

Howes Community Primary School



Child Protection Policy

Date of Last Review: September 2017

Reviewed by: Sioux Cooke, Mandy Mair, Rebecca Bollands

Agreed by Governors: September 2017

Shared with all Staff: September 2017

Frequency of Review: Annually (or as changes are advised by the LA)

Date of Next Review: September 2018

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1 Purpose and Aims

- 1.1 Howes Primary School fully recognises its responsibilities for safeguarding children (child protection).
- 1.2 Our policy applies to all staff, volunteers, governors and visitors in the school.
- 1.3 There are five main elements to our policy:
 - Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in line with national legislation by using at least one suitably trained recruiter on all interview panels and by checking the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children and ensuring any unsuitable behaviour is reported and managed using the Allegations Management procedures
 - Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe
 - Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse
 - Supporting pupils who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan
 - Establishing a safe environment in which children can learn and develop.
- 1.4 We recognise that because of the day to day contact with children, school staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. The school will therefore:
 - Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to
 - Ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried
 - Include opportunities across the curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

2 Statutory Framework

- 2.1 In order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, we will act in accordance with the following legislation and statutory guidance:
 - The Children Act 1989 & 2004
 - The Education Act 2002 (Section 175 for Maintained Schools, Section 157 for Independent Schools, Academies and Free Schools.)
 - The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005
 - Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Teachers and Other Staff (DfE, 2011)
 - Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2015)
 - Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2016)
 - Procedures set out by the Coventry Safeguarding Children Board.

3 The Role of the Governing Body

3.1 Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2016) sets out the responsibilities of governing bodies. As part of these overarching responsibilities the Governing Body will:

- 3.1.1 Through the Headteacher, remedy without delay any deficiencies or weaknesses in regard to child protection arrangements that are brought to the attention of the school management or Governing Body
- 3.1.2 Ensure that a senior member of staff of the school's leadership team is identified to take the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead as defined in *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, and given in Appendix 2 of this document. A second member of staff, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, will fulfil this role when the DSL is unavailable.
- 3.1.3 Ensure that the school has a nominated governor responsible for child protection, to take lead responsibility in the Governing Body for Safeguarding and Child Protection, and to provide support and challenge to the DSL to ensure that the work of the school conforms to this policy.
- 3.1.4 Ensure that on arrival at school all visitors (including contractors) are provided with a leaflet making them aware of their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and their responsibility for referring any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or his/her Deputy, and the names of the Designated Safeguarding Leads and his/her Deputy.
- 3.1.5 Make this policy available to parents and carers through the school website and ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the school and staff for child protection by setting out its obligations in the school prospectus.
- 3.1.6 Ensure that children and young people are taught about keeping themselves safe, in a way that is appropriate to their age. This will include raising their awareness of the types of abuse and neglect, and specific safeguarding issues (eg Child Sexual Exploitation), set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.1.7 Ensure that the school contributes to inter-agency working in line with statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (DfE, 2015). This includes providing a co-ordinated offer of early help¹ when additional needs of children are identified and contributing to inter-agency plans to provide additional support to children subject to child protection plans. This covers a range of work such as:
 - Working with the named CAF Co-ordinator in Children & Family First regarding resistant families
 - Working to help identify children and young people who are privately fostered
 - Working with the Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Team
 - Working to help protect children from extremist and violent views through multi-agency work on the PREVENT agenda.
- 3.1.8 Ensure that the school develops effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters, including:
 - Attendance at case conferences

¹ Inspected by Ofsted under leadership and management of safeguarding (Inspecting Safeguarding, Ofsted, April 2014. Paragraph 17)

- Notifying Social Care immediately (on the first day of absence) if there is an unexplained absence of a child on a **Child Protection Plan**
 - Contacting the child's social worker directly if there is an unexplained absence of a child who is **Looked After**. This will then trigger actions identified in the 'Joint Police and Social Care Protocol for Dealing with Children Missing from Care'.
- 3.1.9 Ensure that the school's Child Protection procedures are in accordance with Local Authority guidance and inter-agency procedures agreed through the Coventry Safeguarding Children Board.
- 3.1.10 Ensure there is a staff behaviour (code of conduct) policy, which links to this child protection policy, and which is shared with all current staff and forms part of the induction training for new staff.
- 3.1.11 Ensure that² any member of staff found not suitable to work with children will be notified to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for consideration for barring, following resignation, dismissal or when we cease to use their service as a result of a substantiated allegation, in the case of a volunteer³.
- 3.1.12 Review this Child Protection policy, and its effectiveness, annually (no later than the date of next review given on the front cover).

4. The Role of the Headteacher

- 4.1 The Headteacher, supported by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, must ensure that this policy and associated procedures are followed by all staff.
- 4.2 Ensure that the school is alert to possible private fostering arrangements, and that in the school admission process, the parents/carers resident with each child or young person indicate whether they are parent, other relative (to be specified), friend of the family, or other (to be specified).

5. The Role of the Safeguarding Lead

- 5.1 The broad areas of responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead involve managing referrals/cases and raising awareness of safeguarding and child protection amongst staff. Appendix 2 of this document, drawn from *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, provides more detailed information on these areas of responsibility.
- 5.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will have the status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post including committing resources and, where appropriate, supporting and directing other staff.
- 5.3 In making decisions on whether to refer child protection concerns/disclosures to Children's Social Care the Designated Safeguarding Lead must use Coventry's Children's Social Care Thresholds and Practice Standards, available at: [www.coventrylscb.org.uk/files/Thresholds and Practice Standards.pdf](http://www.coventrylscb.org.uk/files/Thresholds%20and%20Practice%20Standards.pdf)

² Following guidance from the LADO

³ Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2015) states "If an organisation removes an individual (paid worker or unpaid volunteer) from work such as looking after children (or would have, had the person not left first) because the person poses a risk of harm to children, the organisation must make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service. It is an offence to fail to make a referral without good reason."

The DSL will consult with the Referral and Assessment Service if still unsure on whether to refer.

6. The Role & Responsibilities of all Staff within School

- 6.1 All staff and volunteers must read this policy and Part One of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (Appendix 1) and ensure they are aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding and child protection in being alert to the signs of abuse and of their responsibility to report and record any concerns or disclosures.
- 6.2 All staff and volunteers must act in accordance with this policy if a child he/she presents with indicators of abuse (see Appendix 1 for details). Procedures for reporting concerns are given in sections 5 and procedures for dealing with a disclosure are given in section 6 of this document.
- 6.3 If concerns or allegations regarding a member of staff or the Headteacher then the processes outlined in **section 15** of this document must be followed.

7 Safeguarding Training

- 7.1 The Headteacher must undertake training on child protection at least once every three years (statutory requirement), at LSCB level 1 or above. If the Headteacher is the Designated Safeguarding Lead then he/she shall meet the training requirements set out in 7.2 below.
- 7.2 In addition to basic child protection training the Designated Safeguarding Lead must attend the LSCB's Level 2 *Working Together to Safeguard Children* training, and then undertake **refresher safeguarding training at Level 2 (this should be provided by Education)** or LSCB Level 3 at least every two years (statutory requirement).
- 7.3 The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead must meet the training requirements in section 7.2.
- 7.4 Any newly appointed Designated Safeguarding Lead must attend the LSCB's Level 2 *Working Together to Safeguard Children* training before taking lead responsibility for safeguarding. The deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will take a leading role on safeguarding for the short time that the Designated Safeguarding Lead is waiting to receive training.
- 7.5 All other staff, who work with children, will undertake safeguarding and child protection training at **Level 1 (this should be carried out by the Designated Safeguarding Lead in School)** to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for child protection effectively. This must be kept up to date by refresher training at three yearly intervals, and temporary staff and volunteers who work with children must be made aware of the school's arrangements for child protection and their responsibilities.
- 7.6 The Chair of Governors, the designated Governor for Safeguarding and Child Protection and Local Authority appointed Governors will undertake the Local Authority's governor safeguarding training at least once every three years
- 7.7 All new members of staff will receive child protection training as indicated in 7.5 above as part of their induction programme
- 7.8 Briefings and updates on child protection and safeguarding procedures (including the signs of abuse and procedures for reporting concerns and disclosures) will be provided on a regular basis, at least annually, but more frequently when necessary, to ensure that all members of staff are familiar with any changes to the school policy as they occur

At least one member of every appointments panel will have gained accreditation through Safer Recruitment training.

8 Promoting Children and Young People's Well-being

- 8.1 The school will teach children about safeguarding and ensure that the school contributes to inter-agency working in line with statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (DfE, 2015). This includes providing a co-ordinated offer of early help⁴ when additional needs of children are identified and contributing to inter-agency plans to provide additional support to children subject to child protection plans.
- 8.2 The model sets out a single assessment, planning and review pathway for all children and young people, ensuring that needs are identified earlier and addressed on a multi-agency basis, the Common Assessment Framework (CAF)
- 8.3 Child Protection procedures shall be seen within the context of this broader framework as a response when there is a perceived need to protect a child or young person who is at risk of significant harm

9 Dealing with concerns or disclosures regarding a child or young person

- 9.1 All staff and volunteers must be aware that the main categories of abuse are:
 - Physical abuse
 - Emotional abuse
 - Sexual abuse
 - Neglect

These categories are described in more detail in Appendix 1 and signs indicating the possibility of abuse are described in Appendix 3. The abuse may be instigated by one or more adults, and/or other children and young people.

- 9.2 If any member of staff has a concern that a child in their care has suffered any of these forms of abuse, they must report their concerns to, and seek advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or in his/her absence, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, as soon as possible, and never later than the end of the working day. If there is concern as to whether it is safe to allow the child to go home that day, then all effort must be made to inform the designated safeguarding lead immediately so that the Referral and Assessment Service can be informed and the necessary protective measures implemented.
- 9.3 A child may disclose sensitive information at any time of the day, and in particular this may occur outside of normal lesson time, e.g. break periods or during before/after school club sessions. It is therefore imperative that **all** the staff is aware of the signs and behaviour which **may** indicate abuse, as noted in 9.1.
- 9.4 All staff must:
 - Recognise that a disclosure may come directly from the child, or from a third party, e.g. friend, neighbour, other family member. Alternatively, it

⁴ Inspected by Ofsted under leadership and management of safeguarding (Inspecting Safeguarding, Ofsted, April 2014. Paragraph 17)

may be through the suspicion of staff based on a variety of symptoms and knowledge of possible indicators of abuse

- Take seriously any disclosures made to them and provide reassurance to the discloser through their responses and behaviour.

9.5 When receiving a disclosure from a child that he/she has been abused in some way the member of staff must:

- Find time and, if necessary, a suitable place to listen to the child, when information about possible abuse comes to light.
- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Not make false promises which may not be able to be fulfilled and do not promise confidentiality. If the child asks that information is kept secret, it is important that you tell the child in a manner appropriate to the child's age/stage in development that you cannot promise complete confidentiality – instead you must explain that you may need to pass information to other professionals to help keep the child, or other children, safe.
- Allow the child to talk freely. Do not cross examine, interview, probe or ask to see any injury that is not visible. Listen, only asking questions when necessary to clarify.
- Not criticise the alleged perpetrator.
- Reassure the child that what has happened is not his or her fault.
- Stress that it was the right thing to tell.
- Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told.
- Find out just enough to be sure of the need to refer, and keep any questions open rather than closed. Education is a referrer, not an investigative agency for child protection matters. An incident may eventually end up as a court case and children's evidence can all too easily be compromised by leading questions or repeated recital.
- Make records that are factual, accurate and relevant and avoid subjective judgements. It is not the school's responsibility to 'check out' what any child tells nor should any abuser be questioned.
- Sign and date the record of the disclosure.

9.6 The member of staff who has the concern or received the disclosure must report the concern/disclosure to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or in his/her absence, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, immediately. The member of staff must provide the DSL with a signed, dated written record of the concern/disclosure, using the agreed school pro forma.

9.7 The same approach to receiving a disclosure must be taken if the discloser is not the allegedly abused child but another child or an adult.

- 9.8 The Designated Safeguarding Lead must place the concern on the school's safeguarding file for the child (creating one if necessary).
- 9.9 When the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or in his/her absence, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, has been informed, he/she shall make the decision whether or not to refer the concern to Social Care. On the question of how to decide whether to refer to Social Care, the Coventry Safeguarding Children Board's document 'Children's Social Care Thresholds and Practice Standards' states:

"Professionals in all agencies have a responsibility to refer a child to Children's Social Care when it is believed or suspected that the child:

- **Has suffered significant harm; or**
- **Is likely to suffer significant harm.**

All referrals to Children's Social Care must be made in writing using the Multi-Agency Referral Form or CAF assessment where one has been completed. A history of key events is useful when communicating concerns so that any emerging patterns are recognised." (Section 8, p.6)

The full Children's Social Care Thresholds and Practice document is available at www.coventrylscb.org.uk/files/Thresholds_and_Practice_Standards.pdf . The Referral and Assessment Service will be consulted when there is uncertainty about whether to refer.

- 9.10 Referrals must be made as soon as possible and the appropriate forms completed and sent at the same time. Referrals to Children's Social Care must be made to the citywide Referral and Assessment Service at

**Children's Social Care Referral and Assessment Service
Christchurch House,
Greyfriars Lane,
Coventry,
CV1 2GQ.**

Telephone: 024 7678 8555 (the same telephone number as previously)

- 9.11 Additional referral guidance is provided in Appendix 4.

10 Confidentiality

- 10.1 Safeguarding information should be treated as confidential and only shared as part of the agreed school and Coventry Safeguarding Children Board protocols
- 10.2 All staff/volunteers in school have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals.
- 10.3 Staff / volunteers who receive information about children and their families in the course of their work shall only share that information only within appropriate contexts.

11 Communication with Parents / Carers

11.1 Parents and carers will be made aware of the school/service policy through published information and in initial meetings with parent and carers of new children. Parents and carers will be informed that in certain circumstances there may be a need to contact other agencies without first notifying them. This decision will be made in partnership between Education Services and Social Care Services. It will be made clear that this is a legal obligation and not a personal decision.

12 Recording Keeping

12.1 The completed forms/records will be kept for the duration of the child's school career and where a child changes school the forms/records will be copied to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the receiving school. The school will retain a receipt for the records signed by the receiving school.

12.2 The information contained will be regarded as confidential. Any request for access to the information by non-Coventry Safeguarding Children Board Agencies (e.g. Solicitor, investigating agent) will be referred to the Head teacher/Child Protection Designated Senior Person who is advised to seek legal advice before acting.

13 Safer Recruitment

13.1 The School will comply with the guidance set out in Part 3 of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

13.2 Although not a statutory requirement, at least one member of every appointments panel will have gained accreditation through Safer Recruitment training.

14 Dealing with concerns regarding school staff or volunteers

14.1 To reduce the risk of inappropriate or unprofessional behaviour towards children, all staff and volunteers must be aware of safer working practice and must be familiar with the Government document '*Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People in Education Settings*'.

14.2 A concern, sometimes referred to as an allegation, is any information which indicates that a member of staff/volunteer may have failed to meet the requirements set out in the staff behaviour (code of conduct) policy, or may have:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children⁵.

14.3 This applies to any child the member of staff/volunteer has contact with in their personal, professional or community life.

⁵ These 3 points, drawn from *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE, 2016), represent the LSCB threshold for position of trust strategy meetings

- 14.4 All members of staff/volunteers must report any such concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or in his/her absence to the Deputy DSL), unless the concern relates to these members of staff (in which case they should report directly to the Headteacher). Failure to report it in accordance with procedures is a potential disciplinary matter.
- 14.5 The person to whom a concern or allegation is reported must take the matter seriously, keep an open mind, and must:
- Find time and, if necessary, a suitable place to listen to the person's concerns or allegations.
 - Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief.
 - Not make false promises which may not be able to be fulfilled and do not promise confidentiality. If the person asks that information is kept secret, it is important that you tell the person that you cannot promise complete confidentiality.
 - Allow the person to talk freely. Do not cross examine, interview, or probe. Listen, only asking questions when necessary to clarify.
 - Not criticise the alleged perpetrator.
 - Stress that it was the right thing to share the concerns.
 - Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told.
 - Make records that are factual, accurate and relevant and avoid subjective judgements. It is not the school's responsibility to 'check out' what any child tells nor should any abuser be questioned.
 - Sign and date the record of the disclosure.
- 14.6 The member of staff must provide the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or in his/her absence, his/her deputy) with a signed, dated written record of their concerns, using the agreed school concern pro forma, without delay.
- 14.7 The DSL or Deputy DSL receiving the concern/allegation must not unilaterally determine its validity, and must report the concern/allegation to the Headteacher immediately.
- 14.8 The Headteacher will not investigate the concern itself, or take written or detailed statements, but will assess whether the concern meets any of the three criteria set out in **section 14.2** above. If any of the criteria are met then the Headteacher must contact the LADO within one working day⁶, and provide the LADO with written confirmation of the concern. The name and contact telephone of the LADO are given on the front cover of this policy.
- 14.9 The Headteacher shall, as soon as possible, **following briefing** from the LADO inform the subject of the concern.

⁶ Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)

14.10 If concern is raised regarding the Headteacher, then the Chair of Governors will be contacted, whose name and contact telephone number are given on the front cover of this policy.

In the absence of the one of the Chairs of Governors, the other Chair of Governors will be contacted, whose name and contact telephone are given on the front cover.

14.11 In the event concern regarding the Headteacher the Chair of Governors shall contact the LADO (within one working day), whose contact details are given on the front cover of this policy.

Summary

This information has been lifted from the main statutory guidance, *Keeping Children Safe in Education* which staff may also wish to read.

What school and college staff should know and do

1. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as: protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
2. Children includes everyone under the age of 18.
3. Where a child is suffering significant harm, or is likely to do so, action should be taken to protect that child.¹ Action should also be taken to promote the welfare of a child in need of additional support, even if they are not suffering harm or are at immediate risk.²

The role of the school or college

4. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. School and college staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early and provide help for children, to prevent concerns from escalating. Schools and colleges and their staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children. This system is described in statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015*.³ Schools and colleges should work with social care, the police, health services and other services to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.
5. Each school and college should have a designated safeguarding lead who will provide support to staff members to carry out their safeguarding duties and who will liaise closely with other services such as children's social care.

¹ Such action might be taken under section 47 and section 44 of the Children Act 1989.

² Such action might be taken under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

³ Department for Education guidance: *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015*

The role of school and college staff

6. The *Teacher Standards 2012*⁴ state that teachers, including headteachers, should safeguard children's wellbeing and maintain public trust in the teaching profession as part of their professional duties.

7. All school and college staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn.

8. All school and college staff have a responsibility to identify children who may be in need of extra help or who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. All staff then have a responsibility to take appropriate action, working with other services as needed.

9. In addition to working with the designated safeguarding lead staff members should be aware that they may be asked to support social workers to take decisions about individual children.

What school and college staff need to know

10. All staff members should be aware of systems within their school or college which support safeguarding and these should be explained to them as part of staff induction. This includes: the school's or college's child protection policy; the school's or college's staff behaviour policy (sometimes called a code of conduct); and the designated safeguarding lead.

11. All staff members should also receive appropriate child protection training which is regularly updated.

What school and college staff should look out for

12. All school and college staff members should be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect so that they are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection.

13. Staff members working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the interests of the child.

4 The Teachers' Standards apply to: trainees working towards QTS; all teachers completing their statutory induction period (newly qualified teachers [NQTs]); and teachers in maintained schools, including maintained special schools, who are covered by the 2012 appraisal regulations.

14. There are various expert sources of advice on the signs of abuse and neglect. Each area's Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) should be able to advise on useful material, including training options. One good source of advice is provided on the NSPCC website. Types of abuse and neglect, and examples of specific safeguarding issues, are described in paragraphs 20-25.⁵

15. Knowing what to look for is vital to the early identification of abuse and neglect. If staff members are unsure they should always speak to children's social care.

16. A child going missing from an education setting is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School and college staff members should follow their procedures for dealing with children who go missing, particularly on repeat occasions. They should act to identify any risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation. More information can be found in this [guidance about children who run away or go missing from home or care](#).

What school and college staff should do if they have concerns about a child

17. If staff members have concerns about a child they should raise these with the school's or college's designated safeguarding lead. This also includes situations of abuse which may involve staff members. The safeguarding lead will usually decide whether to make a referral to children's social care, but it is important to note that any staff member can refer their concerns to children's social care directly.⁶ Where a child and family would benefit from co-ordinated support from more than one agency (for example education, health, housing, police) there should be an inter-agency assessment. These assessments should identify what help the child and family require preventing needs escalating to a point where intervention would be needed via a statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989. The early help assessment should be undertaken by a lead professional who could be a teacher, special educational needs co-ordinator, General Practitioner (GP), family support worker, and/or health visitor.

18. If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral should be made to children's social care immediately. Anybody can make a referral. If the child's situation does not appear to be improving the staff member with concerns should press for re-consideration. Concerns should always lead to help for the child at some point.

19. It is important for children to receive the right help at the right time to address risks and prevent issues escalating. Research and Serious Case Reviews have repeatedly shown the dangers of failing to take effective action. Poor practice includes: failing to act on and refer the early signs of abuse and neglect, poor record keeping, failing to listen to the views of the child, failing to re-assess concerns when situations not improve, sharing information too slowly and a lack of challenge to those who appear not to be taking action.⁷

⁵ Department for Education (DfE) training materials on neglect

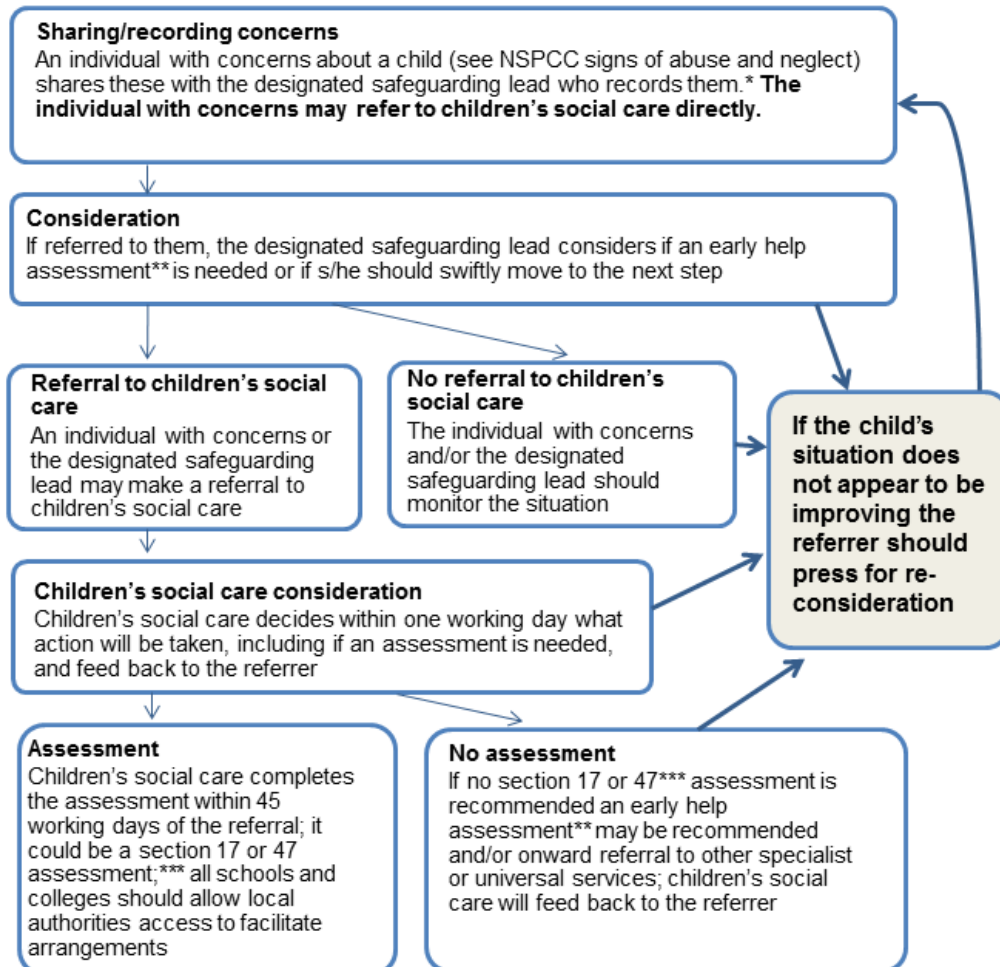
⁶ Advice on whistleblowing can be found on GOV.UK

⁷ Brandon et al, Learning from Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) 2011

Action when a child has suffered or is likely to suffer harm

This diagram illustrates what action should be taken and who should take it when there are concerns about a child. If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral should be made to children's social care immediately.

Anybody can make a referral.



* In cases which also involve an allegation of abuse against a staff member, see part four of this guidance which explains action the school or college should take in respect of the staff member

** Where a child and family would benefit from coordinated support from more than one agency (eg, education, health, housing, police) there should be an inter-agency assessment. These assessments should identify what help the child and family require to prevent needs escalating to a point where intervention would be needed via a statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989. The early help assessment should be undertaken by a lead professional who could be a teacher, special educational needs coordinator, General Practitioner (GP), family support worker, and/or health visitor.

*** Where there are more complex needs, help may be provided under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 (children in need). Where there are child protection concerns local authority services must make enquiries and decide if any action must be taken under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

Types of abuse and neglect

20. **Abuse:** a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

21. **Physical abuse:** a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

22. **Emotional abuse:** the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

23. **Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

24. **Neglect:** the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Specific safeguarding issues

25. Expert and professional organisations are best placed to provide up-to-date guidance and practical support on specific safeguarding issues. For example NSPCC offers information for schools and colleges on the TES website and also on its own website www.nspcc.org.uk Schools and colleges can also access broad government guidance on the issues listed below via the GOV.UK website:

- Alcohol and Drug use
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Exploitive behaviours
- Cyber bullying
- Domestic Violence/Abuse (DV/DA)
- Extremist influences, Radicalisation - PREVENT
- Faith and Belief Abuse
- Fabricated and Induced Illness
- Female Gender Mutilation FGM
- Forced Marriage
- Gangs and youth violence
- Gender based violence
- IT : inappropriate use of Social Media (e-safety)
- Sexting
- Distributing inappropriate images
- Pornography
- Mental Health
- Peer Pressure
- Private Fostering
- Racism
- Risky Behaviours
- Teenage Relationship Abuse
- Teenage Pregnancy
- Trafficking

Further information on Child Sexual Exploitation and Female Genital Mutilation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (for example food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts, money or in some cases simply affection) as a result of engaging in sexual activities. Sexual exploitation can take many forms ranging from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for affection or gifts, to serious organised crime by gangs and groups. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power in the relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim which increases as the exploitative relationship develops. Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying including cyber bullying and grooming. However, it is also important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM): professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. There is a range of potential indicators that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM, which individually may not indicate risk but if there are two or more indicators present this could signal a risk to the child or young person. Victims of FGM are likely to come from a community that is known to practise FGM. Professionals should note that girls at risk of FGM may not yet be aware of the practice or that it may be conducted on them, so sensitivity should always be shown when approaching the subject. Warning signs that FGM may be about to take place, or may have already taken place, can be found on pages 11-12 of the Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines referred to previously. Staff should activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children's social care.

This document is available to download at: www.gov.uk/government/publications.

APPENDIX 2: Role of the designated safeguarding lead

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2016) defines the role in the following terms.

“Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure that the school or college designates an appropriate member of staff to take lead responsibility for child protection. This person should have the status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the post including committing resources and, where appropriate, supporting and directing other staff.

The broad areas of responsibility for the designated safeguarding lead are:

Managing referrals

- Refer all cases of suspected abuse to the local authority children’s social care and:
 - The local authority designated officer (LADO) for child protection concerns (all cases which concern a member of staff)
 - Disclosure and Barring Service (cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child); and/or
 - Police (cases where a crime may have been committed).
- Liaise with the head teacher or principal to inform him or her of issues especially on-going enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies.

Training

- The designated safeguarding lead should receive appropriate training carried out every two years in order to:
 - Understand the assessment process for providing early help and intervention, for example through locally agreed common and shared assessment processes such as early help assessments
 - Have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so
 - Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the school’s or college’s child protection policy and procedures, especially new and part time staff
 - Be alert to the specific needs of children in need⁷, those with special educational needs and young carers
 - Be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals
 - Obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses

⁷ Section 17(10) Children Act 1989: those unlikely to achieve a reasonable standard of health and development without local authority services, those whose health and development is likely to be significantly impaired without the provision of such services, or disabled children.

- Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff, in any measures the school or college may put in place to protect them

Raising Awareness

- The designated safeguarding lead should ensure the school or college's policies are known and used appropriately:
 - Ensure the school or college's child protection policy is reviewed annually and the procedures are updated and reviewed regularly, and work with governing bodies or proprietors regarding this
 - Ensure the child protection policy is available publicly and parents are aware of the fact that referrals about suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the role of the school or college in this
 - Link with the local LSCB to make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest local policies on safeguarding
 - Where children leave school or college ensure their child protection file is copied for any new school or college as soon as possible but transferred separately from the main pupil file.

APPENDIX 3: Indicators of Abuse

NB. This guidance is provided as a useful reminder of the indicators of abuse but should be always be considered within the context of a comprehensive training programme and not as a substitute for more in depth consideration

There are four categories of abuse, which may result in a child being placed on the Child Protection Register. They are:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect

Indicators of Physical Abuse

Some of these indicators would clearly suggest child abuse, whilst others, when combined, may suggest that a child is being abused:

- Unexplained injuries including burns, particularly if they are recurrent
- Improbably excuses given to explain injuries
- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Untreated injuries
- Admission of punishment which seems excessive
- Bald patches
- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Arms and legs covered, even in hot weather
- Fear of returning home
- Fear of medical help
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Aggression towards others
- Running away

Indicators of Emotional Abuse

Some of these indicators would clearly suggest child abuse, whilst others, when combined, may suggest that a child is being abused:

- Physical and/or mental and/or emotional development lags
- Admission of punishment that appears excessive
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Continual self-deprecation
- Sudden speech disorders
- Fear of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- Neurotic behaviour eg. thumb sucking, hair twisting, rocking
- Self mutilation
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Drug/solvent abuse
- Running away
- Compulsive stealing or scavenging.

Indicators of Sexual Abuse

Some of these indicators would clearly suggest child abuse, whilst others, when combined, may suggest that a child is being abused:

- Sudden changes in behaviour or in school performance
- Displays of affection in a sexual way, inappropriate to age
- Tendency to cling or need reassurance
- Regression to younger behaviour eg. thumb sucking, acting like a baby, playing with discarded toys
- Complaints of genital itching or pain, or anal pain
- Distrust of a familiar adult, or anxiety about being left with a relative, babysitter or lodger
- Unexplained gifts or money
- Depression and withdrawal
- Apparent secrecy
- Bedwetting, daytime wetting and/or soiling
- Sleep disturbances, nightmares
- Chronic illness, eg. throat infection, venereal disease or other STD
- Anorexia, bulimia
- Unexplained pregnancy
- Fear of undressing, eg. for sport
- Phobias or panic attacks

Indicators of Neglect

Some of these indicators would clearly suggest child abuse, whilst others, when combined, may suggest that a child is being abused.

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Poor state of clothing
- Emaciation
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school
- Untreated medical problems
- Destructive tendencies
- Low self esteem
- Neurotic behaviour
- No social relationships
- Running away
- Compulsive stealing or scavenging.

APPENDIX 4: REFERRAL GUIDANCE

REASONS WHY SOME PEOPLE HESITATE TO REPORT ABUSE

The following list contains a range of reasons why people commonly hesitate to report abuse. It is provided for information, but be aware that none of these reasons is a justification for failing to report a child protection concern or disclosure.

- The child asks you to keep silent – keep a secret
- Fear of breaking up the family
- Fear of exposing the child to further abuse
- Fear of breaking a trusting relationship with child/family
- Painful memories of your own abusive experiences
- Fear of reprisals to yourself/your children/family
- Fear of presenting evidence in court
- Afraid of misinterpreting or overreacting to the situation
- Assuming another agency is dealing with the problem
- The 'rule of optimism' – everything will work out OK
- Assuming one parent/carer will protect
- Believing the child is fantasising/lying
- Being persuaded by the child's retraction
- Allowing a temporary improvement in the child's situation to distract you from the reality of continuing abuse
- Being unable to comprehend the unbelievable nature of the disclosure
- Not understanding procedures

WHY CHILDREN CAN'T TELL ABOUT ABUSE

- Threats from abuse – withdrawal of 'favours' or physical threats – may be implicit derived from abuse of power
- Threats from peers also involved in abuse
- May think s/he is to blame and fear arrest
- Fear the loss of the child's world – family, school etc.
- May be emotionally dependent on abuser
- May have compartmentalised abuse
- Thinks won't be believed
- Low sense of self-esteem makes disclosure difficult
- May not realise sexual abuse is a crime – thinks its normal
- May not wish to betray abuser
- May fear exposure and particularly public exposure
- May be ambivalent about sexual identity or feel guilt about taking part in abuse
- Lack of faith in justice system particularly for children with disabilities and from ethnic minorities
- Hasn't got adult permission to tell
- Lack of appropriate language skills

WHY REFER?

- Children have the right to be safe
- Adults have a responsibility to protect children
- Abuse is damaging
- Child abuse exists in a world of secrecy and silence – the cycle of abuse has to be broken

- You only have one small piece of a jigsaw
- Children rarely lie about abuse
- An abuser may well abuse many other children who also have a right to protection

For guidance and support, contact the Children's Social Care Referral and Assessment Service Telephone: 024 7678 8555.

MAKING A DECISION

Further guidance on making a decision is provided in the Children's Social Care, Thresholds and Practice Standards, available at:

www.coventrylscb.org.uk/files/Thresholds_and_Practice_Standards.pdf .