

St John Bosco Catholic Primary School



Fabricated Illness Policy

Last updated: 4 October 2018

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Statement of intent

Fabricated or induced illness (FII) by parents/carers can cause significant harm to pupils. FII involves a child who is well-presented by their parent/carer as ill or with disabilities, or a child who is ill or with disabilities, being presented with a more significant problem than they have in reality, and suffering as a consequence.

St John Bosco is aware that schools can play a key role in identifying concerns of FII, and with a raised awareness of the subject, can help intervene if appropriate. Many signs of FII may not be noticeable in a school, but the school is aware of common signs in case a child or family member raises this issue.

St John Bosco understands that it is important for staff to feel confident when they express concerns, no matter how implausible they could, at first, seem.

Signed by:

_____	Headteacher	Date:	_____
_____	Chair of governors	Date:	_____

1. Legal framework

- 1.1. This policy has due regard to the following legislation, including, but not limited to:
 - The Children Act 1989
- 1.2. This policy also has due regard to the following guidance:
 - HM Government 'Safeguarding children in whom illness is fabricated or induced' 2008
 - HM Government 'Working together to safeguard children' 2015
 - DfE 'Keeping children safe in education' 2016

2. Roles and responsibilities

- 2.1. All members of staff at St John Bosco have a responsibility to identify and report pupils who display signs of, or are at risk of, FII.
- 2.2. The school is responsible for communicating with parents/carers and ensuring that they are aware of the responsibilities of staff to share child protection concerns with other professionals and agencies.
- 2.3. Although the school has a responsibility to communicate with parents/carers, all members of staff must understand that they should not speak to parents/carers about pupils who are suspected as having FII, as this could increase harm to the child and may damage evidence.
- 2.4. The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that there is a designated safeguarding lead (DSL). The DSL at our school is Mrs Jacky Briscoe.
- 2.5. All instances of pupils who are at risk of having, or display signs of, FII, will be reported to the DSL.
- 2.6. The DSL is responsible for liaising with external agencies that can support pupils who have FII, and referring pupils where necessary.
- 2.7. The headteacher is responsible for ensuring that members of staff receive adequate training and information about FII, and that all staff are aware of the common signs of FII.
- 2.8. All members of staff are responsible for ensuring that they are aware of their roles and responsibilities for safeguarding children, in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- 2.9. All members of staff have a responsibility to identify pupils who are repeatedly absent from lessons or school, and report this to the DSL.
- 2.10. Absences will be dealt with in line with the school's Absence Policy.
- 2.11. Staff are responsible for adhering to the agreed child safeguarding procedures as set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

- 2.12. All staff are aware that they must not undertake their own personal enquiries, or action beyond what has been set out by the LSCB, as to whether they have reason to suspect a pupil is subject to actual or possible harm.

3. Signs of FII

- 3.1. Members of staff may be able to recognise signs of harm, such as a child who has been repeatedly unwell, or if parents/carers give details of their child's ill health which do not match observations of the child at school.
- 3.2. The following are common indicators of FII:
- Frequent/unexplained absences
 - Regular absences for health appointments and no reasons have been given
 - Refusing permission for school-based health checks
 - Repeated claims of symptoms which are vague, difficult to diagnose, and may not have been noticed by staff
 - Inconsistent illnesses, treatments or ailments
 - Complaints from the pupil regarding abuse by parents/carers or the frequency of their doctor's visits
 - The pupil's symptoms are only mentioned when the parent/carer is present
 - The parent/carer has an unusually high level of medical knowledge
 - Documents state that the parent/carer has changed doctors/hospitals frequently for their child's treatment
 - Sudden dislike of a particular member of staff.

4. Management of FII

- 4.1. All members of staff will be alert to the common signs of FII and any changes in a pupil's behaviour, which may indicate they are subjected to FII.
- 4.2. If a member of staff believes a child to be subjected to FII, they will report this to the DSL, who in turn, is responsible for making a referral to Children's Social Care.
- 4.3. The DSL will determine whether the illness is being reported by the child themselves or their parent/carer.
- 4.4. Where absences are suspected to be due to FII and not truancy, the DSL will refer the child to an external agency for appropriate support.

- 4.5. The DSL will keep a written record of any reported absences, alongside discussions with the child and records of what has been said. This written report will be presented prior to referral in order to aid support.
- 4.6. The school will alert the police as early as possible in any instances of FII.

5. Referral

- 5.1. If it has been decided that a child requires a referral, the DSL will inform the LA children's social care services and make it clear they have concerns about FII.
- 5.2. The DSL will provide the LA children's social care services with all of the important, necessary information, including:
 - Observations, clearly distinguishing between facts and opinions.
 - Any recorded discussions with the pupil.
 - Recorded absences, including the reasoning given by the parent/carer.
- 5.3. Following a referral, the LA children's social care services may conduct an assessment which involves a multi-agency strategy meeting. Members of staff at our school may be invited to attend these meetings.
- 5.4. If members of staff attend these meetings, they will not contact parents/carers; however, the school understands that the minutes from these meetings may be shared with parents/carers, should the case go to court.
- 5.5. The process for referral is outlined in the [Referral Flowchart](#) in the appendices.

6. Staff training

- 6.1. All members of staff will undergo training to ensure that they are aware of the common signs of FII and the process for reporting concerns.
- 6.2. All staff will undergo FII training as part of their induction programme.
- 6.3. All members of staff will be aware of who to contact when in need of supervision or support, in relation to managing FII concerns.

7. Monitoring and review

- 7.1. This policy is reviewed every two years by the headteacher and DSL, and any changes are communicated to all members of staff; the next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2020.

All members of staff are required to familiarise themselves with this policy as part of their induction programme.

Referral Flowchart

	School action
	Other agency action



