



Safeguarding Policy

This policy will be made available to Trustees, Regents, parents, staff and students via the School website.

In all its policies, Marymount International School Rome seeks to act according to the ethos of the School as rooted in our school Mission and the Mission of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary 'That all may have life and live it to the full'. Our commitment to this ethos and to being a Catholic school requires that we always strive primarily for diversity, equity, and inclusion within our community and in our interactions with the wider world. We consider these goals moral imperatives that go beyond legal requirements. In addition, the School undertakes a continual process of review to ensure that policies remain both effective and consistent with our ethos.

Policy statement

Marymount International School Rome embraces the values inherent in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990). The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment and understand that the child's welfare is our paramount concern. Every child should feel safe and protected from any form of abuse which, in this policy, means any kind of neglect, non-accidental physical injury, sexual exploitation or emotional ill-treatment. The School should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child.

The School recognizes that safeguarding incidents could happen anywhere and all staff should be alert to possible concerns being raised in this School.

The School will take all reasonable measures to:

- Ensure that we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff and volunteers (including staff employed by another organization), and other staff or supply staff which must be completed to work with children;
- Protect each child from all forms of abuse, whether from an adult or another child;
- Be alert to possible signs of abuse both in the School and from outside;
- Design and operate procedures which promote this policy;
- Deal appropriately with every suspicion or complaint of abuse;
- Design and operate procedures which, as far as possible, ensure that no-one is prejudiced by false allegations;
- Support children who have been abused in accordance with their agreed child protection plan;
- Be alert to the medical needs of children with medical conditions;

- Operate robust and sensible health & safety procedures;
- Take all practicable steps to ensure that school premises are as secure as circumstances permit;
- Operate clear and supportive policies on drugs, alcohol and substance misuse;
- Consider and develop procedures to deal with any other safeguarding issues which may be specific to individual children in our School.

Designated Safeguarding Lead Person (DSL) Responsible for Safeguarding

The School has appointed senior members of staff, referred to as DSLs, with the necessary status and authority to be responsible for matters relating to child protection and welfare.

The DSLs for the Elementary School are the Principal, Ms. Helen Davico, and the Lower Elementary School Assistant Principal, Ms. Annemarie Sharkey. They may be contacted by email hdavico@marymountrome.com and asharkey@marymountrome.com or on 06 36291091.

The DSLs for the Secondary School are the Principal, Ms. Viviane Mingazzini, and the High School Assistant Principal Pastoral, Mr. Matthew Harvey, who may be contacted by email vmingazzini@marymountrome.com and mharvey@marymountrome.com or on 06 36291091.

If the DSLs are not available, the Psychologist, Ms. Flaminia Vitali, may be contacted on 06 3629 1091 or by email fvitali@marymountrome.com and the Headmistress, Ms. Sarah Gallagher, can be contacted by phone on 06 36291091 or by email sgallagher@marymountrome.com.

The main responsibilities of the DSLs are:

- To be the first point of contact for parents, students, teaching and non-teaching staff and external agencies in all matters of child protection;
- To coordinate the child protection procedures in the School;
- To maintain an ongoing and regular training program for all school employees, which ensures that their behavior and actions do not place children or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm (for example, in one-to-one tuition, sports coaching, conveying a student by car, engaging in inappropriate electronic communication with a child, and so on);
- When new duties and protocols are introduced, staff are made aware at briefings, staff meetings, by email and in training sessions;
- Special provision is available to staff who struggle with English and literacy;
- The DSLs receive updated child protection training at least every two years.

All new staff, including temporary staff and volunteers, are provided with induction training that includes:

- The School's Safeguarding Policy;

- The staff code of conduct/behavior policy;
- The identity of the DSLs.

To monitor the keeping, confidentiality and storage of records in relation to child protection separate from student records, until the students' 25th birthday. These should be copied on to the student's next college or school. An indication of the existence of the additional file is marked on student files.

The DSL will keep the Headmistress informed of all actions unless the Headmistress is the subject of a complaint. In this situation, the DSL should:

- Consult with the Chair of the Board of Regents;
- Advise and act upon all suspicion, belief, and evidence of abuse reported to her;
- Liaise with outside agencies on behalf of the School.

If the DSLs are unavailable or are themselves the subject of a complaint, their duties will be carried out by the Headmistress or another Deputy, who has received appropriate training which is updated every two years.

The Headmistress ensures that there are sufficient resources, time, funding, supervision and support allocated to allow the DSLs to fulfill their child welfare and safeguarding responsibilities effectively.

Signs of Abuse

Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused by an adult(s) or another child or children. Forms of abuse are:

- Physical including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM);
- Emotional (including faith abuse, bullying, cyber-bullying and radicalization);
- Sexual;
- Neglect.

Safeguarding issues include:

- Child missing from education;
- Child missing from home or care;
- Child sexual exploitation (CSE);
- Bullying, including cyberbullying;
- Domestic violence;
- Drugs;
- Fabricated or induced illness;
- Faith abuse;
- Female genital mutilation (FGM);
- Forced marriage;
- Gangs and youth violence;

- Gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG);
- Mental health;
- Private fostering;
- Preventing radicalization;
- Sexting;
- Teenage relationship abuse;
- Trafficking

Possible signs of abuse include (but are not limited to):

- The child says s/he has been abused or asks a question which gives rise to that inference;
- There is no reasonable or consistent explanation for a child's injury; the injury is unusual in kind or location; there has been a number of injuries; there is a pattern to the injuries;
- The child's behavior stands out from the group as either being extreme model behavior or extremely challenging behavior; or there is a sudden change in the child's behavior;
- The child asks to drop subjects with a particular teacher and seems reluctant to discuss the reasons;
- The child's development is delayed;
- The child loses or gains weight;
- The child appears neglected, e.g. dirty, hungry, inadequately clothed;
- The child has difficulties integrating in the school community;
- The child displays signs of hyper-sexuality;
- The child is in possession of pornographic material
- The child is reluctant to go home, or has been openly rejected by her parents or caregivers.

Duty of Employees, Trustees, Regents, and Volunteers

Every employee and Regent of the School, as well as every volunteer, who assists the School is under a general legal duty:

- To protect children from abuse;
- To be aware of the School's child protection procedures and to follow them;
- To know how to access and implement the procedures, independently if necessary;
- To keep a sufficient record of any significant complaint, conversation or event;
- To report any matters of concern to the DSL.

Procedures

Initial complaint: A member of staff suspecting or hearing a complaint of abuse:

- Must listen carefully to the child and keep an open mind. Staff should not take a decision as to whether or not the abuse has taken place;

- Must not ask leading questions, that is, a question which suggests its own answer;
- Must reassure the child but not give a guarantee of absolute confidentiality. The member of staff should explain that s/he needs to pass the information to a DSL who will ensure that the correct action is taken;
- Must keep a brief but sufficient written record of the conversation. The record should include the date, time and place of the conversation and the essence of what was said and done by whom and in whose presence. The record should be signed by the person making it and should use names, not initials. The record must be kept securely and handed to the DSL.
- The School should not do anything that may jeopardize a police investigation, such as asking a child a leading question or attempting to investigate the allegations of abuse.

Preserving evidence: All evidence, (for example, scribbled notes, mobile phones containing text messages, clothing, computers), must be safeguarded and preserved not fewer than six years and at least until the student has reached the age of 25.

Allegations against staff: Suspension will not be an automatic response to an allegation. Allegations against the Designated Person with responsibility for safeguarding should be reported to the Headmistress within 24 hours. If the Headmistress is absent, the allegation should be passed on to the Chair of the Board of Regents. If an allegation concerns the Headmistress, the person receiving the allegation should immediately inform the Chair of the Board of Regents without notifying the Headmistress first. In cases of serious harm, the police should be informed from the outset. The reporting staff member is provided with immunity from retribution or disciplinary action for “whistleblowing” in good faith.

Allegations against students: A student or students against whom an allegation of abuse has been made may be suspended from the School during the investigation, and the School's policy on behavior, discipline and sanctions together with the Anti-bullying and Acceptable Use of Technology policies will apply. If the School determines that the latter have been violated in either the real or virtual world, the violator will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, which may include referral to appropriate counseling, temporary or permanent exclusion.

All children involved, whether perpetrator or victim, are treated as being “at risk”. The School recognizes that false accusations or harassment and/or bullying can cause serious harm to innocent persons. If an allegation results in a finding that the complainant knowingly and falsely accused another person of harassment and/or bullying, the complainant will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including permanent exclusion.

Action by the Designated Safeguarding Lead Person (DSL) should take account of the following:

- The wishes of the student who has complained, provided that the student is of sufficient understanding and maturity and properly informed. However, there may be times when the situation is such that decisions may need to be taken, after all appropriate consultation, that override a student's wishes.
- The wishes of the complainant's parents, provided they have no interest which is in conflict with the student's best interests and that they are properly informed.
- Senior students given positions of responsibility over other students are briefed on appropriate action to take should they receive any allegations of abuse.

The DSLs will monitor the operation of this policy and its procedures and make a report to the Headmistress before every Board of Regents' meeting. Monitoring will take place three times a year. The CP log is reviewed to detail the number of cases involving students and staff that have been addressed by the DSLs, and a report on this is submitted by the Headmistress to the Board Chair tri-annually.

Regents undertake an annual review of safeguarding procedures and of this policy at the October Board meeting, and how their duties under it have been discharged. They also consider how children are safeguarded via the curriculum.