

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC ACADEMY

Child Protection Notice

Our school feels it is of the utmost importance to have good systems for protecting children and safeguarding their welfare, throughout all the activities, which the school undertakes. This means that staff and volunteers must be alert to possible concerns about every pupil, and to report these in a proper fashion. The school has a safeguarding and child protection policy: parents may request a copy of this. It is important for parents to be aware that:

- Staff and volunteers in the school have a duty to report concerns about a child, whether this means the child may be in need of additional support or help of some kind or whether it is thought that a child may have been abused or be at risk of abuse.
- There are four categories of abuse: physical, sexual, emotional, neglect.
- In some cases, the school is obliged to refer children to the Social Services Department, for children to be assessed for their needs or if an investigation into possible child abuse is required. In many cases, there will already have been discussions between school staff and the parents of the child, and the situation and concerns will not be a surprise to the parents. However, parents may not be told that the school has referred their child to the Social Services Department if it is thought that this might put the child at risk.
- The Social Services Department tries to carry out its enquiries in a sensitive fashion. It has to gather information and generally, it can be open with parents about the steps being taken.
- If you think your child may have been abused, you can contact the Social Service Department or the Local Authority's Access and Welfare Service direct. If you think the abuse may have happened in school, contact the Head Teacher who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead for Child Protection. If you think your child has been hurt, arrange to visit your doctor. Comfort and reassure your child.
- If school staff need to express concerns about a child or refer a child to the Social Services Department, it is understood that this can cause distress or anger for the child's parents. It is important that all parties – parents and school staff – try to discuss these matters as calmly and sensibly as possible.

For parents' enquiries, please contact the Head Teacher.