



Independent Listener Policy

Academic Year 2025-2026

Aims and Principles

St Paul's Cathedral School is a Christian, co-educational community which holds to the values of love, justice, tolerance, respect, honesty, service and trust in its life and practice, to promote positive relationships throughout the school community and where the safety, welfare and emotional well-being of each child is of the utmost importance.

The school aims to instil a love of learning through a broad curriculum. It aims to give each pupil the opportunity to develop intellectually, socially, personally, physically, culturally and spiritually. All pupils are encouraged to work to the best of their ability and to achieve standards of excellence in all of their endeavours.

Through the corporate life of the school, and through good pastoral care, the school encourages the independence of the individual as well as mutual responsibility. It aims to make its pupils aware of the wider community, espouses the democratic process and encourages a close working relationship with parents and guardians.

Introduction

The school identifies one person other than a parent, outside the staff, and those responsible for the leadership and governance of the school, who the boarders can contact directly about personal problems or concerns at the school. The pupils in boarding know who this person is, know how to contact them and should feel comfortable talking to them.

There is currently one adult who has taken up the role of 'Independent Listener.'

The School's Independent Listener is:	
Jane Sladdin	07984 984 462

This system is operated on a limited confidentiality basis, and the independent listener is under no obligation to inform the school of any calls, unless there is a safeguarding concern.

All pupils in boarding are made aware of this role and contact details via:

- An annual meeting at which all boarders and the Independent Listener are present.
- Regular reminders in weekly House meetings.
- Posters displayed in the boarding house.
- Details contained in the 'Information for New Boarders' Booklet.

The pupil messaging is that the Independent Listener is one of the many people that are available for pupils to talk to along with:

- Peers
- Parents and family
- Teachers
- Trusted adults
- School Nurse and Mental Health First Aider
- School Chaplain
- School Counsellor
- Safeguarding Leads
- Boarding staff
- Childline
- Children's Commissioner

Actions for the Independent Listener

Pupils are made aware that if a safeguarding concern is raised then the confidentiality has to be extended to the safeguarding team, who are trained to manage incidents sensitively and professionally.

The Independent Listener will encourage the child, where appropriate, to share the worry with parents or school staff and will provide advice on how a child might do so, offer to do so on the child's behalf or to do so in conjunction with the child.

Response to safeguarding concerns

If a safeguarding issue is raised, the Independent Listener is required to inform the child that the information does need to be passed to the school. A safeguarding issue may need to be disclosed unilaterally, together with the identity of the pupil to a member of the safeguarding team. The Independent Listener will, however, always seek to act with the pupil's agreement, encouraging them to make the necessary disclosure.

Response to non-safeguarding concerns

If the matter is not a safeguarding concern, then the Independent Listener is not required to inform the school but will talk to the pupil about how the matter might be addressed and moved forward, and this may involve contacting the School on a named or no-names basis. The first point of contact is likely to be, for consistency and continuity, the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Contact with Head of Boarding

Contact is made between the Head of Boarding and the Independent Listener at least termly and as often as required, providing an opportunity to identify any patterns or trends in contact, which would then be actioned by the Head of Boarding in conjunction with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Boundaries around the role

The Independent Listener is available to talk to over the telephone. The key to the role is in the word 'Listener'. The Independent Listener is not a substitute for professional support services.

Whilst a pupil might contact the Independent Listener on several different occasions, it is expected that there will not be regular and ongoing contact on any issue.

The Independent Listener will signpost pupils to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or other support services listed in Appendix 2.

The Independent Listener would not meet with a pupil in person (unless in an exceptional case with permission from and following a risk assessment by the Designated Safeguarding Lead)

At times the need may simply be to listen or reassure, and no onward contact is needed.

Appendix I – Independent Listener Job Description

Role and Job Description:

Safeguarding is the responsibility of all staff at St Paul's Cathedral School and all staff are expected to share our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the children in our care. Staff must be aware of the procedures within the school which support safeguarding and must act in accordance with the school's Safeguarding Policy and Staff Code of Conduct.

1. The Independent Listener will act as a confidential and supportive adult to pupils who wish to discuss concerns or worries. In a similar way to any member of staff, confidentiality cannot be maintained in a case where there is concern for the welfare or safety of the student (or others) as a consequence of any discussion with the Independent Listener. In these situations, the Independent Listener should inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputies in the first instance, for specific situations as detailed in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. If the DSL Team are unavailable, they may contact one of the following directly; the Local Authority Single Point of Advice (SPOA,) the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), or the Police.

2. Other than as set out above, there is no requirement for the Independent Listener to report to the School any of the conversations they have with pupils. However:

- a. The Independent Listener, with explicit agreement from/at the request of a pupil, may contact the School to share specific details or raise particular concerns.
- b. At their discretion, the Independent Listener can report to the Head any generic information such as the number of calls they receive.

3. The Independent Listener should visit the school at least annually to familiarise themselves with the children if necessary.

4. There will be no expectation that the Independent Listener make themselves available in person for face-face meetings with individual pupils.

Appendix 2 – USEFUL CONTACTS- Who can Boarders call?

Independent Listener: Mrs Jane Sladdin

Telephone: See posters in school

The school has a system whereby any child or young person who wishes to talk to an independent adult can do so. Conversations are confidential unless a pupil is at risk of harm.

ChildLine:

Telephone: 0800 1111

'We're here for you, whatever's on your mind. We'll support you. Guide you. Help you make decisions that are right for you. Our tips and techniques, ideas and inspiration, can help you feel more in control. And you can access them in your own time, at your own pace!'

NSPCC Helpline:

Telephone: 0808 800 5000

The NSPCC helpline provides help and support to thousands of parents, professionals and families. The NSPCC helpline is a place you can contact by phone or online to get advice or share concerns about a child, anonymously if you wish. It's staffed by professional practitioners with backgrounds in jobs like teaching, healthcare and social work.

The Children's Commissioner:

Telephone: 0207 783 8330

The Children's Commissioner for England, Rachel de Souza, is responsible for promoting and protecting the rights of children and young people and making sure their voices are listened to. The advice line is independent of the Government and exists to make sure that young people's rights and entitlements are upheld and that their views are taken seriously. More details can be found at www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk.

Help at Hand:

Telephone: 0800 528 0731

The national advice line for children and young people who are in care, leaving care, living away from home or working with children's services.

City of London Children and Families Team (Social Care)

Telephone: 0207 332 3621/0208 356 2710 (out of hours emergencies)

The Social Care team deal with safeguarding emergencies relating to children and young people resident in the City of London.