Church of England (VA)
Primary School

ASTON ST MARY'S
CHURCH OF ENGLAND
(VOLUNTARY AIDED) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Every child is a treasure – small in size, growing in God's love.

The Diocese of St Albans

Policy for Safeguarding
Adapted from Herts County Council Model Policy

Effective from:	October 2026
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SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Aston St Mary's Church of England (VA) Primary School

Policy Review

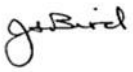
This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body annually.

The policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Governing Body in October 2026.

It is due for review October 2027.

Signature Date 5th October 2026

Head Teacher

Signature  Date 5th October 2026

Chair of Governors

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1. INTRODUCTION

At Aston St Mary's School, we know all of us are God's children and surrounded by his love. Our school vision states, 'every child is a treasure – small in size, growing in God's love.' The policy is particularly important to our whole school community at Aston School. We want and expect all children to be kept safe from harm when in and out of school. All children have the right to continue to grow in a safe environment, surrounded by God's love.

Safeguarding is 'everyone's responsibility'. This policy sets out Aston St Mary's CoE (VA) Primary School responsibilities under the Children Act 2004 to ensure children, young people and adults at risk are kept safe from harm.

Terminology:

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children refers to:

- **protecting children from maltreatment**
- **preventing impairment of children's health or development**
- **ensuring children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care**

The aim of **safeguarding** is to enable children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

What's the difference between Safeguarding and Child Protection?
Safeguarding is an 'umbrella' term that incorporates child protection. **Child Protection** is the process and activities undertaken to fulfil statutory obligations to protect specific children who have been identified as suffering, or at risk of significant harm. All agencies and individuals should proactively **safeguard and promote** the welfare of children so that the need for action to protect children from harm is reduced.

This policy is available on the school website and is included in the staff induction.

2. PRINCIPLES AND AIMS

Our Principles:

- The welfare of children, and their wishes and feelings are afforded consideration when developing and carry out school activities
- All children will have equal rights to support and protection irrespective of their race, age, ability, gender, language, religion, sexual orientation and culture
- All staff and volunteers have a professional role to identify and respond to the needs of children and report any concerns immediately

We aim:

- To provide all staff (employed, contracted and visiting) with the necessary information/training to enable them to meet their statutory responsibilities to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of children
- To provide parents, carers and children with information about the school's arrangements to keep children safe
- To ensure safe and consistent best practice across the school
- To demonstrate the school's commitment with regard to safeguarding children

3. FRAMEWORK

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

• **Arrangements for Managing Allegations of Abuse Against People Who Work With Children or Those Who Are in A Position of Trust, Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Interagency Procedures Manual** http://hertsscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_manage_alleg.html
• **Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006** Statutory guidance for local authorities, maintained schools, independent schools, academies and free schools, DfE www.gov.uk/government/publications/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006

- **Education Act 2011**

  Section 175 – requires local education authorities and the governors of maintained schools and further education (FE) colleges to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are carried out with a view of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

  Section 157and the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations - require proprietors of independent schools (including academies and technology colleges) to have arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.

- **Guidance for Safer Working Practice,** Safer Recruitment Consortium

- **Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners**, DfE (updated April 2024)

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education**, DfE (September 2025), plus any updates

- **Sexual Offences Act** , HM Government (2003)

- **Teachers' Standards 2025**, DfE
  These standards set the minimum requirements for teachers' practice and conduct. Teachers, including Headteachers should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.

- **Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children***,* DfE (2023)

RELEVANT ASSOCIATED POLICIES

In order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, this policy should also be read in conjunction with other associated policies to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children.

- Anti-Bullying
- Attendance
- Child Protection
- Code of Conduct for Employees
- Dealing with School Based Complaints
- E-safety (covered in Child Protection Policy) and Data Protection
- First Aid Policy
- Managing Allegations (covered in Child Protection Policy)
- Pupil Behaviour
- Racial Equality
- Restricted Physical Intervention
- SEND
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs
- Whistleblowing

4. SAFEGUARDING THEMES

Anti-Bullying

Aston St Mary's CoE (VA) Primary School recognises the right of our children and young people to develop with confidence in an environment that is safe and free from the emotional and physical distress that can be seen as a result of bullying. It is the responsibility of Aston St Mary's CoE (VA) Primary School to ensure that procedures are in place that will monitor and address anti-bullying issues. There is a more detailed Anti-Bullying Policy available on the school website and a hard copy is available from the office.

Attendance

In accordance with the School's Attendance Policy, absences are rigorously pursued and recorded. The school, in partnership with the appropriate agencies, takes action to pursue and address all unauthorised absences in order to safeguard the welfare of children and young people in its care. We implement the statutory requirements in terms of monitoring and reporting children missing education (CME), off-rolling and understand how important this practice is in safeguarding children and young people.

Child Protection

There is a detailed Child Protection Policy operating within the school. A copy will be provided to parents on request and is available on the school website. It is the Governing

Body's duty to ensure the policy is reviewed annually and any deficiencies within the policy addressed immediately.

All Child Protection concerns will be managed in accordance with the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures. A copy of these procedures can be found on the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership website.

Children's Services telephone number **03001234043 (including out of hours**)

All staff are aware of the Everyone's Invited website and the allegations of sexual abuse, harassment and assault in schools. Pupils receive regular, ongoing age-appropriate learning about healthy behaviours, relationships and sexual health. The school follows the new RSE and PSHR curriculum. Opportunities are provided for pupils to talk to an adult if they wish/need to.

Complaints

The school has a Complaints Procedure available to parents, pupils and staff who wish to report concerns. This can be found on the school website. All reported concerns will be taken seriously and considered within the relevant and appropriate process. Anything that constitutes an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer will be dealt with under the specific procedures for Managing Allegations Against Staff.

Confidentiality

All staff will understand that safeguarding issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the child and staff involved, but also to ensure that information being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

Safeguarding information will be stored and handled in line with the Data Protection Act 2018. The Designated Senior Person (DSP) will normally obtain consent from the child/parent to share sensitive information with outside agencies. Where there is good reason to do so (e.g. to help to protect a child), the DSP may share information without consent and will make clear records of the reason for the information being shared. Safeguarding records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. The School will retain this information on the pupil file and transfer to the next school/archive the information in line with The Information and Records Management Society. The school will only share information about children with adults who have parental responsibility for a pupil. Please see Hertfordshire's Pupil Safeguarding Records Guidance at ttp://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/child_protection/proformas/index.shtml for further information.

Curriculum

Children are taught to understand and manage risk through our Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), as well as through all aspects of school life.

The school is committed to ensuring that children are aware of behaviour towards them that is not acceptable and how they can keep themselves safe. All children know that we have senior members of staff with responsibility for child protection and they are made aware of whom these persons are. We inform children of whom they might talk to, both in and out of school, their right to be listened to and heard and what steps can be taken to protect them from harm.

Subjects such as RSE/PHSE discuss relevant safeguarding issues with the children. Please see the e-safety section of this policy for further details on this topic.

E-Safety

We have an e-safety policy which can be found in the school office.
Our policy includes how we teach children to stay safe when using the internet in and out of school- including the risks of sharing content and images online and tackling bullying, including cyber bullying. Cyber-bullying by children, via texts and emails, will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures.

The School will ensure that appropriate filtering methods are in place to ensure that children are safe from all types of inappropriate and unacceptable materials, including terrorist and extremist material.

Digital images:
The use of digital images in schools is a complex area. The school has a clear and sufficiently detailed policy which covers the taking and use of digital images and video of children and takes steps to ensure that it is understood and enforced.

The school recognises the importance and usefulness of including the children's use of technology within the classroom, such as an iPad. With this brings lots of opportunities for children across all age ranges to explore and learn in an explorative and creative way. The use of a technology item, such as an iPad, is likely to have a camera and children will be using the camera as part of their learning experience. However, the use of iPad's and other tablet equipment can also present risks if children are left to use the equipment in an unsupervised environment. It is therefore understood that the school will ensure that all usage of iPad's within the school will be supervised by an adult at all times.

Staff and children sign our ICT Acceptable Use Agreements. This includes a section for staff on the use of digital images and clarification about the position regarding the use of

personal mobile phones/cameras for taking pictures. Where volunteers are supporting school staff, they should abide by the same rules as school staff as far as is reasonable.

Health and Safety

We have a Health & Safety Policy which demonstrates the consideration we give to minimising any risk to the children when on the school premises and when undertaking activities out of school under the supervision of our staff. At all times there has to be appropriate staffing levels and when off-site, appropriate and agreed pupil / adult ratios are maintained. The lead adult always assesses visits/trips as to the level of risk and all trips are finally authorised by the Headteacher.

Our school has lone working risk assessments in place and procedures for staff where there is a security risk due to the need to work alone; staff at high risk will receive appropriate training.

A copy of the Health and Safety Policy is available from the school office.

Inclusion and Diversity

Some children may be at increased risk of neglect and or abuse. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur.

Our school ethos promotes and accepts the differences between all children and adults. In practice this is about ensuring inclusion of individuals and treating them fairly and equally, no matter the diversity of their race, gender, age, disability, religion or sexual orientation.

Promoting equality and diversity in education is essential for both teachers and children. The aim is to create a classroom environment where all children can thrive together and understand that individual characteristics make people unique and not ‘different’ in a negative way.

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2025), to ensure that all of our pupils receive equal protection, we will also give special consideration to additionally vulnerable groups (as outlined in our Child Protection Policy), for example children with disabilities or special educational needs. Special consideration is also given in the provision of safeguarding information and resources in accessible formats for children and adults with communication needs.

Managing Allegations Against Staff & Volunteers

Our aim is to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the well-being and very best outcomes for the children at our school. We do recognise that sometimes the behaviour and actions of adults may lead to an allegation of abuse being made.

Allegations sometimes arise from a differing understanding of the same event, but when they occur, they are distressing and difficult for all concerned. We also recognise that many allegations are genuine and there are some adults who deliberately seek to harm or abuse children.

We will take all possible steps to safeguard our children and to ensure that the adults in our school are safe to work with children. We will always ensure that the procedures outlined in Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Inter-agency Procedures and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', DfE (2025) are adhered to and will seek appropriate advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). The Hertfordshire LADO Service can be contacted on **0300 123 4043 or 01992 555420.**

Partnership with Other Services and Partners

Our school recognises that it is essential to establish positive and effective working relationships with other agencies who are part of the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership. There is a joint responsibility on all these agencies to share information to ensure the safeguarding of all children.

Partnership with Operation Encompass Safeguarding

Our school is part of Operation Encompass.

Operation Encompass is a national police and education early intervention safeguarding partnership which supports children and young people who experience Domestic Violence and Abuse and which is in place in every police force in England and Wales. Children were recognised as victims of domestic abuse in their own right in the 2021 Domestic Abuse Act.

Operation Encompass means that the police will share information with our school and **all** police attended Domestic Abuse incidents which involve any of our children PRIOR to the start of the next school day.

Once a Key Adult (DSL) and their deputies (DDSLs) have attended either an Operation Encompass briefing or completed an online Operation Encompass Key Adult training they will cascade the principles of Operation Encompass to all other school staff and governors. All school staff and governors can undertake the online training.

Our DSL and DDSLs undertook training on January 2024.

The governing body received safeguarding training in November 2024.

All members of staff have completed the training (September 2024).

Our parents are fully aware that we are an Operation Encompass school and we ensure that when a new child joins our school the parents/carers are informed about Operation Encompass.

Any Operation Encompass information is stored in line with all other confidential safeguarding and child protection information.

As a staff we have discussed how we can support our children who are experiencing Domestic Violence and Abuse on a day-to-day basis and particularly following the Operation Encompass notification. We have used the Operation Encompass Handbooks to inform our thinking. We are aware that we must do nothing that puts the child/ren or non-abusing adult at risk.

The safeguarding governor will report on Operation Encompass in the termly report to governors. All information is anonymised for these reports. We have used the Operation Encompass Key Adult Responsibilities checklist to ensure that all appropriate actions have been taken by the school.

When the headteacher, DSL or DDSLs leave the school and other staff are appointed, they will ensure that all Operation Encompass log in details are shared with the new headteacher/Key Adult and that the new member of staff will undertake the Operation encompass online training.

Partnership with Parents

Aston St Mary's CoE (VA) Primary School is committed to working in partnership with parents/carers to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to support them to understand our statutory responsibilities in this area.

The school shares a purpose with parents to educate, keep children safe from harm and have their welfare promoted. We are committed to working with parents positively, openly and honestly. Aston St Mary's CoE (VA) Primary School will share with parents any concerns we may have about their child unless to do so may place a child at risk of harm. We encourage parents to discuss any concerns they may have with the Designated Senior Person, Julie Winwood or Deputy Designated Senior Person, Nicki Branagan and Lianne Holmes.

Safer Recruitment and Selection

Our recruitment process selects, screens, trains and supervises staff and volunteers so that the appointment of unsuitable people can be deterred and rejected from working with children.

A copy of the School's Safer Recruitment Policy is available from the school office.

The School has a legal duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, or if there is reason to believe the member of staff has committed one of a number of listed offences, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left. If these circumstances arise in relation to a member of staff at our school, a referral will be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the individual in accordance with advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and/or HR.

Our school also adheres to the guidance issued by The Department for Education in 2015 regarding persons who are disqualified under the Childcare Act 2006.

Safer Working Practice

All adults who come into contact with our children have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare. There is a legal duty placed upon us to ensure that all adults who work with or on behalf of our children are competent, confident and safe to do so.

The Teachers' Standards (DfE,2025) are augmented by standards of personal and professional conduct e.g. ethics and behaviour, in and out of school. Teachers are expected to 'uphold public trust in the profession by showing tolerance and respect for the rights of others, not undermining fundamental British values and ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability'.

All staff will be provided with a copy of our school's code of conduct/staff behaviour policy at induction. These are sensible steps that every adult should take in their daily professional conduct with children. All staff and volunteers are expected to carry out their work in accordance with this guidance and will be made aware that failure to do so could lead to disciplinary action.

The link below will direct you to the current government guidance on safer working practice which we share with staff:

https://oliver-uploads.s3.amazonaws.com/2019/05/24/08/07/50/36/Guidance%20to%20Safer%20Working%20Practices.pdf

Abuse of Position of Trust:
All school staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards pupils is unacceptable and that their conduct towards pupils must be beyond reproach.

In addition, staff should understand that, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over intentionally to behave in certain sexual ways in relation to a child aged under 18, where the adult is in a position of trust in respect of the child, even if the behavior is consensual.

Security

The security measures put into place at Aston St Mary's CoE (VA) Primary School have taken into account the need to balance the need to remain a welcoming environment whilst ensuring the safety of all our children and staff. A security risk assessment will be completed and reviewed annually (or earlier if deemed necessary). The findings will be used in the review of this security policy and shared with staff.

Access to buildings:
The school will take all reasonable efforts to control access to the buildings and grounds of the school to prevent unauthorised access to children and ensure the personal safety of staff. The access control procedures for the buildings are:

- An entry system to the front office for staff, pupils arriving after 8:55am and visitors
- Pupils enter the school through the playground until 8:55am. The gate is locked at 8:55am and reopened at 3:05pm for after school collection.
- All other gates are kept locked.

Visitors, contractors and maintenance personnel:
The control of visitors, contractors and maintenance personnel is a fundamental part of our site security policy for the safeguarding of both people and property.

Where the Governing Body transfers control or otherwise allows the use of school premises to external bodies (such as sports clubs) or service providers during or out of school hours, we will ensure that these bodies or providers have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures, and that there are arrangements in place to co-ordinate with the school on such matters. Such considerations will be made explicit in any contract or service level agreement with the bodies or providers.

Appropriate checks will be undertaken in respect of visitors and volunteers coming into school. Visitors will be expected to sign in and out via the office visitors log and to display a visitors badge whilst on school site. Any individual who is not known or identifiable should be challenged for clarification and reassurance.

The school will not accept the behaviour of any individual (parent or other) that threatens school security or leads others (child or adult) to feel unsafe. Such behaviour will be treated as a serious concern and may result in a decision to refuse access for that individual to the school site.