



Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedure

Oak Bank School

This policy was adopted on

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Key contacts

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Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play.
- 1.2. Our pupils' welfare is our paramount concern. The governing body will ensure that our school will safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils and work together with other agencies to ensure that our school has adequate arrangements to identify, assess and support those children who are suffering or likely to suffer harm.
- 1.3. Our school is a community and all those directly connected, staff members, governors, parents, families and pupils, have an essential role to play in making it safe and secure.

2 OUR ETHOS

- 2.1 We believe that our school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child.
- 2.2 We recognise the importance of providing an environment within our school that will help children feel safe and respected. We recognise the importance of enabling children to talk openly and to feel confident that they will be listened to.
- 2.3 We recognise that all adults within the school, including permanent and temporary staff, volunteers and governors, have a full and active part to play in protecting our pupils from harm.
- 2.4 We will work with parents to build an understanding of the school's responsibilities to ensure the welfare of all children, including the need for referrals to other agencies in some situations.

3 SCOPE

- 3.1 In line with the law, this policy defines a child as anyone under the age of 18 years.
- 3.2 This policy applies to all members of staff in our school, including all permanent, temporary and support staff, governors, volunteers, contractors and external service or activity providers.

4 THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- 4.1 Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on governing bodies of maintained schools and further education institutions (including sixth-form colleges) to make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school. Section 157 of the same Act places a similar duty on non-maintained and independent schools, including free schools and academies.
- 4.2 Under section 10 of the Children Act 2004, all maintained schools, further education colleges and independent schools, including free schools and academies, are required to cooperate with the local authority to improve the well-being of children in the local authority area.
- 4.3 The GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children and young people safe. To effectively share information:
- all practitioners should be confident of the processing conditions, which allow them to store, and share, the information that they need to carry out their safeguarding role. Information which is relevant to safeguarding will often be data which is considered 'special category personal data' meaning it is sensitive and personal
 - where practitioners need to share special category personal data, they should be aware that the Data Protection Act 2018 includes 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' as a condition that allows practitioners to share information without consent
 - information can be shared legally without consent, if a practitioner is unable to, cannot be reasonably expected to gain consent from the individual, or if to gain consent could place a child at risk.
 - relevant personal information can be shared lawfully if it is to keep a child or individual at risk safe from neglect or physical, emotional or mental harm, or if it is protecting their physical, mental, or emotional well-being.
- 4.4 This policy and the accompanying procedure have been developed in accordance with the following statutory guidance and local safeguarding procedures:
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children: A Guide to Inter-Agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children, September 2018*
 - *Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, July 2018*
 - *Central Bedfordshire Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures*

5 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 The school's lead person with overall responsibility for child protection and safeguarding is the **DSL**. We have a deputy DSL to ensure there is appropriate cover for this role at all times.

The DSL will be on our school's leadership team and their role of DSL will be explicit in their job description. This person should have the appropriate authority and be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters, to take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings – and/or to support other staff to do so – and to contribute to the assessment of children.

- 5.2 The school has a **nominated governor** responsible for safeguarding to champion good practice, to liaise with the Head of school and to provide information and reports to the governing body.
- 5.3 The **case manager for dealing with allegations** of abuse made against school staff members is the Head of school. The case manager for dealing with allegations against the Head of school is the chair of governors. The procedure for managing allegations is detailed in Appendix A.
- 5.4 The **Head of school** will ensure that the policies and procedures adopted by the governing body are fully implemented and sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable staff members to discharge their safeguarding responsibilities.
- 5.5 The **governing body** is collectively responsible for ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are fully embedded within the school's ethos and reflected in the school's day-to-day practice.
- 5.6 **All staff members, governors, volunteers and external providers** know how to recognise signs and symptoms of abuse, how to respond to pupils who disclose abuse and what to do if they are concerned about a child.

6 SUPPORTING CHILDREN

- 6.1 We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence are likely to have low self-esteem and may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helpless, humiliated and some sense of blame. Our school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in their lives.
- 6.2 We accept that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn.
- 6.3 Our school will support all pupils by:
- ensuring the content of the curriculum includes social and emotional aspects of learning;
 - ensuring a comprehensive curriculum response to **Online - safety**, enabling children and parents to learn about the risks of new technologies and social media and to use these responsibly;
 - ensuring that child protection is included in the curriculum to help children stay safe, recognise when they do not feel safe and identify who they might or can talk to;
 - providing pupils with a number of appropriate adults to approach if they are in difficulties;
 - supporting the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence;
 - encouraging development of self-esteem and self-assertiveness while not condoning aggression or bullying;
 - ensuring repeated hate incidents, e.g. racist, homophobic or gender- or disability-based bullying, are considered under child protection procedures;
 - liaising and working together with other support services and those agencies involved in safeguarding children; and
 - monitoring children who have been identified as having welfare or protection concerns and providing appropriate support.

7 CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURE

- 7.1 We have developed a structured procedure in line with [Central Bedfordshire Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures](#) which will be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse. This is detailed in Appendix B.
- 7.2 In line with the procedures, the relevant Children's Services Access and Referral Team will be notified as soon as there is a significant concern.
- 7.3 The name of the DSL will be clearly advertised in the school, with a statement explaining the school's role in referring and monitoring cases of suspected abuse.
- 7.4 We will ensure all parents and carers are aware of the responsibilities of staff members to safeguard and promote the welfare of children by publishing the policy and procedures on our website and by referring to them in our introductory school materials.

8 RECORD KEEPING

- 8.1 All child protection and welfare concerns will be recorded and kept in line with the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board guidance available at <http://www.bedfordshireLSP.org.uk/LSP-website/home-page>
- 8.2 We will continue to support any pupil leaving the school about which there have been concerns by ensuring that all appropriate information, including child protection and welfare concerns, is forwarded under confidential cover to the pupil's new school as a matter of priority.

9 SAFER WORKFORCE AND MANAGING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

- 9.1 We will prevent people who pose risks to children from working in our school by ensuring that all individuals working in any capacity at our school have been subjected to safeguarding checks in line with the statutory guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, September 2016](#).
- 9.2 We will ensure that agencies and third parties supplying staff provide us evidence that they have made the appropriate level of safeguarding checks on individuals working in our school.
- 9.3 Every job description and person specification will have a clear statement about the safeguarding responsibilities of the post holder.
- 9.4 We will ensure that at least one member of every interview panel has completed safer recruitment training.
- 9.5 We have a procedure in place to handle allegations against members of staff and volunteers in line with [Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, September 2016](#). This procedure is detailed in Appendix C.

10 STAFF INDUCTION, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

- 10.1 All new members of staff, including newly-qualified teachers and teaching assistants, will be given induction that includes basic child protection training on how to recognise signs of abuse, how to respond to any concerns, **Online-safety** and familiarisation with the safeguarding and child protection policy, staff code of conduct, Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, September 2016 and other related policies.
- 10.2 The induction will be proportionate to staff members' roles and responsibilities and will include, at a minimum, the online child protection training provided by the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board. This training can be accessed from [Virtual Learning College](https://bedfordshireLSP.safeguardingchildren.co.uk) at <https://bedfordshireLSP.safeguardingchildren.co.uk> Staff can self-register and apply for appropriate courses.
- 10.3 The DSL will undergo updated child protection training every two years.
- 10.4 All staff members of the school will undergo live safeguarding and child protection training (whole-school training) which is regularly updated and at least every three years. All governors must undergo governor specific online awareness training at least every two years.
- 10.5 Staff members who miss the whole-school training will be required to undertake other relevant training to make up for it, e.g. by joining another school's whole-school training or completing training online.
- 10.6 The nominated governor for safeguarding and child protection will undergo live Governor Services training prior to or soon after appointment to the role; this training will be updated every three years.
- 10.7 We will ensure that staff members provided by other agencies and third parties, e.g. supply teachers and contractors, have received appropriate child protection training commensurate with their roles before starting work. They will be given the opportunity to take part in whole-school training if it takes place during their period of work for the school.
- 10.8 The DSL will provide an annual briefing to the school on any changes to child protection legislation and procedures and relevant learning from local and national serious case reviews.
- 10.9 The school will maintain accurate records of staff induction and training. This is detailed on the single central record.

11 CONFIDENTIALITY, CONSENT AND INFORMATION SHARING

- 11.1 We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential.
- 11.2 The Head of school or the DSL will disclose any information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need-to-know basis only.
- 11.3 All staff members must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or well-being.

- 11.4 All staff members have a practitioner responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children.
- 11.5 All our staff members who come into contact with children will be given appropriate training to understand the purpose of information sharing in order to safeguard and promote children's welfare.
- 11.6 We will ensure that staff members are confident about what they can and should do under the law, including how to obtain consent to share information and when information can be shared without consent. This is covered in greater detail in Appendix B.

12 INTER-AGENCY WORKING

- 12.1 We will develop and promote effective working relationships with other agencies, including agencies providing early help services to children, the police and Children's Social Care.
- 12.2 We will ensure that relevant staff members participate in multi-agency meetings and forums, including child protection conferences and core groups, to consider individual children.
- 12.3 We will participate in serious case reviews, other reviews and file audits as and when required to do so by the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board. We will ensure that we have a clear process for gathering the evidence required for reviews and audits, embedding recommendations into practice and completing required actions within agreed timescales.

13 CONTRACTORS, SERVICE AND ACTIVITY PROVIDERS AND WORK PLACEMENT PROVIDERS

- 13.1 We will ensure that contractors and providers are aware of our school's safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures. We will require that employees and volunteers provided by these organisations use our procedure to report concerns.
- 13.2 We will seek assurance that employees and volunteers provided by these organisations and working with our children have been subjected to the appropriate level of safeguarding check in line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, September 2016*. If assurance is not obtained, permission to work with our children or use our school premises may be refused.
- 13.3 When we commission services from other organisations, we will ensure that compliance with our policy and procedures is a contractual requirement.

14 WHISTLE-BLOWING AND COMPLAINTS

- 14.1 We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff members fail to do so.
- 14.2 We will ensure that all staff members are aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of child protection, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues. If necessary, they will speak with the Head of school, the chair of the governing body or with the Local Authority Designated Officer.
Alternatively, staff may also refer to the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line: call 0800 028 0285 Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

- 14.3 We have a clear reporting procedure for children, parents and other people to report concerns or complaints, including abusive or poor practice.
- 14.4 We will actively seek the views of children, parents and carers and staff members on our child protection arrangements through surveys, questionnaires and other means.

15 SITE SECURITY

- 15.1 All staff members have a responsibility to ensure our buildings and grounds are secure and for reporting concerns that may come to light.
- 15.2 We check the identity of all visitors and volunteers coming into school. Visitors are **expected to sign in and out by registering their name and agency on the "Entry Sign" System. All visitors will be expected to wear a visitors badge whilst on the school site and will be escorted whilst on the premises.**
- 15.3 The school will not accept the behaviour of any individual, parent or anyone else, that threatens school security or leads others, child or adult, to feel unsafe. Such behaviour will be treated as a serious concern and may result in a decision to refuse the person access to the school site.

16 QUALITY ASSURANCE

- 16.1 We will ensure that systems are in place to monitor the implementation of and compliance with this policy and accompanying procedures. This will include periodic audits of child protection files and records by the DSL
- 16.2 We will complete an audit of the school's safeguarding arrangements at frequencies specified by the Central Bedfordshire Local Safeguarding Children Board and using the audit tool provided by them for this purpose.
- 16.3 The school's senior Leadership team and the governing body will ensure that action is taken to remedy without delay any deficiencies and weaknesses identified in child protection arrangements.

17 POLICY REVIEW

- 17.1 This policy and the procedures will be reviewed every academic year. All other linked policies will be reviewed in line with the policy review cycle.
- 17.2 The DSL will ensure that staff members are made aware of any amendments to policies and procedures.

18 LINKED POLICES AND PROCEDURES

- 18.1 The following policies and procedures are relevant for the child protection and safeguarding policy and procedure.
- Administration of Medicines Policy
 - Anti-Bullying Policy
 - Attendance Policy/ Children Missing from Education Policy and Procedures
 - Behaviour Policy
 - Behaviour Management Handbook
 - Complaints procedure
 - Conducting search and Confiscation Policy

- Data Protection Policy
- Dealing with offensive weapons and knives
- Online-safety Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- LAC Policy
- Offsite Activities and Educational Visits Policy and risk assessments
- Positive Handling and Physical Intervention Policy and Guidance
- SMSC Policy
- Photographs in school Policy
- Safer Recruitment
- Teachers' Standards, Department for Education guidance
- Sex and Relationships Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy
- Staff code of conduct
- Whistle Blowing Policy (does this include the NSPCC Whistleblowing helpline)

APPENDIX A

The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead

1 MANAGING REFERRALS

- 1.1 Refer all cases of suspected abuse to Central Bedfordshire Social Care and to the Police if a crime may have been committed.
- 1.2 Liaise with the Head of school about safeguarding issues relating to individual children, especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.
- 1.3 Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff members on matters of child protection and safeguarding.
- 1.4 Liaise with agencies providing early help services and coordinate referrals from the school to targeted early help services for children in need of support.

2 RECORD KEEPING

- 2.1 Keep written records of child protection and welfare concerns in line with Central Bedfordshire Local Safeguarding Board guidance.
- 2.2 Ensure a stand-alone file is created as necessary for children with safeguarding concerns.
- 2.3 Maintain a chronology of significant incidents for each child with safeguarding concerns.
- 2.4 Ensure such records are kept confidentially and securely and separate from the child's educational record.
- 2.5 When a child leaves our school, the DSL will make contact with the DSL at the new school and will ensure that the child protection file is forwarded to the receiving

school in an appropriately agreed manner. We will retain evidence to demonstrate how the file has been transferred; this may be in the form of a written confirmation of receipt from the receiving school and/or evidence of recorded delivery. Where a parent elects to remove their child from the school roll to home educate, the school will make arrangements to pass any safeguarding concerns to the **Access and Inclusion Team**.

3 INTER-AGENCY WORKING AND INFORMATION SHARING

- 3.1 Cooperate with Children's Social Care for enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.
- 3.2 Attend, or ensure other relevant staff members attend, child protection conferences, core group meetings and other multi-agency meetings, as required.
- 3.3 Liaise with other agencies working with the child, share information as appropriate and contribute to assessments.

4 TRAINING

- 4.1 Undertake appropriate training, **updated every two years**, in order to
 - be able to recognise signs of abuse and how to respond to them, including special circumstances such as child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation, fabricated or induced illness, understand the assessment process for providing early help and intervention, e.g. the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Threshold document guidance and tools and the early help planning processes;
 - have a working knowledge of how the local authority conducts initial and review child protection case conferences and contribute effectively to these; and
 - be alert to the specific needs of children in need (as specified in section 17 of the Children Act 1989), those with special educational needs, pregnant teenagers and young carers.
- 4.2 Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the school's safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures, including providing induction on these matters to new staff members.

Induction will include:

 - **Basic safeguarding**
 - **Prevent awareness**
 - **Expectation of the completion of the LSGB On-line training for CSE and FGM**
 - **And the signing of the Acceptable Use Policy**
- 4.3 Organise whole-school child protection training for all staff members at least **every two years**. Ensure staff members who miss the training receive it by other means, e.g. by joining another school's training.
- 4.4 Link with Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board to identify appropriate training opportunities for relevant staff members.
- 4.5 Ensure the school allocates time and resources every year for relevant staff members to attend training.
- 4.6 Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings in any action the school takes to protect them.

4.7 Maintain accurate records of staff induction and training.

5 AWARENESS RAISING

5.1 Review the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures annually and liaise with the school's governing body to update and implement them

5.2 Make the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures available publicly and raise awareness of parents that referrals about suspected abuse may be made and the role of the school in any investigations that ensue.

5.3 Provide an annual briefing to the school on any changes to child protection legislation and procedures and relevant learning from local and national serious case reviews.

6 QUALITY ASSURANCE

6.1 Monitor the implementation of and compliance with policy and procedures, including periodic audits of child protection and welfare concerns files (at a minimum once a year).

6.2 Complete an audit of the school's safeguarding arrangements at frequencies specified by the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board.

6.3 Provide regular reports, to the governing body detailing changes and reviews to policy, training undertaken by staff members and the number of children with child protection plans and other relevant data.

6.4 Take lead responsibility for remedying any deficiencies and weaknesses identified in child protection arrangements.

APPENDIX B

Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedure

1 DEFINITIONS

1.1 **Abuse**, including neglect, is a form of maltreatment. A person may abuse a child by inflicting harm or by failing to prevent harm. Children may be abused within their family, in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them, or, more rarely, by a stranger.

1.2 **Children** are any people who have not yet reached their 18th birthday; a 16-year-old, whether living independently, in further education, in the armed forces or in hospital, is a child and is entitled to the same protection and services as anyone younger.

1.3 **Child protection** is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and refers to activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

1.4 **Early help** means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years to teenage years.

1.5 **Harm** is ill treatment or impairment of health and development, including impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another.

- 1.6 **Safeguarding children** is the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children** is defined in [Working Together to Safeguard Children: A Guide to Inter-Agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children \(2018\)](#) as:
- protecting children from maltreatment;
 - preventing impairment of children's health and 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.
- 1.7 **Significant harm** is the Threshold document that justifies compulsory intervention in the family in the best interests of the child. Section 31 of the Children Act 1989 states 'where the question of whether harm suffered by a child is significant turns on the child's health or development, his health or development shall be compared with that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child.'

2 CATEGORIES OF ABUSE

- 2.1 **Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such that it causes severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve:
- making a child feel worthless, unloved or inadequate
 - only there to meet another's needs
 - inappropriate age or developmental expectations
 - overprotection and limitation of exploration, learning and social interaction
 - seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another, e.g. domestic abuse
 - making the child feel worthless and unloved - high criticism and low warmth
 - serious bullying
 - exploitation or corruption

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

- 2.2 **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical 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 misuse. Once a child is born, it may involve a parent 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
 - ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

- 2.3 **Physical abuse** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, 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.
- 2.4 **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is

happening. Activities may involve physical contact, including penetration of any part of the body, or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children looking at or in the production of sexual images, including on the internet, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Child sexual exploitation is also sexual abuse; it involves children and young people receiving something, for example accommodation, drugs, gifts or affection, as a result of them performing sexual activities, or having others perform sexual activities on them. It could take the form of grooming of children, e.g. to take part in sexual activities or to post sexual images of themselves on the internet.

3 SPECIFIC SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

3.1 School staff members need to be aware of specific safeguarding issues and be alert to any risks. [Central Bedfordshire Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures](#) has detailed information about specific issues such as child sexual exploitation, fabricated or induced illness, female genital mutilation, private fostering, etc., and the local procedures to respond to risks.

3.2 The government website, [GOV.UK](#), has broad government guidance on a variety of issues. The following is not a comprehensive list and staff members should search the GOV.UK website and the *Central Bedfordshire* for advice on other issues.

- child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- Peer on Peer Abuse (Bullying) including cyberbullying
- domestic violence
- drugs
- fabricated or induced illness
- faith abuse
- female genital mutilation (FGM)
- forced marriage
- gangs and youth violence
- gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- mental health
- private fostering
- preventing radicalisation and the Prevent duty
- sexting
- teenage relationship abuse
- trafficking
- County Lines

3.3 Further information on Child Sexual Exploitation

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 cyberbullying 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.

Teachers and school staff are more likely to see victims on a regular basis than almost any other practitioner. They will notice recurrent or prolonged absences and significant changes in behaviour. These concerns should be recorded in pupil chronologies to enable these patterns to be identified. They are key to identifying children at risk and raise concerns at an early stage, to potentially halt the grooming process before sexual exploitation has begun. Teachers will highlight concerns about missing children as they may be at risk of child sexual exploitation.

Due to the nature of the grooming methods used by their abusers, it is very common for children and young people who are sexually exploited not to recognise that they are being abused. Practitioners should be aware that young people particularly aged 17 and 18 may believe themselves to be acting voluntarily and will need practitioners to work with them so they can recognise that they are being sexually exploited.

As much as possible it is important that the young person is involved in decisions that are made about them.

Link to LSP Child Sexual Exploitation procedures;

<http://www.bedfordshireLSP.org.uk/LSP-website/Practitioners/child-sexual-exploitation>

Link to DfE 'What to do if you suspect a child is being sexually abused': This should be read in conjunction with statutory guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-you-suspect-a-child-is-being-sexually-exploited>

Link to DfE Statutory Guidance outlining how organisations and individuals should work together to protect young people from sexual exploitation.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-young-people-from-sexual-exploitation-supplementary-guidance>

3.4 Further information on Female Genital Mutilation

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM): Practitioners 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. Practitioners 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. Staff should activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children's social care.

Warning signs that FGM may be about to take place, or may have already taken place, can be found on pages 16-17 of the Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines referred to below. The DfE Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines, chapter 9 (page 42)

Guidelines for school, colleges and universities sets out how staff can make a difference;

'Girls who are threatened with, or who have undergone FGM may withdraw from education, restricting their educational and personal development. They may feel unable to go against the wishes of their parents and consequently may suffer emotionally. Staff may become aware of a student because she appears anxious, depressed and emotionally withdrawn. They may be presented with a sudden decline in her performance, aspirations or motivation. There may be occasions when a student comes to school or college but then absents herself from lessons, possibly spending prolonged periods in the bathroom.

Students who fear they may be at risk of FGM can often come to the attention of, or turn to, a teacher, lecturer or other member of staff before seeking help from the police or social services. Sometimes the student's friends report it to staff. Teachers, lecturers and other members of staff are in an ideal position to identify and respond to a victim's needs at an early stage'

Link to DFE multi agency practice guidelines for female-genital-mutilation (June 2014)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-statutory-guidance-on-female-genital-mutilation>

3.5 Further information on Preventing Radicalisation

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act, which received Royal Assent on 12 February 2015, places a duty on specified authorities, including local authorities and childcare, education and other children's services providers, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism ("the Prevent duty"). This guidance will be updated further to reflect the implications of the Prevent duty, which is expected to come into force later in 2015.

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 will also place a duty on local authorities to ensure Channel panels are in place. The panel must include the local authority and chief officer of the local police. Panels will assess the extent to which identified individuals are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism, following a referral from the police and where considered appropriate and necessary consent is obtained, arrange for support to be provided to those individuals. The Act will require partners of Channel panels to co-operate with the panel in the carrying out of its functions and with the police in undertaking the initial assessment as to whether a referral is appropriate.

Schools and colleges which are required to have regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education are listed in the Act as partners of the panel. The relevant provisions of the Act will come into force on 12 April 2015 but many local authorities already have Channel panels set up in their area.

Channel Training

'Channel' is the name for the process of referring a person for early intervention and support, including:

- identifying people at risk of being drawn into terrorism
- assessing the nature and extent of that risk, and
- developing the most appropriate support plan for the people concerned.

The Channel process is about safeguarding children, young people and adults from being drawn into committing terrorist-related activity. It is about early intervention to protect and divert people away from risk before a crime occurs.

You can complete a short general awareness course online here:

<http://www.bedfordshireLSP.org.uk/LSP-website/Practitioners/radicalisation-and-extremism>

More information is also available here:

[http://www.bedfordshireLSP.org.uk/assets/1/online_safety - LSP bulletin -
_radicalisation.pdf](http://www.bedfordshireLSP.org.uk/assets/1/online_safety_-_LSP_bulletin_-_radicalisation.pdf)

This course will cover :

- Promote awareness of the PREVENT strategy within your organisation and partners, including the local risks, roles and responsibilities involved in its delivery
 - Ensure colleagues and partners are aware of how to report any potentially relevant information or concerns
 - Promote an understanding amongst colleagues and partners of how to identify indicators of terrorism
 - Promote an understanding amongst colleagues and partners of how to identify potential signs of individual vulnerability to radicalisation.
- Indicators of terrorist activity

The Department for education has published The Prevent duty Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protecting-children-from-radicalisation-the-prevent-duty>

3.6 Self-harm and suicidal behaviour

Definition - Self harm, self mutilation, eating disorders, suicide threats and gestures by a child must always be taken seriously and may be indicative of a serious mental or emotional disturbance.

4 RECOGNITION – WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- 4.1 Staff members should refer to the detailed information about the categories of abuse and risk indicators in the <http://www.bedfordshireLSP.org.uk/LSP-website/children-and-young-people/self-harm> for further guidance.
- 4.2 In an abusive relationship, the child may:
- appear frightened of their parent(s)
 - act in a way that is inappropriate to their age and development, although full account needs to be taken of different patterns of development and different ethnic groups
- 4.3 In an abusive relationship, the parent or carer may:
- persistently avoid child health services and treatment of the child's illnesses
 - have unrealistic expectations of the child
 - frequently complain about or to the child and fail to provide attention or praise
 - be absent
 - be misusing substances
 - persistently refuse to allow access on home visits by Practitioners
 - be involved in domestic violence and abuse
 - be socially isolated
- 4.4 Serious case reviews have found that parental substance misuse, domestic abuse and mental health problems, sometimes referred to as the 'toxic trio', if they coexist in

a family could mean significant risks to children. Problems can be compounded by poverty, frequent house moves or eviction.

<http://www.bedfordshireLSP.org.uk/LSP-website/Practitioners/domestic-violence>

Honour Based Violence

Honour based Violence is a form of domestic abuse which is perpetrated in the name of so called "honour." The honour code which it refers to is set at the discretion of male relatives and women who do not abide by the "rules" are punished for bringing shame on the family – by doing something that is not in keeping with the traditional beliefs of their culture. Any evidence of such Honour Based Violence will be taken very seriously at Oak Bank and will be challenged. Additional support will be sought from services such as Karma Nirvana.

Peer on Peer Abuse

At Oak Bank School we strive to create an environment that actively discourages abuse and challenges the attitudes which underlie it. We have a clear anti-bullying Policy which states that bullying of any form is unacceptable be it racial, homophobic, sexual (including on-line texting and harassment via social media) physical or emotional.

All adults that come in to contact with our pupils are expected to be good role models and to take action whenever such abuse takes place.

Any practitioner that feels a young person has been abused should speak to the perpetrators, record the event and inform the year team / key workers . Where necessary, or where the abuse is repeated the parents will be called in and sanctions will be put in place.

Peer on Peer abuse will be discussed in:

- Tutor periods
- During assemblies
- Where relevant, as part of the curriculum.

Oak Bank School recognises certain gender differences that can be prevalent when dealing with Peer on peer abuse. This may include girls being touched / assaulted sexually or boys being subject to initiation or hazing type violence (refers to the practice of rituals, challenges, and other activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group.) Peer on peer abuse will not be tolerated at Oak Bank School.

Child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment

NSPCC

Sexual violence or sexual harassment can occur between 2 children of any sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. The guidance defines the following terms:

Sexual violence includes:

- rape
- assault by penetration
- sexual assault - intentionally touching another person in a way that is sexual.
-

Sexual harassment - 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. Sexual harassment is likely to:

- violate a child's dignity, and/or
- make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or
- create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Harmful sexual behaviours - problematic, abusive and violent sexual behaviours that are developmentally inappropriate and may cause developmental damage. Sexual behaviour between children can be considered harmful if one of the children is much older, particularly if there is more than 2 years' difference in age or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other is not. Children displaying harmful sexual behaviours have often experienced their own abuse and trauma

What will we do?

All of our actions will be based on the principle that:

Sexual violence and sexual harassment is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.

All victims will be reassured that they are being taken seriously and will be supported and kept safe. They will never be given the impression that they are creating a problem nor will they ever be made to feel ashamed.

- Staff will not promise confidentiality but will only share information with those in a position to take appropriate actions.

Staff will:

- Listen carefully, be non-judgmental, be clear about boundaries, will not ask leading questions, will make a written record of the disclosure.
- Notes will be factual, as presented by the child and will be passed on, immediately to the Designated Lead.

If the report includes an online element such as pictures on a phone:

- Avoid viewing youth-produced sexual imagery. Instead, respond to what you have been told the image contains.
- If it is felt necessary to view, discuss with the head teacher first.
- Never copy, print, or share the image (it's illegal)
- View with another member of staff present
- Record the fact that the images were viewed along with reasons and who was present. Sign and date.

Deleting images (from devices and social media)

- If it has decided that involving other agencies is not necessary, consideration should be given to deleting the images.
- It is recommended that pupils are asked to delete the images themselves and confirm they have done so. This should be recorded, signed, and dated.
- Any refusal to delete the images should be treated seriously, reminding the pupil that possession is unlawful.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will make a risk assessment based on the following:
Every case will be considered on an individual basis.

- If the child is a risk of harm the Police will be informed via 101.

Where the child is not at significant risk, decisions will be made based on:

- The wishes of the victim
- The nature of the alleged incident
- The age of the alleged victim / perpetrator
- The developmental stages of the persons involved
- Any imbalance of power
- Is the incident a one off incident or a pattern of behaviour?
- Are there on-going risks to the victim, other children, staff.
- Other related issues

Considerations:

All reported sexual incidents are likely to be embarrassing if not traumatic for a child, it is important that we bare this in mind whilst we are dealing with any such cases.

We will consider:

- Whether the alleged victims / perpetrators should be kept apart in school or travelling to and from school.
- Gossip and rumours will be dealt with following the guidelines of the Anti-Bullying Policy / Peer on Peer Abuse.
- Where there is a criminal investigation into a rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault, the alleged perpetrator will be removed from any classes they share with the victim. This is the best interests of both children and should not be perceived to be a judgement on the guilt of the alleged perpetrator.

Actions:

The allegation is a one off incident, the child is not at significant risk or the victim does not want any further action – the incident will be managed internally. All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions will be recorded.

The child has been harmed, is at risk of harm or is in immediate danger – a referral to Children’s Social care will be made. Parents will be informed, guidance from social services will be followed and a risk assessment will be carried out.

Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made – this will be immediately reported to the Police via 101. The parents will be informed unless informing the parents will put the child at greater risk, further actions will be in agreement with the Police such as what information can be shared with staff and others and how best to protect the victim and their anonymity. If the Police decide that no further action is required, we will follow the advice of other specialist support as advised.

Should a student of Oak Bank be convicted or receive a caution for a sexual offence and the victim is also a student at Oak Bank then(this will be considered as a serious breach of discipline and remaining in the school would seriously harm the education and the welfare of the victim and potentially, other students. The student would, therefore, be permanently excluded from the school. Any new educational institution will be made aware of the on-going support needs and the possible risk to other students or staff. This information would be passed on by the designated lead following safeguarding protocol of confidentiality and practitionerism.

The alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator will be fully supported at all times.

County Lines:

Children and vulnerable adults are being used by drug dealers across the country to courier drugs and money. This crime is known as County Lines.

As a county that lies between London and Birmingham as well as having close links to Milton Keynes, our students are highly vulnerable to exploitative actions such as:

- Gang activity
- Criminal activity
- Young people being used to transport drugs from one county to another and being paid large sums of money to do so.

Signs to watch out for:

- Persistently going missing from school or home and / or being found out-of-area;
- Unexplained acquisition of money, clothes, or mobile phones

- Excessive receipt of texts / phone calls
- Relationships with controlling / older individuals or groups
- Leaving home / care without explanation
- Suspicion of physical assault / unexplained injuries
- Parental concerns
- Carrying weapons
- Significant decline in school results / performance
- Gang association or isolation from peers or social networks
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being

We have to listen out and act quickly on information received.

Child Missing in Education (CME)

At Oak Bank School the safety and welfare of our pupils is of the utmost importance. All staff should be aware of their responsibilities regarding child safety, including what to do if a child goes missing from school supervision or when a child is not collected from school by their parent/carer.

- Related School Documents
- Attendance Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Educational Visits Policy

Responsibilities

Governors

To review any incidence of missing child or child not collected in order to ensure that the Academy takes forward any lessons learned and continues to operate best practice

Senior Leadership Team

To ensure all staff understand the procedure to be followed in the event of a missing child

Staff Team

To ensure that attendance registers are completed accurately and promptly according to guidelines, every day.

Parents/carers

To ensure that Oak Bank School holds up to date contact information, including named emergency contacts in the event that parents/carers are not available

To know the procedure for handover and collection of children where relevant, particularly where there may be safeguarding issues or concerns, including parental responsibility.

To sign children out of school at the main office when collecting them during the school day.

5 ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE MADE AGAINST OTHER CHILDREN

5.1 At our school we believe that all children have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm by adults in the school and other students.

We recognise that some pupils will sometimes negatively affect the learning and wellbeing of others and their behaviour will be dealt with under the school's Behaviour Policy.

5.2 Safeguarding allegations

Occasionally, allegations may be made against pupils by others in the school, which are of a safeguarding nature. Safeguarding issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. It is likely that to be considered a safeguarding allegation against a pupil, some of the following features will be found.

The allegation:

- is made against an older pupil and refers to their behaviour towards a younger pupil or a more vulnerable pupil
- is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence
- raises risk factors for other pupils in the school
- indicates that other pupils may have been affected by this pupil
- indicates that young people outside the school may be affected by this pupil

5.3 Examples of safeguarding issues against a pupil could include:

Physical Abuse

- violence, particularly pre-planned
- forcing others to use drugs or alcohol

Emotional Abuse

- blackmail or extortion
- threats and intimidation

Sexual Abuse

- indecent exposure, indecent touching or serious sexual assaults
- forcing others to watch pornography or take part in sexting

Sexual Exploitation

- encouraging other children to attend inappropriate parties
- photographing or videoing other children performing indecent acts

In areas where gangs are prevalent, older pupils may attempt to recruit younger pupils using any or all of the above methods. Young people suffering from sexual exploitation themselves may be forced to recruit other young people under threat of violence.

5.4 Minimising the risk of safeguarding concerns towards pupils from other pupils

On occasion, some pupils will present a safeguarding risk to other pupils. The school should be informed that the young person raises safeguarding concerns, for example, they are coming back into school following a period in custody or they have experienced serious abuse themselves.

These pupils will need an individual risk management plan to ensure that other pupils are kept safe and they themselves are not laid open to malicious allegations. There is a need to balance the tension between privacy and safeguarding.

5.5 What to do

When an allegation is made by a pupil against another pupil, members of staff should consider whether the complaint raises a safeguarding concern. If there is a safeguarding concern the DSL should be informed.

A factual record should be made of the allegation, but no attempt at this stage should be made to investigate the circumstances.

The DSL should contact The hub to discuss the case. It is possible that Children's Social Care are already aware of safeguarding concerns around this young person. The DSL will

follow through the outcomes of the discussion and make a statement of referral where appropriate.

The DSL will make a record of the concern, the discussion and any outcome and keep a copy in the files of both pupils' files.

If the allegation indicates a potential criminal offence has taken place, the police should be contacted at the earliest opportunity and parents informed (of both the pupil being complained about and the alleged victim).

Where neither Children's Social Care nor the police accept the complaint, a thorough school investigation should take place into the matter using the school's usual disciplinary procedures.

In situations where the school considers a safeguarding risk is present, a risk assessment should be prepared along with a preventative, supervision plan.

The plan should be monitored and a date set for a follow-up evaluation with everyone concerned.

6 SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN THRESHOLD DOCUMENT

<http://www.bedfordshireLSP.org.uk/LSP-website/Practitioners/the-importance-of-Threshold-documents>

6.1 The Safeguarding Children Threshold document has been developed so that everyone working with children in Central Bedfordshire has a common language for understanding the needs and risks surrounding children and their families.

6.2 For example, if the school has concerns about a child and needs advice or support from an Access and Referral social worker, they will use the Threshold document Guidance to understand the school's concerns and provide advice about what to do or to decide whether the child and family need social care involvement. The Threshold document does not replace practitioner judgement, but it is intended to support decision-making and discussions between services and practitioners.

6.3 It is important that staff members are familiar with the Threshold document tool. It comes in two parts – a windscreen tool showing levels of need (see below) and an indicator tool describing a range of conditions about the child and family that the school (and other practitioners the school has discussions with) can use to identify their level of need.

6.4 The Threshold document tool, including the windscreen and indicators, and detailed guidance are available on

http://www.centralbedfordshireLSP.org.uk/assets/1/assessment_and_thresholds_levels_of_need_risk_and_intervention_-_windscreen_poster_a4.pdf

6.5 The Threshold document shows that a child's or family's additional needs can be on a range from none to very high, and that needs can shift from early help to child protection and back to preventative early help. It covers children whose needs are increasing as well as children whose needs are decreasing after Children's Social Care involvement. The Threshold document will help practitioners to identify the right level of support for the child in the least intrusive way while keeping the child safe.

6.6 The Threshold document identifies four levels of need.

Level 1: Universal Needs

Universal support for all children and families.

Needs are met by universally accessible services e.g.

- Schools and colleges
- Early Years settings
- GPs
- Health visitors and school nurses
- Midwifery
- Housing
- Police
- Children's centres

No referral needed - professionals are to contact Family Information Services for information and services to signpost to.

Level 2: Additional Needs/ Early Help

Children and families, including disabled children and young people, experiencing difficulties and requiring additional support to enable achievement of good outcomes for children in the family and to prevent abuse and neglect.

Needs are met by universal and targeted services e.g.

- Children's centre services
- Early Education and child care
- Family learning and access to work
- Welfare rights/ benefits advice
- Positive activities for young people
- Emotional well-being and counselling services
- Parenting and family support
- Healthy lifestyles and reducing risky behaviours

Professional to complete an Early Help Assessment, where service is unable to meet the full needs of the child and send to the Access and referral Hub.

Level 3: Complex needs/ Child in need

Children and families including disabled children and young people, whose needs are complex and without co-ordinated support are likely to escalate into specialist services.

Needs are met by combination of universal and targeted services and are overseen by a social worker.

Professional to refer on to the Access and Referral Hub.

If a threshold for Child and Family Assessment is not met, professional may be asked to complete an Early Help Assessment.

Level 4: Urgent, Immediate or Other High Priority Needs

Children and families, including disabled and young people, whose needs are complex and enduring and cross many domains. They are at risk of significant harm or removal from home.

Needs are met by a combination of universal, targeted and specialist services and co-ordinated by a social worker.

Professional to make immediate referral to the Access and Referral Hub.

6.7 By referring to the Threshold document and indicators, the school can identify when assessment and support for a child and family need 'stepping up' to a referral to Social Care and when the needs of a child and their family have been reduced enough for them to be 'stepped down' to early help services.

7 WHAT ACTION TO TAKE IF YOU HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD

Staff member	What action to take if you have concerns
Any member of staff, governor, volunteer, contractor or activity provider	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss your concerns with the DSL Lesley Phillips, or in their absence, with the Deputy DSL Rachael Freer/ Hayley Blount, as soon as possible, before the child leaves for the day. It is important that the child is not sent home at the end of the day without taking the right protective action. 2. Report the concern via "My Concern" this will automatically be forwarded to the DSL 3. If the DSL or their deputy is not available, you should contact the Children's Social Care Access and referral Team yourself for a consultation about the action you need to take. Inform the DSL about your consultation and what actions you have taken.
Designated safeguarding lead	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You are concerned that the child is at risk of significant harm (Level 4 of the Threshold document) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 Contact the relevant Access and Referral Team immediately. 1.2 If you believe that the child is in immediate danger, or you suspect a crime has been committed, you must also contact the police immediately. 1.3 If the Access and Referral Team accepts your contact as a referral, send them a completed Bic 100 form within 24 hours or the relevant referral for pupils that are out of authority. 1.4 The Access and referral Team may decide, in discussion with you, that

	<p>the child's needs are at Level 2 or 3 of the Threshold document and the school is better placed to provide support. See points 2.5 and 2.6 below for further action.</p> <p>1.5 Record all your discussions and decision-making using "My Concern," (our recording and reporting software.) Add a copy of the statement of referral to the child's file. If the child does not have a stand-alone child protection file, you will need to create one including a front sheet. Update or start the chronology (all chronologies will be maintained using "My Concern" . Continue to update the child's file and chronology as the investigation and the resulting work carry on.</p> <p>2. You believe the child is not at risk of significant harm, but the child or their family may need support (Level 2 or 3 of the Threshold document)</p> <p>2.1 Use the Threshold document tool to identify the level of need.</p> <p>2.2 Discuss your concerns with senior colleagues in another agency, if necessary.</p> <p>2.3 Contact the Access and referral Team for a consultation, without necessarily identifying the child in question, in order to develop an understanding of the child's needs and circumstances.</p> <p>2.4 If the Access and referral Team accepts your contact as a referral for social care assessment, send them a completed statement of referral within 24 hours, as above.</p> <p>2.5 If your consultation results in the decision that the child and family are in need of help at Level 2 or 3 of the Threshold document, provide additional support in the school and/or refer the child or their family to other agencies providing early help services.</p> <p>2.6 Record all your consultations and decision-making using "My Concern". Update or start the chronology and add referral letters and forms to the child's file; create a stand-alone file including a front sheet, if one does not exist. Continue to update the file, including the chronology, as work progresses.</p>
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8 DEALING WITH A DISCLOSURE MADE BY A CHILD – ADVICE FOR ALL MEMBERS OF STAFF

If a child discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the member of staff or volunteer should follow this guidance.

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Only ask questions when necessary to clarify.
- Accept what is being said.
- Allow the child to talk freely – do not put words in the child's mouth.
- Reassure the child that what has happened is not his or her fault.
- Do not make promises that you may not be able to keep.
- Do not promise confidentiality – it may be necessary to refer the child to Children's Social Care.
- Stress that it was the right thing to tell.
- Do not criticise the alleged perpetrator.
- Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told.
- Inform the DSL without delay.
- Report all concerns using "My Concern" these will be forwarded automatically to the DSL for further action.
- Dealing with a disclosure from a child and safeguarding issues can be stressful. Consider seeking support for yourself and discuss this with the DSL.

9 DISCUSSING CONCERNS WITH THE FAMILY AND THE CHILD – ADVICE FOR THE DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD

- 9.1 In general, you should always discuss any concerns the school may have with the child's parents. They need to know that you are worried about their child. However, you should not discuss your concerns if you believe that this would place the child at greater risk or lead to loss of evidence for a police investigation.
- 9.2 **If you make a decision not to discuss your concerns with the child's parents or carers** this must be recorded in the child's child protection file with a full explanation for your decision.
- 9.3 **It is important to consider the child's wishes and feelings**, if age appropriate, as part of planning what action to take in relation to concerns about their welfare.
- 9.4 When talking to children, you should take account of their age, understanding and preferred language, which may not be English. It is also important to consider how a disabled child may need support in communicating.
- 9.5 How you talk to a child will also depend on the substance and seriousness of the concerns. You may need to seek advice from Children's Social Care or the police to ensure that neither the safety of the child nor any subsequent investigation is jeopardised.
- 9.6 If concerns have arisen as a result of information given by a child, it is important to reassure the child but not to promise confidentiality.
- 9.7 **It is expected that you discuss your concerns with the parents and seek their agreement to making a referral to Children's Social Care, unless you consider that this would place the child at increased risk of significant harm.**
- 9.8 **You do not need the parents' consent to make a referral if you consider the child is in need of protection**, although parents will ultimately be made aware of which organisation made the referral.
- 9.9 If parents refuse to give consent to a referral but you decide to continue, you need to make this clear to Children's Social Care.
- 9.10 **If you decide to refer the child without the parents' consent, make sure to record this with a full explanation of your decision.**
- 9.11 When you make your referral, you should agree with Children's Social Care what the child and parents will be told, by whom and when.
- 9.12 See section 11 below for guidance on information sharing and consent.

10 EARLY HELP FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

- 10.1 Most parents can look after their children without the need of help other than from their family or friends. However, some parents may need additional help from our school or other services such as the NHS. Providing help early is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later.
- 10.2 Our school will work together with other agencies to provide a coordinated offer of early help, in line with *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015* and local guidance, to any child who needs it.

- 10.3 We will pool our knowledge within the school and with other agencies about which families or children need additional support in a range of ways so that we can work out how best to help them. We will use the Central Bedfordshire Threshold document to identify what level of need the child or their family has.
- 10.4 We will work closely with targeted early help services and Children's Social Care if we feel families need more support and input, or children are at risk of harm, and we will continue to provide support if other services are also needed.
- 10.5 [Targeted early help services](#) are aimed specifically at helping families with children and young people whose needs are at Level 3 on the Threshold document.
- 10.6 Targeted support is also provided by family keyworkers in specialist services, for example Youth Offending, Bedfordshire Police, Social care, NHS, and by School Nurses and Family Support Health Practitioners. These services may lead a plan of support in a similar way to targeted early help services.
- 10.7 Our school will [refer any child with needs at Level 3 on the Threshold document](#) to a targeted early help service and work with the service in any early help planning they may undertake to support the child.
- 10.8 We will talk to the family about referral to a targeted early help service and explain that there may be a need to involve other Practitioners, including talking to a social worker about our concerns. We will seek the family's consent for the referral.
- 10.9 If the family does not consent to an early help service, we will make a judgement about whether the needs of the child will escalate or the child will become unsafe without help. If our judgement is that the needs or concerns will escalate, then we will contact the Children's Social Care Access and referral Team in our area for a consultation with a qualified social worker in order to make a shared decision about whether the level of concerns calls for a referral to Children's Social Care.

11 CHILDREN'S-SOCIAL-CARE-LED RESPONSES TO CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD

- 11.1 Once Children's Social Care has accepted our referral as needing a social-care-led response (Level 4 of the Threshold document), a senior social work practitioner and their manager will evaluate the concerns to identify the sources and levels of risk and to agree what protective action may be necessary.
- 11.2 The evaluation of concerns and risks involve deciding whether:
- the child needs immediate protection and urgent action is necessary; or
 - the child is suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm and enquiries need to be made under section 47 of the Children Act 1989; or
 - the child is in need and should be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.
- 11.3 We will cooperate with Children's Social Care and the police in any emergency action they take using their legal powers for immediate protection of the child. This may involve removing the child from their home.
- 11.4 We will participate in any multi-agency discussions (strategy discussions), if invited to do so, and share information about the child and their family to plan the response to concerns.
- 11.5 We will share information about the child and their family for section 47 enquiries and family assessments undertaken by Children's Social Care.

- 11.6 We will ensure that a relevant staff member participates in all initial and review child protection conferences, if we are invited to attend. The staff member will work together with other agencies to discuss the need for and agree to an outcome-focused child protection plan and will ensure that the child's wishes and views are considered in their own right in planning.
- 11.7 If we are members of the core group to implement a child protection plan, we will ensure a relevant staff member participates in all core group meetings.
- 11.8 We will ensure that we complete all actions allocated to us as part of the outcome-focused plan, whether a child protection plan or a family support plan, in a timely way.
- 11.9 We will continue to monitor children once their plans are ended to ensure that they are supported and kept safe.

12 INFORMATION SHARING AND CONSENT

- 12.1 It is essential that people working with children can confidently share information as part of their day-to-day work. This is necessary not only to safeguard and protect children from harm but also to work together to support families to improve outcomes for all.
- 12.2 The school may have to share information about parents or carers, such as their medical history, disability or substance misuse issues, for investigations of child abuse carried out by Children's Social Care.
- 12.3 We will proactively seek out information as well as sharing it. This means checking with other Practitioners whether they have information that helps us to be as well informed as possible when working to support children.
- 12.4 The Data Protection Act 1998 is not a barrier to sharing information. It is there to ensure that personal information is managed in a sensible way and that a balance is struck between a person's privacy and public protection.
- 12.5 We should be sharing any concerns we have with parents at an early stage, unless this would put a child at greater risk or compromise an investigation. Parents need to know what our responsibilities are for safeguarding and protecting children and that this involves sharing information about them with other Practitioners.
- 12.6 Be clear about the purpose of sharing confidential information and only share as much as you need to achieve your purpose.
- 12.7 Try to get consent from parents (or the child, if they have sufficient understanding¹) to share information, if possible. However, **you do not need consent if you have serious concerns about a child's safety and well-being. If you decide to share information without consent, you should record this with a full explanation of your decision.**
- 12.8 **Consent should not be sought from parents or carers (or the child, if they have sufficient understanding), if:**
- it would place a child at increased risk of harm; or

¹ Children aged 12 or over may generally be expected to have sufficient understanding. Younger children may also have sufficient understanding. All people aged 16 and over are presumed, in law, to have the capacity to give or withhold their consent, unless there is evidence to the contrary.

- it would place an adult at risk of serious harm; or
- it would prejudice a criminal investigation; or
- it would lead to unjustified delay in making enquiries about allegations of significant harm to a child; or
- required by law or a court order to share information.

12.9 **Consent is not necessary** in cases where Children's Social Care are making child protection enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989. Information needs to be shared with Children's Social Care; staff members must make sure to record what information has been shared.

12.10 **Consent is necessary**, for:

- Children's Social Care investigations or assessments of concerns under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Children's Social Care will assume that we have obtained consent from the parents to share information unless we make them aware that there is a specific issue about consent. This must be discussed with a social worker in the Access and referral Team.
- Early help assessments. Assessments are undertaken with the agreement of the child and their parents or carers.

12.11 If you are in any doubt about the need for seeking consent, get advice from the DSL or from the Children's Social Care Access and Referral Team.

12.12 Keep a record of your decision to share information, with or without consent, and the reasons for it. Remember also that it is just as important to keep a record of why you decided not to share information as why you did so.

13 **RECORD KEEPING**

13.1 Good record keeping is an important part of the school's accountability to children and their families and will help us in meeting our key responsibility to respond appropriately to welfare concerns about children.

13.2 Records should be factual, accurate, relevant, up to date and auditable. They should support monitoring, risk assessment and planning for children and enable informed and timely decisions about appropriate action to take.

13.3 All staff members, governors, volunteers, contractors and activity providers should ensure that they record and report safeguarding concerns in line with guidance from the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (LSP)

13.4 The DSL will ensure that records are maintained appropriately for children with safeguarding concerns and that stand-alone files are created and maintained in line with requirements of the above guidance.

14 **PRACTITIONER CHALLENGE AND DISAGREEMENTS**

14.1 Working with children and families, and in particular child protection work, is stressful and complex, as well as involving uncertainty and strong feelings. To ensure that the best decisions are made for children, we need to be able to challenge one another's practice.

14.2 We will promote a culture within our school that enables all staff members to raise, without fear of repercussions, any concerns they may have about the management of child protection in the school. This may include raising concerns about decisions, action and inaction by colleagues about individual children. If necessary, staff

members will speak with the Designated safeguarding lead, the Head of school, the chair of governors or with the Local Authority Designated Officer.

- 14.3 Cooperation across agencies is crucial; Practitioners need to work together, using their skills and experience, to make a robust contribution to safeguarding children and promoting their welfare within the framework of discussions, meetings, conferences and case management.
- 14.4 If there are any practitioner disagreements with practitioners from other agencies, the DSL or the Head of school will raise concerns with the relevant agency's safeguarding lead.
- 14.5 If the school disagrees with the child protection conference chair's decision, the DSL or the Head of school will consider whether they wish to challenge it further and raise the matter with Children's Services Head of Safeguarding.

15 SAFER RECRUITMENT

- 15.1 Our school has robust recruitment and vetting procedures to help prevent unsuitable people from working with children.
- 15.2 Our job advertisements and application packs make explicit reference to the school's commitment to safeguarding children, including compliance with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) process and clear statements in the job description and person specification about the staff member's safeguarding responsibilities.
- 15.3 **Disqualification by association:**
Staff should be reminded that under the new act, relationships and associations, including online, may have implications for the safeguarding of students and if there are concerns about these associations, the school should be informed. Relevant staff should self-declare that they are not disqualified as previously required.
- 15.4 All staff members who have contact with children, young people and families will have appropriate pre-employment checks in line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, September 2018* and *Working together to safeguard children 2018*.
- 15.5 At least one member on every short listing and interview panel will have completed safer recruitment training. The Head of school is responsible for ensuring that safer recruitment training is kept up to date.
- 15.6 The Head of school and the nominated governor for child protection are responsible for ensuring that our **single central record** is accurate and up to date.

16 PROCEDURE FOR MANAGING ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE MADE AGAINST SCHOOL STAFF MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

16.1
Our aim is to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the well being and very best outcomes for the children at our school. We do recognise that sometimes the behaviour of adults may lead to an allegation of abuse being made.

16.2
Allegations sometimes arise from a **difference in** understanding of the same event, but when they occur they are distressing and difficult for all concerned. We also recognise that many

allegations are genuine and there are some adults who deliberately seek to harm or abuse children.

16.3

We will take all possible steps to safeguard our children and to ensure that the adults in our school are safe to work with children. We will always ensure that the procedures outlined in Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, September 2016 are adhered to and will follow the flow chart in Appendix C.

16.4

If an allegation is made or information is received about an adult who works in our setting which indicates that they may be unsuitable to work with children, the member of staff receiving the information should inform the Headteacher immediately. Should an allegation be made against the Headteacher, this will be reported to the Chair of Governors. In the event that neither the Headteacher nor Chair of Governors is not contactable on that day, the information must be passed to and dealt with by either the member of staff acting as Headteacher or the Vice Chair of Governors.

16.5

The Headteacher or Chair of Governors will follow the flow chart in Appendix C. No member of staff or the governing body will undertake further investigations before receiving advice from the DAT or LADO.

16.6

Any member of staff or volunteer who does not feel confident to raise their concerns with the Headteacher or Chair of Governors should follow the flow chart in Appendix C and make the appropriate contact direct.

16.7

Supporting people:

The school together with Children's Social Care and the police, if they are involved, will consider the impact on the child concerned and provide support as appropriate.

The Head of school will ensure that the child and family are kept informed of the progress of the investigation.

The Personnel Advisory Team will be contacted at the earliest opportunity for advice in relation to the investigation of any allegation in line with the Councils' Disciplinary Policy, where appropriate.

The staff member who is the subject of the allegation will be advised to contact their union, practitioner association or a colleague for support, (depending on the outcome of the safeguarding strategy meeting which is normally chaired by the LADO).

The Personnel Advisory Team will ensure that the staff member is provided with appropriate support, if necessary, through occupational health or welfare arrangements.

The Head of school will appoint a named representative to keep the staff member updated on the progress of the investigation; this will continue during any police or section 47 investigation or disciplinary investigation.

16.8

The school has a legal duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child, or if there is reason to believe the member of staff has committed one of a number of listed offences, and who has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left. The DBS will consider whether to bar the person. If these circumstances arise in relation to a member of staff at our school, a referral will be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the individual in accordance with advice from the LADO and/or The Personnel Advisory Team.

Appendix C MANAGING ALLEGATIONS/CONCERNS ABOUT INDIVIDUALS WHO WORK WITH CHILDREN

