavier College is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for student life and learning in college. The College upholds every student's right to the care and protection that promotes their human growth and sense of personal worth and dignity. We have a strong commitment to Equality Diversity and inclusion and are particularly aware of the additional needs of those vulnerable students within our community, especially those with learning difficulties and disabilities. In this policy, the College sets out its principles and procedures for putting into practice its commitment to the well-being of our students in the matter of student protection. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children are everyone's responsibility. As a college, we have a legal duty to protect and promote the welfare of our students, particularly those at risk of abuse or neglect.

1.2 A copy of the full text of this document is accessible to each teacher and Governor.

1.3 The safeguarding provision is publicised within the Student Welfare section of the Student Handbook and Diary and promoted in different ways throughout the college year. The full text of the Student Protection Policy is available on request and in alternative formats including Braille.

1.4 In addition, where it is considered to be necessary, individual students with learning difficulties and disabilities are advised about safeguarding during their initial assessment for support.

2 Principles

The College's Student Protection Policy and procedures are underpinned by the following principles:

2.1 The needs and well-being of the student are paramount at all times.

2.2 The college aims to build a Christian community characterised by good personal relationships between students and staff. In addition it is the professional responsibility of each teacher to initiate, foster and sustain appropriate relationships with students that are positive and generous, caring and protective, supportive and interested in the life of the individual.

2.3 The existence of sustained good relationships between staff and students is the context for the trust that is a necessary precondition of any disclosure or discussion of abuse.

2.4 Cases of alleged or suspected abuse are to be treated seriously; students who disclose abuse or are suspected of being abused, need to be treated with sympathy and understanding; what they say needs to be received without scepticism or disbelief. Staff should keep an open mind and not fall into the trap of confusing the taking of what a pupil says seriously with believing what the pupil has said. Staff should be aware that students with learning difficulties and disabilities may find expressing their concern difficult for a variety of reasons. Everything should be done to facilitate the ease of communication. The Head of ALS is able to offer advice on how to facilitate this, without having to know the student's name.

2.5 It is important that all staff understand and act upon their roles and responsibilities where a concern of abuse arises.

2.6 It is not the college's role to investigate allegations or suspicions but to gather what information it has and to refer the matter to the appropriate outside agencies according to the procedures set out in this document.

2.7 Where a case of abuse arises, the college acknowledges and accepts its role in providing appropriate support and care for the students, families, staff and others involved.

2.8 In practice arrangements in student protection are largely focused on those under 16-years of age, however, students are within child protection law up to the age of 18. In cases that involve students with learning difficulties and disabilities an appropriate support referral should always be made if the abuse case is not taken up by the area Child Protection Team/Safeguarding Children Board.

3 Designated Safeguarding Officer

3.1 A senior member of staff is Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) and has a special responsibility for promoting and co-ordinating student protection policy and procedure throughout the college.

3.2 The Designated Safeguarding Officer has responsibility:

- to take appropriate action in instances of suspected student abuse, according to the procedures set out in this policy
- to develop and maintain links and, in particular cases, to liaise with other agencies such as social services and the police.
- to maintain the Pastoral Log and sensitive area therein

- to be available, listen and respond to concerns raised by staff, parents or students in relation to student protection
- to promote amongst staff an awareness of the college's student protection arrangements, the additional needs of students with learning difficulties and disabilities, and to arrange suitable in-service training for staff.
- to bring to the notice of new and student teachers the college's student protection arrangements through training at the earliest opportunity
- to oversee planning of curricular provision designed to promote students' awareness of safeguarding issues.

3.3 The Designated Safeguarding Officer will report formally to the Principal on his/her work at least each term.

3.4 The Designated Safeguarding Officer is supported by two other staff with Designated Person training (Principal and Student Welfare Officer) as well as the Safeguarding Team which includes the Principal, the Student Welfare Officer, two Assistant Principals for Student Welfare and the nominated Governor.

4 The responsibilities of staff

4.1 Those presumed to have "charge" of a student include "any person to whose charge a young person is committed by any person who has parental responsibilities in relation to him." Those presumed to have "care" include "any other person having actual possession or control of a young person." All staff, and those with substantial access to students in college, would be regarded as having responsibilities of "charge and care" in regard to students.

4.2 The duty of care which staff owe to students, includes a general obligation to do all that might reasonably be expected in the promotion of their safety and well-being. There is a professional obligation to act upon concerns, however they may arise.

4.3 It is important that individual staff do not make private decisions or private arrangements for dealing with cases of suspected or known abuse. The Board of Governors requires that staff follow the policy and procedures set out in this document.

5 Allegations and Suspensions

5.1 Suspensions of student abuse may arise from concerns expressed by the student, from allegations made by other students or adults, or from anonymous allegations.

5.2 Concerns may also arise from a staff member's own observations of a student's behaviour or appearance, by the presence of indicators of student abuse, or by a feeling, based on knowledge of the student, that all is not well, or by a combination of factors.

5.3 When such concerns arise, the staff member must prudently and professionally decide how to respond. This decision will need to take account of the needs of the student concerned, the circumstances in which the concern has arisen, the strength of the concern, and the policy and procedures set out in this document.

6 The initial response by a member of staff

6.1 It may be appropriate when concerns first arise for the staff member to make casual enquiry of the student about how an obvious injury was sustained or why the student appears upset. This would be good practice in the exercise of normal pastoral care. However, where there is a clearer suspicion of abuse, staff should not ask leading questions or enter into a detailed investigation of the symptoms or causes of the student's injury or distress. To do so could prejudice later formal investigations.

6.2 In any initial interview with a student, it is important that a member of staff makes contemporaneous notes, to be written up later as the formal record on the Pastoral Log.

6.3 The role of college staff is:

- to observe
- to record
- to report

6.4. Consider what you know, what you have seen and what it is about the student which causes concern. Keeping notes of your observations can be very helpful.

6.5. Listen to the student if he or she tells you of abuse. Reassure the student that they did the right thing to tell you. Don't probe but allow the student to tell you in their own words. Never promise to keep something a secret. Phrases like "Some secrets are too big to keep" or "we'll have to get help to stop this happening again" are useful. Write down what the student has told you, using the language used by the student. Students with learning difficulties or disabilities may use very basic language/slang. Do not adapt or correct the words that they use. This could prejudice a case.

6.6. Check with colleagues whether they have noticed anything worrying about the student.

6.7 In making a record on the Pastoral Log, specific attention should be given to:

- signs of physical injury
- signs of emotional distress or unusual behaviour
- any comment by the student or anyone else as to the identity of the alleged abuser
- any comment about how the injury occurred should be recorded, preferably quoting the words actually used and as soon as possible after the comment was made
- recording who said what and when they said it

6.8 The record should also make reference to a learning difficulty or disability.

6.9 The member of staff should then take prompt action to report the matter as detailed below.

7 Action by staff in all cases

7.1 As far as possible, concerns about a young person should be raised with the Designated Safeguarding Officer (or a member of the Designated Safeguarding Team if the DSO is not available), without undue delay, in person and on the same day, allowing for immediate discussion of the concerns and their implications. This also includes situations of abuse which may involve staff members. It is important to note that any staff member can refer their concerns to social care directly.

7.2 The member of staff should record their concerns and actions in the Pastoral Log and bring this to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Officer (or a member of the Designated Safeguarding Team if the DSO is not available).

7.3 Information about the allegation must not be shared with any person other than the Designated Safeguarding Officer or other member of the Designated Safeguarding Team, including the Principal. This may present some difficulties for a student who uses a communicator or who may be on the roll of Oak Lodge School for the Deaf. These difficulties should be discussed with the Head of ALS.

7.4 In cases where an allegation is made against any member of the Safeguarding Team, the record should be referred to the Principal. If the allegation is made against the Principal, report is to be made to the Chair of Governors (for guidelines regarding abuse of a student perpetrated by a member of staff see section 13 of this document).

7.5 All requests for information from social care regarding section 17 or section 47 assessments should be referred to the DSO immediately

8 Action by staff in exceptional cases

8.1 In exceptional cases, where a member of staff feels that concerns about a student are not being taken seriously, or followed through appropriately, or with sufficient speed, the member of staff should refer the matter directly to the Principal or the local authority social services.

8.2 If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a young person a referral should be made to social care immediately. Anybody can make a referral. If the young person's situation does not appear to be improving the staff member with concerns should press for re-consideration. Concerns should always lead to help for the child at some point.

9. What Staff should look out for

9.1 All college staff members should be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect so that they are able to identify cases of young people who may be in need of help and protection. Staff must always have an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the interests of the child.

9.2 All college staff must read and sign a copy of 'Keeping children safe in education: Information for all school and college staff' April 2014. Staff should retain a copy of this guidance. Staff should be aware of the types of abuse and neglect (see 10) and further information on Child Sexual Exploitation and Female Genital Mutilation

10. Types of abuse and neglect

10.1. **Abuse:** a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

10.2. **Physical abuse:** a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

10.3. **Emotional abuse:** the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include

not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

10.4. Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

10.5. Neglect: the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

10.6 Staff should also be aware of **financial abuse** whereby young people are forced to hand over money or details of bank accounts / cards for the purposes of fraud.

10.7 Staff will receive training in identifying the signs of radicalisation. Any concerns should be reported to the DSO and the Principal immediately.

11 Action by the Designated Safeguarding Officer

11.1 As soon as the Designated Safeguarding Officer has been alerted to a suspected case of student abuse, s/he should collate all the relevant information

and make a determination as to the clarity of evidence held by the college on the student and of the urgency of the case.

11.2 If there is certainty or very good reason to suspect a student has been abused or requires protection because at risk of significant harm, the DSO should contact the child protection team in the borough where the student lives. This should be done immediately. Where a student presents clear and immediate evidence of abuse caused by a known person, the Designated Safeguarding Officer will consider contacting the police directly, where there is cause for concern about the safety of the student. The Principal should be kept informed of developments at all times and without delay. Due concern should be given to the additional needs of students with learning difficulties and disabilities

11.3 The DSO and the safeguarding team should also consider

- what immediate support may need to be given to the student
- whether medical treatment or assessment is indicated
- what is known about the student's family situation - in cases where abuse is suspected within the family, initial contact with the parents should not be made by the college but by social services or the police
- are there implications for siblings
- are the student's parents aware of the allegations and what is their attitude likely to be?
- whether there are implications for other students
- in cases where information has been provided by another student, what support will there be for that student and how far can his/her parents be informed of the situation without breaching confidentiality

11.4 Special regard should be paid for the additional needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

11.5 The discussions of any meeting are strictly confidential. Records should be kept on the Pastoral Log.

11.6 After discussion and due consideration, a decision should be made whether there are concerns which require a referral to the Child Protection Team of the borough in which the student resides. Referrals should be made in every case where there is any substantial suspicion. Proof is not required at this stage. If there is doubt whether to refer or not, the CP borough team should be advised of the circumstances of the allegation and the college's doubts about it (seeking such advice does not require names of students to be disclosed). Referral is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Team and should be done immediately.

11.7 The DSO should liaise with the principal to inform him or her of issues especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations

11.8 All requests for information from social care regarding section 17 or section 47 assessments should be referred to the DSO immediately and he or she must comply with these requests.

12 Role of Governors.

12.1 The Governing Body must ensure that the college meets its responsibilities regarding policy, procedures, monitoring compliance and reporting, as set out by the DfE and which are in keeping with locally agreed inter-agency procedures. The Governing Body ensures that remedies without delay any deficiencies or weaknesses with regard to student protection arrangements that are brought to its attention.

12.2 A member of the Governing Body is nominated as the Safeguarding Governor. It is their responsibility to liaise with the Local Authority and/or other partner agencies in the event of an allegation being made against the Principal.

12.3 The Governing body should ensure that the college contributes to inter-agency working in line with statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013. This will include a co-ordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified and contributing to inter-agency plans to provide additional support to children subject to child protection plans. The college should allow access for social care from the host local authority to conduct, or to consider whether to conduct, a section 17 or a section 47 assessment.

12.4 The Board of Governors undertakes an annual review of its policies and procedures and relating to safeguarding and how the above duties have been discharged. It receives an annual report relating to Safeguarding matters. The names of students involved are confidential and will not be disclosed in this report.

12.5 Training in Safeguarding and Child Protection must be undertaken by all Governors.

13 Abuse of trust and allegations of student abuse perpetrated by a member of staff

13.1 We recognise that as adults working at the college, we are in a relationship of trust with the students and acknowledge that it is a criminal offence to abuse that trust. Legislation within the Sexual Offenders Act 2003 is intended to protect young people in education who are over the age of consent but under 18 years of age. Any allegation of abuse perpetrated by a member of staff against a student will be taken very seriously.

13.2 Disclosures made by a student about such abuse should be recorded and communicated directly to the Principal or to The Designated Safeguarding Officer who will inform the Principal.

13.3 The Principal will conduct a preliminary enquiry to establish an initial judgement as to the veracity of the allegation.

13.4 If the conclusion of this preliminary enquiry is that the allegation is completely unfounded, the decision to take the matter no further, together with background information and reasons for the decision, will be recorded and placed in a confidential Student Protection File. These details will not be recorded in the staff member's personal file or in any other College records.

13.5 In the course of the preliminary enquiry, the staff member who is the subject of the allegation will usually be informed of the situation and asked to give a response. Staff members may wish to consult their union or professional association, or have a work based colleague present at this stage.

13.6 The parents of a student who has made the allegation, or of the student who is the subject of the alleged abuse, will be informed of the situation by the Principal. This initial communication will indicate only that an allegation has been made and, in broad terms, the nature of that allegation. Further details, including the identity of the staff member, will not be divulged by the college until specific legal advice has been obtained.

13.7 If the conclusion of the initial enquiry is that there are grounds for suspicion of abuse, then the Principal will further consider contacting the LA Senior Advisor for Safeguarding Children in Education and the LADO, and also:

- whether there is a need to remove the member of staff from unsupervised access to students
- whether there is a need to remove the member of staff from access to students
- whether there is a need to suspend the member of staff
- the possibility that others may also have been abused
- the information that may need to be given to the parents of students involved to assure them that proper procedures are being followed and to counter rumours and the breakdown of trust and communication

- what support, such as counselling, should be offered to the student and families involved

13.8 In all these considerations and the actions consequent upon them, the Principal will take such legal advice as s/he deems necessary, and be aware of the delicate balance that has to be maintained between openness and confidentiality, in the best interests of the student and with respect to the due rights of the staff member involved.

13.9 Concurrently and in liaison with the Principal's enquiry, the DSO will follow the usual procedures for any allegation of student abuse. As a result of any referral to the area child protection team or other agencies, action may be taken by these authorities against the alleged abuser. At the same time, the Principal may initiate the College's regular disciplinary procedures against the member of staff concerned.

13.10 The Principal will inform the Chair of Governors at each stage of the enquiry.

13.11 In cases where a staff member has been the subject of a malicious or mischievous allegation, the Principal will seek an immediate interview with the parents of the student, with a view to serious disciplinary action being taken against the student concerned. The staff member will be asked for their views and informed of the outcome of these proceedings.

14 Abuse by other students

14.1 Bullying by other students may be emotional, physical, sexual or financial. The College has set out its expectations, procedures and sanctions for dealing with such cases in its Anti-Bullying Policy – see Appendix A

14.2 Where a situation clearly goes beyond bullying and becomes a matter of abuse warranting student protection, the procedures detailed in this document will be followed as for other allegations of abuse. If the abuse takes place on site, Wandsworth Educational Welfare services should be informed.

15 The College's dealings with outside agencies

15.1 Without prejudice to the specific advice of legal counsel, the College and its staff will adopt a positive and co-operative approach in its dealings with the various welfare and legal agencies involved in student protection in accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013. The first and primary aim of the College will be to promote the best interests and welfare of the student. We will have particular regard for vulnerable students and those with learning difficulties and disabilities.

15.2 Where a member of staff receives requests for co-operation from outside agencies related to a safeguarding or protection issue, they are to notify and seek guidance from a member of the Designated Safeguarding Team before any undertakings or arrangements are made.

15.3 As the College is a Catholic institution working in the Archdiocese of Southwark, the Principal may decide that it is appropriate to inform the diocesan authorities, as she or he sees fit.

16 The appointment of staff

16.1 Appointments to teaching or other posts involving substantial access to students are made conditionally upon satisfactory returns from checks made by the Disclosure and Barring Service.

16.2 Responsibility for conducting the checks listed above, and other appropriate inquiry into background and suitability, will rest with the Principal.

16.3 Staff have a duty to inform the Principal immediately if they have received a conviction whilst in post that may affect their DBS status.

17 Staff training

17.1 As part of its programme of staff personal and professional development, the College is committed to providing regular and suitable training for staff, in accordance with statutory guidelines, including:

- the identification of possible abuse
- responding when a student discloses abuse or seeks help and support
- the college's student protection policy and procedures

17.2 All staff also have training in the Equality Act 2010.

17.3 Responsibility for organising staff training for Safeguarding, Equality and Diversity lies with the Principal, the CPD co-ordinator, the Designated Safeguarding Officer and the Head of Learning Support.

18 The curriculum

18.1 The College is committed to including within its curriculum appropriate information, advice and discussion of abuse and personal safety issues. This will be done with due regard for the maturity of students and the sensitivity of the subject. Due concern will always be given to the accessibility of any materials for students with learning difficulties and disabilities and show an awareness of cultural and religious influences.

19 e-Safety

19.1 The Designated Safeguarding Officer will work with others to establish, monitor and review the college's e-Safety policy. All staff members are responsible for ensuring the safety of learners in their areas and should report any concerns about electronic usage or abuse to their immediate line manager. The college will ensure that all staff and students adhere to the IT acceptable use policy.

20 Further guidance

20.1 Staff seeking clarification or further guidance in matters of student protection should refer, in the first instance, to the Designated Safeguarding Officer, or any member of the Safeguarding team.

This policy is subject to approval by the governing body and shall be reviewed on a yearly basis

Review date June 2016