



## **Our Mission Statement – the reason our College exists**

### **“Living & Growing in the Light of the Gospel”**

*With Christ at the centre of our learning, we:*

- *Help young people to achieve their greatest potential*
- *Guide their intellectual growth, nurture their God-given talents, and inspire them to live in service to others*
- *Aim to develop honest, confident, responsible and compassionate members of society, based on the educational values of Blessed Antonio Rosmini*

## **Our Vision Statement – the long-term change resulting from our work**

### ***‘ Encouraging Big Ideas’***

*Ratcliffe’s unique educational offering based on our College motto, “Legis Plenitudo Charitas”, Love is the fulfilment of the Law, provides a perfect context within which young people may acquire the emotional knowledge and interpersonal skills necessary to live happy and purposeful lives. The College’s inclusive Catholic ethos is complemented by the outstanding quality of our College community through which our Mission, “Learning and Growing in the Light of the Gospel”, serves to nurture resilience and develop maturity. Young people leave Ratcliffe with a strong sense of who they are and their purpose in the world, equipped socially, emotionally, morally and spiritually to go forth and make a difference to the communities in which they live and work.*

<b>Author:</b> James Rainer	<b>Receiver:</b> All staff/Governors
<b>Date:</b> August 2023	<b>Next Review:</b> September 2024

## **This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**

### **Rationale**

In compliance with the requirements of The National Minimum Standards for Boarding (DfE September 2022) and to help fulfil its wider responsibilities for safeguarding, Standard 2.3 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding (NMS) requires schools to appoint an Independent listener, as a possible 'safety valve' for students with concerns or problems.

### **Independent Listener**

- Mrs Bridget Lawden - 07432 566480

As part of the College's duty of care and safeguarding agenda, it is crucial that all students, including boarders feel safe, and know how to share concerns with an appropriate adult should they need to do so Hence all staff are committed to ensuring our students are safe and feel they have someone to talk to.

The Independent Listener is a volunteer who liaises with the Deputy Head Pastoral, Director of Safeguarding and Student Wellbeing Coordinator. The purpose of the post is for an appropriately trained adult, independent of the College staff, to be available to offer support to students via telephone or text. Contact may be made by students at any time and the Independent Listener is responsible for making suitable arrangements. The Independent Listener's photograph and contact details is widely displayed around College and College accommodation. A College mobile number is available for students to contact the Independent Listener. This mobile number is not used for any other purpose.

The role of Independent Listener is a volunteer post and as such there is no financial remuneration. The College will reimburse all reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of the role. Ratcliffe College is committed to the safeguarding of its students and staff. All members of staff, including the Independent Listener are made aware of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, KCSIE 2023, part 1 and receive regular training on all aspects of safeguarding. Staff understand that they must report any concerns about a child immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Concerns raised about a member of staff must be reported to the Headmaster. Concerns regarding the Headmaster must be reported to the Chair of Governors.

### **AIMS:**

- To work alongside Boarding staff and the Deputy Head (Pastoral) enlisting support of other relevant staff, where appropriate.
- To ensure that every student is happy and has someone to talk to if the need arises.

- To enable students to obtain support and guidance when they feel unable to speak with a member of teaching staff, their parents or family.
- To receive training about specific scenarios which may arise in the role, e.g., bullying, friendship issues, anxiety about academic work or peer-on-peer abuse and will have access to the relevant school policies on these matters.
- To be aware of other roles which within the Pastoral system, where a child may be directed to for support, e.g., Designated Safeguarding Lead, Peer Listeners, Tutor, Head of Year and the School Counsellor.
- To develop their profile with students so that they will feel able to make contact when they need. The Independent Listener will visit the College boarding accommodation in the evening at least once each term.
- To 'listen' and assist a student with any problem they raise. The aim of the role is not to push the School's point of view, but rather listen to the student and to try and understand their feelings on a matter. Where appropriate the Independent Listener may 'signpost' people who can provide additional support. From time to time, the Independent Listener may need to contact the College to request additional support for a student in order to help them to carry out their duties effectively.
- To always consider the best course of action for the student they are supporting. Information received about the College or members of the College community should remain confidential unless there is a safeguarding concern. Information should only be passed on to the College if it is in the best interests of the student to do so and, preferably, with the student's knowledge and agreement.

**Confidentiality must never be guaranteed when speaking to a student, and the individual must know and understand before going into any detail that information considered to be a safeguarding matter, will be passed on to the School or external authorities in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.**

- The Independent Listeners role is:
  - To listen to a student supportively and sensitively, without prejudice or judgement and, where appropriate, help them to resolve their concerns/issue.
  - To pass on concerns to the relevant staff with the student's permission, where appropriate, but always pass on safeguarding concerns to the DSL.
  - To persuade the child to go and talk to their form tutor, member of staff in the house or designated safeguarding lead.
  - To report to the Children's Services, any concern which is relevant to the child protection and safeguarding procedure.
- Independent listeners are chosen because of their sensitive and understanding nature. The Independent Listeners should enhance the relationship of both students and staff, and the College should always have confidence in their integrity to take the best course of action.
- The National Minimum Standards for Boarding Standards (NMS) requires schools to appoint an Independent Listener, as a possible 'safety valve' for students with concerns or problems.
- **The following procedure is to be followed in any appointments:**
  - Appointment procedures to follow the NMS staff recruitment standards.
  - The position is subject to the usual child protection, welfare and 'whistle-blowing' requirements.

- Make it clear that the position, which is an unpaid and voluntary role, is independent of the main lines of school management, but still subject to the school's specification, organisation and safeguarding procedures.
- There must be clear rules on confidentiality – and duty to breach if informed of safeguarding risk to student or other students. There must be no absolute guarantees of secrecy.
- 'School norms and expectations.'
- There needs to be an awareness of perception of independent listener's other roles (e.g., policewoman, governor, doctor, vicar, counsellor, local dignitary)
- A briefing / induction is carried out by the school's Deputy Head, Pastoral who is also the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Clarify relationship with their own other professional expectations and codes – religious, medical.
- Ensure that, following appointment, the students' awareness is raised – person, role, rules, access.

## **MONITORING**

- The Deputy Head Pastoral will monitor frequency and availability of the Independent Listener. Additional support will be identified should the provision not be adequate.
- The Independent Listener will record, in writing, all conversations with students, and where necessary, pass on concerns to the Deputy Head Pastoral or Director of Safeguarding.
- The Independent Listener will meet with the Director of Safeguarding, Deputy Head Pastoral and Student Wellbeing Coordinator once per term to discuss the role and the support being offered to our students. This meeting will also provide the Independent Listener updated safeguarding training, provided by the DSL.
- Where required, CPD will be provided for the Independent Listener by Ratcliffe College.