

## Managing Allegations against other Pupils Policy

At St Bernard's Catholic Grammar School we believe that all children have a right to attend school, learn in a safe environment and be loved and valued for who they are as a child of God. No student should suffer from harm in the school, whether that is from an adult or other student(s). Where the behaviour of any student does negatively affect the learning or wellbeing of others, their behaviour will be dealt with under the school's Behaviour Policy.

If there were to be an allegation made against a student(s) by others in the school, which are of a safeguarding nature (issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or sexual exploitation) it is likely that some of the following features will be found.

The allegation:

- is made against an older pupil and refers to their behaviour towards a younger pupil or a more vulnerable pupil.
- is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence.
- raises risk factors for other pupils in the school.
- indicates that other pupils may have been affected by this student.
- indicates that young people outside the school may be affected by this student.

Examples of safeguarding allegations against a student could include:

Physical Abuse:

For example violence (particularly pre-planned) or forcing others to use drugs, alcohol or other banned substances.

Emotional Abuse:

For example blackmail, extortion, threats or intimidation.

Sexual Abuse:

For example indecent exposure, indecent touching, serious sexual assaults or forcing others to watch pornography or take part in sexting.

Sexual Exploitation:

For example encouraging other children to attend inappropriate parties, offering an incentive such as money for the performance of an indecent act or photographing or videoing other children performing indecent acts.

As the school is located in a town where gang culture does exist, older students may attempt to recruit younger pupils using any or all of the above methods. Young people suffering from sexual exploitation themselves may be forced to recruit other young people under threat of violence. These are concerns that staff at the school

will continue to watch for carefully and, should they have concern, will report them to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as a matter of priority.

## **Policy**

When an allegation is made by a pupil against another student, the member of staff to whom the disclosure is made should consider whether the complaint raises a safeguarding concern. If it does, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or the deputy in their absence) should be informed as soon as is possible. A written factual record should be made of the allegation, but no attempt should be made to investigate the circumstances. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will discuss with the Headteacher and Deputy Safeguarding Lead the need to contact social services to discuss the case. It is possible that social services may already be aware of safeguarding concerns around this young person. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will follow through the outcomes of the discussion and make a social services referral where appropriate. If the allegation indicates a potential criminal offence has taken place, the police will be contacted at the earliest opportunity. Any further interview of the student(s) involved will be in the presence of the member of staff to whom the initial disclosure was made. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will make a record of the concern, the discussion and any outcome and keep a copy in the separate Child Protection files. In all events, parents will be informed, both those of the student to whom the allegation refers and those of the alleged victim, unless doing so endangers the welfare of the student(s).

It may be appropriate to formally exclude the student about whom the complaint has been made, either for a fixed period or on a permanent basis, according to the school's behaviour policy and procedures.

Where neither social services nor the police accept the complaint, a thorough school investigation will take place into the matter using the school's usual disciplinary procedures. In situations where the school considers a safeguarding risk is present, a risk assessment will be undertaken and a preventative supervision plan put in place. The plan should be monitored and a date set for a follow-up evaluation involving everyone concerned.

On occasion, some students will present a safeguarding risk to other students. The school should be informed that a young person raises safeguarding concerns when, for example, they are coming back into school following a period in custody or they have experienced serious abuse themselves. These students will need an individual risk management plan to ensure that other pupils are kept safe and they themselves are not laid open to malicious allegations. There is a need to balance the tension between privacy and safeguarding.

No matter what the outcome is of an allegation of abuse against another pupil, the school will review the circumstances of the case to see if there are any

improvements that can be made in its practice or policy to help prevent similar allegations in the future.

This Policy was adopted by the Full Governing Body Meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2017

Review Date: May 2019

