



SAINT JOHN'S

# Safer Working Practices Policy

SPRING 2022

Designated Member of Staff	Headteacher
Committee with responsibility	Curriculum and Standards
Date of Issue	Spring 2022
Frequency of Review	Annual

Issue Number	Issue Date	Summary of Changes
1	April 2022	Introduction of the policy

## **Underpinning Principles**

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- It is the responsibility of all adults to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. This responsibility extends to a duty of care for those adults employed, commissioned or contracted to work with children and young people.
- Adults who work with children are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
- Adults should work and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way.
- The same professional standards should always be applied regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity.
- Adults should continually monitor and review their practice and ensure they follow the guidance contained in this document.

## **Duty of Care**

This means that adults should:

- understand the responsibilities, which are part of their employment or role, and be aware that sanctions will be applied if these provisions are breached
- always act, and be seen to act, in the child's best interests
- avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions
- take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour

This means that employers should:

- ensure that appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures are adopted, implemented and monitored
- ensure that codes of conduct/practices are continually monitored and reviewed
- ensure that, where services or activities are provided by another body, the body concerned has appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures
- foster a culture of openness and support
- ensure that systems are in place for concerns to be raised
- ensure that adults are not placed in situations which render them particularly vulnerable
- ensure all adults have access to and understand this guidance and related, policies and procedures
- ensure that all job descriptions and person specifications clearly identify the competences necessary to fulfil the duty of care

## **Confidentiality**

This means that adults:

- be clear about when information can be shared and in what circumstances it is appropriate to do so
- are expected to treat information they receive about children and young people in a discreet and confidential manner
- should seek advice from a senior member of staff if they are in any doubt about sharing information they hold or which has been requested of them
- need to know to whom any concerns or allegations should be reported

## **Making a professional judgement**

This means that where no specific guidance exists adults should:

- discuss the circumstances that informed their action, or their proposed action, with a senior manager, or with the parent/carer if not working for an organisation
- report any actions which could be mis -interpreted to their senior manager
- always discuss any misunderstanding, accidents or threats with a senior manager
- always record discussions and reasons why actions were taken.
- record any areas of disagreement about course of action taken and if necessary referred to a higher authority

## **Power and positions of trust**

This means that adults should not:

- use their position to gain access to information for their own or others' advantage
- use their position to intimidate, bully, humiliate, threaten, coerce or undermine children or young people
- use their status and standing to form or promote relationships which are of a sexual nature, or which may become so

## **Propriety and Behaviour**

This means that adults should not:

- behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children or act as a role model.
- make, or encourage others to make, unprofessional personal comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate, or which might be interpreted as such

This means that adults should:

- be aware that behaviour in their personal lives may impact upon their work with children and young people
- follow any codes of conduct deemed appropriate by their organisation
- understand that the behaviour and actions of their partner (or other family members) may raise questions about their suitability to work with children and young people

## **Dress and Appearance**

This means that adults should wear clothing which:

- is appropriate to their role
- is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative
- does not distract, cause embarrassment or give rise to misunderstanding
- is absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans
- is not considered to be discriminatory and is culturally sensitive

## **Gifts, Rewards and Favouritism**

This means that adults should:

- be aware of their organisation's policy on the giving and receiving of gifts
- ensure that gifts received or given in situations which may be misconstrued are declared
- generally, only give gifts to an individual young person as part of an agreed reward system
- where giving gifts other than as above, ensure that these are of insignificant value
- ensure that all selection processes which concern children and young people are fair and that wherever practicable these are undertaken and agreed by more than one member of staff

## **Infatuations**

This means that adults should:

- report and record any incidents or indications (verbal, written or physical) that suggest a child or young person may have developed an infatuation with an adult in the workplace
- always acknowledge and maintain professional boundaries

## **Communication with Children and Young People**

This means that adults should:

- not give their personal contact details to children or young people, including their mobile telephone number
- only use equipment e.g. mobile phones, provided by organisation to communicate with children, making sure that parents have given permission for this form of communication to be used
- only make contact with children for professional reasons and in accordance with any organisation policy
- recognise that text messaging is rarely an appropriate response to a child in a crisis situation or at risk of harm. It should only be used as a last resort when other forms of communication are not possible
- not use internet or web-based communication channels to send personal messages to a child/young person

## **Social Contact**

This means that adults should:

- have no secret social contact with children and young people or their parents
- consider the appropriateness of the social contact according to their role and nature of their work
- always approve any planned social contact with children or parents with senior colleagues
- advise senior management of any social contact they have with a child or a parent with whom they work, which may give rise to concern
- report and record any situation, which may place a child at risk or which may compromise the organisation or their own professional standing
- be aware that the sending of personal communications such as birthday or faith cards should always be recorded and/or discussed with line manager
- understand that some communications may be called into question and need to be justified

## **Sexual Contact**

This means that adults should not:

- have sexual relationships with children and young people
- have any form of communication with a child or young person which could be interpreted as sexually suggestive or provocative i.e. verbal comments, letters, notes, electronic mail, phone calls, texts, physical contact
- make sexual remarks to, or about, a child/young person
- discuss their own sexual relationships with or in the presence of children or young people

This means that adults should:

- ensure that their relationships with children and young people clearly take place within the boundaries of a respectful professional relationship
- take care that their language or conduct does not give rise to comment or speculation

Attitudes, demeanour and language all require care and thought, particularly when members of staff are dealing with adolescent boys and girls.

## **Physical Contact**

This means that adults should:

- be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described
- never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent
- always be prepared to report and explain actions and accept that all physical contact be open to scrutiny
- not indulge in horseplay
- always encourage children, where possible, to undertake self-care tasks independently
- work within Health and Safety regulations
- be aware of cultural or religious views about touching and always be sensitive to issues of gender
- understand that physical contact in some circumstances can be easily misinterpreted

This means that organisations should:

- ensure they have a system in place for recording incidents and the means by which information about incidents and outcomes can be easily accessed by senior management
- make adults aware of relevant professional or organisational guidance in respect of physical contact with children and meeting medical needs of children and young people where appropriate
- be explicit about what physical contact is appropriate for adults working in their setting

## **Other Activities that require Physical Contact**

This means that adults should:

- treat children with dignity and respect and avoid contact with intimate parts of the body
- always explain to a child the reason why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take
- seek consent of parents where a child or young person is unable to do so because of a disability
- consider alternatives, where it is anticipated that a child might misinterpret any such contact
- be familiar with and follow recommended guidance and protocols
- conduct activities where they can be seen by others

- be aware of gender, cultural or religious issues that may need to be considered prior to initiating physical contact

This means that organisations should:

- have up to date guidance and protocols on appropriate physical contact in place that promote safe practice and include clear expectations of behaviour and conduct.
- ensure that staff are made aware of this guidance and that safe practice is continually promoted through supervision and training

### **Behaviour Management**

This means that adults should:

- not use force as a form of punishment
- try to defuse situations before they escalate
- inform parents of any behaviour management techniques used
- adhere to the organisation's behaviour management policy
- be mindful of factors which may impact upon a child or young person's behaviour e.g. bullying, abuse and where necessary take appropriate action

This means that organisations should:

- have in place appropriate behaviour management policies
- where appropriate, develop positive handling plans in respect of an individual child or young person

### **Use of Control and Physical Intervention**

This means that adults should:

- adhere to the organisation's physical intervention policy
- always seek to defuse situations
- always use minimum force for the shortest period necessary
- record and report as soon as possible after the event any incident where physical intervention has been used

This means that organisations should:

- have a policy on the use of physical intervention in place that complies with government guidance and legislation and describes the context in which it is appropriate to use physical intervention
- ensure that an effective recording system is in place which allows for incidents to be tracked and monitored
- ensure adults are familiar with the above
- ensure that staff are appropriately trained

### **Children and Young People in Distress**

This means the adult should:

- consider the way in which they offer comfort and reassurance to a distressed child and do it in an age-appropriate way
- be circumspect in offering reassurance in one to one situations, but always record such actions in these circumstances
- follow professional guidance or code of practice where available
- never touch a child in a way which may be considered indecent
- record and report situations which may give rise to concern from either party
- not assume that all children seek physical comfort if they are distressed

## **Personal Care**

This means that adults should:

- avoid any physical contact when children are in a state of undress
- avoid any visually intrusive behaviour
- where there are changing rooms announce their intention of entering

This means that adults should not:

- change in the same place as children
- shower or bathe with children
- assist with any personal care task which a child or young person can undertake by themselves

## **First Aid and Administration of Medicine**

This means that organisations should:

- ensure staff understand the extent and limitations of their role in applying basic care and hygiene tasks for minor abrasions and understand where an injury requires more experienced intervention
- ensure there are trained and named individuals to undertake first aid responsibilities
- ensure training is regularly monitored and updated
- always ensure that arrangements are in place to obtain parental consent for the administration of first aid or medication

This means that adults should:

- adhere to the organisation's policy for administering first aid or medication
- comply with the necessary reporting requirements
- make other adults aware of the task being undertaken
- explain to the child what is happening.
- always act and be seen to act in the child's best interests
- report and record any administration of first aid or medication
- have regard to any health plan which is in place
- always ensure that an appropriate health/risk assessment is undertaken prior to undertaking certain activities

## **One to One Situations**

This means that adults should:

- ensure that when lone working is an integral part of their role, full and appropriate risk assessments have been conducted and agreed.
- avoid meetings with a child or young person in remote, secluded areas,
- always inform other colleagues and/or parents/carers about the contact(s) beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by
- avoid use of 'engaged' or equivalent signs wherever possible. Such signs may create an opportunity for secrecy or the interpretation of secrecy
- always report any situation where a child becomes distressed or angry to a senior colleague
- carefully consider the needs and circumstances of the child/children when in one to one situations

## **Home Visits**

These means that adults should:

- agree the purpose for any home visit with senior management, unless this is an acknowledged and integral part of their role e.g. social workers
- adhere to agreed risk management strategies
- always make detailed records including times of arrival and departure and work undertaken
- ensure any behaviour or situation which gives rise to concern is discussed with their manager and, where appropriate action is taken

This means that employers should:

- ensure that they have home visit and lone-working policies of which all adults are made aware. These should include arrangements for risk assessment and management
- ensure that all visits are justified and recorded
- ensure that adults are not exposed to unacceptable risk
- ensure that adults have access to a mobile telephone and an emergency contact person

## **Transporting Children and Young People**

This means that all organisations:

- should have appropriate policies for transporting children and young people

This means that adults should:

- ensure they are fit to drive and free from any drugs, alcohol or medicine which is likely to impair judgement and/ or ability to drive
- be aware that the safety and welfare of the child is their responsibility until they are safely passed over to a parent/carer
- record details of the journey in accordance with agreed procedures
- ensure that their behaviour is appropriate at all times
- ensure that there are proper arrangements in place to ensure vehicle, passenger and driver safety. This includes having proper and appropriate insurance for the type of vehicle being driven
- ensure that any impromptu or emergency arrangements of lifts are recorded and can be justified if questioned

## **Trips and Outings**

This means that adults should:

- always have another adult present in out of workplace activities, unless otherwise agreed with a senior manager
- undertake risk assessments in line with their organisation's policy where applicable
- have parental consent to the activity
- ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times
- never share beds with a child/children or young people.
- not share bedrooms unless it involves a dormitory situation and the arrangements have been previously discussed with senior manager, parents and children and young people

## **Photography and Videos**

This means that adults should:

- be clear about the purpose of the activity and about what will happen to the images when the activity is concluded
- be able to justify images of children in their possession

- avoid making images in one to one situations or which show a single child with no surrounding context
- ensure the child/young person understands why the images are being taken and has agreed to the activity and that they are appropriately dressed.
- only use equipment provided or authorised by the organisation
- report any concerns about any inappropriate or intrusive photographs found
- always ensure they have parental permission to take and/or display photographs

This means that adults should not:

- display or distribute images of children unless they have consent to do so from parents/carers
- use images which may cause distress
- use mobile telephones to take images of children
- take images 'in secret', or taking images in situations that may be construed as being secretive

### **Access to Inappropriate Images and Internet Usage**

This means that organisations should

- have clear e-safety policies in place about access to and use of the internet
- make guidance available to both adults and children and young people about appropriate usage.

This means that adults should:

- follow their organisation's guidance on the use of IT equipment
- ensure that children are not exposed to unsuitable material on the internet
- ensure that any films or material shown to children and young people are age appropriate

### **Whistle Blowing**

This means that organisations should:

- ensure they have appropriate whistle-blowing policies in place
- ensure that they have clear procedures for dealing with allegations against staff which are in line with their Local Safeguarding Children Board's procedures.

This means that adults should:

- report any behaviour by colleagues that raises concern regardless of source

### **Sharing Concerns and Recording Incidents**

This means that adults:

- should be familiar with their organisation's system for recording concerns
- should take responsibility for recording any incident, and passing on that information where they have concerns about any matter pertaining to the welfare of an individual in the workplace

This means that organisations:

- should have an effective, transparent and accessible system for recording and managing concerns raised by any individual in the workplace