



ST JOSEPH'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL
BACUP

SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

“Jesus is the Centre of our lives”

God wants me to be the best me I can be

Our Mission

Through His teaching we aim to value ourselves and each other as unique and precious individuals created by God; we encourage and develop love and respect for each other and for our world; we strive to promote and deepen our Catholic faith through prayer, work and play; we aim to foster a loving, caring environment in which each child can freely learn and develop to their full potential.

2026–2027

Policy information

Document control	Details
Policy title	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
Policy leader / DSL	Mrs Julie Cawtherley, Acting Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead
Approved by	Full Governing Body TBC
Date adopted	Autumn 2026 - TBC
Review date	September 2027
Version	1.0
Audience	Staff, governors, families and other stakeholders
Safeguarding role	Named person / arrangement
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Mrs Julie Cawtherley – Acting Headteacher
Deputy DSLs	Mrs Victoria Sanderson; Miss Claire Barry; Mrs Sue Barry
Safeguarding Governor / Chair	Mrs Jacquie Williams
Prevent Lead	Mrs Julie Cawtherley
DSL availability	A trained DSL or deputy is available during school hours and school-arranged activities. Cover is communicated daily; secure routes remain available when the lead DSL is absent.

Policy status This is the school's statutory child protection policy for the academic year 2026–2027. It reflects Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 from 1 September 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, the EYFS statutory framework and Lancashire local multi-agency arrangements. It must be published, understood, implemented and reviewed at least annually.

1. Purpose, scope and Catholic mission

St Joseph's RC Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child. This policy applies to all pupils, governors, employees, supply and agency staff, trainee teachers, volunteers, contractors, club providers and visitors, including adults working on behalf of the school away from the site or online.

Our mission states that Jesus is the centre of our lives and our motto is "God wants me to be the best me I can be". Every child is unique, precious and created by God. Safeguarding therefore requires a vigilant, open and child-centred culture in which children are heard, adults act promptly, professional curiosity is encouraged and dignity, justice, compassion and truth guide decisions.

The welfare of the child is paramount. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: no single practitioner has a complete picture, and no concern is too small to share. This policy should be read with the staff code of conduct, online safety, acceptable use, behaviour, attendance, SEND, whistleblowing, allegations management, recruitment, intimate care, first aid and complaints procedures.

2. Statutory definition and principles

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means providing help and support as soon as problems emerge; protecting children from maltreatment within or outside the home, including online; preventing impairment of mental or physical health or development; ensuring safe and effective care; and acting so children achieve the best outcomes. Child protection is the activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

- The child's best interests, wishes and feelings are considered throughout, using communication that is accessible to age, development, language and SEND.
- Staff maintain an attitude of "it could happen here", recognise that safeguarding issues overlap and remain alert to harm both inside and outside the home and online.
- Children receive help at the earliest appropriate level: universal and community-based early help, targeted Family Help, child-in-need support or child-protection intervention.
- Concerns are shared lawfully, proportionately and without delay. Consent is not required where seeking it would place a child at risk or undermine a safeguarding response.
- Parents are normally involved and informed unless doing so may increase risk, impede an enquiry or conflict with police or children's social care advice.

3. Legal and statutory framework

The policy was reviewed against legislation and official guidance current on 22 August 2026. The governing body has regard to KCSIE under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 and ensures arrangements are effective in practice.

Source	Application to this policy
Children Acts 1989 and 2004	Sections 17 and 47 underpin children-in-need and significant-harm responses; agencies cooperate and work in the child's best interests.
Education Act 2002, s175	The governing body must make arrangements to safeguard and promote pupil welfare and have regard to statutory guidance.
KCSIE 2026	Sets duties for whole-school safeguarding, staff action, safer recruitment, concerns about adults and child-on-child sexual harassment and violence.
Working Together 2026	Sets the child-centred, family-network and multi-agency framework, including help, support, protection, assessment and information sharing.
EYFS statutory framework	Section 3 safeguarding and welfare requirements apply to Reception and any school-based early years provision.
Equality and SEND	Equality Act 2010, public sector equality duty, Children and Families Act 2014 and SEND Code ensure accessible, non-discriminatory safeguarding.
Data protection	UK GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018 and Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 permit necessary and proportionate safeguarding information sharing.
Specific duties	Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015; Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003; Domestic Abuse Act 2021; Modern Slavery Act 2015; Human Rights Act 1998; Sexual Offences Act 2003; Children and Social Work Act 2017.
Recruitment and barring	Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and exceptions, School Staffing Regulations 2009 and Crime and Policing Act 2026.

4. Ofsted inspection, April 2026

Ofsted inspected St Joseph's on 28 April 2026 and found that safeguarding standards were met. Inspectors reported that leaders and governors fulfilled their specific safeguarding responsibilities, legal requirements were met and an open culture existed in which safeguarding was everyone's responsibility and concerns were actively identified, acted upon and managed. Pupils said they felt safe and well cared for; they knew how to keep safe in an age-appropriate way, including online; and provision was adapted for pupils with SEND.

This policy protects and develops those strengths. The school will continue to test the quality, timeliness and accessibility of reporting routes; ensure all adults, including support staff without routine CPOMS access, can report immediately and receive feedback; audit the clarity of CPOMS entries; monitor attendance as a safeguarding indicator; and provide governors with termly assurance about training, referrals, allegations, online safety and action taken. These are school improvement safeguards and are not presented as additional formal Ofsted judgements.

5. Governance, leadership and accountability

5.1 Governing body

- Approves this policy annually, ensures it reflects local arrangements and KCSIE, publishes it and checks implementation rather than policy presence alone.
- Ensures every staff member reads KCSIE Part One in full, receives induction and regular updates, and can use the school's reporting systems confidently.
- Appoints a senior DSL with time, authority, resources and training; ensures trained deputy cover, including during activities, and does not delegate the DSL's ultimate lead responsibility.
- Ensures appropriate filtering and monitoring, cyber security, safer recruitment, SCR assurance, allegations procedures, Prevent arrangements and suitable safeguarding curriculum provision.
- Receives anonymised termly information, challenges leaders and ensures equality, SEND, workload and staff wellbeing are considered without weakening safeguarding.

5.2 Headteacher

- Creates an open culture, ensures adequate DSL cover, resources, training, records and local procedures, and takes immediate action where systems or practice are weak.
- Acts as case manager for allegations about adults unless the allegation concerns the headteacher, when the Chair of Governors acts and seeks LADO advice.
- Ensures staff code of conduct, low-level concerns, whistleblowing, mobile-device and acceptable-use expectations are understood and enforced.

5.3 DSL and deputy DSLs

- Manage referrals to children's social care, police, Channel/Prevent, DBS and other services; liaise with the LADO and safeguarding partners; and support staff through referral processes.
- Maintain a complete safeguarding picture, including attendance, behaviour, SEND, health, online concerns, family circumstances and alternative provision; ensure the child's voice shapes action.
- Keep detailed, accurate, secure records of concerns, discussions, decisions and rationales, including why a referral was or was not made, and ensure timely follow-up and escalation.
- Lead transfer of the child protection file securely and separately from the main pupil file, normally within five days for an in-year transfer or the first five days of a new term, obtaining receipt.
- Receive formal DSL training at least every two years and refresh knowledge and skills at least annually; understand Prevent, exploitation, online safety, SEND, mental health and local assessment protocols.

5.4 All staff and volunteers

- Read and understand KCSIE 2026 Part One, this policy, the staff code of conduct, behaviour policy, attendance procedures and reporting arrangements; sign to confirm understanding.
- Identify indicators, listen to children, report concerns immediately and record them factually. Staff must not assume that somebody else will act.
- Know that anyone can make a referral and must escalate or refer directly if a child remains at risk or the response is inadequate. Inform the DSL as soon as safely possible.
- Report concerns about adults, including low-level concerns and self-referrals, through the routes in this policy and never conduct their own investigation.

6. Immediate reporting and responding to a disclosure

Concern	Immediate action	Record / escalate
Concern about a child	Listen, reassure, do not promise confidentiality or investigate. If immediate danger, call 999.	Report verbally to the DSL/deputy immediately and record factually on CPOMS as soon as possible. Anyone may refer to children's social care.
Disclosure	Use open prompts only: "Tell me", "Explain", "Describe". Preserve the child's words and evidence.	Record date, time, context, exact words, injuries and action. Do not ask the child to repeat the account unnecessarily.
Staff member, supply staff, trainee, volunteer or	Report immediately to the headteacher. If the concern is about the headteacher, report to the Chair of Governors. Do not investigate.	The case manager seeks LADO advice and follows KCSIE Part Four. Emergency/police action takes priority where required.

Concern	Immediate action	Record / escalate
contractor - possible harm threshold		
Low-level concern about an adult	Report promptly to the headteacher, however small or uncertain. Self-referral is encouraged.	Record securely and review for patterns. If doubt exists about threshold, consult the LADO.
Safeguarding practice or leadership concern	Raise with the DSL/headteacher or Chair as appropriate. Use whistleblowing arrangements if unresolved or unsafe.	Staff may contact children's social care, the LADO, police or NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line directly.

No CPOMS access? Report verbally to the DSL or deputy immediately and complete the school's confidential safeguarding concern form before leaving site. The receiving DSL records it on CPOMS, identifies the original reporter and confirms receipt and next action where it is appropriate to do so. An electronic record never replaces an urgent conversation.

Staff do not promise secrecy, ask leading questions, confront an alleged perpetrator, take photographs of injuries on personal devices, search a child's device, download sexual imagery or delay because evidence is incomplete. Notes are signed, dated, timed and passed securely to the DSL. If the child is in immediate danger or requires urgent medical attention, staff call 999 and take protective action.

7. Referral, escalation and multi-agency working

The DSL uses Lancashire Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership procedures and local thresholds. Referrals are made promptly to children's social care where a child is in need or there is reasonable cause to suspect significant harm. Staff support assessments and provide information requested; the DSL tracks outcomes and challenges decisions respectfully where risk remains.

- If a referral is not accepted or does not lead to appropriate action, the DSL uses local escalation and professional challenge procedures and records the rationale and outcome.
- The school cooperates with social workers, police, health, education safeguarding officers, Family Help, Prevent/Channel and other partners and attends strategy discussions, conferences and core groups.
- The school responds to Operation Encompass notifications before the start of the next school day where practicable and provides quiet, proportionate support without requiring a disclosure.
- The school identifies private fostering arrangements and notifies the local authority; it also acts on concerns involving homelessness, temporary accommodation, family imprisonment or parental substance misuse or mental ill-health.

8. Early help, Family Help and attendance

Staff are alert to emerging need and discuss concerns with the DSL. Support may be offered through universal services, community-based early help or targeted Family Help. The child and family are involved wherever safe and appropriate. A professional other than a social worker may lead an assessment where local protocol permits and competence, supervision and accountability are clear.

Children absent from education, especially repeatedly or for prolonged periods, may be at risk of abuse, exploitation, neglect, criminal activity, forced marriage or FGM. Attendance concerns are shared with the DSL, explored with professional curiosity and addressed under statutory attendance and children-missing-education procedures. The school makes required local authority notifications and never removes a pupil from roll unlawfully.

9. Recognising abuse, neglect and exploitation

Abuse may occur in a family, institution, community or online; be caused by an adult or child; and involve physical, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect, stalking, financial exploitation, coercive control or modern slavery. Children may not recognise or disclose abuse and behaviour may communicate unmet need. Staff consider patterns and context, not isolated indicators.

Category / risk	Examples and indicators requiring professional curiosity
Physical abuse	Injury, poisoning, burning, shaking, fabricated or induced illness, inconsistent explanations or fear of an adult. Bruising in a non-mobile child requires urgent safeguarding consideration.

Category / risk	Examples and indicators requiring professional curiosity
Emotional abuse	Persistent criticism, belittling, name-calling, rejection, intimidation, exposure to domestic abuse, exploitation or developmentally inappropriate expectations.
Sexual abuse	Contact or non-contact activity, grooming, exposure to sexual acts or material, making or sharing nudes or semi-nudes, AI-generated sexual imagery and abuse by a known person, peer, group or network.
Neglect	Persistent failure to meet basic physical or psychological needs, including food, clothing, shelter, supervision, medical care, education, emotional responsiveness or protection from danger.
Exploitation	CCE, county lines, CSE, trafficking, gang or network control, unexplained money/items, missing episodes, older associates, coercion, threats or offending under exploitation. Victims may identify with the group and may be criminalised for coerced acts.
Domestic abuse	Physical, sexual, emotional or economic abuse, coercive control, stalking and child-to-parent/caregiver abuse. Children may be victims in their own right under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
Mental health / self-harm	Changes in mood, behaviour, attendance, eating, sleep, self-care, self-harm, suicidal thoughts or unexplained deterioration may indicate abuse or need urgent support. Follow emergency pathways where risk is immediate.
Honour- or faith-based abuse	FGM, forced marriage, abuse linked to beliefs, accusations or family/community honour. Staff report without mediation or family contact where this may increase risk.

10. Specific statutory and high-risk responses

10.1 Female genital mutilation and forced marriage

Teachers who discover that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18 must personally report this to the police under the mandatory reporting duty and inform the DSL. Suspicions or risk concerns are referred through normal safeguarding procedures. Forced marriage is illegal; staff do not contact family or attempt mediation where risk is suspected.

10.2 Prevent, extremism and radicalisation

The school has due regard to preventing people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. Concerns are treated as safeguarding concerns and reported to the DSL/Prevent Lead, who considers local Prevent advice, police consultation and a Channel referral. Staff distinguish lawful debate from vulnerability or support for terrorism, use proportionate risk assessment and build resilience through a safe curriculum.

10.3 Modern slavery and the National Referral Mechanism

Where trafficking or modern slavery is suspected, the DSL contacts children's social care and police and ensures the competent authority considers a National Referral Mechanism referral. Exploitation indicators are not treated solely as behaviour or criminality.

10.4 Concealed or denied pregnancy

Concerns about a child's pregnancy, concealment or denial are reported immediately to the DSL. The school secures urgent health and safeguarding advice, preserves privacy on a need-to-know basis and considers sexual abuse, exploitation, coercion, trafficking, honour-based abuse and risk to the baby.

11. Child-on-child abuse, harmful sexual behaviour and sexual violence

All child-on-child abuse is unacceptable, preventable and a safeguarding issue for the child harmed and the child alleged to have caused harm. It includes bullying, prejudice and discriminatory abuse, racism, misogyny, misandry, physical abuse, threats involving weapons, abuse in intimate relationships, hazing, upskirting, harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment and sexual violence, online or offline. It is never dismissed as banter, part of growing up or “boys being boys”.

- Staff report every concern to the DSL. The DSL makes an immediate risk and needs assessment for the child harmed, alleged perpetrator and other children, including siblings and bystanders.
- The school separates children where needed, preserves education and dignity, avoids confrontation or repeated accounts, and considers children’s social care and police referral. Support and disciplinary processes may run alongside safeguarding action.
- All making or sharing of nude or semi-nude images requires a safeguarding response, whether consensual or non-consensual and whether photographed, altered or wholly generated by AI. Staff never view, copy, print, save or forward an image unless specifically directed by police under an agreed process.
- Responses are proportionate to age, development, SEND, power imbalance, coercion, intent and impact. The child’s preferred terminology is respected and confidentiality is managed carefully.

12. Online safety, generative AI, filtering and mobile devices

Online safety is part of safeguarding and is addressed through policy, curriculum, staff practice, parental engagement and technical controls. The school considers content, contact, conduct and commerce risks, including grooming, harassment, fraud, misinformation, extremist material, image abuse, cybercrime and AI-generated content. Generative AI is used only through approved systems, with human oversight, privacy protection and age-appropriate safeguards.

- The governing body ensures filtering and monitoring meet DfE standards without unreasonable over-blocking. Roles are assigned to a responsible SLT member, the DSL and IT support/provider.
- Effectiveness is reviewed at least once each academic year and after significant change or incident. Checks cover every internet-connected device and relevant location; results, actions and resolution are recorded.
- Staff receive clear routes to report blocked legitimate content, harmful content, circumvention, device misuse, cyber security incidents and filtering or monitoring failures.
- Personal mobile phones and smart devices are not used to photograph or communicate with pupils. School mobile-device and acceptable-use rules apply to staff, pupils, visitors and early years practice.

13. Children who may face additional barriers or risk

The school gives particular consideration to children with SEND or medical conditions; children in care or previously in care; children in kinship care; young carers; children with a social worker; pupils in alternative provision; children affected by homelessness or temporary accommodation; children who are lesbian, gay or bisexual or questioning their gender; and children experiencing racism, discrimination, poverty, migration, family imprisonment or English as an additional language.

- Possible indicators must not be assumed to arise from SEND, disability or behaviour. Communication aids, trusted adults, additional time and specialist advice are used so children can report safely.
- The school recognises that children may be targeted because they are perceived to be different, regardless of identity, and provides safe, non-directive and age-appropriate support.
- For a child with a social worker, the DSL works with the social worker and Virtual School Head as appropriate so safeguarding, attendance, wellbeing and educational outcomes are considered together.
- Alternative provision is quality assured before placement and monitored throughout. School remains responsible for the pupil’s safeguarding and education and maintains regular direct contact.

14. Curriculum, sport, clubs, visitors and premises

Pupils are taught, in an age-appropriate and inclusive way, about healthy relationships, consent, boundaries, privacy, online safety, harmful content, bullying, exploitation, discrimination, mental health, help-seeking and how to report concerns. Teaching is adapted for SEND and reviewed in response to local risk and pupil voice. Visiting speakers and materials are checked and supervised.

Safeguarding standards apply to PE, sport, trips, clubs, wraparound care and external organisations using the premises. Leaders check suitability, supervision, changing arrangements, transport, first aid, photography, one-to-one coaching and reporting routes. Hirers and providers must have appropriate safeguarding and allegations procedures; contractual arrangements make responsibilities clear. Any concern arising from an external activity is reported to the DSL and, where relevant, the LADO or governing organisation.

15. Safer recruitment and ongoing suitability

Recruitment follows KCSIE 2026 Part Three and safer-recruitment principles from advertisement to induction and ongoing employment. At least one appropriately trained person participates in each recruitment exercise. Shortlisted candidates are informed that an online search may be carried out for publicly available information relevant to suitability; findings are considered fairly and discussed where appropriate.

- Identity, enhanced DBS and barred-list eligibility, right to work, qualifications, prohibition and direction checks, overseas history, references and employment history are checked as legally required and recorded on the single central record.
- From the 2026 regulated-activity change, the former volunteer supervision exemption is not relied upon. Any volunteer teaching, training, instructing or supervising children on more than three days in a month or overnight is treated as regulated activity and receives the required barred-list and DBS checks.
- The school obtains written assurance for agency, supply and third-party staff and verifies identity on arrival. Responsibilities for trainee teachers and contracted staff are agreed with their employing or training organisation.
- Visitors are identified, risk assessed, signed in, appropriately supervised and issued with clear safeguarding information. Contractors' access is planned around risk and checks.
- Childcare disqualification requirements are applied to relevant early and later-years roles. The school makes legal referrals to the DBS and Teaching Regulation Agency where thresholds are met, including where a person would have been removed had they not left.

16. Concerns and allegations about adults

Any concern that an adult working in or for the school may have harmed a child, committed a relevant offence, posed a risk of harm or behaved in a way indicating possible unsuitability to work with children is reported immediately to the headteacher. Concerns about the headteacher go to the Chair of Governors. The case manager obtains LADO advice before investigation and follows KCSIE Part Four, including duties shared with an agency, training provider or contractor.

A low-level concern is any concern, however small, that conduct is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct but does not appear to meet the harm threshold. It is reported promptly to the headteacher, recorded securely, reviewed for patterns and handled proportionately. Staff are encouraged to self-refer. Records are retained in line with KCSIE and data-protection requirements and are separate from pupil safeguarding records.

The school protects children and treats adults fairly, maintains appropriate confidentiality, supports those involved and does not automatically regard an unsubstantiated, unfounded or false allegation as malicious. Where leadership is implicated, action is delayed or a concern remains, staff use whistleblowing arrangements and may contact the Chair, LADO, children's social care, police or NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line directly.

17. Information sharing, records and transfer

- CPOMS entries are made as soon as possible and distinguish fact, professional opinion and third-party information. They include the child's voice, date/time, context, exact words, people involved, injuries, action, decisions, rationale, referrals, outcomes and follow-up.
- The DSL audits record quality and outstanding actions at least half-termly. Staff without CPOMS access use the immediate verbal and written route in section 6; the DSL ensures the concern is incorporated into the secure chronology.
- Information is shared on a necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure basis. The lawful basis and risk assessment are recorded where necessary. Data protection is not a barrier to safeguarding.
- Access is role based. Safeguarding records are stored securely, retained according to the school schedule and transferred securely and separately when a child changes school. Receipt is confirmed and any continuing support is discussed directly between DSLs where concerns exist.

18. Training, induction and staff support

Every member of staff, including those who do not work directly with children, reads KCSIE Part One in full from September 2026. Induction covers this policy, the staff code of conduct, reporting routes, online safety, filtering and monitoring, whistleblowing, allegations and low-level concerns, attendance and the identity and availability of the DSL team. Agency staff, volunteers, contractors and governors receive role-appropriate information.

Whole-school training is provided at induction and regularly thereafter, with safeguarding and child-protection updates at least annually and more often as risks or guidance change. Understanding is checked rather than assumed. DSLs and deputies receive formal training at least every two years and refresh knowledge at least annually. Staff receive supervision or wellbeing support following difficult cases while confidentiality is preserved.

19. Monitoring, assurance and review

The DSL reports anonymised safeguarding assurance to governors at least termly. Monitoring includes reporting timeliness and record quality; early help and referrals; attendance and missing education; child-on-child abuse; online safety; filtering and monitoring; allegations and low-level concerns; recruitment and SCR checks; training completion and understanding; alternative provision; vulnerable groups; and actions arising from audits, incidents or pupil voice.

The Safeguarding Governor meets the DSL regularly, samples systems without accessing unnecessary personal information and reports assurance and challenge to the governing body. The policy is reviewed at least annually and sooner following statutory or local change, a serious incident, a safeguarding practice review, inspection, audit finding or lesson learned. The governing body approves material revisions and the current version is published on the school website.