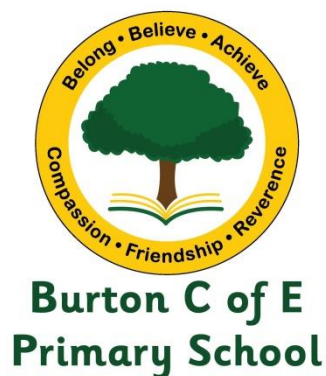




# Burton C E Primary School

## Child Protection Policy

Adopted by the Governing Body on  
8<sup>th</sup> October 2025

Reviewed in  
September 2025

— based on the Dorset Model Policy and 'Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership' guidance and updated in light of KSCiE 2025

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead is

Alison Timmings (HT)

Our Deputy Safeguarding Leads are

Sarah Steel (DHT)

&

Sarah Edmunds

Our Nominated Governor for Safeguarding is

Mary Taylor

# **Child Protection Policy**

The child protection policy for Burton C E Primary School reflects the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2025.

This policy consists of four main documents:

- A. The overarching safeguarding policy (statement of aims & principles)
- B. Child protection procedures
- C. Information and procedures for Specific aspects of safeguarding
- D. Child protection summary sheet.

Part D is printed separately and provided routinely for those adults who will not have the opportunity to read this policy in its entirety but will have unsupervised contact, even as a 'one-off', with pupils on a temporary or intermittent basis such as supply, peripatetic or visiting professionals.

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# **Part A: Safeguarding Policy**

## **1. Principles**

Burton C E Primary School recognises that the welfare of the child is paramount: the needs and best interests of the child will be put first and their wishes listened to and accommodated where appropriate. Throughout this document, 'child' refers to a young person under the age of 18.

We take seriously our duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children and young people in our care.

All children have the right to be safeguarded from harm or exploitation whatever their

- age
- health or disability
- gender or sexual orientation
- race, religion, belief or first language
- political or immigration status

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone's** responsibility (KCSIE 2025, Part 1 Para 2).

The following 3 **safeguarding partners** are identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education (and defined in the Children Act 2004, as amended by chapter 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017). They will make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs:

- The local authority (LA)
- Integrated care boards (previously known as clinical commissioning groups) for an area within the LA
- The chief officer of police for a police area in the LA area

The Governing Body will act in accordance with Section 175 / Section 157 of the Education Act 2002 and the supporting statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2025 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in this school. (See Appendix 2 for other linked guidance and Law)

The Governing Body recognises that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm or exploitation and that pupils cannot learn effectively unless they feel secure. The Governors will, therefore, provide a school environment which promotes self-confidence, a feeling of worth and the knowledge that pupil's concerns will be listened to and acted upon.

The Governors will also ensure that the school carries out its statutory duties to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Local Authority Children's Services (Social Care usually via the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub MASH / BCP First Response) and to assist them in taking appropriate action on behalf of children in need or enquiring into allegations of child abuse or neglect. Schools recognise the contribution they can make to protect and support pupils in their care and contribute to a co-ordinated offer of early help.

The school is committed to ensuring that best practice is adopted when working with all children, offering them support and protection and accepts that it has a legal and moral responsibility to implement procedures, to provide a duty of care for children, to safeguard their well-being and to protect them from abuse.

The Governing Body is accountable for ensuring that the school meets its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding and that all policies, procedures and training are in place and effective.

It is a recognised Safeguarding Standard (recommended by the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership) that governors receive an annual report from the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Nominated Governor to help monitor compliance with statutory responsibilities.

The school completes and submits to the LA Safeguarding Children Team, an annual audit of its safeguarding and child protection arrangements, including an action plan. *This audit was most recently completed in Dec 2024 and was reviewed by BCP safeguarding team in March 2025*

Governors, staff and regular volunteers in this school understand the importance of taking appropriate action and working in partnership with children, their parents/carers and other agencies to safeguard children and promote their welfare.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- afford protection for all pupils
- enable staff and volunteers to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- promote a culture which makes this school a safe place to learn and in which children feel safe

This policy applies to the Headteacher, all staff, including supply and peripatetic staff, volunteers, governors or anyone working on behalf of the school.

## **2. Aims of the Policy**

- To raise the awareness of all school staff of the importance of child protection and safeguarding pupils and of their responsibilities for identifying and reporting actual or suspected abuse, neglect or concerns about a child's welfare
- To ensure pupils and parents are aware that the school takes the safeguarding agenda seriously and will follow the appropriate procedures for identifying and reporting abuse, neglect or concerns about a child's welfare and for dealing with allegations against staff
- To promote effective liaison with other agencies in order to work together for the protection of all pupils
- To support pupils' development in ways which will foster security, confidence and independence
- To integrate a safeguarding curriculum within the existing curriculum allowing for continuity and progress through all key stages
- To take account of and inform policy in related areas such as discipline, bullying, staff and pupil behaviour policies, Online-Safety and the preventing extremism agenda

There are three main elements to the school's safeguarding policy:

1. **PREVENTION** (positive and safe school environment, careful and vigilant teaching, accessible pastoral care, support to pupils, good adult role models).
2. **PROTECTION** (agreed procedures are followed, staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to safeguarding concerns).
3. **SUPPORT** (to pupils, who may have been at risk of significant harm and the way staff respond to their concerns and any work that may be required and to those in need of early help services).

This child protection policy forms part of a suite of policies and other documents which relate to the wider safeguarding responsibilities of the school. In particular it should be read in conjunction with the

- staff behaviour policy (code of conduct)
- mobile technology policy
- Computing, acceptable use and safer digital practices policy (including online safety)
- safer recruitment policy and procedures
- procedures to handle allegations against members of staff and volunteers, including referring to the Disclosure and Barring Service (when appropriate)
- whistle blowing policy
- procedures to respond appropriately when children are missing education
- anti-bullying procedures

These policies and procedures are *on school website, available from school office or staff intranet*.

It is recognised that the school plays a crucial role in preventative education. This is in the context of a whole-school approach to preparing pupils for life in modern Britain, and a culture of zero tolerance of sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and sexual violence/harassment. This will be underpinned by our:

- Behaviour policy
- Pastoral support system
- Planned programme of relationships, sex and health education (RSHE), which is inclusive and delivered regularly, tackling issues (at an age appropriate level) such as:
  - Healthy and respectful relationships
  - Boundaries and consent
  - Stereotyping, prejudice and equality
  - Body confidence and self-esteem
  - What constitutes sexual harassment and why this is always unacceptable

## **Equality**

Some children have an increased risk of abuse, both online and offline, and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise children's diverse circumstances. We ensure that all children have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face.

We give special consideration to children who:

- Have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or health conditions (see section 10)
- Are young carers
- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality
- Have English as an additional language (EAL)
- Are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence
- Are at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM), sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation
- Are asylum seekers
- Are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs
- Are looked after or previously looked after (see section 12)
- Are missing or absent from education for prolonged periods and/or repeat occasions
- Whose parent/carer has expressed an intention to remove them from school to be home educated

### 3. Key Practices ~ in Summary:

We will endeavour to safeguard children and young people by:

- abiding by the Keeping Children Safe in Education Guidance
- always acting in their best interests
- valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- involving them in decisions which affect them
- never tolerating bullying, homophobic behaviour, racism, sexism or any other forms of discrimination, including through use of technology
- ensuring the curriculum affords a range of opportunities to learn about keeping themselves safe, particularly when using technology
- exercising our duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- by ensuring all staff attend 'Prevent' training in respect of radicalisation and extremist behaviour and by assessing the risk of our pupils becoming involved with or supporting terrorism
- supporting attendance and taking action if a child is missing school regularly
- Appointing a lead Governor/Trustee responsible for safeguarding practice within the school
- Having safeguarding as a standing agenda item at staff meetings and governing body meetings and minutes recorded.
- appointing a senior member of staff from our leadership team as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and ensuring this person has the time, funding, training, resources and support to perform the role effectively ~ **DSL is Mrs Alison Timmings (Headteacher)**
- appointing at least one Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure there is always someone available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns ~ **DDSLs are Mrs Sarah Steel; Mrs Sarah Edmunds**
- appointing a Designated Teacher to promote the educational achievement of children who are Looked-After (in care) and to work closely with the virtual school head to discuss how pupil premium plus additional funding can support the progress of these children and will also have the responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children who have left care. ~ **Currently our Designated Teacher is Mrs Sarah Edmunds**

- ensuring that staff working with Looked-After Children have information appropriate to their role regarding, for example, the child's care arrangements, legal status and contact with birth parents
- appointing a Young Carers Champion to ensure the needs of this group are not overlooked and to promote educational achievement and support for them. **Our Young Carer champion is Miss Jane Pope.**
- making sure all staff and volunteers are aware of and committed to the safeguarding policy and child protection procedures and also understand their individual responsibility to take action
- Ensuring that staff are aware of the need to be proactive in supporting children whose protected characteristics may make them more at risk of harm or abuse and that those who identify as LGBT, or may be questioning, have a trusted adult with whom they can be open
- Ensuring that teachers, staff, peripatetic staff, contractors and volunteers have completed Disclosure and Barring Service checks as per the safer recruitment guidance, and that contacts within extended services require safer recruitment and safeguarding compliance
- Ensuring all employees and volunteers receive safeguarding training appropriate to their designation. This is to ensure all staff are aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect (including child-on-child abuse), how to identify children who may benefit from early help, and raise awareness of the wide range of safeguarding issues and how to help to respond and support the children in their care.
- Ensuring any external contractors using, or are on, school premises i.e. after school clubs, sports clubs) have up to date safeguarding policies and are signed up to Safeguarding Procedures. Also ensure that they follow guidelines on the use of restraint and comply with the safeguarding requirements. Following up on any concerns or allegations raised whilst premises are used by a third party.
- Signing up to the Dorset Information Sharing Charter (DISC) previously the Dorset overarching information sharing protocol and share information relating to MARAC and the Personal information sharing agreement with respect to receiving alerts about domestic abuse and advise parents accordingly
- Identifying any concerns early and providing appropriate help to prevent them from escalating, including working with parents/carers and other agencies as appropriate e.g through the provision of Thrive, ELSA and pastoral support workers and links with Early Help and the Family Partnership Teams
- Sharing information about child safeguarding concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving children and their parents/carers appropriately
- Acknowledging and actively promoting that multi-agency working is the best way to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm
- Taking the right action, in accordance with Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership inter-agency safeguarding procedures, if a child discloses or there are indicators of abuse
- Keeping clear, accurate and contemporaneous safeguarding and child protection records
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made in accordance with statutory guidance and legal requirements (including online searches) and also making sure that at least one appointment panel member has undertaken safer recruitment training. *Currently the Headteacher; 1 Governor and the Clerk to Governors/ Headteacher PA have all undertaken*

*online Safer Recruitment training provided by NSPCC and updates through the National College.*

- Providing effective management for staff through induction, support and regular update training appropriate to role
- Adopting a code of conduct for all staff and volunteers which includes acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil relationships and communications including the use of social media. It is essential that member of staff's own practice and behaviour puts children's welfare first and cannot be misconstrued in any way and does not contravene accepted good practice.
- Ensuring our online safety process includes appropriate filters and monitoring systems
- Ensuring staff and volunteers understand about 'whistle blowing' and
- Ensuring staff know how to escalate concerns about pupils or staff if they think the right action has not been taken to safeguard children - that they should report any concerns about safeguarding practice or any concerns about staff to the Head Teacher (or Chair of Governors if concern is regarding the Headteacher) or to the Local Authority LADO or Ofsted.
- Promoting a culture in which staff feel able to report to senior leaders with what they consider to be unacceptable behaviour or breaches of the school Code of Conduct by their colleagues, having faith that they will be listened to and appropriate action taken
- We will obtain written notification from any agency or third-party organisation that it has carried out the necessary safer recruitment checks that we would otherwise perform. We will also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.
- Dealing appropriately with any allegations/concerns about the behaviour of staff or volunteers in accordance with the process set out in statutory guidance
- We will ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, who is to work at the school has had the appropriate level of DBS check. This will be:
  - An enhanced DBS check with barred list information for contractors engaging in regulated activity
  - An enhanced DBS check, not including barred list information, for all other contractors who are not in regulated activity but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children
- Contractors who have not had any checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity under any circumstances.
- We will check the identity of all contractors and their staff on arrival at the school.
- For self-employed contractors such as music teachers or sports coaches, we will ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Should there be an occasion when an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.
- Checking the identity and suitability of visitors
  - Requiring visitors to verify their identity and to leave their belongings, including their mobile phone(s), in a safe place during their visit.
  - Checking the credentials and reason for visiting of unknown visitors before allowing them to enter the setting. Visitors should be ready to produce identification.
  - Ensuring Visitors sign the visitors' book and wear a visitor's badge.

- All other visitors, including visiting speakers, will usually be accompanied by a member of staff at all times and must be if the above checks have not been carried out. We will not invite into the school any speaker who is known to disseminate extremist views, and will carry out appropriate checks to ensure that any individual or organisation using school facilities is not seeking to disseminate extremist views or radicalise pupils or staff.
- Taking the opportunities to teach safeguarding as part of a broad and balanced curriculum
- Undertake an annual audit of safeguarding, using the BCP Self Evaluation audit tool which will be shared with the Governing Body/Trustees leading to appropriate actions to ensure that the school is meeting all the requirements in line with national guidance, legislation and local guidance
- Reporting on safeguarding to the Governing Body/Trustees at least annually
- Review and update the safeguarding policy annually and when any significant changes occur.

## 4. Definitions:

### What is safeguarding and Child Protection?

‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ 2023, HM Government statutory guidance, defines safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- preventing impairment of children’s mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the outcomes set out in the Children’s Social Care National Framework..

**Child protection** is part of this definition and refers to activities undertaken to protect specific children who are suspected to be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. This includes harm that occurs inside or outside the home, including online.

### What is significant harm?

The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of significant harm as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention by statutory agencies in family life in the best interests of children. There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm. Sometimes it might be a single traumatic event but more often it is a compilation of significant events which damage the child’s physical and psychological development. Decisions about significant harm are complex and in each case, require discussion with the statutory agencies: Children’s Social Care and Police.

### What is child abuse?

It is generally accepted that there are four main forms of abuse.

- i) **Physical abuse**
- ii) **Emotional abuse**
- iii) **Sexual abuse**
- iv) **Neglect**

Definitions of these forms of abuse as well as indicators to be aware of can be found in Appendix 3

## **Part B: Child Protection Procedures**

These procedures should be read in conjunction with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education, Part One: Information for all School and College Staff' 2025, plus Annex A.

### **5. Purpose of these procedures**

These procedures explain what action should be taken if there are concerns that a child is or might be suffering harm.

### **6. Responsibilities and roles**

All adults in the school have an individual responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children by taking appropriate action. This includes taking action where there are child protection concerns.

All staff will be aware of:

- Our systems that support safeguarding, including this child protection and safeguarding policy, the staff code of conduct; the role and identity of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputies, the behaviour policy, online safety that includes the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring, and the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education
- Their role in Early Help Assessment, including identifying emerging problems, liaising with the DSL, and sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment
- The process for making referrals to local authority children's social care and for statutory assessments that may follow a referral, including the role they might be expected to play
- What to do if they identify a safeguarding issue or a child tells them they are being abused or neglected, including specific issues such as FGM, and how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality while liaising with relevant professionals
- The signs of different types of abuse, neglect and exploitation, including domestic and sexual abuse (including controlling and coercive behaviour, as well as parental conflict that is frequent, intense, and unresolved), as well as specific safeguarding issues, such as child-on-child abuse, grooming, child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE), indicators of being at risk from or involved with serious violent crime, FGM, radicalisation and serious violence (including that linked to county lines)
- New and emerging threats, including online harm, grooming, sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, radicalisation, and the role of technology and social media in presenting harm

- The importance of reassuring victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe
- The fact that children can be at risk of harm inside and outside of their home, at school and online
- The fact that children who are (or who are perceived to be) lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning (LGBTQ+) can be targeted by other children
- That a child and their family may be experiencing multiple needs at the same time
- What to look for to identify children who need help or protection

Governing bodies are accountable for ensuring their school has an effective child protection policy which should be reviewed annually and available publicly, such as on the school website.

The statutory safeguarding guidance for schools: 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' states that all schools and colleges should have 'a senior board level (or equivalent) lead to take leadership responsibility' for safeguarding. The responsibilities of the governing body, proprietors and management committees in relation to safeguarding are in KCSIE Part 2.

The person who takes leadership responsibility for safeguarding on the governing body of this school is: ***Mary Taylor.***

This school has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who has the appropriate training, authority, time support and resources to fulfil the duties of the role as described in the job description. The DSL (and any deputies) is most likely to have a complete safeguarding picture. This is the person who takes lead responsibility for safeguarding. Any concerns about children should be discussed with / reported to the DSL who will decide what action to take including referring to Children's Social Care or Police as appropriate.

The Role of the DSL is set out in KCSIE 2025 (Annex C) and this should be explicit in the role holder's job description.

The DSL or a deputy DSL should always be available during school hours for staff in the school to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Therefore the DSL is advised to have at least two deputies to provide safeguarding cover at all times e.g. the DSL may be on planned time away from the school for training etc. and the deputy off sick which could lead to unacceptable delay in protecting a child. In the absence of the DSL, all staff should be aware of which deputy DSL is available.

Adequate and appropriate cover should be arranged for out of hours/out of term activities (KCSIE Annex C)

(See further details in the Role of the DSL – local guidance and KCSIE Annex C)

**The Designated Safeguarding Lead in this school is: *Alison Timmings (Headteacher)***

The school also two Deputy Safeguarding Leads.

**The Deputy Safeguarding Leads are *Sarah Steel (Deputy Headteacher)* and *Sarah Edmunds (EYFS Leader)***

At our school the Pastoral Support Worker (Jane Pope) has also undertaken safeguarding training to Level 3 to be able to support staff with advice and guidance as well as to support her in carrying out her pastoral role working with children and families.

In addition, BCP Children's Social Care can provide advice and guidance on safeguarding and child protection matters.

See Appendix 1 for contact details.

All action is taken in line with the following guidance:

- DfE guidance (2025) – Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) – published by HM Government
- BCP and Dorset Inter-Agency Safeguarding Procedures & Guidance, accessed through the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership website <https://pandorsetscb.proceduresonline.com/>
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused – Government Guidance (2015)

The headteacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy, including:

- Ensuring that staff (including temporary staff) and volunteers:
  - Are informed of our systems that support safeguarding, including this policy, as part of their induction
  - Understand and follow the procedures included in this policy, particularly those concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect
- Communicating this policy to parents/carers when their child joins the school and via the school website
- Ensuring that the DSL/ DDSL has appropriate time, funding, training and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent
- Acting as the 'case manager' in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff or volunteer, where appropriate
- Making decisions regarding all low-level concerns,
- Ensuring the relevant staffing ratios are met, where applicable
- Overseeing the safe use of technology, mobile phones and cameras in the setting

## **7. Pupil Participation in Safeguarding**

- All pupils in the school are aware of staff who they can talk to. The names of the DSL/safeguarding leads/pastoral care workers, Anti Bullying Champion, Online (e-Safety) Champion etc. are available on posters in each classroom and around the school

- Safeguarding and what constitutes a healthy relationship both online and offline are taught through the curriculum and statutory RSE lessons e.g. personal safety, the impact of risky behaviour as well as road, rail and water safety
- The Safe Schools and Communities team are contacted for advice and training e.g. online safety
- On line resources e.g. Childline, Kidscape, Think u Know and CEOP are promoted to pupils
- The views of pupils about safeguarding issues in school are taken into account through pupil questionnaires, school governors and digital leaders.

## 8. Online safety and the use of technology

We recognise the importance of safeguarding children from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material, and we understand that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues.

To address this, our school aims to:

- Have robust processes in place to ensure the online safety of pupils, staff, volunteers and governors
- Protect and educate the whole school community in its safe and responsible use of technology, including mobile and smart technology (which we refer to as 'mobile phones')
- Set clear guidelines for the use of mobile phones for the whole school community
- Establish clear mechanisms to identify, intervene in and escalate any incidents or concerns, where appropriate

### The 4 key categories of risk

Our approach to online safety is based on addressing the following categories of risk:

**Content** – being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, such as pornography, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories

**Contact** – being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users, such as peer-to-peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes

**Conduct** – personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm, such as making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography), sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and

**Commerce** – risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and/or financial scams

### To meet our aims and address the risks above we will:

- Educate pupils about online safety as part of our curriculum. For example:
  - The safe use of social media, the internet and technology
  - Keeping personal information private

- How to recognise unacceptable behaviour online
- How to report any incidents of cyber-bullying, ensuring pupils are encouraged to do so, including where they are a witness rather than a victim
- Train staff, as part of their induction, on safe internet use and online safeguarding issues including cyber-bullying and the risks of online radicalisation. All staff members will receive refresher training at least once each academic year
- Educate parents/carers about online safety via our website, communications sent directly to them and via our membership to National Online Safety. We will also share clear procedures with them so they know how to raise concerns about online safety
- Make sure staff are aware of any restrictions placed on them with regards to the use of their mobile phone and cameras, for example that:
  - Staff are allowed to bring their personal phones to school for their own use, but will limit such use to non-contact time when pupils are not present
  - Staff will not take pictures or recordings of pupils on their personal phones or cameras
- Staff may have their personal mobile phones with them during the school day to facilitate communication for support if there are no other staff working with them and they are away from other communication such as a walkie talkie – or this fails.
- Make all pupils aware of the pupil acceptable use agreement
- Ensure all staff, volunteers and governors sign the staff code of conduct which includes expectations regarding the acceptable use of the internet in school, use of the school's ICT systems and use of their mobile and smart technology
- Explain the sanctions we will use if a pupil is in breach of our policies on the acceptable use of the internet and mobile phones
- Make sure all staff, pupils and parents/carers are aware that staff have the power to search pupils' phones, as set out in the [DfE's guidance on searching, screening and confiscation](#)
- Put in place robust filtering and monitoring systems to limit children's exposure to the 4 key categories of risk (described above) from the school's IT systems
- Work with our external IT support (Currently Trailblaze IT) to ensure monitoring and filtering systems (currently via Smoothwall) are reasonable and effective.
- Carry out an annual review of our filtering and monitoring systems; Cyber security and approach to online safety that considers and reflects the risks faced by our school community

### **Artificial intelligence (AI)**

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, pupils and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Gemini.

Our school recognises that AI has many uses, including enhancing teaching and learning, and in helping to protect and safeguard pupils. However, AI may also have the potential to facilitate abuse (e.g. bullying and grooming) and/or expose pupils to harmful content. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real.

We will treat any use of AI to access harmful content or bully pupils in line with this policy and our anti-bullying and behaviour policies.

Staff should be aware of the risks of using AI tools whilst they are still being developed and should carry out risk assessments for any new AI tool being used by the school. Our school's requirements for filtering and monitoring also apply to the use of AI, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education.

This section summarises our approach to online safety and mobile phone use. For comprehensive details about our school's policy on online safety and the use of mobile phones, please refer to our Computing, Acceptable Use and Safer Digital Practices policy, which you can find on our website.

## **9. Early Help**

Early help support must be kept under constant review and consideration given to a referral to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) if the child's situation does not appear to be improving (KCSIE 56).

Early Help can be accessed via the BCP First Response Team. This team can offer advice and deal with referrals for Early help support. Where necessary these calls can be transferred to the MASH team where the threshold of harm is reached.

Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. It means providing support as soon as a problem emerges.

In order to do this, the school will:

- work with other local agencies to identify children and families who would benefit from early help
- Take into account contextual Safeguarding issues i.e. children vulnerable to abuse or exploitation outside of their families
- Take into account the parental capacity to support the child and what further help can be offered e.g. FOW, parenting course.
- Undertake an assessment of the need for early help and support referrals where necessary
- Provide early help services e.g. access to the School Nurse, Pastoral Support Worker (Miss Pope), SENCO (Mrs Reeves), Family Outreach Worker through Early Help (FOW), School attendance worker (SAW)
- Refer to appropriate services e.g. CAMHS, Behaviour Support; counselling services

The school ensures that pupils have a choice of staff who will listen to their concerns either about themselves or about one of their peers.

Emotional health, including support for children at exam and transition times is very important. As a school our staff, ELSA support and PSW work together to identify and support children at these times. This may take the form of 1-1 or group sessions in school or sign posting to, additional outside support services for pupils and their parents including on line support such as Childline. This is particularly relevant if the need is not thought to meet the threshold for CAMHS intervention. The SENCO, Pastoral Worker or DSL all undertake regular relevant training and those involved directly in safeguarding (DSL/ DDSLs) receive supervision for their role either internally or externally through PACE.

More information about Early Help can be sought from one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads or the Pastoral Support Worker.

## 10. Recognising child abuse – signs and symptoms

Keeping Children Safe in Education is clear: '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 need help or protection'. It is also clear that children may not recognise their experience as harmful or be ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused. For these reasons it is crucial that staff are aware of the signs of abuse and remain professionally curious.

Recognising child abuse is not always easy, and it is not the responsibility of school staff to decide whether child abuse has taken place or if a child is at significant risk. They do, however, have a clear individual responsibility to act if they have a concern about a child's welfare or safety or if a child talks about (discloses) abuse. They should maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' and always act in the best interests of the child.

Knowing what to look for is vital to the early identification of abuse and neglect. If staff are unsure, they should **always** speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy). Any concerns about a child's welfare, should be acted upon immediately.

All staff are expected to be able to identify and recognise all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation and shall be alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:

- › Is disabled
- › Has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory education health and care (EHC) plan)
- › Is a young carer
- › Is bereaved
- › Is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including being affected by gangs and county lines and organised crime groups and/or serious violence, including knife crime
- › Is frequently missing/goes missing from education, care or home
- › Is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- › Is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- › Is viewing problematic and/or inappropriate online content (for example, linked to violence), or developing inappropriate relationships online
- › Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- › Is misusing drugs or alcohol
- › Is suffering from mental ill health
- › Has returned home to their family from care
- › Is at risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse such as female genital mutilation (FGM) or forced marriage
- › Is a privately fostered child
- › Has a parent or carer in custody or is affected by parental offending
- › Is missing education, or persistently absent from school, or not in receipt of full-time education
- › Has experienced multiple suspensions and is at risk of, or has been permanently excluded

All school and college staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

In line with our Equalities Policy, all staff should be aware that they must not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of protected characteristics. They must consider how they will support these pupils; being aware that they may be disadvantaged and disproportionately subjected to abuse because of their protected characteristic – eg race, gender or disability.

All staff should be aware of the process for making referrals to children's social care and for statutory assessments under the children Act 1989, especially section 17 (children in need) and section 47 (a child suffering or likely to suffer, significant harm) that may follow a referral, along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments.

Appendix 3 of this policy (and Appendix B of KCSiE 2025) details examples of possible indicators of each of the four kinds of abuse.

The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and is covered under section 32 of this policy – Child-on-child abuse.

## **11. Responding to the child who discloses (talks about) abuse**

All staff and volunteers will:

- Listen carefully to what is said
- Stay calm - Avoid showing shock or disbelief
- Observe the child's demeanour
- Find an appropriate opportunity to explain that the information will need to be shared with others. They will not promise to keep the information confidential or a 'secret'
- Allow the child to continue at her/his own pace and not interrupt if the child is freely recalling events. They will not stop him/her to find a 'witness' as this could inhibit the child from saying more
- Avoid asking questions or pressing for more information. Ask for clarification only. If questions are necessary they should be framed in an open manner and not 'lead' the child in any way: Tell me.... Explain.... Describe...
- Allow the child to use their own words
- Reassure the child, if necessary, that s/he has done the right thing by talking about it
- Listen to the child and reassure them that you believe them, are taking what is being said seriously and will support them.
- Explain what will happen next and with whom the information will be shared
- Not ask the child to repeat the disclosure to anyone else in school – including the DSL - or ask him/her or any other children who were present to write a written account or 'statement'
- Maintain confidentiality – only tell those people that it is necessary to inform such as the police, social services and DSL

## **12. Taking action**

If, in exceptional circumstances, the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken.

If it is believed that a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or is in immediate danger a referral should be made to local authority children's social care and/or the police **immediately**. Anyone can make a referral.

Where physical injuries have been observed, these will be carefully noted and recorded on a body map on CPOMS but not photographed. The staff member will not ask to see injuries that are said to be on an intimate part of the child's body.

Any disclosure or indicators of abuse will be reported verbally to the DSL or Deputy straightaway. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should refer these concerns to Social Care before the child goes home if still in school. A decision will be made by the MASH whether to convene a strategy meeting; undertake a social care or joint investigation or provide alternative services or advice.

Although referrals to the MASH/ First Response would normally be made by the DSL or in their absence a deputy DSL or other member of the SLT, in exceptional circumstances any other individual with concerns can take advice from the local children's Social Care (First Response – 01202 123334) and any action taken should be shared with the DSL (or Deputy) as soon as is practically possible.

Where the child already has an allocated social worker, that person or a manager or duty worker in the same team must be contacted promptly.

A written record will then be made - via CPOMS (online record system) - of what was said, including the child's own words, as soon as possible and given to the DSL.

If the child can understand the significance and consequences of making a referral to social workers, they will be asked for their views. It will be explained that whilst their views will be considered, the school has a responsibility to take whatever action is required to ensure the child's safety and that of other children.

The DSL will decide whether to contact parents at this stage, judging whether to do so, it is necessary to consider if contacting the parents/carers is likely to place the child at risk of harm from their parent's/carers actions or reactions - for example in circumstances where there are concerns that a serious crime such as sexual abuse, domestic violence or induced illness has taken place. If in any doubt, the DSL or staff member will call the Children's social care first response team and agree when parents/carers should be contacted and by whom. The reason for the decision not to contact parents first will be recorded in the child's school child protection file.

A child protection referral from a professional cannot be treated as anonymous.

Through training, all staff need to be able to identify signs of possible abuse, exploitation or neglect and be able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection. They should be vigilant, protective and discuss any concerns with the DSL or deputy who will refer to Social Care or other agencies where appropriate.

Staff need to have 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 best interests of the child.

Fear about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

Where there is no disclosure by a child, but concerns are accumulating, such as in relation to neglect or emotional abuse, the DSL will ensure that all information is brought together and that s/he makes a professional judgement about whether to refer to outside agencies.

The Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership's Threshold Documents should be used to help clarify the pathway required for a child: whether concerns will be managed within the school; or with the help of other agencies as part of early help; or whether they require specialised support such as a social work assessment or referral to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

A member of staff who reports concerns to the DSL should expect some feedback, although confidentiality might mean in some cases that this is not detailed. If the member of staff is not happy with the outcome s/he can press for reconsideration and if following this, s/he still believes the correct action has not been taken, will refer the concerns directly to children social care.

### **13. Response from Children's Social Care to a school referral**

- Referral  
Once a referral is received by the team, a manager will decide on the next course of action within one working day. When there is concern that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm, this will be decided more quickly, and a strategy discussion held with the Police and Health professionals and other agencies as appropriate (section 47 Children Act 1989).

The Designated Safeguarding Lead should be told **within three working days** of the outcome of the referral. If this does not happen s/he will contact the duty worker again.

- Assessment  
All assessments should be planned and co-ordinated by a qualified social worker. They should be holistic, involving other professionals, parents/carers and the children themselves as far as practicable. Assessments should show analysis, be focused on outcomes and usually take no longer than 45 working days from the point of referral. School staff have a responsibility to contribute fully to the assessment.
- S47 Enquiries (regarding significant harm)  
The process of the investigation is determined by the needs of the case, but the child/young person will always be part of that process and sometimes without parents' knowledge or permission. On occasions, this will mean the child/young person is jointly interviewed by the Police and social workers, sometimes at a special suite where a video-recording of the interview is made.
- The Child Protection Conference

If, following the s47 enquiries, the concerns are substantiated and the child is judged to be at risk of significant harm, a Child Protection Conference (CPC) will normally be convened. The CPC must be held within 15 days of the first strategy discussion and school staff will be invited to attend - normally the DSL or Headteacher. This person will produce a written report in the correct format (a pro forma is available on the DSCB website). This will be shared with the child/young person and his/her family before the conference is held. A copy will also be sent to the person chairing the initial CPC at least 24 hours in advance.

More information is in the inter-agency safeguarding procedures ('Child Protection Conferences') on the DSCB website.

If the DSL disagrees with the decisions made by social workers regarding the outcome of the referral, the conclusions of the assessment or any actions taken, the matter should be discussed and if necessary escalated to more senior managers (under the escalation policy available on the DSCB website), *particularly* if the child's situation does not appear to be improving.

#### **14. Following up referrals**

When a referral has been made to Social Care via the MASH; the referral form should be attached electronically to the child's CPOM profile. An alert should be added as a reminder to check for feedback to the referral in 2 weeks time – or sooner if there is more immediate risk to the child.

The agency to which the referral was made e.g. Social Care, should inform the referrer of their action. Where this does not happen promptly the referrer should re contact the agency to which it made the referral to be assured that action is being taken or that alternative support is being recommended

If after a referral the child's situation does not appear to be improving, the DSL should consider following local escalation procedures. It is essential that the school remains actively involved in support and plans even where another agency is taking the lead whether at early help, child in need or child protection level. Where there is a difference of opinion with another agency and this cannot be resolved the Escalation policy should be used.

[https://pandorsetscb.proceduresonline.com/p\\_escalation.html](https://pandorsetscb.proceduresonline.com/p_escalation.html)

#### **15. Responding to concerns reported by parents or others in the community**

Occasionally parents or other people in the local community tell school staff about an incident in or accumulation of concerns they have about the family life of a child who is also a pupil at the school.

If the incident or concern relates to *child protection*, the information cannot be ignored, even if there are suspicions about the motives of the person making the report. Members of staff will therefore pass the information to the DSL in the usual way.

It is preferable if the parent / community member who witnessed or knows about the concerns or incident makes a call to Children's Social Care themselves as they will be better able to answer any questions. They can ask for their name not to be divulged if a visit is made to the family.

If the parent / community member refuses to make the referral, the DSL will clarify that s/he (the DSL) has a responsibility to do so and will also need to pass on to social workers how s/he is aware of the information.

This process also applies to parents / community members who are also school staff. As professionals who work with children they cannot be anonymous when making the referral but can ask for the situation to be managed sensitively and, if necessary, for their identity to be withheld from the family if it will cause difficulties in their private life.

## **16. Pupils with Child Protection or Child in Need Plans**

Pupils who are the subject of a Child Protection Conference will have either an agreed multi-disciplinary action plan or child protection plan. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will attend and provide reports for strategy discussions, CP conferences, core group meetings, Child in Need meetings and contribute to assessments and plans.

The School recognises that pupils who are the subjects of abuse, neglect or who live in situations of domestic abuse may exhibit distressed or challenging behaviour and may not be reaching their full academic potential. The school will ensure that appropriate support mechanisms are in place in school.

## **17. Responsibility to Act**

Any suspicion or concern that a child or young person may be suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm, **MUST** be acted on. Doing nothing is not an option. Any suspicion or concerns will be reported without delay to the DSL or a Deputy. During term time the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or a Deputy should always be available (during school hours) for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. However, if for whatever reason they are not available, the staff member will discuss their concerns as soon as possible with either

- another senior member of staff or
- MASH - Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub / First Response Team

Anyone can make a referral, not just the DSLs.

It is important that everyone in the school is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for making a judgement about whether abuse has occurred and should not conduct an 'investigation' to establish whether the child is telling the truth. That is a task for social workers and the Police following a referral to them of concern about a child. The role of school staff is to act promptly on the information received.

This applies regardless of the alleged 'perpetrator': whether the child raises concerns about a family member or someone outside school, a member of staff or another child/pupil.

A careful record will be made of what has been seen/heard that has led to the concerns and the date, time, location and people who were present. As far as possible, staff should record verbatim what was said and by whom. The record will be passed to the DSL.

The DSL will keep a record of the conversation with the duty worker and other social workers, noting what actions will be taken and by whom, giving the date and time of the referral. The referral will be confirmed in writing on the inter-agency referral form (available on the DSCB website) as soon as possible and at least within 48 hours. Any pre-existing assessments such as through the Common Assessment Framework should be attached.

A school child protection file will be started in the child's name, where the child is not already known to social workers. If a file already exists, the new information will be added to the chronology.

**See Appendix 4 below for detailed record keeping guidance.**

## **18. Responding to allegations or concerns about staff (including Supply Staff) or volunteers**

### **Allegations that may meet the harms threshold**

Rigorous recruitment and selection procedures and adhering to the school's code of conduct and safer practice guidance will hopefully mean that there are relatively few allegations against or concerns about staff or volunteers. Even though it may seem difficult to believe that a colleague may be unsuitable to work with children, the risk is far too serious for any member of staff to dismiss such a suspicion without acting.

In cases in which it is alleged that, or there is cause to believe that, a current member of staff, including a supply teacher, volunteer or contractor, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children – this includes behaviour taking place both inside and outside of school

... the Headteacher (not the DSL if this is a different person) will be informed immediately.

If the allegation/concern is about the Headteacher the person with concerns will contact the Chair of Governors or the Local Authority Designated Officer (also known as the LADO) in the Local Authority Safeguarding and Standards Team. See Appendix 1 below for contact details.

We will deal with any allegation of abuse quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A 'case manager' will lead any investigation. This will be the headteacher, or the chair of governors where the headteacher is the subject of the allegation. The case manager will be identified at the earliest opportunity.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

In all cases of allegations against staff or volunteers, the Headteacher and Chair of Governors, will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) without delay and follow the correct procedures as set out in the separate school policy. This must comply with Part Four of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2025.

Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague towards a child are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. All staff must remember that the welfare of a child is paramount. The school's whistle blowing code enables staff to raise concerns or allegations in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place.

All staff should be made aware of the NSPCC whistle blowing helpline <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/report-abuse/dedicated-helplines/whistleblowing-advice-line/>

### **Allegations that may not meet the harms threshold**

The term 'low-level' concern is any concern – no matter how small – that an adult working in or on behalf of the school may have acted in a way that:

- Is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, **and**
- Does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the designated officer at the local authority

Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:

- Being overly friendly with children
- Having favourites
- Taking photographs of children on their mobile phone
- Engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door
- Humiliating pupils

We recognise the importance of creating a culture of openness, trust and transparency to encourage all staff to confidentially share low-level concerns so that they can be addressed appropriately.

### **Dealing with allegations**

We will deal with all allegations in accordance with the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 Part 4. This is detailed in our Managing Allegations Policy.

## **19. Welcoming other Practitioners**

Visitors with a practitioner role, such as the school nurse, social worker, educational psychologist or members of the Police will have been vetted to work with children through their own organisation. The local authority have confirmed that all LA personnel required to work directly with children have undergone the relevant checks.

Practitioners will be required to bring their identity badges on all visits and to wear these. They will complete signing in/out forms and wear a school I.D. badge if required

to do so. Where they are working alone with children they will be required to follow the school's mobile technology policy and hand in their mobile phones at the office.

For agency, third-party staff and contractors, safer recruitment procedures and the guidance in KCSIE must be followed.

## **20. Contextual Safeguarding**

### What is contextual safeguarding?

Safeguarding incidents and or behaviours can be associated with factors outside of school or college and /or can occur between children outside of school or college. All staff especially the DSL or deputies should consider the context within which such incidents and or behaviour occur. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and serious youth violence. This is contextual safeguarding and means assessments should consider such factors, so it is important that schools and colleges provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and the context of the abuse.

## **21. Off Site Visits**

Off site visits are the subject of a risk assessment. Safeguarding concerns or allegations will be responded to following the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures (as above). The member of staff in charge of the visit will report any safeguarding concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Headteacher, who will pass to the MASH if appropriate. In an emergency the staff member in charge will contact the police and/or the MASH directly.

The child protection/safeguarding policy and procedures of an off site provider e.g. water sport activity, will be checked and the DSL satisfied that they are appropriate, before using the facility. All off site visit and activity risk assessments are recorded on Evolve and LA advisor advice or approval sought where needed.

## **22. Photography and images**

The vast majority of people who take or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely innocent, understandable and acceptable reasons. Sadly, some people abuse children through taking or using images, so we must ensure that we have some safeguards in place. To protect children we will:

- Seek parental and pupil consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications)
- Use only the child's first name with an image
- Ensure that children are appropriately dressed
- Encourage children to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them

A statement is made at all events where parents are taking photographs of children that these are to be for personal use only and that these are not to be shared on social media.

## **23. Training**

Child protection will be part of induction for all staff and regular volunteers new to the school. They will be given a copy of this policy, the Code of Conduct, details about the role of the DSL and part one of the most recent version of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education: information for all school and college staff' plus Annex B if they work directly with children or Annex A for those who do not work directly with children. They will be asked to confirm that they have reviewed this guidance at the beginning of each year.

This will be followed up by basic child protection training that equips individuals to recognise and respond appropriately to concerns about pupils.

A proportional risk based approach will be taken regarding the level of information provided to all temporary staff and volunteers. As a minimum they will be provided with, and will be expected to follow, the child protection summary sheet which forms part of this policy.

Staff who do not have designated responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including the Headteacher, will undertake suitable refresher training at appropriate intervals. The Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership recommends formal training at least every three years by a suitably qualified person.

In addition, all staff members will receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates from the DSL as required, but at least annually. This will include learning from local and national serious cases when the learning becomes available.

All staff will have training in preventing radicalisation and extremism ('Prevent') – either by attending a Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP) or completing an on-line course, followed by a discussion with the DSL. The DSL is the Prevent Lead and will attend appropriate training.

When DSLs and Deputies take up the role they will attend enhanced (Level 3) training provided through the DSCB multi-agency course. They must be updated at 2 yearly intervals after that.

In addition, their knowledge and skills will be updated regularly - at least annually. These individuals are expected to take responsibility for their own learning about safeguarding and child protection by, for example: taking time to read and digest newsletters and relevant research articles; attending training offered by Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership on matters such as domestic abuse, attachment and child sexual and criminal exploitation; completing on-line training on FGM; attending local DSL forums and inter-agency safeguarding conferences.

Designated Teachers for Looked-After Children (mandatory for maintained schools and academies) will undertake appropriate training. In BCP this is provided by the Virtual School for Children in Care.

Headteachers and at least one governor will complete safer recruitment training (mandatory in maintained schools) either through a multi-agency taught session or by completing the NSPCC on-line course.

It is recommended by the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership that all governors attend training, briefings or other input which equips them to understand

fully and comply with their legal safeguarding duties *as governors*, set out in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2025. Attendance includes those who also work with children and have attended child protection training in that role.

## **24. Safer Working Practice**

All adults who come into contact with children at this school will behave at all times in a professional manner which secures the best outcomes for children and also prevents allegations being made. Detailed advice on safer working practice can be found in the school's Code of Conduct. Staff will receive updated advice and guidance and training regarding safer working practices.

We promote a culture whereby members of the school community should feel able to raise with the Headteacher, or any member of the leadership team, any concerns about staff conduct. If the reporter feels that the issue has not been addressed they should contact someone outside of the school, such as the Chair of Governors or the LADO. (See Appendix 1 below for contact details.)

## **25. Partnership with parents/carers, the community and External Agencies**

The school shares a purpose with parents to educate, keep children safe from harm and have their children's welfare promoted

We are committed to working with parents positively, openly and honestly. We ensure that all parents are treated with respect, dignity and courtesy. We respect parents' rights to privacy and confidentiality and will not share sensitive information until we have permission or it is necessary to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

Burton School will share with parents any concerns we may have about their child unless to do so may place a child at risk of harm.

We encourage parents to disclose any concerns they may have with the school. We make parents aware of our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies and parents are aware that these are on the school website.

Information about safeguarding is readily available and visible in the school e.g. posters, names of DSLs and other relevant staff e.g. Anti Bullying Champion, Online Safety Champion, Pastoral Care Worker, KCSIE LSCB leaflet in reception, school web site safeguarding page, information leaflet for all new starters.

The school has links with its local community which will promote the welfare and safeguarding of the pupils e.g. with respect to religious, cultural or other local issues.

As a school we work closely with and follow the advice and guidance of the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership. We are signed up to Operation Encompass. All the relevant staff have completed the necessary training for this, and all staff, governors and parents have been informed of our participation in this project.

The Police, via Operation Encompass and Children's Social Care, alert the school that a domestic abuse incident has occurred at the home of a child. Details of the incident

are shared via a secure email alert and details are recorded securely on our online safeguarding system. This is to ensure that settings meet their data protection requirements. Routinely the detail of the incident will not be shared with other staff unless absolutely necessary and where there are other concerns about a child's welfare. Staff working with a child are told just enough to enable them to meet the child's welfare, social and emotional needs on their entry to school following the incident.

The school will provide and/or access early help services and can refer or sign post parents to services with their consent.

If parents / carers have any reason to make a complaint about the school, the procedures can be found on the school website or provided through the office.

The school has a responsibility to work with other agencies on all safeguarding issues which may include:

- Allegations against staff – work with the LADO
- Child exploitation including Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), serious violence, County Lines
- Bullying including cyberbullying and prejudice based bullying
- Children missing from education, EHE, exclusions and attendance
- Children and the court system
- Children with family members in prison
- Domestic abuse
- Drugs and alcohol misuse
- Early Help
- 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)
- Health and Safety
- Homelessness
- Honour – based violence (HBV)
- Illegal child employment
- Mental health
- Physical Intervention, reasonable force, isolation and deprivation of liberty
- Private fostering/any regulated activity such as host families
- Child-on-child abuse
- Radicalisation/extremism
- Sexting/sharing of nude and semi-nude images /grooming and other online safety issues
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children
- Teenage relationship abuse
- Trafficking and modern slavery
- Work related learning and child employment

For more information see the links to Government guidance in KCSIE 2025

## Confidentiality

- Timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding
- Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety, of children
- The Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and the UK GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe
  
- We will share information with our three safeguarding partners understanding that 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' is a processing condition which allows us to share personal data and information without consent where there is a good reason to do so ie
  - it is not possible to gain consent;
  - it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent;
  - or if to gain consent would place a child at risk
  
- Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may not be in the child's best interests
- If a victim under 18 asks the school not to tell anyone about sexual violence or sexual harassment:
  - This should not be promised and advice should be sought from the DSL and social services or the police as appropriate.
  - The DSL will have to balance the victim's wishes against their duty to protect the victim and other children
  - The DSL should consider that:
    - Parents or carers should normally be informed (unless this would put the victim at greater risk)
    - The basic safeguarding principle is: if a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger, or has been harmed, a referral should be made to local authority children's social care
    - Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault are crimes. Where a report of rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault is made, this should be referred to the police. While the age of criminal responsibility is 10, if the alleged perpetrator is under 10, the starting principle of referring to the police remains
- Regarding anonymity, all staff will:
  - Be aware of anonymity, witness support and the criminal process in general where an allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment is progressing through the criminal justice system
  - Do all they reasonably can to protect the anonymity of any children involved in any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment – for example, carefully considering which staff should know about the report, and any support for children involved
  - Consider the potential impact of social media in facilitating the spreading of rumours and exposing victims' identities

- If staff are in any doubt about sharing information, they should speak to the DSL (or deputy)

## **26. Raising concerns about safeguarding practice in our school**

In this school we promote a culture where any staff or volunteers feel able to raise with the Headteacher any concerns about safeguarding or child protection practice.

Any issues which they have not been able to resolve with the Headteacher or which concern the conduct of the Headteacher, should be reported to the governors in the first instance. If they are still not satisfied they should approach the Director for Children's Services or, if the issue relates to the conduct of or allegation against a member of staff, should contact the Local Authority designated officer (also known as the LADO 01202 817600).

Staff should refer to the school's whistle-blowing policy for more information or can use the NSPCC whistle blowing helpline: 0800 0280285.

## **Part C: Information and procedures for Specific aspects of safeguarding**

### **27. Children who are looked after, those previously looked after and care leavers**

Appropriate staff should hold information about a child's legal status, care arrangements, any contact arrangements, name of the Social Worker and work with the virtual school head/team. Previously looked after children remain vulnerable. Care leavers will have plans initiated by the LA of which the school should be aware. Additional support will be provided as indicated on this plan or as necessary.

The school has a **Designated Teacher for Looked After Children: Sarah Edmunds** Sarah Edmunds is a qualified teacher and leader of the EYFS; deputy DSL and Designated teacher. Training for the role of designated teacher was undertaken in June 2017 and updated in January 2022. Regular network meetings are attended to keep this knowledge up to date.

The designated teacher on commencement of sections 4 to 6 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, has the responsibility to promote the educational achievement of children who are looked after (as above) and those children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or who were adopted from the state care outside England and Wales.

A previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable and all staff should have skills knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe. When dealing with looked after children and previously looked after children it is important that all agencies work together, and prompt action is taken on concerns to safeguard these children, who are a particularly vulnerable group. The designated

teacher and DSLs will work with the Head of the Virtual School to promote the improvement of outcomes for these children and those with a social worker.

The Designated teacher must have appropriate training and the relevant qualifications and experience.

Statutory guidance contains further information on; [The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher.](#)

## **28. Children who need a Social Worker (Child in Need and Child Protection Plans)**

Children may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. This could be due to abuse, neglect and complex family circumstances. A child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm, as well as educationally disadvantaged in facing barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health.

Where the DSL is made aware of the fact a child has a social worker, this will be recorded on CPOMS and the DDSs made aware. The name and contact details of the social worker will be recorded in the summary on the front overview page of the pupils CPOMS record. This information will be shared, as necessary, with the adults directly responsible for the child's education and welfare on a daily basis and will inform decisions about safeguarding and pupil welfare and when interventions and additional support are required.

## **29. Children with special educational needs and who are disabled**

Research shows that children with special educational needs and who are disabled are especially vulnerable to abuse and adults who work with them need to be vigilant and take extra care when interpreting apparent signs of abuse or neglect.

Additional barriers can exist for adults who work with such children, in respect of recognising abuse and neglect. These can include

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- Being more prone to peer group isolation than other children
- not necessarily showing outwardly the signs of the impact of others behaviour towards them such as bullying
- Children with SEN and who are disabled can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying – without outwardly showing any signs; and
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers
- Cognitive understanding – being unable to understand the difference between fact and fiction in online content and then repeating the content/behaviours in schools or colleges or the consequences of doing so

Staff awareness should be raised to these issues

These child protection procedures will be followed if a child with special educational needs or who is disabled discloses abuse or there are indicators of abuse or neglect. There are no different or separate procedures for such children. To address these

additional challenges schools and colleges should consider extra pastoral support for children with SEN and disabilities.

Staff responsible for intimate care of children will undertake their duties in a professional manner always and in accordance with the school's intimate care policy.

Governors will provide a school environment in which pupils with special educational needs or disabilities feel confident and able to discuss their concerns. Whenever possible, pupils will be given the chance to express themselves to a member of staff with appropriate communication skills. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will work with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator to identify pupils with particular communication needs

### **30. Children with Mental Health/Emotional Health Needs (See Annexe B – link – Mental Health and Behaviour P141)**

Staff are made aware that mental health problems can be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. This could have a lasting impact on the child or young person as well as on their behaviour and education. Staff are encouraged to speak to a DSL or member of the SEND team if they have concerns that a child's behaviour suggests they may be experiencing Mental Health problems or at risk of developing one. It is not the role of education staff to diagnose mental health problems but their observations can be helpful to other qualified professionals.

Pupils identified with mental health/emotional issues or those with parents/siblings identified with mental health issues will be offered additional support. Pupils will have a choice of staff who will listen to their concerns about themselves or other pupils and appropriate early help services such as ELSA and PSW are available within school.

Referrals will be made to CAMHS or other appropriate services in conjunction with parents. The DSL or other appropriate member of staff may seek advice from the CAMHS Link Worker or consultation service.

Where there is a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken, in line with this child protection policy.

There will be a strategy for providing ongoing education for children subject to S26 Mental Health (Children & Families) Act 2014.

The school is working in line with [mental health and behaviour in schools guidance 2018](#)

The school will support pupils with strategies to develop their own emotional well being i.e. emotional literacy and resilience. Additional support will be available at exam, result and transition times or after bereavement or tragic events.

### **31. Use of Alternative Provision and Children not in full time education**

Where a child may be subject to a part time timetable or supported through Alternative Provision, the school recognises it's continued responsibility for safeguarding and will ensure that appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place in any provision used. We would only approve absence for or the use of provision that has been approved by the LA or is Ofsted Registered.

### **'Dual registered' pupils**

Where a pupil is on roll at the school and starts to attend a Learning Centre (LC), the chronology and other relevant information in the child protection file should be copied and passed to the DSL at the LC at the earliest opportunity. Because of the nature of such 'bespoke' arrangements for individual pupils, the two DSLs should agree on which one of them will keep the chronology updated and how best to communicate to each other significant events and issues in relation to that pupil.

## **32. Children missing or absent from education**

The school will keep its admission register accurate and up to date. The school attendance policy is regularly updated and understood by all staff. Attendance and patterns of attendance will be regularly reviewed. Any children missing education will be reported as required by the statutory guidance 'Children Missing Education' (Sept 2018)

A child being absent from education, particularly repeatedly, can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues. This might include abuse or neglect, such as sexual abuse or exploitation or child criminal exploitation, or issues such as mental health problems, substance abuse, radicalisation, FGM or forced marriage.

There are many circumstances where a child may be absent or become missing from education, but some children are particularly at risk. These include children who:

- Are at risk of harm or neglect
- Are at risk of forced marriage or FGM
- Come from Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller families
- Come from the families of service personnel
- Go missing or run away from home or care
- Are supervised by the youth justice system
- Cease to attend a school
- Come from new migrant families

We will follow our procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children who are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse, exploitation and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of going missing in future. This includes informing the local authority if a child leaves the school without a new school being named, and adhering to requirements with respect to sharing information with the local authority, when applicable, when removing a child's name from the admission register at non-standard transition points.

### **Emergency contacts**

Where reasonably possible the school will endeavour to hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil. This goes beyond the legal minimum and

is good practice to give the school or college additional options to contact a responsible adult when a child missing education is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

We recognise that a child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including the specific types of abuse detailed above including child criminal exploitation, serious violent crime, radicalisation or travelling to conflict zones.

Therefore all staff will follow the school's procedure for dealing with unauthorised absence and children absent from education procedures, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify vulnerable pupils and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

After reasonable attempts have been made by the school to contact the family, the school will follow the Statutory Guidance and local procedures and refer to the Local Authority education welfare/attendance service.

All schools must inform their Local Authority if a child is referred to be educated outside of the school system e.g. Elective Home Education, ceased to attend, unfit to attend on health grounds, in custody for 4 months or permanently excluded.

After an assessment of risk, any safeguarding concerns about children who become EHE will be communicated to the MASH or other services. The HT will take all reasonable steps to meet and discuss the options with parents prior to their decision to EHE.

If a school excludes a pupil from site or educates them off site they will endeavour to ensure their safety.

The Statutory Guidance on 'Exclusion from maintained schools, Academies and pupil referral units in England' (2017) sets out the lawful use of these powers.

Actions could include involving other professionals and, if any of the criteria are met, informing the local authority where a pupil's name has been removed from the school roll.

See Christchurch Learning Partnership Attendance Policy and School strategy.

**There is more information about specific safeguarding issues including links to websites in Part one and Annex B of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2021.**

### **33. Domestic Abuse**

Domestic abuse can be psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. It can have long reaching impact on children through seeing, hearing or experiencing the effects of domestic abuse and /or experiencing it through their own intimate relationships.

This school receives information from the police via Operation Encompass to alert the Designated Safeguarding Leads in the school when there has been an incident of domestic abuse in a household where a pupil lives. This allows us to monitor and support the pupil. If we have additional concerns, we will discuss the need for further safeguarding actions with Social Care or the police. This information would only be shared with other staff on a restricted need to know basis i.e. those who are immediately responsible for the pupil's welfare such as the class teacher. Where a Multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) occurs the school may be asked

for information and appropriate school related information may be shared with the school after the meeting.

The school website/information boards will provide contacts to local domestic abuse services e.g. [National DV Helpline](#) 0808 2000247, [Bournemouth DA Service](#).

### **34. Child-on-child abuse**

All staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse and **all** staff should be clear on the policy and procedures with regards to child-on-child abuse.

This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to;

- Bullying (including cyber bullying)
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- Upskirting – which is now a criminal offence
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment
- Sharing nude or semi-nude images (also known as Sexting or youth produced sexual imagery); and
- Initiation/hazing type violent rituals

All incidents of Child-on-child abuse should be recorded on CPOMS and the DSL /DDSL informed verbally or through being tagged in the online reporting system. Where there is a significant risk of harm, repeated behaviour or a criminal offence has occurred the Headteacher and DSL should be informed immediately.

Whilst girls are more likely to be the victims of child-on-child abuse, all child-on-child abuse is unacceptable and should be taken seriously. Staff should not dismiss abusive behaviour as 'normal' or 'banter' between young people and should not develop high thresholds before acting.

There may be delays to a criminal process, but schools and colleges should not wait for the outcome before protecting the victim, alleged perpetrator and other children in the school.

Schools need to manage the balance between supporting the victim and ensuring the alleged perpetrator has an education and safeguarding support themselves. Appropriate support should be ongoing basis to the victim.

Incidents of 'Sexting' will be dealt with in line with the school 'Procedures for Dealing with Youth Produced Sexual Imagery' which is based on the August 2016 guidance from UKCCIS: 'Sexting in schools and colleges: responding to incidents and safeguarding young people'.) – Final update January 2017.

#### **Staff responsibilities when responding to an incident of 'Sexting'.**

If you are made aware of an incident involving the consensual or non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images/videos, including pseudo-images, which are computer-generated images that otherwise appear to be a photograph or video (also known as 'sexting' or 'youth produced sexual imagery'), you must report it to the DSL immediately.

You must **not**:

- View, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery yourself, or ask a pupil to share or download it (if you have already viewed the imagery by accident, you must report this to the DSL)
- Delete the imagery or ask the pupil to delete it
- Ask the pupil(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery (unless asked to by the DSL)
- Share information about the incident with other members of staff, the pupil(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers
- Say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved

You should explain that you need to report the incident, and reassure the pupil(s) that they will receive support and help from the DSL.

### **Initial review meeting**

Following a report of an incident, the DSL will hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff – this may include the staff member who reported the incident and the safeguarding or leadership team that deals with safeguarding concerns.

This meeting will consider the initial evidence and aim to determine:

- Whether there is an immediate risk to pupil(s)
- If a referral needs to be made to the police and/or children's social care
- If it is necessary to view the image(s) in order to safeguard the young person (in most cases, images or videos should not be viewed)
- What further information is required to decide on the best response
- Whether the image(s) has been shared widely and via what services and/or platforms (this may be unknown)
- Whether immediate action should be taken to delete or remove images or videos from devices or online services
- Any relevant facts about the pupils involved which would influence risk assessment
- If there is a need to contact another school, college, setting or individual
- Whether to contact parents or carers of the pupils involved (in most cases parents/carers should be involved)

The DSL will make an immediate referral to police and/or children's social care if:

- The incident involves an adult. Where an adult poses as a child to groom or exploit a child or young person, the incident may first present as a child-on-child incident.
- There is reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example, owing to SEN)
- What the DSL knows about the images or videos suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person's developmental stage, or are violent
- The imagery involves sexual acts and any pupil in the images or videos is under 13
- The DSL has reason to believe a pupil is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (for example, the young person is presenting as suicidal or self-harming)

If none of the above apply then the DSL, in consultation with the headteacher and other members of staff as appropriate, may decide to respond to the incident without involving the police or children's social care. The decision will be made and recorded in line with the procedures set out in this policy.

### **Further review by the DSL**

If at the initial review stage a decision has been made not to refer to police and/or children's social care, the DSL will conduct a further review to establish the facts and assess the risks.

They will hold interviews with the pupils involved (if appropriate).

If at any point in the process there is a concern that a pupil has been harmed or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately.

### **Informing parents/carers**

The DSL will inform parents/carers at an early stage and keep them involved in the process, unless there is a good reason to believe that involving them would put the pupil at risk of harm.

### **Referring to the police**

If it is necessary to refer an incident to the police, this will be done through dialling 101 or reporting online – response is usually within 24-48 hours.

### **Recording incidents**

All incidents of sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, and the decisions made in responding to them, will be recorded. The record-keeping arrangements set out in this policy also apply to recording these incidents.

### **Curriculum coverage**

Pupils of an appropriate age are taught about the issues surrounding the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes as part of our relationships education and computing programmes. Teaching covers the following in relation to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes:

- What it is
- How it is most likely to be encountered
- The consequences of requesting, forwarding or providing such images, including when it is and is not abusive and when it may be deemed as online sexual harassment
- Issues of legality
- The risk of damage to people's feelings and reputation

Pupils also learn the strategies and skills needed to manage:

- Specific requests or pressure to provide (or forward) such images
- The receipt of such images

**Bullying, significant friendship issues** and **prejudice** will be detailed in the school behaviour policy and Anti bullying policy. Serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger is a form of emotional abuse (KCSIE part One para 28). This could include bullying from siblings. The DSL should consider referral to Social Care where bullying is at this level.

Violent behaviour between 16 and 18 year olds in a relationship or from a child towards a parent or carer is a form of domestic abuse and will require consideration of specialist help including referral to the MASH. Advice or referral may also be made to the MASH for younger pupils where there is violent behaviour.

### **Child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment**

Sexual violence and harassment can occur between two children of any age or sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

The school's initial response to a report from a child is important. It is essential that **all** victims are reassured and that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

Ultimately, any decisions are for the school to make on a case-by-case basis, with the DSL or deputy taking a lead role and using their professional judgement, supported by other agencies, such as children social care and the police as required.

**Concerns about child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment** will be reported to the DSL immediately and a referral made to the MASH who will advise on the appropriate action to take and facilitate a strategy meeting when appropriate. The School will use the School Risk Assessment Management Plan (RAMP). The risk to other pupils and staff must be assessed and the school must risk assess the level of support and school action needed to protect other pupils in the school. ([See also Safeguarding Partnership Policy and KCSIE Part 5 and Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between children in schools and colleges May 2018](#)).

Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are likely to be complex and require difficult decisions to be made, often quickly and under pressure. Pre-planning and effective policies will provide schools and colleges with the foundation for a calm, considered and appropriate response to any reports.

Following a report of sexual violence, the DSL (or deputy) should make an immediate risk and needs assessment, considering;

- The victim
- The alleged perpetrator
- All the other children (if appropriate adult students and staff)

Schools need to consider the following options for managing a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment;

- Manage internally
- Early Help
- Safeguarding children – referral to children social care
- Reporting to the Police – in parallel to children's social care

If children require safeguarding and a referral to Children's Social Care is made, the process for managing sexually harmful behaviour can be found in the inter-agency safeguarding procedures on the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership website. In brief, a multi-agency meeting should be convened by Children's Social Care following a referral and an action plan agreed.

A school risk assessment will be put in place, preferably by way of a meeting, which will consider;

- The wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed
- The nature of the alleged incident
- The ages of the children involved
- The developmental stages of the children involved
- Any power imbalance between the children
- Is the incident a one off or a sustained pattern of abuse?
- Are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children, school or college staff?
- Contextual safeguarding

All staff should act in the best interests of the child.

- At Burton Primary school the following measures are taken to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse:
  - The use of the Jigsaw PSHE curriculum which includes awareness of safe behaviours; Staff safeguarding training and a culture of staff recording and passing on concerns; Close links are maintained with other agencies such as Early Help and Children's Social Care to identify those most vulnerable; ELSA and Pastoral Support work.
- Any allegations of Child-on-child abuse will be dealt with in line with the school Bullying and child protection policies. The School Behaviour policy and code sets down expectations for behaviour. Where there is any concern that the incident may pose a safeguarding risk to children (for example incidents of sexual touching), advice will be sought from the MASH team.
- The school SENDCo and Pastoral Support Worker work closely with families where there is violence within the home and, where these are initiated by the child, will support referrals to behaviour support and or CAMHS services.
- Burton School has its own policy on use of mobile technology

**Our Anti-bullying Champion is Mrs Sarah Steel.**

**Our Online-Safety Champion is Mrs Julia Kolbucaj**

### **35. Pupils engaging in under-age sexual activity**

Sexual activity where one of the partners is under the age of 16 is illegal, although prosecution of young people who are *consenting partners of a similar age* is not usual. Designated Safeguarding Leads will exercise professional judgement when deciding whether to refer or take advice from social workers, **considering** such things as any imbalance of power, wide difference in ages or developmental stages etc.

Where a child is under the age of 13 penetrative sex is classified as rape under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 so must be reported to social workers in every case.

The inter-agency safeguarding procedures, on the DSCB website, have more information about under-age sexual activity.

### **36. Child sexual exploitation (CSE) /Child Criminal exploitation (CCE)**

CSE is a form of abuse which involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something they need or want (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money, mobile phones) as a result of their performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual acts. It can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; e.g. being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain.

Recognition of child sexual exploitation is part of staff training. We note that any child or young person may be at risk of this form of abuse, regardless of family background or other circumstances, and can experience significant harm to physical and mental health.

Child criminal exploitation (CCE) is a form of abuse where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child

into criminal activity. It may involve an exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator, and/or through violence or the threat of violence.

The abuse can be perpetrated by males or females, and children or adults. It can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse.

The victim can be exploited even when the activity appears to be consensual. It does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. For example, young people may be forced to work in cannabis factories, coerced into moving drugs or money across the country (county lines), forced to shoplift or pickpocket, or to threaten other young people.

Both CSE and CCE occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

Due to the grooming methods used by abusers, it is common for young people not to recognise they are being abused and may feel they are 'in a relationship' and acting voluntarily.

"County Lines" is becoming widely recognised and used to describe criminal exploitation of young people using the internal trafficking of young people for the purpose of criminal exploitation. Young people are groomed using the same techniques as above, with them completing a task on behalf of another individual or group of individuals which is of a criminal nature.

Children are "trafficked" as part of the exploitation. They have their transport arranged for them for the purpose of selling drugs, firearms or sex.

Young people will go missing for extended periods of time, missing education and moving away from their friendship groups.

Any concerns about child sexual exploitation/criminal exploitation will be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will take appropriate action which might include completing a risk assessment form. The form and more detailed local procedures are in the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership guidance and the Child Exploitation Toolkit. We work closely with works with other agencies – such as Early Help; MASH, Police - to reduce risk of harm from potential forms of criminal exploitation e.g. County Lines drug trade, trafficking.

### **37. Gangs, Youth Violence, Weapons**

All staff should be aware of indicators that may signal children are at risk from or are involved in serious violent crime (see list para 29) and links to further guidance Para 30. This will include any known or anticipated links to County Lines activity. The school will work closely with the police on these matters.

### **38. Children and the court system**

The pastoral team are aware of tools and support which can be accessed and offer additional support at school to children involved in any form of court process.

### **39. Homelessness**

Should the school become aware of any housing issues which may be posing a risk to a child's welfare, including where 16-18 year olds may be living independently, we will work with appropriate services and where a child is thought to be at risk of harm, a referral will be made to the MASH.

### **40. Children with family members in prison**

The school will offer support and advice through the pastoral support and ELSA teams to work with children 'to help mitigate negative consequences for those children', with a family member(s) in prison and identify and sign post to parents what other agencies may also provide assistance. ([NICCO](#))

### **41. Substance Abuse**

The school SENDCo and Pastoral Support Worker work closely with families where there is substance misuse within the family and will establish links and referrals for support as necessary through the Early Help 'Family Partnership Zone' linked worker.

### **42. Forms of abuse linked to culture, faith or belief**

All staff in this school will promote mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Some forms of abuse are linked to these and staff should strive to suspend professional disbelief (i.e. that they 'could not happen here') and to report promptly any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will seek further advice from statutory agencies, prior to contacting parents/carers.

### **Female Genital Mutilation / Breast Ironing**

FGM is illegal and involves intentionally altering or injuring female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It can have serious and long-lasting implications for physical health and emotional well-being. Possible indicators include taking a girl out of school / country for a prolonged period or talk of a 'special procedure' or celebration.

**Any teacher** who either:

- Is informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her; or
- Observes physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 and they have no reason to believe that the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth

Must immediately report this to the police, personally. This is a mandatory statutory duty, and teachers will face disciplinary sanctions for failing to meet it.

Unless they have been specifically told not to disclose, they should also discuss the case with the DSL and involve local authority children's social care as appropriate.

**Any other member of staff** who discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a **pupil under 18** must speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures.

The duty for teachers mentioned above does not apply in cases where a pupil is *at risk* of FGM or FGM is suspected but is not known to have been carried out. Staff should not examine pupils.

**Any member of staff** who suspects a pupil is *at risk* of FGM or suspects that FGM has been carried out should speak to the DSL and follow our local safeguarding procedures

Brest Ironing, a harmful procedure which involves flattening a girl's chest with hot stone or other objects to delay breast growth, is often performed by family members to prevent unwanted sexual attention. Staff should be aware of this as a form of abuse and report it if they are concerned it may be happening.

**Forced Marriage** is also illegal and occurs where one or both people do not or, in cases of people with learning disabilities, cannot consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used. It is not the same as arranged marriage. Young people at risk of forced marriage might have their freedom unreasonably restricted or be 'monitored' by siblings. There might be a request for extended absence from school or they might not return from a holiday abroad. We recognise that school staff can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage. Since Feb 2023 it has also been a crime to carry out **any** conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before the age of 18.

**So called 'honour-based' violence** is a crime or incident which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community. It can exist in all communities and cultures and occurs when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code. Females are predominantly, but not exclusively, the victims and the violence is often committed with some degree of approval and/or collusion from family or community members. All forms of so called honour- based violence are abuse, regardless of the motivation, and should be referred accordingly. However, there are some significant differences in the immediate response required as involving families in cases of forced marriage or 'honour – based' violence is dangerous:

- It may increase the risk of serious harm to the victim. Experience shows that the family may punish them for seeking help;
- Relatives, friends, community leaders and neighbours should not be used as interpreters – despite any reassurances from this known person.

### **43. Radicalisation and extremism**

Radicalisation refers to the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence.

Extremism is the promotion or advancement of an ideology based on violence, hatred or intolerance, that aims to:

- Negate or destroy the fundamental rights and freedoms of others; or
- Undermine, overturn or replace the UK's system of liberal parliamentary democracy and democratic rights; or
- Intentionally create a permissive environment for others to achieve the results outlined in either of the above points

Terrorism is an action that:

- Endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people;
- Causes serious damage to property; or
- Seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system

The use or threat of terrorism must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

In this school we recognise that safeguarding against radicalisation and extremism is no different from safeguarding against any other vulnerability.

Our curriculum promotes respect, tolerance and diversity. Children are encouraged to share their views and to understand that they are entitled to have their own different beliefs which should not be used to influence others.

We recognise that children with low aspirations are more vulnerable to radicalisation and therefore we strive to equip our pupils with confidence, self-belief, respect and tolerance as well as setting high standards and expectations for themselves.

Children are taught about how to stay safe when using the Internet and are encouraged to recognise that people are not always who they say they are online. They are taught to seek adult help if they are upset or concerned about anything they read or see on the Internet.

Any concerns about pupils becoming radicalised or being drawn into extremism will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will *not* speak to parents/carers or other family members at this stage but will take prompt advice from the Police.

### **Prevent**

Prevent is about safeguarding people and communities from the threat of terrorism and violent extremism. Prevent is part of CONTEST, the Government's counter-terrorism strategy. It aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. We recognise that the school has responsibilities in relation to the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

The Prevent strategy: Responds to the ideological challenge we face from terrorism and aspects of extremism, and the threat we face from those who promote these views.

The Home Office works with local authorities, a wide range of government departments, and community organisations to deliver the Prevent strategy. The police play a significant role in Prevent, in much the same way as they do when taking a preventative approach to other crimes.

The Prevent lead in our school is the DSL.

All staff have received Prevent training - either attended a WRAP (Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent) session or have completed on-line Prevent training – and are alert to the risk of pupils being radicalised and becoming involved with or supporting terrorism

- Know what to do to support those assessed as being at risk e.g. referral to the MASH or for immediate response call the Anti Terror hotline on 0800 789321. A Channel programme (for older children) may be appropriate
- Where the school has any concerns about pupils travelling to a conflict zone, advice may be sought from the Home Office and a referral to the MASH if still concerned.

- Working in partnership with other agencies
- Effective engagement with parents/the family should be considered as they are in a key position to spot signs of radicalisation. Assist and advise families who raise concerns and sign post to support. Discuss any concerns the school has with parents unless this is thought to put the child at risk.
- Staff training to raise awareness and keeping them up to date with local risks
- IT policies and suitable filtering to ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in schools.
- British values should be promoted in the curriculum and on the web site and other teaching and actions to help minimise engagement in extremist activity

Any individuals who are identified as being vulnerable to radicalisation are referred to the appropriate agency which could be the police or a multi-agency Channel Panel. This ensures the appropriate interventions are put in place to protect the individual. Like child protection, Channel is a multi-agency safeguarding programme run in every local authority in England and Wales. It works to support vulnerable people from becoming involved with or supporting terrorism. It provides a range of support such as mentoring, counselling, assistance with employment etc. Where pupils at this school are being discussed, the DSL or Headteacher will attend the Panel meetings.

Channel is about early intervention to protect vulnerable people from being drawn into committing terrorist-related activity and addresses all types of extremism.

Staff and governors in this school have either attended a WRAP (Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent) session or have completed on-line Prevent training.

**To refer:** The new **National Prevent referral form** should be used to submit a concern that someone may be vulnerable to radicalisation or extremism. This can be found on the school shared resources 'intranet' or obtained from the DSL.

Email: **[preventreferrals@dorset.pnn.police.uk](mailto:preventreferrals@dorset.pnn.police.uk)**

To assist this new process, Dorset Police have created a new email address **[preventreferrals@dorset.pnn.police.uk](mailto:preventreferrals@dorset.pnn.police.uk)** which will share the form with both the police and the MASH, to allow the safeguarding concerns to be assessed alongside any police risk.

**If you have any questions or are unsure if a referral is appropriate, please contact the Dorset Prevent Team (during office hours) on 01202 229319.**

#### **44. Pupils who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning**

The section of KCSIE 2025 on gender questioning children remains under review, pending the publication of revised guidance.

We recognise that pupils who are (or who are perceived to be) lesbian, gay, bisexual or gender questioning (LGBTQ+) can be targeted by other children. See our behaviour policy for more detail on how we respond to bullying.

We also recognise that LGBTQ+ children are more likely to experience poor mental health. Any concerns should be reported to the DSL.

When families/carers are making decisions about support for gender questioning pupils, they should be encouraged to seek clinical help and advice. This should be done as early as possible when supporting pre-pubertal children.

When supporting a gender questioning pupil, we will take a cautious approach as there are still unknowns around the impact of social transition, and a pupil may have wider vulnerability, such as complex mental health and psychosocial needs, and in some cases, autism and/or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

We will also consider the broad range of their individual needs, in partnership with their parents/carers (other than in rare circumstances where involving parents/carers would constitute a significant risk of harm to the pupil). We will also include any clinical advice that is available and consider how to address wider vulnerabilities such as the risk of bullying.

Risks can be compounded where children lack trusted adults with whom they can be open. We therefore aim to reduce the additional barriers faced and create a culture where pupils can speak out or share their concerns with members of staff.

## **D. Child Protection Summary for all Visiting Professionals**

### **Burton CE Primary School**

As an adult working directly with children in this school you have a duty of care towards all pupils. This means you must act at all times in a way that is consistent with their safety and welfare.

It is your responsibility to keep your child protection training up to date; you might be asked for evidence of this.

You must follow the principles of safer working practice, which include use of technology – on no account should you contact or take images of pupils on personal equipment, including your mobile 'phone.

If the behaviour of another adult in the school gives rise to concern you must report it to the Headteacher.

If you have a concern about a child, particularly if you think s/he may be suffering or at risk of suffering harm, it is your responsibility to share the information promptly with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) *Alison Timmings (Headteacher)* or the Deputy/ies Sarah Steel (Deputy Headteacher) / Sarah Edmunds (EYFS Lead)

The following is not an exhaustive list, but you might become concerned as a result of:

- Seeing a physical injury which you believe to be non-accidental
- Observing something in the appearance of a pupil which leads you to think his/her needs are being neglected
- A pupil telling you that s/he has been subjected to some form of abuse

In any of these circumstances you must write down what you observed or heard, date and sign the account and give it to the DSL or a Deputy.

If a pupil talks to you about (discloses) sexual or physical abuse you:

- Listen carefully without interruption, particularly if s/he is freely recalling significant events
- Only ask sufficient questions to clarify what you have heard. You might not need to ask anything but, if you do, you must not 'lead' the pupil in any way so should only ask 'open' questions
- Make it clear you are obliged to pass the information on, but only to those who need to know
- Tell the DSL or Deputy without delay
- Write an account of the disclosure as soon as you are able (definitely the same day), date and sign it and give it to the DSL.

Do not ask the pupil to repeat the disclosure to anyone else in school, ask him/her or any other pupil to write a 'statement', or inform parents. You are not expected to make a judgement about whether the child is telling the truth.

**Remember** – share any concerns, don't keep them to yourself.

## Useful Contacts

1) For all referrals (concerns about children, which require a social work assessment)

Call BCP First Response Hub: 01202 123 334

Professionals acute line for **children's First Response**; 01202 794209  
Or contact: **childrensfirstresponse@bcpcouncil.gov.uk**

For children living in Dorset LA contact Dorset CHAD: 01305 228558 / 01202 228866 (Out of hours)

**The Dorset Police MASH**  
**mash@dorset.pnn.police.uk**  
**Call 101**

### 3) Out of Hours Service

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole residents should contact  
**01202 738 256** or **ChildrensOOHS@BCPcouncil.gov.uk** 5pm to 9am  
**Monday to Friday and 24-hours on weekends and bank holidays,**  
including Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

### 4) BCP Safeguarding in Education Team – contact Sue Wickings / Jo France 01202 817839 / safeguardingineducation@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

The team comprises Children's Services managers and advisors including:

- The Education Safeguarding Standards Advisor who offers advice and support to schools in relation to safeguarding and child protection issues
- The Local Authority Designated Officer (the LADO) to whom allegations against adults who work with children in education establishments must be reported

**LADO**  
**Contact:**

The main contact number for the service is 01202 817600

The secure email address for the service is: lado@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

### 5) BCP Virtual School for Children in Care

### 6) Dorset Governor Services (for governor safeguarding training)

01305 224382

## Links to relevant law and guidance

### Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on:

- Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2025\)](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2023\)](#),
- the [Maintained Schools Governance Guide](#) and [Academy Trust Governance Guide](#).

We comply with this guidance and the arrangements agreed and published by our 3 local safeguarding partners.

This policy is also based on the following legislation:

- Section 175 of the [Education Act 2002](#), which places a duty on schools and local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils
- [The School Staffing \(England\) Regulations 2009](#), which set out what must be recorded on the single central record and the requirement for at least 1 person conducting an interview to be trained in safer recruitment techniques
- [The Children Act 1989](#) (and [2004 amendment](#)), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children
- Section 5B(11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the [Serious Crime Act 2015](#), which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18
- [Statutory guidance on FGM](#), which sets out responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM
- [The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974](#), which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children
- Schedule 4 of the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#), which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children
- [Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty](#), which explains schools' duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism
- [The Human Rights Act 1998](#), which explains that being subjected to harassment, violence and/or abuse, including that of a sexual nature, may breach any or all of the rights which apply to individuals under the [European Convention on Human Rights](#) (ECHR)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#), which makes it unlawful to discriminate against people regarding particular protected characteristics (including disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and race). This means our governors and headteacher should carefully consider how they are supporting their pupils with regard to these characteristics. The Act allows our school to take positive action to deal with particular disadvantages affecting pupils (where we can show it's proportionate). This includes making reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. For example, it could include taking positive action to support girls where there's evidence that they're being disproportionately subjected to sexual violence or harassment
- [The Public Sector Equality Duty \(PSED\)](#), which explains that we must have due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The PSED helps us to focus on key issues of concern and how to improve pupil outcomes. Some pupils may be more at risk of harm from issues such as sexual violence; homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying; or racial discrimination
- The [Childcare \(Disqualification\) and Childcare \(Early Years Provision Free of Charge\) \(Extended Entitlement\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2018](#) (referred to in this policy as the "2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations") and [Childcare Act 2006](#), which set out who is disqualified from working with children
- This policy also meets requirements relating to safeguarding and welfare in the [statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage](#)

We also have due regard to

- Bournemouth and Poole Local Safeguarding Children's board (LSCB) [www.bournemouth-poole-lscb.org.uk](http://www.bournemouth-poole-lscb.org.uk)
- Safeguarding: Disclosure and Barring  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>
- The Information Commissioner's Office – Data Protection Act in Schools and Education  
<https://ico.org.uk/your-data-matters/schools/pupils-info/>
- Children Missing Education (September 2016)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>
- Pan Dorset Continuum of Need 2020 & Sexually Harmful Behaviours Level of Need (2019)  
<https://pandorsetscb.proceduresonline.com/contents.html>
- CE Toolkit  
<https://pandorsetscb.proceduresonline.com/contents.html>
- Teaching Online Safety in Schools June 2019  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teaching-online-safety-in-schools>
- UKCIS guidance on the sharing of nude and semi-nude images (replaces guidance on Sexting)  
<https://ineqe.com/2021/01/13/ukcis/>

## Possible Indicators of Abuse

The following information is not designed to turn school staff into experts but it will help them to be more alert to the signs of possible abuse. The examples below are not meant to form an exhaustive list; Designated Safeguarding Leads and other staff will find it helpful to refer to Government advice 'What to do if you are worried about a child being abused' (2015) and the inter-agency safeguarding procedures on the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Board website. The definitions are from Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015).

### i) Physical Abuse

**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.

Most children will collect cuts and bruises in their daily lives. These are likely to be in places where there are bony parts of the body, like elbows, knees and shins. Some children, however, will have bruising which is less likely to have been caused accidentally. An important indicator of physical abuse is where bruises or injuries are unexplained or the explanation does not fit the injury or there are differing explanations. A delay in seeking medical treatment for a child when it is obviously necessary is also a cause for concern. Bruising may be noticeable on children with different skin tones or from different ethnic groups and specialist advice may need to be taken.

Patterns of bruising that are suggestive of physical child abuse can include:

- bruising in children who are not independently mobile
- bruises that are seen away from bony prominences
- bruises to the face, back, stomach, arms, buttocks, ears and hands
- multiple bruises in clusters
- multiple bruises of uniform shape
- bruises that carry the imprint of an implement used, hand marks, fingertips or a belt buckle

Although bruising is the commonest injury in physical abuse, fatal non-accidental head injury and non-accidental fractures can occur without bruising. Any child who has unexplained signs of pain or illness must be seen promptly by a doctor.

Other physical signs of abuse can include:

- cigarette burns
- adult bite marks
- broken bones
- scalds

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate physical abuse:

- fear of parents being approached for an explanation
- aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- flinching when approached or touched
- reluctance to get changed, for example wearing long sleeves in hot weather
- missing school

- running away from home

## ii) Emotional Abuse

**Emotional abuse** ~ The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent 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 the 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, though it may occur alone.

Emotional abuse can be difficult to measure, and often children who appear otherwise well cared for may be emotionally abused by being taunted, put down or belittled. They may receive little or no love, affection or attention from their parents or carers. *Children who live in households where there is domestic violence often suffer emotional abuse.* Emotional abuse can also take the form of children not being allowed to mix/play with other children.

The physical signs of emotional abuse can include:

- a failure to thrive or grow, particularly if the child puts on weight in other circumstances, e.g. in hospital or away from parents' care
- sudden speech disorders
- developmental delay, either in terms of physical or emotional progress.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate emotional abuse include:

- neurotic behaviour, e.g. sulking, hair twisting, rocking
- being unable to play
- fear of making mistakes
- self-harm
- fear of parents being approached

## iii) Sexual Abuse

**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 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.

Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by

other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education. Adults who use children to meet their own sexual needs abuse both girls and boys of all ages, including infants and toddlers. It is important to remember that children can also be sexually abused by other children (i.e. those under 18).

Usually, in cases of sexual abuse it is the child's behaviour which may cause concern, although physical signs can also be present. In all cases, children who talk about sexual abuse do so because they want it to stop. It is important, therefore, that they are listened to, taken seriously and appropriate action taken promptly.

The physical signs of sexual abuse can include:

- pain or itching in the genital/anal areas
- bruising or bleeding near genital/anal areas
- sexually transmitted disease
- vaginal discharge or infection
- stomach pains
- discomfort when walking or sitting down
- pregnancy

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse can include:

- sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour, e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- having nightmares
- missing school
- running away from home
- sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or developmental level
- sexual drawings or language
- bedwetting
- eating problems such as overeating or anorexia
- self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
- saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about
- alcohol / substance / drug use
- suddenly having unexplained sources of money
- not being allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults or other children

#### **iv) Neglect**

**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 because of maternal substance use. 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.

Neglect can be a difficult form of abuse to recognise, yet have some of the most lasting and damaging effects on children and young people.

The physical signs of neglect can include:

- constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children
- being constantly dirty or smelly
- loss of weight, or being constantly underweight
- inappropriate dress for the conditions

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect can include:

- complaining of being tired all the time
- not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments
- having few friends
- mentioning being left alone or unsupervised

It is important that adults in school recognise that providing compensatory care might address the immediate and presenting issue but could cover up or inhibit the recognition of neglect in all aspects of a child's life. Compensatory care is defined as 'providing a child or young person, on a regular basis, help or assistance with basic needs with the aim of redressing deficits in parental care'. This might involve, for example, providing each day a substitute set of clothing because those from home are dirty, or showering a child whose personal hygiene or presentation is such that it is affecting his/her interaction with peers. It does not include isolated or irregular support such as giving lunch money or washing a child who has had an 'accident'. If any adult in school finds s/he is regularly attending to one or more aspects of a child's basic needs then this will prompt a discussion with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The general rule is: the younger the child, the higher the risk in terms of their immediate health. However, serious neglect of older children and adolescents is often overlooked, on the assumption that they can care for themselves and have made a 'choice' to neglect themselves. Lack of engagement with services should be a potential indicator of neglect.

School staff should be mindful of the above and discuss any concerns with the

DSL who will take the appropriate action in accordance with the inter-agency neglect guidance on the DSCB website.

## **Record Keeping: Best Practice**

### **To be read and followed by all DSLs and Deputies**

#### **1. Introduction**

1.1 The importance of good, clear child welfare and child protection record keeping has been highlighted repeatedly in national and local Serious Case Reviews.

1.2 It is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)'s responsibility to ensure that child protection files, access, storage and transfer meet the required professional standards as detailed in this document.

1.3 The common law of confidentiality, Data Protection and Human Rights principles must be adhered to when obtaining, processing or sharing personal or sensitive information or records. In summary, the Data Protection Act requires that records should be securely kept, accurate, relevant, up to date and kept for no longer than is necessary for the purpose for which they were made.

1.4 Any electronic record keeping system should comply with the general standards set out below. (The 'My Concern' system in use in many local schools has been checked for compliance.)

#### **2. Record to be made by an adult receiving a disclosure of abuse (when a child talks about abuse)**

2.1 This record should be made as soon as possible **after** the individual hearing the disclosure has reported it verbally to the DSL. The facts, not opinions (unless of relevance), should be accurately recorded in a non-judgemental way. It is important to remember that expressing an opinion as to whether the child is telling the truth is not helpful and can prejudice how a case proceeds.

2.2 The record should ideally be on a standard 'concerns' form (LA model available from the Safeguarding and Standards Team or on Nexus) but if this is not used, should include:

- The child's name, gender and date of birth
- Date and time of the conversation
- What was the context and who was present during the disclosure?
- What did the child say? – verbatim if possible
- What questions were asked? – verbatim
- Responses to questions –verbatim
- Any observations concerning child's demeanour and any injuries
- The name of the person to whom the disclosure was reported
- Printed name and job title of the author, followed by signature and date

2.3 The record about a disclosure of abuse should be passed to the DSL and retained in the pupil's child protection file in its original and contemporaneous form (as it could be used as evidence in court proceedings), even if later typed or if the information is incorporated into a report.

2.4 Schools should never ask pupils, regardless of their involvement in a child protection matter (i.e. the subject of an allegation, a witness or the alleged 'perpetrator'), to write out their 'statements' of what has happened. In some cases,

this could have the unintended consequence of jeopardising a child protection investigation. This applies regardless of whether the incident(s) took place within or outside school.

### **3. Records kept by the Designated Safeguarding Lead**

3.1 As stated at 2.2 above it is useful and recommended practice for school staff to have one standard pro forma for recording all 'welfare' and child protection concerns.

3.2 The concern form should be passed to the DSL who will make a judgement about what action needs to be taken, in accordance with local inter-agency safeguarding procedures, using the Threshold Tool, if necessary. The decision about any action, whether a referral is made to Social Care, will be recorded clearly by the DSL.

3.3 Concerns which initially seem trivial may turn out to be vital pieces of information later, so it is important to give as much detail as possible. A concern raised may not progress further than a conversation by the DSL with the parent, or, at the other end of the scale, could lead to matters being heard in a court.

3.4 All 'lower level' / pastoral concerns about a child's welfare, which will generally have been discussed with parents/carers, are kept in the child's main file. Alternatively, some schools have adopted their own systems of collating such welfare concerns, but whichever system is in place, these records should not be labelled 'child protection'.

3.5 It is never good practice to keep pupil welfare records in a diary or day-book system. Often it is only when a number of seemingly minor issues relating to an individual pupil over a period of time are seen as a whole that a pattern can be identified indicating a child protection concern.

### **4. Starting a school child protection file**

4.1 A school child protection file does not necessarily mean that the pupil is or has been the subject of a child protection conference or plan. 'Child protection file' denotes a high level of school concern which has warranted referral to/ involvement of, and in most cases assessment by, child care social workers.

4.2 It is the responsibility of the DSL to start a school child protection file when a social worker is or was involved, e.g.: -

- a) A formal referral is made by the school to Children's Social Care on an inter-agency referral form or
- b) Social Care inform the school they have commenced an assessment in relation to a pupil resulting from information from another source or
- c) A child protection file is forwarded to the school by a previous school or pre-school attended by the pupil or
- d) A child who is in care/looked after transfers into the school or

e) A pupil is privately fostered

4.3 It is not good practice to make 'family files'; each child should have his/her own record which includes information specific to him/her and which will be sent to the next school at the time of transfer. The names of siblings and/or other children who live in the household who also attend the school should be clearly noted on individual files.

4.4 If two (or more) pupils at the school are referred to Social Care for the same concern (for example, an allegation of sexually harmful behaviour), then child protection files will be started on both/all pupils.

4.5 'Document wallet' - type files are not ideal as the papers therein can easily fall out or get 'out of order'.

4.6 School child protection files are never 'closed' or de-categorised. Once a school has started a child protection file, the chronology is maintained so that any future concerns can be considered in the context of past events, even if Social Care ceases involvement.

4.7 Note - If there is an allocated social worker because a child is disabled or a young carer and there are no child protection concerns then a child protection file should not be started.

## 5. Adopted children

5.1 When a pupil is admitted to a school in Reception class and parents provide the information that s/he was adopted prior to commencing education, this should be recorded with their permission on the main school file in order that appropriate support can be provided in future if necessary. In these situations, it is not necessary to start a child protection file **unless** the criteria described above (at 4.2a and 4.2b) also apply.

5.2 Some older adopted children will have school child protection files because they were initially in care/looked after and were subsequently adopted. During the period when the child is 'placed for adoption' (prior to an adoption order being made) any file that contains information that identifies both the birth family and the adoptive family must be classed as highly sensitive and this information should only be shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis.

5.3 Once the adoption order has been made the DSL in the school that holds the child protection file must overhaul the file. The principle is that there must be nothing that identifies the child's birth name or the birth family. In sifting the file, it is acceptable to destroy documents that will continue to be held by other agencies: for example, child protection conference minutes and LAC review minutes which will be in Social Care records.

5.4 A chronology should be prepared that gives an overview of the information previously held in the file but **without giving the child's birth name or any details which would identify the birth family**.

5.5 The overhauled file should only contain the new chronology and any information that has originated from within school (for example concern forms). This file should

now be in the child's new name, contain no information which identifies the birth name or birth family, will be held in the school as long as the child remains or sent onto a new school as described (at 9) below.

5.6 Please note that once a child is adopted, all school records, not just cp files, must be amended so that there is nothing which gives the birth name or identifies the birth family.

## **6. The format of child protection files**

6.1 It is helpful if individual files have a front sheet with key information about the pupil and contact details of parents/carers, social worker and any other relevant professionals.

6.2 If the child is Looked-After the front sheet should include important information about legal status, parental responsibility, arrangements for contact with birth parents and extended family, levels of authority delegated to carers and the name of the virtual school head in the authority that looks after the child.

6.3 If a pupil is or was subject of a child protection plan or in care/looked after, this should be highlighted in some way to make it immediately obvious to anyone accessing the record.

6.4 It is a multi-agency standard that children's child protection files must have at the front an up to date chronology of *significant* incidents or events *and* subsequent actions/outcomes. Maintaining the chronology is an important part of the DSL role; it aids the DSL, Deputy and others to see the central issues 'at a glance' and helps to identify patterns of events and behaviours.

6.5 It should make sense as a 'stand-alone' document: anyone else reading the chronology should be able to follow easily what the concerns are/have been, whether the concerns have escalated and why, plus the actions taken by the school to support and protect the child. This will be particularly useful for DSLs in receiving schools when pupils transfer, for professionals involved in collating information for Serious Case Reviews and for parents/pupils/ex-pupils if they view the record.

6.6 Once a chronology is started it should be updated as appropriate even if Social Care later ceases involvement (see 4.6 above).

6.7 The file should be well organised and include, as appropriate, school 'concern forms', copies of correspondence, school reports to and minutes of child protection conferences, documents relating to children in care/'looked after' etc. The DSL will decide which relevant information which pre-dates the starting of the child protection file, such as CAF or other pastoral care documentation, will also be included.

## **7. Storage**

7.1 All records relating to child protection concerns are sensitive and confidential so will be kept in a secure (i.e. locked at all times) filing cabinet, separate from other

school files, and accessible through the DSL, the Deputy(ies) and other senior staff in larger schools.

7.2 Where records are kept electronically through the School's CPOMS system; staff are given only given access to Child Protection and safeguarding as is necessary for them to fulfil their duties. The DSL will ensure that staff accounts are set up accurately to reflect this need. These files will be printed and sent securely to a child's next school or sent electronically if they are also using the CPOMS system.

7.3 The pupil's general school file should be marked in some way (e.g. a yellow star) to indicate that a child protection file exists. All staff who may need to consult a child's school file should be made aware of what the symbol means and to speak to the DSL if necessary if they see this symbol and have concerns. For example, a member of the office staff who is looking in the main file for a parent's contact details because of unexplained absence might decide to report this to the DSL if they see the indicator, in case the absence is significant.

## **8. Sharing of and access to child protection records**

8.1 It is highly unlikely that all members of staff need to know the details of a child's situation, or that there should be widespread access to the records. Access to, and sharing of, information should be on a need-to-know basis, decided case by case. The DSL is the best person to decide this. Consideration must also be given to *what* needs to be shared. In general, the closer the day-to-day contact with the child, the more likely the need to have some information.

8.2 The child who is the subject of a child protection record has the right to access the file, *unless* to do so would affect his/her health or well-being or that of another person, or would be likely to prejudice a criminal investigation or a Section 47 assessment (which relates to significant harm) under the Children Act 1989.

8.3 Parents (i.e. those with parental responsibility in law) are entitled to see their child's child protection file, with the same exemptions as apply to the child's right to access the record. Note that an older pupil may be entitled to refuse access to the record by his/her parents. As a guide, this applies to pupils who are 12 years of age or above, if they are of normal development or maturity.

8.4 References by name to children other than the pupil who is the subject of the file should be removed when disclosing records, unless consent is obtained from the individual/s concerned (or their parents/carers on their behalf). Care must be taken to ensure all identifying information is removed from the copy of the record to be shared.

8.5 Always seek advice from your legal advisor or Dorset Data Protection Officer (01305 225175) if there are any concerns or doubt about a child or parents reading records. However, it is generally good practice to share all information held unless there is a valid reason to withhold it, e.g. to do so would place the child or any other person at risk of harm. Any requests to see the child's record should be made in writing to give time for confidential information, such as any details of other pupils, to be removed.

8.6 In respect of requests from pupils or parents for information which wholly or partly consists of an educational record, access should be granted within 15 school days. This might be relevant to 'welfare' concerns in a main school file, for example. Viewing-only access to these records is free but it is reasonable to charge for copies on a sliding scale from £1 - £50 (maximum) depending on the number of pages.

8.7 However, should the request only seek access to a child protection file (which is not classed as an educational record), access should be granted within 40 calendar days. A discretionary maximum fee of £10 can be charged for viewing access to or a copy of a child protection record.

8.8 If the record to be disclosed contains information about an adult professional, that information can be disclosed if it relates to the performance by that person of their job or other official duties e.g. a reference to a teacher in their teaching role or a school nurse in their nursing role. However, if the reference refers to that individual's private life, it should be removed (unless this relates to a child protection matter which is relevant to the record to be disclosed).

8.9 Child protection information should not normally be shared with professionals other than those from Social Care, the Police, Health or the Local Authority. Ofsted and other school inspectors can view individual child protection files. Information should not be released to parents' solicitors on request; advice should be sought from the school's legal advisor in such cases.

8.10 Governors, including the Nominated Governor, should not access the records.

## **9. Transfer of child protection records**

9.1 When a pupil transfers to another school (including to a Learning Centre because of permanent exclusion) the DSL should inform the receiving school as soon as possible in person or by telephone that child protection records exist. The original records must be passed on either by hand or sent by recorded delivery, separate from the child's main school file. Care must be taken to ensure confidentiality is maintained and the transfer process is as safe as possible.

9.2 If the records are to be posted, they should be copied and these copies retained until there has been confirmation in writing that the originals have arrived at the new school. They can then be shredded.

9.3 Whether child protection files are passed on by hand or posted, there should be written evidence of the transfer (such as a form or slip of paper signed and dated by a member of staff at the receiving school.) This receipt should be retained by the originating school for 6 years (in line with guidance from the Records Management Society).

9.4 If the pupil is removed from the roll to be home educated, the school should pass the child protection file to the LA EHE Administrator and a receipt obtained as described above.

9.5 If a pupil with a child protection record leaves the school without a forwarding address and no contact is received from a new school the DSL should follow the

school's Child Missing Education (CME) procedures. If there is reason to suspect the pupil is suffering harm then the DSL will refer to Social Care in the usual way.

9.6 If a child arrives in the school in an unplanned way and / or there are concerns about them from the outset, it is worth contacting the previous school for a discussion with the DSL. There might be a child protection file which has not been passed on.

9.7 School 'welfare' or pastoral records (i.e. where concerns or issues have been raised but there has been **no** referral to or involvement by a social worker) should also be passed on to the next school for their information and can be included in the main school file, for example. In respect of data protection, parents/carers should be made aware (either individually or through newsletters, for example) that information is transferred in this way to enable the next school to properly support their child. Most parents will understand the reason for this but if for whatever reason a parent disagrees with you passing on non-child protection documents, you should not do so.

## **11. Retention of records**

11.1 The school should retain the record for as long as the pupil remains in school and then transfer as described above.

11.2 Guidance from the Records Management Society is that when a pupil with a child protection record reaches statutory school leaving age (or where the pupil completed 6<sup>th</sup> form studies), the last school attended should keep the child protection file until the pupil's 25<sup>th</sup> birthday. It should then be shredded (and a record kept of this having been done, date, and why).

11.3 The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse has instructed relevant organisations, including schools and colleges, that they should NOT destroy, for the foreseeable future, any of their records that could potentially come within the scope of the inquiry (i.e. any records relating to sexual abuse).

## **12. Electronic child protection records**

12.1 Electronic records must be password protected with access strictly controlled in the same way as paper records.

12.2 They should be in the same format as paper records (i.e. with well-maintained chronologies etc) so that they are up to date if/when printed, if necessary.

12.3 Electronic files must not be transferred electronically to other schools unless there is a secure system in place but should be printed in their entirety, linked with paper documentation such as conference minutes and transferred as described in section 9 above. When the receipt has been returned to confirm that the file has been received at the new school, the computer record should be deleted.