

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

The purpose and scope of this policy statement

Regina Caeli U.K. works with children and families as part of its activities. The purpose of this policy statement is:

- to protect children who are pupils at Regina Caeli U.K. (RCA U.K.), as well as their families and anyone else who is associated with RCA U.K., such as prospective families and tutors and their families.
- to provide parents, staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to child protection.

This policy statement applies to anyone working on behalf of RCA U.K, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and students.

Legal framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children in England. A summary of the key legislation and guidance is available from nspcc.org.uk/childprotection

We believe that:

- children and young people should never experience abuse of any kind
- we have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all children and young people, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.

We recognise that:

- the welfare of the child is paramount
- all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other issues
- working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare



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We will seek to keep children and young people safe by:

- valuing, listening to and respecting them
- appointing a nominated child protection/safeguarding lead, a deputy child protection/safeguarding lead and a lead trustee/board member for safeguarding
- developing and implementing an effective online safety policy and related procedures
- sharing information about child protection and safeguarding best practice with children, their families, staff and volunteers via leaflets, posters, group work and one-to-one discussions
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures
- implementing a code of conduct for staff and volunteers which includes appropriate safeguarding provisions
- using our procedures to manage any allegations against staff and volunteers appropriately
- ensuring that we have effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place
- ensuring that we provide a safe physical environment for our children, young people, staff and volunteers, by applying health and safety measures in accordance with the law and regulatory guidance
- recording and storing information professionally and securely

Related policies and procedures

Procedures for acting when abuse by one or more pupils against another is alleged

- Children are vulnerable to abuse by their peers. Such abuse should be taken as seriously as abuse by adults and the same procedures should be used. Staff should not dismiss abusive behavior as normal between young people and should not develop high thresholds before taking action.
- This type of abuse should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'.
- Where a pupil (or a member of staff or volunteer) makes an allegation about the behaviour of a pupil or pupils against another pupil, and this is deemed to be or could be deemed to be a form of abuse, the allegation must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- When there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, this will be referred to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB).
- In the event of disclosures about pupil on pupil abuse, all children involved (whether perpetrator or victim) are treated as being 'at risk'.
- If a child causes harm to another, this should not necessarily be dealt with as abuse: bullying, fighting and harassment between children are not generally seen as child protection issues. However, it may be appropriate to regard a young person's behaviour as abusive if there is a large difference in power (for example age, size, ability, development) between the young people concerned; or the perpetrator has repeatedly tried to harm one or more other children; or there are concerns about the intention of the alleged perpetrator.



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- If the evidence suggests that there was an intention to cause severe harm to the victim, this should be regarded as abusive whether or not severe harm was actually caused.
- Different gender issues can also be prevalent when dealing with peer on peer abuse.
- In order to minimise the risk of peer on peer abuse, RCA U.K. will strive to create an environment that actively discourages abuse and challenges the attitudes which underlie it.
- The Chair of the Board should be contacted in all cases and kept fully informed
- This type of abuse should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'.

Procedures for acting when abuse by any member of staff, parent or volunteer is alleged

- If an allegation is made against anyone working with children, all unnecessary delays will be avoided. We will not undertake our own investigations of allegations without prior consultation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), or team of officers, or in the most serious cases the police, so as not to jeopardise statutory investigations.
- All concerns of possible abuse should be reported to the DSL. An allegation against the DSL should be reported to the Chair of the Board
- Immediate action should be taken to protect the child and any other children present, and advice should be sought from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), or team of officers within one working day.
- The nature, content and context of the allegation will be considered and a course of action including any involvement of the police will be agreed.
- Discussions should be recorded in writing, and any communication with both the individual and the parents of the child/children agreed.
- The procedures for dealing with allegations should be applied with common sense and judgement. It is in everyone's interest to resolve cases as quickly as possible, consistent with a fair and thorough investigation.
- The member of staff may be suspended from their duties while an investigation is carried out,
- Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) will be notified within one week of any person leaving the school whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or pupil whose services are no longer used because he or she is considered unsuitable to work with children. DBS contact details are PO Box 181, Darlington, DL1 9FA. Tel: 01325 953795.
- Allegations found to be malicious are removed from personnel records; records are kept of all other allegations but those unsubstantiated, unfounded or malicious are not referred to in employer references. However, for all other allegations, a clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation is kept on the employee's confidential personnel file, including details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved, and a note of any action taken and decisions reached. A copy is also provided to the accused.
- In line with restrictions on the reporting or publishing of allegations against teachers, the school will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity. These restrictions apply up to the point where the accused person is charged with an offence.



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Types of Abuse and How to Spot Them

There are many types of abuse, the most common of which are:

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or young person. It may also be caused by the parent/carer fabricating or inducing illness in a child.

Possible signs: Bruising without satisfactory explanation, burns (often recurrent), bite marks, parent/carers frequently alleging illness in a child, inappropriately or excessively clothed particularly in hot weather, reluctance to do PE or shower, self-harm.

Impact of physical abuse: It can lead to neurological damage, physical injuries, disability and occasionally death. Harm may be caused directly by the abuse itself or by the abuse taking place in a wider family context of conflict. Physical abuse has been linked to aggressive behaviour, emotional and behavioural problems and educational difficulties.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child or young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent/carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, access to medical care, failure to protect a child from physical harm, as well as excluding a child from home or abandonment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Possible signs of neglect: Constant hunger, poor personal hygiene, poor state of clothing, frequent lateness or non-attendance at school, untreated medical problems. A child going missing from an education setting is also a potential indicator, particularly on repeated occasions.

Impact of neglect: Severe neglect of young children is associated with major impairment of growth and intellectual development. Persistent neglect can lead to serious impairment of health and development, and long-term difficulties with social functioning, relationships and educational progress.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment 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, unloved or inadequate, or valued only in so far 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.

Possible signs of emotional abuse: Physical, mental and emotional development lags, over-reaction to mistakes, extremes of passivity or aggression, continual self deprecation, self-harm, inappropriate emotional response to painful situations.



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Impact of emotional abuse: Emotional abuse has an important impact on a developing child's mental health, behaviour and self-esteem. It can be especially damaging in infancy. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may be features in families where children are exposed to such abuse. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of mistreatment of a young person, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

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 penetrative (e.g. rape) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities (e.g. exposure to pornographic material, watching sexual activities or encouraging children and young people 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.

Impact of sexual abuse: Self-harm, inappropriate sexualised behaviour, depression, loss of or poor self-esteem, aggressive behaviour, lack of trust, running away from home.

Procedures to help keep children safe

All members of staff and (if applicable) volunteers will be given induction training that includes:

- The school's Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- The Employee Handbook (including the Whistle Blowing procedure)
- The identity and role of the DSL and Deputy DSL

We review and update our procedures annually (or earlier, if a law change dictates it) and staff are reminded of their responsibilities and the Code of Conduct at the start of every academic year and/or by email or meetings at various times during the year. Staff periodically confirm in writing that they have received, read and understood this policy and will adhere to it.

Staff with mobile phones keep them on "airplane mode" during lesson time, and they do not have children's mobile numbers on their phones or use them to take photos in class.

The Employee Handbook has extensive guidelines about appropriate relationships between staff and pupils. Violation of these guidelines leads to disciplinary procedures, including dismissal. ,

Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)



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The designated safeguarding lead is expected to:

Manage referrals

- Refer cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/ harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required; and
- Refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required.
- Refer cases of suspected abuse to the local authority as required;
- Support staff who make referrals to local authority children's social care;

Work with others

- Liaise with the Chair of the Board, to inform him or her of issues especially on-going enquiries and police investigations;
- As required, liaise with the case manager and designated officers at the local authority for child protection concerns
- Liaise with staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies.
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for staff.

Undertake training

- The DSL will undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role.
- This training should be updated at least annually.
- This training should be supplemented by informal reading (this might be via e-bulletins, meeting other designated leads, or simply taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments) at regular intervals, as required, but at least annually, to allow them to understand and keep up with any developments relevant to their role

Raise awareness

- The designated safeguarding lead should ensure the school or college's policies are known, understood and used appropriately;
- Ensure the RCA UK's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum) and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with governing bodies or proprietors regarding this;
- Ensure the child protection is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school or college in this; and
- Link with the local authorities to make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest local policies on safeguarding.

Availability

- During term time the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should always be available (during school or college hours) for staff, parents or pupils to discuss any safeguarding concerns.



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Whistleblowing Policy

All Staff are afforded the protections in our Whistleblowing policy, which is set out in the Employee Handbook.

Record Keeping, Storage and Information Sharing

Effective record keeping is an important aspect of child protection. RCA UK has a Welfare Concern Form which is used to record all child safeguarding and protection concerns and incidents.

RCA UK will always share information written by staff with parents unless there is a valid reason to withhold it. For example, child protection records may be exempt from the disclosure provisions of the General Data Protection Act 2018 in cases where disclosure may cause serious physical or emotional harm to the child or any other person.

If a Subject Access Request (SAR) is made, we will act on the request without undue delay, and, at the latest within one month of receipt.

Cases of alleged abuse that result in court proceedings may require RCA UK to disclose their records, either through the police or social services. Records (suitably anonymised) may also be requested for use in disciplinary proceedings. Fears about sharing information cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

Information about concerns, allegations, and referrals is not kept in one "concern log" - rather information or items relating to individuals are kept in separate files. All files containing sensitive or confidential data are locked away and access to the keys strictly controlled and limited to people in named roles who either need to know about the information in those records and/or who manage the records/files. If records are stored electronically then we password-protect those records

DBS Checks and Criminal Convictions Policy

RCA UK requires applicants to disclose criminal convictions as part of their application. RCA UK uses the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to obtain information to enable it to assess the suitability of applicants for employment as a staff member of volunteer. DBS disclosure information will only be used for the specific purpose for which it was requested and for which the applicant's full consent will have been obtained.



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Contact Details

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mrs. Sarah Thatcher - [sthatcher.uka at rcahybrid.org](mailto:sthatcher.uka@rcahybrid.org)

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mrs. Bruna Kelliher – [bkelliher.uka at rcahybrid.org](mailto:bkelliher.uka@rcahybrid.org)

Central Bedfordshire Access and Referral Hub: 0300 300 8585, Out of Hours 0300 300 8123, email cs.accessandreferral@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): The LADO (also known in Central Bedfordshire as the Allegations Manager) oversees investigations into allegations and concerns against adults who work with children and young people in both a paid and voluntary capacity. The criteria for LADO intervention is where the behaviour of an adult has resulted in a child being harmed or at risk of harm; a criminal offence may have been committed or the behaviour of the adult may indicate unsuitability to work with children. If you have concerns about the conduct and behaviour of someone working with children and young people you can contact Central Bedfordshire's LADO as follows: 0300 300 5026 / 0300 300 8142.

National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children: Tel 0808 800 5000
Childline Tel 0800 1111.

'Say Something' (reporting sexual exploitation) Call or text 116000.

Further information is available from the following websites:

www.gov.uk/dfc;

www.nspcc.org.uk;

www.stop-cse.org/saysomething

NSPCC whistleblowing helpline 0800 0280285 (Monday to Friday, 8am – 8pm) or

help@nspcc.org.uk

Other resources

The [UK Council for Child Internet Safety \(UKCCIS\)](#) is a voluntary organisation chaired by Ministers from the Department for Education and the Home Office. [UKCCIS](#) brings together over 180 organisations and individuals from government, industry, law enforcement, academia, charities and parenting groups. Some of the organisations [UKCCIS](#) works with include: Cisco, Apple, Sony, Research in Motion, the four largest internet service providers, Facebook and Microsoft.

The [Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre \(CEOP\)](#) has numerous resources for parents and carers and children using the internet; there are several video tutorials on the [THINKUKNOW site](#) which is part of [CEOP](#).

[Lucy Faithful Foundation](#) is a registered child protection charity which works to prevent child sexual abuse. It runs '[Stop It Now!](#)' and '[Parents Protect](#)'.

[Stop It Now!](#) reaches out to adults concerned about their own behaviour towards children, or that of someone they know, as well as professionals, survivors and protective adults. [Stop It Now!](#) runs a Freephone confidential helpline.



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www.rcahybrid.org.uk

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['Parents Protect'](#) is a site to help parents, carers and other protective adults with information and advice to help them prevent child sexual abuse.

[Catholic Youth Work](#) has detailed guidelines on the use of social networking sites.

[Internet Matters](#) gives advice on parental controls and is a great way of preventing children accessing unsuitable content online.

[Childnet](#) International is a multi-lingual resource site which has a guide on protecting your privacy on 'Facebook'.

The [NSPCC](#) has useful resources for keeping children safe online including sections on Cyberbullying and Sexting. Reporting and Monitoring.



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