



Introduction

St Dominic Savio Catholic Primary School recognises that pupils with special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities or certain health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges. This includes our pupils with a formal diagnosis or medical and health condition, as well as where additional needs are apparent but there is no formal diagnosis.

Additional barriers can exist when recognising or disclosing abuse and neglect in this group of pupils. This can include:

- Adults including professionals may miss signs of abuse/neglect, mistaking them as part of a child's needs or health condition.
- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration.
- Communication barriers and difficulties.
- Some pupils may not recognise the abuse and pupils might not be able to ask for help.

All colleagues should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful.

The context of our setting includes pupils who are preverbal and non-verbal. Staff are trained for extra vigilance due to this additional risk. Staff are aware that due to this communication barrier they need to be vigilant when identifying signs of abuse and look out for the following with our pupils with additional needs

Identifying signs of abuse

These can include

- Behavioural changes in a pupil and identify this as potential indicators of distress or trauma
- Unexplained bruising
- Pain, itching in the genital area, bruising, bleeding near the genital area
- Aggression towards adults and pupils
- Being more withdrawn than usual
- Showing signs of fear with others

Any lack of verbal communication will not prevent school staff from having a professional curiosity. Staff know to speak to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and safeguarding team if there are concerns about the safeguarding of pupils. For example, this professional curiosity would be not accepting that an injury is a result of the needs of the child, but instead consider what other causes there may be and what the evidence suggests.



Procedures in place to support pupils with SEN

School uses a range of strategies and procedures to safeguard and support pupils with additional needs. These are summarised by the three levels below

Level 1

- Small group of key trusted adults to support pupils in the setting
- Helping pupils to build a supportive relationship with trusted people in the setting
- Empowering pupils to understand self-care and safety. Educating pupils about personal boundaries, privacy, and identifying hurtful behaviours.
- An inclusive curriculum that is relevant and appropriate to meet the needs of all learners.
- Worry boxes for children to communicate with staff using their chosen method
- Nurture sessions and check in with our nurture support teacher

Level 2

Level 1 strategies plus

- Use of social stories to outline accepted and unaccepted behaviours towards pupils
- Social stories to outline socially acceptable behaviour in a range of contexts. It is our responsibility to understand and address these specific risks for pupils.
- Providing adapted education on topics such as keeping safe, sex and relationships and online safety in a way that is accessible for that pupil.
- Use the child's preferred method of communication to support them.

Level 3 – non or pre verbal

Level 1 and 2 strategies plus

- Use of communication boards to identify feelings
- Adults model to pupil how to explain feelings

