

Head of Safeguarding (Designated Safeguarding Lead)



St Mary's School
CAMBRIDGE

MARCH 2026

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Welcome from the Head

Thank you for showing interest in this role at St Mary's School, Cambridge.

We are an independent day and boarding school for girls aged 3 to 18. We have a school roll of around 600 students. Approximately 15% of the students are boarders. Reflecting the cosmopolitan community of Cambridge, on average 25% of students originate from overseas, from around 30 countries.

The School offers a secure and welcoming learning environment for girls: we are delightfully situated in the heart of the academically renowned and culturally vibrant city of Cambridge. The Junior School is adjacent to the famous backdrop of Coe Fen, and the Senior School and Boarding House overlook the University of Cambridge Botanic Gardens.

Cambridge is an outstanding place to live and work. As a university city, Cambridge has the cultural advantages of a much larger settlement but with a population of approximately 145,000, it is a safe, clean and attractive location. The city has an international reputation owing to its world ranking university and the school benefits from its proximity to the digital and enterprise communities in the various high-tech science parks and enterprise hubs. We are within easy travelling distance of London, less than an hour by train and a short hop from London Stansted Airport.

There has been major investment in new facilities at the School over the past decade: a new Junior School; a new Sixth Form Centre; new provision of Art & Photography; the creation of our Science Hub; and our new boarding facility, Mary Ward House. We have developed our sporting facilities through an ambitious collaboration with Homerton College, University of Cambridge and have invested in a new boat house in a joint partnership with City of Cambridge Rowing Club and Homerton College. We are proud to have opened our Mary Ward Educational Suite in January 2024 which provides new state of the art teaching spaces.

High quality facilities are only as good as the people who work in them, so we invest heavily in our staff, who we know are our greatest asset. We encourage staff to develop themselves through training and facilitate bespoke CPD opportunities for all.

St Mary's School promotes equal opportunity for all staff and pupils and is committed to its culture of diversity and inclusion. We encourage applications from candidates from a wide range of backgrounds.

Above all, St Mary's School, Cambridge is a very happy place. We have an excellent local reputation for being very friendly and nurturing, and yet ambitious, for the young women in our care, enabling strong progress to next steps at university, the world of work or a gap year. Our girls are genuinely delightful, the teachers and support staff are exceptionally dedicated; we are a very close-knit, loving, joyful and purposeful community.

St Mary's really is a warm and welcoming environment for all staff, whatever their role, and we look forward to receiving your application.

Hannah Helliar

The St Mary's Approach

We are proud to be a Christian school in the Catholic tradition and founded on the principles of our 17th century foundress, Mary Ward, our vision is that 'By God's grace, women in time will do much' (Mary Ward 1585-1645). The challenge for women is not over, and whilst there are now more opportunities for 'women to do much' there are still considerable barriers and so our work continues via our mission to develop curious, creative and compassionate young women with the aspiration, confidence and integrity to shape a better world for the common good. Our approach is based on the core values of Freedom, Joy, Justice, Love and Truth and we live these values in school through our HEART habits of

H – Hard work	We show perseverance and sustain focus.
E – Empathy	We are kind, joyful, generous, value friendship and celebrate diversity.
A – Adaptability	We adjust to difficult situations, are open minded, discerning and take calculated risks.
R – Responsibility	We act justly and strive to uphold truth and lead by example.
T – Thoughtfulness	We are creative, reflective, attentive, show gratitude, hear others and disagree well.

Our unique approach to education fosters a love of life and of learning, while growing the academic curiosity and spiritual wellbeing of each individual girl so that they can look beyond themselves and enter adulthood aspiring to be more and to give more, not just to have more. We warmly welcome girls, and staff, of all Christian denominations and other faith and secular backgrounds to join our thriving community.

Last year the school celebrated its 125th anniversary. Building on our 400-year tradition, St Mary's School, Cambridge belongs to an international network of approximately two hundred Mary Ward schools.

Innovative Learning at St Mary's

We empower all our students to aim high. As an accredited High Performance Learning World Class School there has never been a more exciting time to join our team.

High Performance Learning (HPL) is a research-based, pedagogy-led philosophy that responds to our growing understanding of human capability. It sees all students as potential high performers who are not limited by 'ability'. HPL makes the goal of high performance the expectation for all students and uses a unique teaching and learning framework to systematically grow minds and develop the cognitive skills, values, attitudes and attributes needed to reach success.

Here at St Mary's, we are proud to be developing our own approach to HPL and welcome applications from like-minded colleagues who are ambitious for their students and committed to research-based approaches to teaching and learning.

For further information please visit <https://www.highperformancelearning.co.uk/>

Digital St Mary's

St Mary's is a digital school. The goals of the School are supported through

- developing a community of staff and students which learns in, responds to and engages with an ever-changing digital world;
- preparing students for their future by giving them the confidence to work in a digital environment;
- establishing creative teaching and learning environments;
- employing teaching staff who are trained and supported to be technologically and digitally skilled.

All members of St Mary's work digitally using Microsoft 365 as a platform. All students in the Senior School and Sixth Form have access to an individual device (Microsoft Surface Pro) which is used extensively in lessons and for home learning.

Job Description: Head of Safeguarding (Designated Safeguarding Lead)

Reporting to:	Head, via the Deputy Head (Pastoral & Boarding)
Hours of Work:	Term time only (35 weeks + 4 weeks)
Salary:	c. £45,000 (depending on experience) FTE

Summary

St Mary's School, Cambridge is seeking to appoint an experienced and committed candidate to the new role of Head of Safeguarding (Designated Safeguarding Lead). The Head of Safeguarding is responsible to the Head and will sit on the School's Senior Leadership Team. The post holder will be the Designated Safeguarding Lead for the whole school (Junior School, Senior School, Sixth Form and boarding) and work closely with the Senior School Deputy Head (Pastoral & Boarding) and the Deputy Head of Juniors. They will lead the team of DDSLs.

The successful candidate will take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection across the school (including online safety). They will be a collaborative colleague, a committed practitioner, and be fully supportive of the school's vision. They will have demonstrable experience of leading and actioning whole school strategic plans or strategic plans in other settings. They will confidently ensure the school provides up-to-date, relevant advice/training and support to enable the school community to have the knowledge and understanding of all safeguarding policies and practices that must be adhered to. The successful candidate will be pivotal in advising and supporting other members of staff on child welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters, and will liaise with relevant external agencies. They will provide relevant and appropriate training to all stakeholders, and be an approachable and supportive colleague.

Head of Safeguarding is a crucial role within our school, responsible for ensuring the welfare and safety of all children and young people in the school. The postholder will be a non-teaching staff member who will implement and have a strategic oversight of the school's safeguarding policies and procedures, in accordance with the guidelines outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) and National Minimum Standards for Boarding (NMS).

The Key Duties and Responsibilities set out below is a list of the principal responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The list is not exhaustive, and, in any case, aspects of the job description may be adjusted from time to time to take account of developments as well as changes to the Senior Leadership Team.

1. Safeguarding Policy Implementation

- Develop, review and update the school's safeguarding and other relevant policies at least annually, ensuring they are compliant with KCSIE guidelines, and that other school policies are consistent with them.
- Ensure all staff members, including teaching and professional services staff, are aware of and adhere to the school's safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Promote a culture of safeguarding amongst staff, students, parents, and other stakeholders, regularly communicating with them.
- Have a strategic oversight of the school's safeguarding to ensure there is a comprehensive understanding and effective delivery of it.

2. Designated Safeguarding Lead

- Fulfil the role of DSL as described in KCSIE.
- Take lead responsibility for all safeguarding concerns and incidents, ensuring they are recorded, reported, and managed appropriately.
- Work closely with the Deputy Head (Pastoral & Boarding) and Deputy Head of Juniors and other key pastoral staff in ensuring all students are safeguarded.
- Provide advice, guidance, and support to staff regarding safeguarding matters and refer cases to external agencies when necessary, also supporting staff who make referrals.
- Collaborate with external agencies, such as social services and the police, to address safeguarding concerns and coordinate appropriate interventions. Refer cases to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern and support staff who make referrals.
- Liaise with the Head in the referral of cases to the Disclosure and Barring Service where a person is dismissed or leaves due to risk or harm to a child.
- Liaise with the Deputy Head (Pastoral & Boarding) regarding referrals to the Police where a crime may have been committed.
- Be the point of contact for Operation Encompass notifications.
- Make the Head aware of safeguarding issues in the school.
- Liaise with the case manager and the local authority designated officer(s) (LADO) for child protection concerns in cases which concern a staff member, volunteer or adult.
- Liaise with the Lead Nurse where safeguarding concerns are linked to mental health.
- Liaise with the Deputy Head (Pastoral and Boarding) on attendance data, to identify safeguarding or other issues that may impact on students' learning and achievement.
- Liaise with the Director of IT and Digital Strategy Lead to ensure effective filtering and monitoring of the school's network, promoting online and digital safety and following up any safeguarding concern or inappropriate use, with specific reference to the filtering and monitoring expectations of a DSL in KCSIE, and with close regard to the Filtering and Monitoring Standards.
- Liaise with the Bursar and Head of Operations to ensure that external organisations using the school site have appropriate oversight of safeguarding and respond to any safeguarding incidents that occur onsite involving these organisations, as per KCSIE guidance.
- Encourage a culture of listening to children among all staff, ensuring that children's feelings are heard where the school puts measures in place to protect them.
- Model best practice and always uphold the principles of confidentiality and data protection whilst ensuring that appropriate sharing of information allows staff to effectively support their students.
- Establish, maintain and provide regular supervision for colleagues, as agreed with the Deputy Head (Pastoral & Boarding).
- Oversee the use of MyConcern on a daily basis and distribution of caseload to the Safeguarding team.
- Monitor Senso/Smoothwall (as appropriate) alerts and act upon them or delegate to other DDSs or HOYs as appropriate.
- Meet with the Safeguarding Governor termly to discuss safeguarding compliance and ensure that the governors are fully up to date.
- Play a key role in pastoral meetings along with the Deputy Head (Pastoral & Boarding) and other relevant staff.
- Attend local safeguarding cluster meetings.
- To lead on case management of the most vulnerable pupils.
- Promote supportive engagement with parents and/or carers in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including when families may be facing challenging circumstances.

- To be prepared to facilitate home visits to families to verify students are 'safe and well' for purposes of those missing education (CME) and/or to carry out discussion/assessments to provide on-going support for safeguarding purposes.
- Organise and participate in the DSL/DDSL rota for school holidays.

3. Training and Education

- Arrange and deliver regular safeguarding training sessions for all staff members and governors, ensuring they are up to date with the latest safeguarding practices and procedures.
- Provide ongoing support and advice to staff regarding the identification and reporting of safeguarding concerns.
- Collaborate with other professionals and organisations to organise external training sessions and workshops for staff and parents.
- Understand and support the school with regards to the requirements of the Prevent duty and provide advice and support to staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation and being drawn into terrorism.
- Understand and support the school with regards to the Filtering and Monitoring Standards.
- Understand the unique risks associated with online safety and ensure staff training is current.
- Encourage and build a culture of trust which highlights the importance of relationship building so that staff and students feel comfortable raising safeguarding concerns within the school setting.
- Liaise with the Deputy Head (Pastoral & Boarding)/Senior Tutor and the Digital Strategy Lead to ensure that students and parents have access to up-to-date education on online safety.
- Undertake training to gain and maintain the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role and meet the expectations set out in KCSIE.
- Undertake Safer Recruitment training in order to be part of the process for recruitment of new staff.

4. Record-keeping and Documentation

- Maintain accurate and up-to-date records of all safeguarding concerns, incidents, and actions taken, in compliance with legal and regulatory requirements. Ensure decision making is clear in the records and any relevant pupil voice and lessons learned, including a systematic approach to recording evidence relevant to safeguarding cases.
- In liaison with the Compliance Manager, understand relevant data protection legislation and regulations, especially the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR).
- Ensure confidentiality and sensitivity when handling safeguarding information, adhering to data protection policies and procedures.
- Monitor and review safeguarding records to identify patterns, trends, or areas for improvement, and implement necessary changes to safeguarding practices.
- Collate qualitative and quantitative data and produce reports (including a termly report to governors) to facilitate monitoring and evaluation.
- Where children leave the school (including in-year transfers): - Ensure their safeguarding file is securely transferred to the new school as soon as possible, separately from the main pupil file, with a receipt of confirmation, and within the specified time set out in KCSIE and consider whether it would be appropriate to, in conjunction with the Deputy Head (Pastoral & Boarding), to share any additional information with the new school before the child leaves.
- Ensure the school receives information from the previous schools of new joiners, including nil returns, within the timescale specified by KCSIE, whether this is in-year or at the start of an academic year.

5. Safeguarding awareness

- Keep abreast of current research and understanding which is applicable to Child Protection, Safeguarding and family work.
- Promote and raise awareness of safeguarding issues within the school community through the development of initiatives, campaigns and resources, including website articles and assemblies.
- Provide guidance and support to parents and guardians regarding safeguarding matters, encouraging open communication and collaboration.

6. Senior School Attendance

- Ensure daily attendance registers are accurate and complete and follow up with staff members about any incomplete data.
- Follow up on any unexplained absences with parents/carers, escalating issues as appropriate to Heads of Year or Deputy Head (Pastoral & Boarding).
- In line with school procedures and in conjunction with Heads of Year, Senior Tutor and Deputy Head (Pastoral & Boarding), initiate and oversee the administration of absence procedures; for example, letters home, and engagement with local authorities/other external agencies and partners.
- Maintain accurate records of communications with parents/carers and relevant interventions on iSAMS/MyConcern as appropriate.
- Build and refresh knowledge of ISAMS and MyConcern and other relevant systems.
- Interpret attendance report identifying key statistics, reasons for absence and any patterns of concern.
- Track attendance of vulnerable groups of pupils and share information with Heads of Year, Senior Tutor and Deputy Head (Pastoral & Boarding).
- Identify pupils that need additional support to improve their attendance.
- Work with Heads of Year, Senior Tutor and Deputy Head (Pastoral & Boarding) to identify appropriate interventions to improve attendance for particular groups or individual pupils.
- Review progress and the impact of support/interventions.
- Work with the Deputy Head (Pastoral & Boarding) to develop and revise the school's Attendance Policy.
- Liaise with the Deputy Head (Pastoral & Boarding) to Implement children missing from education (CME) procedures when appropriate.
- Coordinate meetings with pupils and parents/carers alongside the pastoral team to implement interventions and track progress.
- Identify and, where possible, mitigate potential barriers to attendance in partnership with families.

7. Other responsibilities

- Share responsibility for promoting an atmosphere of warmth, trust and mutual support across the School, in line with our vision, mission and values.
- Contribute to whole school monitoring and improvement as part of SLT, including self-evaluation.
- Be involved in the general duties of the SLT, including admissions and other school events.
- Be involved in the recruitment of staff.
- Have care for the welfare of all school staff.
- Work within the school's health and safety policy, to ensure a safe working environment for pupils, staff and visitors.
- Maintain professional standards of attendance, punctuality and conduct with pupils, parents and colleagues.
- Promote diversity, equality and inclusion in all aspects within the school.
- Undertake other duties as reasonably requested by the Head.
- Act in accordance with the aims, policies and administrative procedures of the school.

This job description is not exhaustive, and the post holder will be expected to carry out such duties that may be required from time to time and that are broadly consistent with the job description. It may, generally after consultation with the post holder, be subject to modification or amendment by the school.

Person Specification

SPECIFICATION	DETAIL
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undergraduate Degree or equivalent • Further qualifications in an area related to this post desirable
Experience, Knowledge and understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of working with senior leadership • Relevant experience in a senior safeguarding role, ideally within the education or service sector environment • Expert working knowledge of school safeguarding and practices • Up-to-date knowledge of relevant safeguarding regulatory guidance relating to schools • Evidence of continued professional development • Experience of training others or in extended safeguarding matters • Understanding of teaching and school settings • Experience of creating and implementing policies at an organisational level • Experience of leading strategic initiatives across a whole school or relevant organisation.
Skills and Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to pastoral excellence • Ability to manage own time and use initiative, to work calmly under pressure, and to meet deadlines • Ability to work effectively in a team • Excellent organisational skills and attention to detail, with high levels of accuracy • Highly developed interpersonal skills • Ability to communicate articulately and confidently with all stakeholders, both in writing and verbally • High levels of personal and professional responsibility and integrity • Ability to maintain confidentiality • Ability to manage, persuade, influence, support and motivate staff • Resilient, flexible, confident and responsive to challenge • Excellent drive and determination • Ability to manage change successfully
Personal Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to the ethos of the school • High expectations for students • Commitment to own personal development • Commitment to a culture of continuous improvement • Readiness to contribute to the whole school when required

Child Welfare and Child Protection Issues

The interview for this post will include exploring issues relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children including:

- motivation to work with children and young people;
- ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships with children and young people;
- emotional resilience in working with challenging behaviours;
- attitudes to the use of authority and maintaining discipline.

Any relevant issues arising from the take up of references will be discussed at interview. The school is an equal opportunities employer. We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Successful applicants are subject to an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Check.

Benefits

At St Mary's you will enjoy an exceptional career and comprehensive benefits including a contributory pension scheme, BUPA cash plan, 33% discount (pro rata for part-time staff) on school fees, a work laptop, an occupational sickness scheme, free lunches and refreshments, a season ticket discount, access to the Cambridge University Botanic Gardens and much more.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

St Mary's School is committed to ensuring equal opportunities in all aspects of employment and selects staff on merit irrespective of race, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, marital status, sex, sexuality/gender preference, disability or age. You are not obliged to complete the Equal Opportunities Form, but any information given will help us monitor the effectiveness of our policies and procedures.

If you have a disability, you are invited to request any special arrangements that you may require for interview or any adjustments that you would consider necessary to your working arrangements by contacting our Human Resources department (hr@stmaryscambridge.co.uk, 01223 353253).

Process

Application is welcomed by completing the Application Form and Equal Opportunities Form which can be found on the Vacancies page of our website. This may be accompanied by a covering letter and a curriculum vitae. We are unable to accept applications supported by a CV alone.

Interviews will be conducted in person, and they will explore candidates' suitability to work with children. Candidates are required to bring with them the necessary ID documentation and any relevant qualification certificate(s), all of which must be originals. Further information of the interview format will be provided if you are shortlisted for interview.

If you have any question, please contact the HR Team by email: hr@stmaryscambridge.co.uk or call: 01223 353253.

Closing date: 9.00am Wednesday 18 March 2026

Interview date: Tuesday 24 March 2026

We will review applications on receipt. Suitable candidates may be interviewed before the closing date, and we reserve the right to withdraw the position if an early appointment is made.