

Our Lady and St Joseph School

Advocates and Independent Visitors

Date	Review Date	Coordinator	Nominated Governor
14/07/2014	14/07/2015	Theresa Garnett	Paul Mokwenye

We believe this policy relates to the following legislation:

- Local Authority Social Services Act 1970
- Children Act 1989
- Protection Children Act 1999
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
 - This policy has also been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004; the Education Act 2002, and in line with government publications: 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2013, Revised Safeguarding Statutory Guidance 2 'Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families' 2000, 'What to do if You are Worried a Child is Being Abused' 2003. The guidance reflects, "Keeping Children Safe in Education" 2014.
- The Governing body takes seriously its responsibility under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; and to work together with other agencies to ensure adequate arrangements within our school to identify, assess, and support those children who are suffering harm.
- At Our Lady and St Joseph's school we recognise that all adults, including temporary staff¹, volunteers and governors, have a full and active part to play in safeguarding our pupils by protecting them from harm, and that the child's welfare is our paramount concern.
- All staff believe that our school should provide a caring, positive safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child.
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The following documentation is also related to this policy:

- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Human Rights Act 1998
- Working Together to Safeguard Children - a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (1999)
- Advocacy 2000
- Valuing People: a new strategy for learning disability for the 21st century: planning with people: towards person centred approaches (2001)
- National Standards for the Provision of Children's Advocacy Services (2002)

We understand 'advocacy is about speaking up for children and young people. Advocacy is about empowering children and young people to make sure that their rights are respected and their views and wishes are heard at all times. Advocacy is about representing the views, wishes, and needs of children and young people to decision-makers and helping

¹ Wherever the word "staff" is used, it covers ALL staff on site, including ancillary supply and self employed staff, contractors, volunteers working with children etc, and governors

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them to navigate the system.' (National Standards for the Provision of Children's Advocacy Services (2002))

We believe all children and young people should be treated fairly, equally and with respect. They have the rights to express themselves and have their views heard as stated in Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Human Rights Act 1998. The Convention recognises that children are able to have opinions, to make decisions and to influence solutions.

We realise the advocacy services, by using their vast experience and knowledge, have an important role to play in the promotion of the rights of individual children and young people.

Therefore, we have a duty to make children and young people aware of the existence of the advocacy services, allowing them to gain easy access to them, making them aware that advocates are their voice and act exclusively on their behalf.

We understand independent visitors (IVs) are adult volunteers independent of the local authority who befriend, support and advise vulnerable children and young people being looked after by the local authority. They aim to promote the developmental, social, emotional, religious and cultural needs of children and young people who are referred by the local authority to the Independent Visitor Scheme.

We wish to work closely with the School Council and to hear their views and opinions as we acknowledge and support Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child that children should be encouraged to form and to express their views.

We as a school community have a commitment to promote equality. Therefore, an equality impact assessment has been undertaken and we believe this policy is in line with the Equality Act 2010.

Aims

- To make children and young people aware of the existence of the advocacy services.
- To ensure children and young people gain easy access to the advocacy services.
- To make children and young people aware that advocates are their voice and acting exclusively on their behalf.
- To make children and young people aware that independent visitors provide support, advice and information regarding issues in their lives.
- To share good practice within the school.
- To work with other schools to share good practice in order to improve this policy.

Responsibility for the Policy and Procedure



Role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body has:

- delegated powers and responsibilities to the Headteacher to ensure all pupils, parents school personnel and governors are aware of and comply with this policy;
- responsibility for ensuring that the school complies with all equalities legislation;
- nominated a designated Equalities governor to ensure that appropriate action will be taken to deal with all prejudice related incidents or incidents which are a breach of this policy;
- responsibility for ensuring funding is in place to support this policy;
- responsibility for ensuring this policy and all policies are maintained and updated regularly;
- responsibility for ensuring all policies are made available to parents;
- the responsibility of involving the School Council in the development, approval, implementation and review of this policy;
- nominated a link governor to visit the school regularly, to liaise with the Headteacher and to report back to the Governing Body;
- responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy

Role of the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team

The Headteacher and the Senior Leadership Team will:

- ensure all pupils, school personnel, and parents are aware of and comply with this policy;
- ensure pupils are aware of their rights;
- ensure pupils are aware of the existence of the advocacy services;
- ensure pupils gain easy access to the advocacy services;
- ensure pupils are aware that advocates are their voice and act exclusively on their behalf;
- ensure pupils are aware of the role of independent visitors;
- work closely and form excellent links with the advocacy service;
- work closely with and the link governor;
- provide leadership and vision in respect of equality;
- provide guidance and awareness training to all staff;
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy;
- annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy

Role of the Advocate

Advocates will:

- work for children and young people and no one else;
- value and respect children and young people as individuals;
- listen to children and young people;
- support the views, wishes or feelings of children and young people;
- make the views of children and young people known;
- help children and young people understand their rights;

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- act in confidence;
- challenge all types of unlawful discrimination;
- ensure children and young people understand what is happening to them;
- exercise choice when decisions about children and young people are being made;
- help children and young people raise issues and concerns or make informal or formal complaints about things they are not happy with;
- not pressurise, persuade or take a course of action without the permission of the child or young person

Role of Independent Visitors

Independent visitors will:

- have some awareness and understanding of children and young people;
- be committed to children's rights and needs;
- be sensitive to the needs and wishes of children and young people;
- support vulnerable children and young people that they are matched with;
- be reliable and trust worthy;
- be good communicators;
- have a sense of humour;
- listen attentively and in confidence;
- be non-judgemental and tolerant;
- be prepared for a long term commitment of two years minimum;
- establish a relationship of trust and support;
- give encouragement;
- question and challenge people on behalf of the child or young person;
- make regular visits;
- provide information and advice;
- report any concerns regarding the welfare or safety of the child or young person;
- organise appropriate activities and trips;
- take an interest in any hobbies the child or young person may have

Role of Pupils

The Headteacher will make pupils aware of:

- this policy;
- their rights and their right to make decisions that affect their life;
- the advocacy service;
- the role of advocates;
- the role of independent visitors

Role of the Nominated Governor

The Nominated Governor will:

- work closely with the Headteacher;
- attend appropriate awareness training sessions;
- ensure this policy and other linked policies are up to date;

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- ensure that everyone connected with the school is aware of this policy;
- report to the Governing Body every term;
- annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy

Role of School Personnel

School personnel will:

- be made aware and comply with all aspects of this policy;
- attend appropriate awareness training sessions;
- implement the school's equalities policy and schemes;
- report and deal with all incidents of discrimination;
- attend appropriate training sessions on equality;
- report any concerns they have on any aspect of the school community

Role of the School Council

The School Council will be involved in:

- determining this policy with the Governing Body;
- discussing improvements to this policy during the school year;
- organising surveys to gauge the thoughts of all pupils;
- reviewing the effectiveness of this policy with the Governing Body

Role of Parents/Carers

Parents/carers will:

- be aware of and comply with this policy;
- be aware that their children have rights;
- work in partnership with the school;
- comply with this policy for the benefit of their children;
- be asked to take part periodic surveys conducted by the school;
- support the school Code of Conduct and guidance necessary to ensure smooth running of the school

Raising Awareness of this Policy

We will raise awareness of this policy via:

- the School Handbook/Prospectus
- the school website
- the Staff Handbook
- meetings with parents
- meetings with school personnel
- communications with home such as weekly newsletters and of end of half term newsletters
- reports such annual report to parents and Headteacher reports to the Governing Body
- information displays in the main school entrance

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Training

All school personnel:

- have equal chances of training, career development and promotion
- receive awareness training on this policy;
- receive periodic training so that they are kept up to date with new information
- receive equal opportunities training on induction

Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school. (See Initial Equality Impact Assessment)

Monitoring the Effectiveness of the Policy

The practical application of this policy will be reviewed annually or when the need arises by the coordinator, the Headteacher and the nominated governor.

A statement of the policy's effectiveness and the necessary recommendations for improvement will be presented to the Governing Body for further discussion and endorsement. (See Policy Evaluation)

Linked Policies

▪ Pastoral Care	▪ Outside Agencies
▪ Safeguarding and Child Protection	▪ Special Educational Needs & Disabilities
▪ Disclosure and Barring Service Checks	▪ Looked After Children

Headteacher:		Date:	
Chair of Governing Body:		Date:	