



***ST. THOMAS MORE HIGH SCHOOL***  
**ACADEMY**

**Guidance Sexual Violence, Sexual Harassment and Sexual Bullying Policy**

<b>Ratified by SLT on:</b>	<b>September 2023</b>
<b>Reviewed and Agreed by SLT</b>	<b>September 2024</b>

**Mr Daniel Cauchi**  
Chair of the Governing Body

**The School's Mission Statement**

To inspire,

To learn,

To achieve,

*To keep our Catholic ethos at the centre of our lives,*

*To fulfil our educational potential, welcoming all and reaching out to the wider world,*

*To truly be God's servant first.*

# ST THOMAS MORE HIGH SCHOOL

## KEY CONTACTS WITHIN THE SCHOOL SEPTEMBER 2024

### **DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD**

NAME: MR GEOFF MASON : Member of SLT

**CONTACT NUMBER: 01702 606771**

### **DEPUTY SAFEGUARDING LEAD**

NAME: MRS MICHELLE WALFORD

**CONTACT NUMBER: 01702 606773**

### **CHAIR OF GOVERNORS**

NAME: DANIEL CAUCHI

### **NOMINATED GOVERNOR FOR SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION**

NAME: LORRAINE MCCLEAN

### **DESIGNATED LEAD FOR LAC**

NAME: MRS ALISON LINDSAY : Member of SLT

**CONTACT NUMBER: 01702 606712**

### **EMERGENCY OUT OF HOURS CONTACT FOR STAFF :**

[gmason@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk](mailto:gmason@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk)

[mwalford@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk](mailto:mwalford@st-thomasmore.southend.sch.uk)

### **DIRECT OUT OF OFFICE HOURS FOR C-SPOC**

See number below for direct referral

## KEY CONTACTS WITHIN THE DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD

NAME: Mr Rob Simpson (Diocesan Director of Education)

**CONTACT NUMBER: 01277 265284**

## KEY CONTACTS WITHIN THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

<b>CSPOC</b> <b>Children's Social Care,</b> <b>Southend City Council:</b> Where the school has concerns for the safety and welfare of a child or young person.	01702 215007  <a href="mailto:c-spoc@southend.gov.uk">c-spoc@southend.gov.uk</a>
<b>OUT OF OFFICE HOURS:</b> To make URGENT referrals	0345 606 1212
<b>SAFEGUARDING &amp; CHILD PROTECTION CO-ORDINATOR and LOCAL AUTHORITY DESIGNATED OFFICER (LADO):</b> Where there are concerns/allegations in respect of people working with children	ALLISON FRANCIS 01702 534539 <a href="mailto:allisonfrancis@southend.gov.uk">allisonfrancis@southend.gov.uk</a>
<b>SAFEGUARDING ADVISOR:</b>	SHARON LANGSTON 01702 534591 <a href="mailto:LADO@southend.gov.uk">LADO@southend.gov.uk</a>



## St. Thomas More High School

### Sexual Violence, Sexual Harassment and Sexual Bullying Policy

St Thomas More School is committed to maintaining a learning environment free from sexual violence, sexual harassment and sexual bullying. Sexual violence, sexual harassment and sexual bullying of or by any member of the school community, on or off the school premises is not acceptable and will not be **tolerated**.

#### **Aims of this Policy**

St Thomas More School aims to:

- create a learning environment free from sexual violence, sexual harassment and sexual bullying where all members of the school community are treated with respect at all times
- raise awareness of this policy so that all members of the school community are aware of their rights and responsibilities regarding sexual violence, sexual harassment and sexual bullying
- to train all staff to recognise and respond to instances of sexual violence, sexual harassment and sexual bullying
- to encourage all members of the school community to report incidences of sexual violence, sexual harassment and sexual bullying
- To treat all reports in a serious, sensitive, fair, and timely manner in line with safeguarding responsibilities
- To guarantee against victim-blaming further victimisation and reprisals

#### **Definition of Sexual Violence, Sexual Harassment and Sexual Bullying**

**Sexual Violence** refers to the following sexual offences as defined in the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

- Rape- a person (A) commits an offence if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to this penetration, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents
- Assault by penetration –A person (A) commits an offence if s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration, and A does not reasonably believe and B consents
- Sexual assault- A person (A) commits an offence if s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

**Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent:** A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally causes another person (B) to engage in an activity, the activity is sexual, B does not consent to engaging in the activity, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (NOTE – this could include forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party).

**What consent is:** Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity

and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

- a child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity
- the age of consent is 16
- sexual intercourse without consent is rape

Further information about consent can be found here: [Rape Crisis England & Wales - Sexual consent](#)

### **Sexual harassment**

- When referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school or college. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child-on-child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.
- Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:
  - sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names
  - sexual "jokes" or taunting
  - physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes. Schools and colleges should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence – it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim
  - displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature
  - upskirting (this is a criminal offence)
  - online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include:
    - consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos. Taking and sharing nude photographs of those aged under 18 is a criminal offence. [UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#) provides detailed advice for schools and colleges sharing of unwanted explicit content
    - sexualised online bullying
    - unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media
    - sexual exploitation; coercion and threats, and
    - coercing others into sharing images of themselves or performing acts they're not comfortable with online
- It is important that our school considers sexual harassment in broader terms. Sexual harassment (as set out above) creates a culture that, if not challenged, can normalise inappropriate behaviours and provide an environment that may lead to sexual violence.

### **Harmful sexual behaviour**

- Children’s sexual behaviour exists on a wide continuum, ranging from normal and developmentally expected to inappropriate, problematic, abusive and violent. Problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviour is developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. A useful umbrella term is protection and is used in this advice. **HSB can occur online and/or face-to-face and can also occur simultaneously between the two.** HSB should be considered in a child protection context.
- When considering HSB, both ages and the stages of development of the children are critical factors. Sexual behaviour between children can be considered harmful if one of the children is much older, particularly if there is more than two years’ difference or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not. However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them, for example, if the older child is disabled or smaller in stature. Confidential specialist support and advice on HSB is available from the specialist sexual violence sector and sources are listed in Annex B.
- It is effective safeguarding practice for the designated safeguarding lead (and their deputies) to have a good understanding of HSB. This does form part of their safeguarding training. This will aid in planning preventative education, implementing preventative measures, drafting and implementing an effective child protection policy and incorporating the approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment into the whole school or college approach to safeguarding.
- HSB can, in some cases, progress on a continuum. Addressing inappropriate behaviour is an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future. Children displaying HSB have often experienced their own abuse and trauma. It is important that they are offered appropriate support.

**Sexual Bullying** is the general term used to describe any behaviour where sex or gender is used to degrade someone. It includes all of the examples outlined above and may also include homophobic language.

### **Legal Responsibilities**

St Thomas more School acknowledges that sexual violence and sexual harassment are against the law and are covered by the Sexual Offences Act 2003, the Protection of Children Act 1978 and the Criminal Justice Act 1988.

The school acknowledges that being subjected to sexual violence, sexual harassment or sexual bullying may breach the Human Rights Act 1998, depending on the circumstances and nature of the conduct, and that schools must not act in a way that is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. This includes:

- Article 3: the right to freedom from inhumane degrading treatment (an absolute right)
- Article 8: the right to respect for private and family life (a qualified right) including a duty to protect individuals’ physical and psychological integrity
- Article 14 requires that all of the rights and freedoms set out in the Act must be protected and applied without discrimination
- Protocol 1, Article 2 protects the right to an effective education

The school adheres to the Guidance of **KCSIE-Sept 2024** which provides the initial framework for all safeguarding considerations in our school. This provides the basis for all other related safeguarding policies and links closely to this policy.

St Thomas school acknowledges that schools are required to comply with the relevant requirements set out in the Equality Act 2010, which includes:

- schools must not unlawfully discriminate against students because of a **protected characteristic** (sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy or sexual orientation)
- schools should consider positive action to address disadvantages faced by one group

St Thomas More School acknowledges that compliance with Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) is a legal duty and schools have the general duty to:

- have regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance the quality of opportunity between different groups
- foster good relations between different groups.

### **How the school responds to a disclosure of sexual violence and sexual harassment**

The school has in place procedures to deal with any disclosures within its Safeguarding and Keeping Children Safe policy as well as Schools Allegations of Abuse Against Staff policy. These policies are based upon parts of the new guidance given in the [Keeping Children Safe in Education- DfE, September 2024](#) and the [Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children in Schools- May 2018](#).

### **SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT BETWEEN CHILDREN IN SCHOOLS**

The school acknowledges sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age. It can occur online. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same school. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. It is essential the school will ensure that **all** victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor will a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. Staff are made aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. The school understands that girls and children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and LGBTQ children are at greater risk. Staff are made aware of the importance of:

- challenging inappropriate behaviours;
- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up;
- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”; and
- challenging physical behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

The school has a separate Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence Policy to ensure safeguarding procedures are followed (KCSIE 2024).

### **Upskirting.**

The school is aware that The Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019, which is commonly known as the Upskirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019. ‘Upskirting’ is where someone takes a picture under a person’s clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing

their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any sex, can be a victim.

### **The response to a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment.**

The school understands that the initial response to a report from a child is incredibly important. How the school responds to a report can encourage or undermine the confidence of future victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment to report or come forward. Not recognising, acknowledging or understanding the scale of harassment and abuse and/or downplaying of some behaviours can actually lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour. It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor will a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

### **Part five: Child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment**

This part of the statutory guidance is about how schools and colleges **should respond to all signs, reports and concerns** of child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment, including those that have happened outside of the school or college premises, and/or online (what to look out for and indicators of abuse are set out in Part one of this guidance). As set out in Part one of this guidance, all staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of **'it could happen here'**, and this is especially important when considering child-on-child abuse.

The school recognises that:

- sexual violence refers to the most serious sexual offences (rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault), these are covered by statute so should be referred directly to the Police.
- sexual harassment and sexual bullying do not include the most serious sexual offences so, depending on the context and nature of harassment or bullying, the school may decide **not** to inform the Police immediately or at all, but rather to refer to children's social care or specialist support services, such as Rape Crisis
- a child under 13 cannot consent to any sexual activity
- the school should have a clear report procedure for both staff and students, but students should be able to report to a member of staff of their choosing so all staff should have relevant safeguarding training
- any student making a disclosure or report, no matter what the content, should feel believed, that they will be taken seriously, that they will be supported and they will be kept safe
- they should never feel like they are creating a problem, that they are to blame for what has happened or feel ashamed to report
- disclosures or reports may come via friends or friend's parents and the student should not be asked why they chose to disclose in that way or why they did not respond in a different way, such as tell someone sooner
- the designated safeguarding lead or their deputy should take the leading role when responding to a disclosure
- the first person to hear the disclosure may be called to attend Crown Court as a witness and asking leading questions may undermine a Police investigation
- the priority is always the immediate safety of the child, not gathering information (the Police will do that)
- professional judgement should be supported by other agencies, including the children's social care and Police
- all concerns, discussions, decisions and reason for decision should be carefully recorded

- specialist support services such as SOS Rape Crisis can support with risk assessments and safety planning for victims
- the NSPCC has a helpline for professionals at [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk) or 0808 800 5000

## Support

- Local authority children’s social care and the police are important partners where a crime may have been committed. Referrals to the police will often be a natural progression of making a referral to local authority children’s social care. The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) will lead the school response and are aware of the local process for referrals to children’s social care and making referrals to the police. Useful links:
  - National Crime Agency’s [CEOP Safety Centre](#) aims to keep children and young people safe from online sexual abuse. Online sexual abuse can be reported on their website and a report made to one of its Child Protection Advisors.
  - **The NSPCC** provides a helpline for professionals at 0808 800 5000 and [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk). The helpline provides expert advice and support for school and college staff and will be especially useful for the designated safeguarding lead (and their deputies).
  - Support from **specialist sexual violence sector organisations** such as [Rape Crisis](#) or [The Survivors Trust](#).
  - **The Anti-Bullying Alliance** has developed guidance for schools about [Sexual and sexist bullying](#).
- **Online: Our School** recognises that sexual violence and sexual harassment occurring online (either in isolation or in connection with face-to-face incidents) can introduce a number of complex factors. Amongst other things, this can include widespread abuse or harm across a number of social media platforms that leads to repeat victimisation. Online concerns can be especially complicated and support is available from:
  - **The UK Safer Internet Centre** provides an online safety helpline for professionals at 0344 381 4772 and [helpline@saferinternet.org.uk](mailto:helpline@saferinternet.org.uk). The helpline provides expert advice and support for school and college staff with regard to online safety issues.
  - **Internet Watch Foundation:** If the incident/report involves sexual images or videos that have been made and circulated online, the victim can be supported to get the images removed by the [Internet Watch Foundation \(IWF\)](#).
  - Childline/IWF: [Report Remove](#) is a free tool that allows children to report nude or sexual images and/or videos of themselves that they think might have been shared online.
  - **UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi-nudes advice:** [Advice for education settings working with children and young people](#) on responding to reports of children sharing non-consensual nude and semi-nude images or videos (also known as sexting and youth-produced sexual imagery). See footnote 8 for more information.
  - National Crime Agency’s [CEOP Education Programme](#) provides information for the children’s workforce and parents and carers on protecting children and young people from online child sexual abuse.
  - LGFL ['Undressed'](#) provided schools advice about how to teach young children about being tricked into getting undressed online in a fun way without scaring them or explaining the motives of sex offenders.
  - Additional sources of support are listed at the end of Annex B. (KCSIE Sept 2024)

## Follow up Procedures when dealing with sexual bullying

Procedures for dealing with bullying laid out in the schools Anti-Bullying Policy as well as reference to the [Keeping Children Safe in Education- DfE, September 2024](#) which has been the basis for the schools Safeguarding Policy and procedures.

The Anti-Bullying alliance document entitled 'Sexual Bullying: developing effective anti-bullying practice - a guide for school staff, suggests the following response to sexual bullying.

- **listen and take complaint seriously:** children often report that they are not taken seriously or believed when they try to report bullying – particularly disabled young people and those with SEN. Every complaint will be taken seriously in order to keep the young person safe. No leading questions so as to bias a response to a serious incident will be asked to avoid further escalation
- **record and report:** notes will be taken for each incident that is disclosed and reported to the school Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The DSL will decide whether to make a referral to the LCSB. Records will be kept of all incidents and bullying by its very nature is repetitive so patterns and trends can be monitored. This record can also be used to sanction a student at a later date or provide information in the event of a later incident or investigation
- **sanction as appropriate but take every opportunity to educate:** the sanctions given would depend on the nature of the incident, and the age and development level of the child or young person involved. Every incident will be seen as an opportunity to educate the children involved as to the appropriate way to behave and should be part of a wider school education programme. The nature of bullying is that it is repetitive and so it is vital to check that lessons have been learnt, and the behaviour has stopped.
- **confidentiality is vital:** it is recognised these can be embarrassing and difficult issues for children to share and disclose and it is therefore important that they have the schools trust to keep information private. Information will only be shared on a need to know basis. **Compliance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) will be consistently maintained.**
- **Incidents outside of school will be dealt with:** All Headteachers have powers to sanction behaviour outside of school 'to such as extent as is reasonable' (section 90 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006) this is particularly pertinent to cyber related bullying, bullying on transport to and from school, and bullying on school trips. This is explicit in the schools safeguarding policies including anti-bullying.

### **Additional actions to be considered when a disclosure of an allegation against another student or made includes:**

- The victim, the alleged perpetrator and any other children involved or impacted need to be supported and safeguarded
- Sexual bullying and sexually harmful behaviours should not be considered as part of growing up, as 'banter' or as 'boys being boys'
- If there is an open police investigation, the suspect may have bail conditions but will more likely be released under investigation, both come with conditions which the school must support the suspect to adhere to (typically this is to not contact the victim, directly or indirectly, and to not be in their vicinity)
- Regardless of whether a report is made to police, the alleged perpetrator should be removed from lessons they share with the victim and consideration must be given to transport arrangement and social times to ensure they are kept apart
- The victim's educational experience should not be significantly affected by disclosing and it is essential they do not feel they are being sanctioned for speaking out

- Disciplinary action can be taken by schools even when there is an ongoing police investigation and sanctions should not be passed over just because police are involved (but consideration should be given to prejudicing the investigation)
  - It is good practice for both the victim and alleged perpetrator's parents to be informed to explain what support is being put in place but information should not be shared about the student who is not their child
  - SoS Rape Crisis can support with risk assessments and safety planning for victims and provide support for their parents
  - Staff must be vigilant against bullying of the victim and alleged perpetrator
  - All concerns, discussions, decision and reasons for decisions should be carefully recorded
  - St Thomas More High School is committed to maintaining a learning environment free from sexual violence, sexual harassment and sexual bullying. This means the following are prohibited:
  - All forms of sexual assault
  - Unnecessary and unwanted physical behaviour which has a sexual element, such as brushing against someone or pushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes or making sexual gestures
  - Sexual comments about someone's appearance, telling sexual stories, using sexualised or sexist names, use of unwelcome sexual innuendo and spreading rumours of a sexual nature
  - Sexual 'jokes', taunting or cat-calling
  - Displaying pictures, photos or drawing of sexual content
  - Online behaviour which has a sexual element, such as sharing indecent images or pornography, sexual comments on social media and coercion or threats to engage in sexual acts online or offline
- Sexual violence, sexual harassment and sexual bullying of or by any member of the school community, on or off the school premises, is not acceptable and it will never be tolerated.

If you experience sexual violence, sexual harassment or sexual bullying, you should report to a senior member of staff that is designated for Safeguarding:

- **Mr G Mason, Director of Learning i/c Safeguarding and Attendance- SLT**
- **Mrs M Walford, Pupil and Community Support Officer**
- **Mr T Harding, Senior Pupil Support Mentor**
- **Ms E Corr, Director of Learning i/c Sixth Form - SLT**