

Parental Safeguarding Session: Contextual Safeguarding

Monday 24th March 2025



A reminder of what we mean when we talk about 'contextual safeguarding' ...

Contextual safeguarding recognises that as young people grow and develop they are influenced by a whole range of environments and people outside of their family.

For example, at school age, this could be a young person's peer group (both inside and outside of school), an online group(s) or the local community.

Children and young people may encounter risk in any/all of these environments.

Sometimes the different contexts are inter-related and can mean that children and young people may encounter multiple risks.

Contextual safeguarding looks at how we can best understand these risks, engage with young people and their environment and help to keep them safe.

Contextual Safeguarding here at St Mary's



Our School & The Local Area



- Newcastle School, yet serve predominantly two Local Authorities (Newcastle & North Tyneside). Only mixed, 11-18 Catholic school in the City.
- St Mary's consists of students from more than 40 countries, speaking over 50 different languages. Almost 1 in 4 of our students has a first language other than English (325 students), ranking us in the highest 20% nationally for this measure.
- We welcome students of faith and no faith.
- Above average academic intake for Year 7 cohorts, compared to local average.
- In Newcastle, the population size has increased by 7.1%, from around 280,200 in 2011 to 300,200 in 2021. This is higher than the average increase for England (6.6%).
- Visually, this means that on average there are 19 people living on a football pitch-sized area of land within Newcastle.
- Nearby areas like North Tyneside and Northumberland have seen their populations increase by around 4.1% and 1.4% respectively over the last 10 years.

What could be some of the 'contextual' safeguarding risks for our students?

County Lines

Knife Crime

Child Sex Exploitation

Violence Against Women & Girls

Prevent

County Lines

- County lines is a form of criminal exploitation where urban gangs persuade, coerce or force children and young people to store drugs and money and/or transport them to suburban areas, market towns and coastal towns (Home Office, 2018).
- It can happen in any part of the UK and is against the law and a form of child abuse.
- Children and young people may be criminally exploited in multiple ways. Other forms of criminal exploitation include child sexual exploitation, trafficking, gang and knife crime.
- County lines gangs are highly organised criminal networks that use sophisticated, frequently evolving techniques to groom young people and evade capture by the police.



Knife Crime



- You will be aware of recent tragic stories in the local and national news that have involved knives being used, predominantly by young people.
- Knife crime devastates the lives of victims and their families and brings misery and fear to our communities. We need to work together to ensure that young people understand that carrying a knife can easily end in tragedy
- It has been found that people aged between 15-19 are the most likely group to be in possession of knives. Those carrying a knife may not have the intention to kill someone but that's the reality of what could happen. In many cases innocent people have been the victims.

Child Sex Exploitation

- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is when someone takes advantage of a person sexually. Through threats, bribes, violence, humiliation, or by telling the victim that they love them, they force the victim to do sexual things for their own or other people's benefit or enjoyment (including: touching or kissing private parts, sex or taking sexual photos).
- Whereas all children are vulnerable to being sexually exploited, research has identified two clear indicators of heightened vulnerability to child sexual exploitation. These are students under Child Protection or Child In Need plans, as well as those with a disability.
- In Feb 2022, the Independent Inquiry on Child Sexual Abuse was published by UK Government. The authors recommended: strengthening laws such as the Sentencing Act, Government enhancing its Child Exploitation Disruption Toolkit, updated guidance for schools from DfE, urgent ban on placements in semi-independent and independent settings of children aged 16 and 17 who have experienced, or are at heightened risk of experiencing, sexual exploitation, police forces and local authorities urgently collecting specific data – disaggregated by sex, ethnicity and disability – on all cases of known or suspected child sexual exploitation, including by networks. UK Government say this work is ongoing.

Violence Against Women & Girls

- The United Nations defines violence against women and girls (VAWG) as:

“...any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.”

- VAWG impacts women and girls of all ages, from all walks of life, regardless of their level of education, income, where they live or their sexuality. It is a major obstacle to ending gender inequality and discrimination globally.
- Data shows how every day in the region there are 138 victims of domestic abuse, 103 of stalking and harassment and 21 of sexual offences. This is equivalent to nearly 11 victims per hour – most of them women.
- The age bracket of women and girls, in Newcastle, who on average suffer the most violence is 15-24 years of age.
- There were 37,912 cases of stalking and harassment recorded in the North East – that’s 103 a day; 16,369 of them recorded by NP (45 a day); 12,277 by DP (33 a day); 9,266 by CP (25 a day).
- Stalking and harassment cases in England comprise 9.2% of the overall crime, but in our region this percentage is 14.2%.
- According to the ONS figures, there were 7,750 cases of sexual offences in the region (21 a day); 4,077 in the NP area (11 a day); 1,837 by DP (5 a day); 1,836 by CP (5 a day). This includes a range of offences, from rape to harassment and common assault. This is higher than national averages.

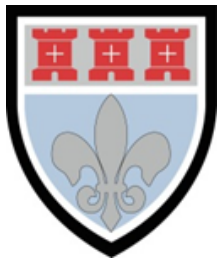
PREVENT

Prevent is part of the government counter-terrorism strategy. Its aim is to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

The Prevent strategy will specifically:

- respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it
- prevent students from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support
- work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation which we need to address.





Safeguarding

Our school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all of our students and staff. Each student's welfare is of paramount importance.

Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone working in the school, regardless of their specific role or duty.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child-centred.

This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

Support in School

- Personal Development Lessons with safeguarding focus including mental health and self-esteem. Health and wellbeing topic is taught in all year groups 7-13.
- Posters around school to remind students of key staff and importance of sharing problems.
- Assemblies.
- Regular staff training.
- Sixth Form Mentor support.
- Excellent pastoral support.
- Rigorous logging of concerns and intervention.
- Close liaison with external agencies.
- Regular parent communication.
- Professional and medical advice.
- Building a culture of openness and dialogue.
- School nurse.
- School Counsellors.

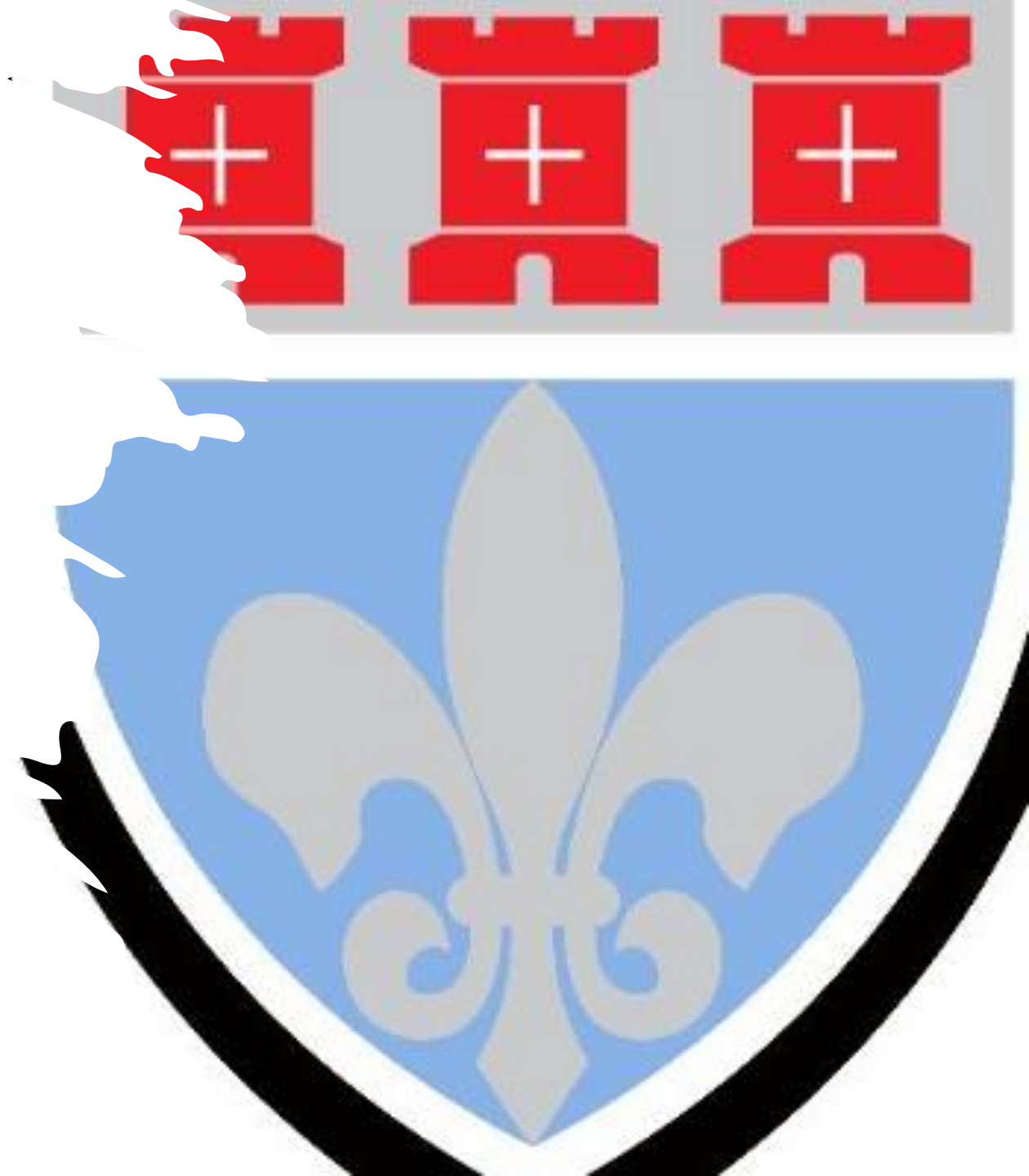
Further help and support

- GP advice, guidance and referrals – CAMHS
- NHS Talking therapies
- Streetwise counselling service - 0191 2305400
- (Drop in sessions and online counselling service)

- Childline Website and 24 hour Helpline - 0800 1111
- Young Minds Website and 24 hour Helpline - 0808 802 5544
- Young Minds Textline and parent Helpline/webchat
- NSPCC Website and 24 hour Helpline - 0808 800 5000
- Samaritans Website and Helpline and online chat - 116 123
- Family Lives Website and Helpline - 0808 800 2222

Student Wellbeing - Guidance

- Limit the time the young person spends on social media
- Mobile phones should be kept downstairs overnight
- Encourage young people to develop hobbies
- Encourage young people to get involved in sports and clubs and do something active
- Encourage conversation and dialogue without mobile phones
- Encourage quality time with family and friends
- Encourage young people to read
- Encourage a healthy diet, avoid energy drinks
- Encourage young people to sleep at least 8 hours every night.



If you are ever concerned about the wellbeing of your child or of another child, please tell a DSL or your child's Head of Year as soon as possible.

Nothing is too small. We would rather know, even if you feel it may not be important.

