



Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures

Date of Last Amendment: September 2016

Date to be Reviewed: September 2017



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1. Safeguarding Policy Statement

At Blatchington Mill School & Sixth Form College we strive to be a place where students, staff, volunteers, families and other visitors will be made welcome and comfortable and where we will treat each other with respect. We believe that all children and young people have the right to protection from neglect and abuse and that their welfare is of paramount importance.

Blatchington Mill School & Sixth Form College is a place where learning and personal development take place in a climate of trust and confidence and where we value everyone's unique contribution to our community. Everyone has a responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and for ensuring that they are protected from harm. All staff and volunteers working in the school have a duty to ensure that children are safe and protected, and we all have a duty to ensure that if there are any concerns relating to the welfare or safety of a child, the Brighton and Hove Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures are followed.

We will always try to work in partnership with families, but in any conflict between the needs of the child or young person and those of parents/carers/or professionals, the needs of the young person must come first. We are committed to safe recruitment and selection procedures to ensure that all staff and volunteers have been appropriately screened prior to appointment, and to the provision of appropriate child protection training through the staff induction programme and within continuing professional development opportunities.



2. Policy Framework

Initiated:	September 2001
Groups Consulted:	Governors Staff
Date Reviewed:	July 2004 by Governor's Committee July 2005 by Governor's Committee September 2008 by Staff and Governor's Committee December 2009 by Governors IAG Committee December 2014 Governor's Committee January 2015 by Governors March 2016 by Governors July 2016 by Governors
Audience	Parents/carers Staff Governors
Policy located:	School website, Firefly and Portal
Policy Format:	Full
Policy Relates to:	Safeguarding and Child Protection
Lead Member of Staff:	Ruth King



3. Key Contact Personnel in School

3.1 Designated Safeguarding Leads:

Ruth King
Deputy Headteacher



Carolyn Bennett
Teaching Assistant



Named Child Protection Governor: Fiona Bauermeister

Chair of Governors: Peter Sowrey

All staff should have access to this policy and sign to the effect that they have read and understood its content.



4. Key contacts within the Local Authority

Role	Name	Contact details
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Darrel Clews	01273295643
Children’s Social Care – for reporting concerns	Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub: MASH	01273 290400
	Emergency Duty Service – after hours, weekends and public holidays	01273 335905 or 335906
Targeted early help services for children and families	Early Help Hub	01273 292632

Date agreed: July 2016

Date of next review: July 2017

5. Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

5.1 Introduction

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



5.2 Our Ethos

- We believe that our school should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes our school values and the Social Moral Spiritual and Cultural development of the individual child.
- We recognise the importance of providing an environment within our school that will help children feel safe and respected. We recognise the importance of enabling children to talk openly and to feel confident that they will be listened to. We recognise the need to teach children the skills they need to stay safe and to ask for help if they need it.
- We recognise that all adults within the school, including permanent and temporary staff, volunteers and governors, have a full and active part to play in protecting our students from harm.
- We will work with parents/carers to build an understanding of the school's responsibilities to ensure the welfare of all children, including the need for referrals to other agencies in some situations.

5.3 Scope

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

5.4 The Legal Framework

- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on governing bodies of maintained schools and further education institutions (including sixth-form colleges) to make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are students at the school.
- Under section 10 of the Children Act 2004, all maintained schools and further education colleges are required to cooperate with the local authority to improve the well-being of children in the local authority area.



- Under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, all schools are required to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”.
- Under section 14B of the Children Act 2004, the Local Safeguarding Children Board can require a school or further education institution to supply information in order to perform its functions. This must be complied with.
- This policy and the accompanying procedures have been developed in accordance with the following statutory guidance and local safeguarding procedures:
 - [Working Together to Safeguard Children: A Guide to Inter-Agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children, March 2015](#)
 - [Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, September 2016](#)
 - [Pan-Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures](#)
 - [The Children’s Act 2004](#)
 - [The PREVENT Duty June 2015](#)

5.5 Roles and Responsibilities

- The school’s lead person with overall responsibility for child protection and safeguarding is the **Designated Safeguarding Lead**. We have a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure there is appropriate cover for this role at all times. The Designated Safeguarding Lead’s responsibilities are described in Appendix A.
- Blatchington Mill has a **nominated governor** responsible for safeguarding to champion good practice, to liaise with the head teacher and to provide information and reports to the governing body.
- The **case manager for dealing with allegations** of abuse made against school staff members is the head teacher. The case manager for dealing with allegations against the head teacher is the chair of governors. The procedure for managing allegations is detailed in Appendix B.
- The **head teacher** will ensure that the policies and procedures adopted by the governing body are fully implemented and sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable staff members to discharge their safeguarding responsibilities.



- **The governing body** is collectively responsible for ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are fully embedded within the school's ethos and reflected in the school's day-to-day practice.
- **All staff members, governors, volunteers and external providers** know how to recognise signs and symptoms of abuse, how to respond to students who disclose abuse and what to do if they are concerned about a child.

6. Supporting Children

- We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence are likely to have low self-esteem and may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helpless, humiliated and feel some sense of blame. Our school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in their lives.
- We accept that the behaviour of a child in these circumstances may range from that which is perceived to be normal to aggressive or withdrawn.
- Our school will support all students by:
 - ensuring the content of the PSHE curriculum includes social and emotional aspects of learning, drug, alcohol and tobacco education and relationships and sex education;
 - ensuring a comprehensive curriculum response to e-safety, enabling children and parents/carers to learn about the risks of new technologies and social media and to use these responsibly;
 - ensuring that child protection is included in the curriculum to help children stay safe, recognise when they do not feel safe and identify who they might or can talk to;
 - Building resilience to radicalisation by promoting fundamental British values and enabling them to challenge extremist views;
 - providing students with a number of appropriate adults to approach if they are in difficulties;
 - supporting the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence;
 - encouraging development of self-esteem and self-assertiveness while not condoning aggression or bullying;
 - ensuring that all staff understand the additional safeguarding issues of children with special educational needs and disabilities and how to address them
 - ensuring that all staff are aware of the early help process, and understand their role in it, including acting as the lead professional where appropriate.



- liaising and working together with other support services and those agencies involved in safeguarding children;
- monitoring attendance patterns and reviewing and responding to them as part of welfare and protection procedures; and
- Monitoring children who have been identified as having welfare or protection concerns and providing appropriate support.

7. Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedure

- We have developed a structured procedure in line with Pan-Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures which will be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse. This is detailed in Appendix B.
- In line with the procedures, the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) will be notified as soon as there is a significant concern.
- The name of the Designated Safeguarding Lead is clearly advertised in the school, with a statement for all to see on entry to the school, explaining the school's role in referring and monitoring cases of suspected abuse.
- We will ensure all parents/carers are aware of the responsibilities of staff members to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and act in the best interests of children by publishing the policy and procedures on our website and by referring to them in our introductory school materials.

8. Record Keeping

- We will ensure that records are maintained appropriately for children with safeguarding concerns and that confidential stand-alone files are created and maintained. This will be done via secure software; CPOMS.
- We will continue to support any pupil leaving the school about whom there have been concerns by ensuring that all appropriate information, including child protection and welfare concerns, are forwarded under confidential cover to the pupil's new school as a matter of priority.



9. Safer Workforce and Managing Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers

- We will prevent people who pose risks to children from working in our school by ensuring that all individuals working in any capacity at our school have been subjected to safeguarding checks in line with the statutory guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, September 2016](#)
- We will ensure that no clubs run through the school involve students aged 8 and under.
- Where appropriate, we will remind all outside lets with staff members who have contact with children and young people, aged 8 and under, (during a BMS let) of their obligation to make declarations about household members, in line with [Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006](#).
- We will ensure that agencies and third parties supplying staff provide us evidence that they have made the appropriate level of safeguarding check on individuals working in our school. We will also ensure that any agency worker presenting for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.
- Every new job description and person specification will have a clear statement about the safeguarding responsibilities of the post holder.
- We will ensure that at least one member of every interview panel has completed safer recruitment training.

We have a procedure in place to handle allegations against members of staff and volunteers in line with [Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, September 2016](#)

This procedure is detailed in Appendix B.

10. Staff Induction, Training and Development

- All new members of staff, including newly-qualified teachers and teaching assistants, will be given an induction which includes child protection training on how to recognise signs of abuse, how to respond to any concerns, e-safety and familiarisation with the child protection policy, the schools staff behaviour/code of conduct and the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead. We will ensure that staff understand the difference between a safeguarding concern and a child in immediate danger or at risk of significant harm.



- This induction will include all members of staff having read Part One of [Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, September 2016](#)
- The induction will be proportionate to staff members' roles and responsibilities.
- The Head Teacher will undergo child protection training, when appointed to post and then refreshed every three years.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy will undergo child protection training, when appointed to post and then refreshed every two years.
- All staff members of the school and the nominated child protection governor will undergo child protection training (whole-school training) annually.
- Staff members who miss the whole-school training will be required to undertake catch up refresher sessions as offered throughout the year by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- The nominated governor for child protection will undergo appropriate training prior to or soon after appointment to the role; this LA provided training will be updated every two years.
- We will ensure that staff members provided by other agencies and third parties, e.g. supply teachers, have received appropriate child protection training commensurate with their roles before starting work. They will be given the opportunity to take part in whole-school training if it takes place during their period of work for the school.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will provide an annual briefing to the school on any changes to child protection legislation and procedures and relevant learning from local and national serious case reviews.
- The school will maintain accurate records of staff induction and training.

11. Confidentiality, Consent and Information Sharing

- We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential.
- The head teacher or the Designated Safeguarding Lead will disclose any information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need-to-know basis only, and in the best interests of the child.
- All staff members must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or well-being.



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

12. Inter-Agency Working

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

13. Contractors, Service and Activity Providers and Work Placement Providers

- We will ensure that contractors and providers are aware of our school's child protection policy and procedures. We will require that employees and volunteers provided by these organisations use our procedure to report concerns.
- We will seek assurance that employees and volunteers provided by these organisations and working with our children have been subjected to the appropriate level of safeguarding check in line with [Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, September 2016](#)
If assurance is not obtained, permission to work with our children or use our school



premises may be refused.

- When we commission services from other organisations, we will ensure that compliance with our policy and procedures is a contractual requirement.

14. Whistle-Blowing and Complaints

- We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff members fail to do so.
- We will ensure that all staff members are aware of their duty to raise concerns, where they exist, about the management of child protection, which may include the attitude or actions of colleagues. If necessary, they will speak with the head teacher, the chair of the governing body or with the Local Authority Designated Officer. Should staff not feel able to raise concerns they can call the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline on 0800 028 0285.
- We have a clear reporting procedure for children, parents/carers and other people to report concerns or complaints, including abusive or poor practice.

15. Site Security

- All staff members have a responsibility to ensure our buildings and grounds are secure and for reporting concerns that may come to light.
- We check the identity of all visitors and volunteers coming into school. Visitors are expected to sign in and out in the office visitors' log and to display a visitor's badge while on the school site. Any individual who is not known or identifiable will be challenged for clarification and reassurance.
- The school will not accept the behaviour of any individual, parent/carer or anyone else, that threatens school security or leads others, child or adult, to feel unsafe. Such behaviour will be treated as a serious concern and may result in a decision to refuse the person access to the school site.

16. Quality Assurance

- We will ensure that systems are in place to monitor the implementation of and compliance with this policy and accompanying procedures. This will include periodic audits of child protection files and records by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.



- We will complete an audit of the school's safeguarding arrangements at frequencies specified by the Brighton and Hove Local Safeguarding Children Board and using the audit tool provided for this purpose.
- The school's senior leadership team and the governing body will ensure that action is taken to remedy without delay any deficiencies and weaknesses identified in child protection arrangements.

17. Policy Review

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



APPENDIX A – The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead

1. Managing Referrals

- 1.1 Refer all cases of suspected abuse to the MASH and to the Police if a crime may have been committed.
- 1.2 Cases which involve concern around a member of staff should be referred to the LADO as well.
- 1.3 The Disclosure and Barring Service will also be informed where a person is dismissed or left the school due to posing a risk or harm to a child.
- 1.4 Liaise with the head teacher about safeguarding issues relating to individual children, especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.
- 1.5 Act as a source of support, advice and expertise to staff members on matters of child protection and safeguarding.
- 1.6 Liaise with agencies providing early help services and coordinate referrals from the school to targeted early help services for children in need of support.
- 1.7 Monitor any cases referred to early help and consider referral to children's services where the situation does not improve.
- 1.8 Refer cases to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required.

2. Record Keeping

- 2.1. Keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of child protection and welfare concerns and referrals
- 2.2. Ensure a stand-alone file is created as necessary for children with safeguarding concerns within CPOMS.
- 2.3. Maintain a chronology of significant incidents for each child with safeguarding concerns within CPOMS.



- 2.4. Ensure such records are kept confidentially and securely and separate from the child's educational record.
- 2.5. As soon as a child with safeguarding concerns moves to another school, liaise with the new school's Designated Safeguarding Lead for information sharing. Ensure the child's child protection or welfare concerns records are transferred to new school as soon as possible. These files should be transferred separately from the main pupil file, using secure transit and obtaining confirmation of receipt.
- 2.6. Where a child is transferring to a school outside of Brighton or Hove, or to an independent school, or to be Electively Home Educated, the child protection or welfare concern records will be copied before sending to the next school/LA. In this case the copies will be retained by school for six years.
- 2.7. The final school (secondary) will retain Child Protection files until DoB+25 years.

3 Inter-Agency Working and Information Sharing

- 3.1 Cooperate with Children's Social Work Services for enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.
- 3.2 Attend, or ensure other relevant staff members attend, child protection conferences, core group meetings and other multi-agency meetings, as required.
- 3.3 Liaise with other agencies working with the child, share information as appropriate and contribute to assessments.
- 3.4 Ensure the Assistant Head i/c Pupil Premium students works with the Virtual School Head to discuss how Pupil Premium funding can best be used to support the progress of looked after children in school.

4 Training

- 4.1 Undertake appropriate training, **updated every two years**, and update knowledge and skills at least annually in order to
 - be able to recognise signs of abuse and how to respond to them, including special circumstances such as Child Sexual Exploitation, Female Genital Mutilation, fabricated or induced illness (see chapter 8 of the [Pan-Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures](#));



- understand the assessment process for providing Early Help and intervention, e.g. Children's Services Threshold document: A guide to early help and safeguarding services.
- have a working knowledge of how the Local Authority conducts initial and review child protection case conferences and contribute effectively to these; and
- be alert to the specific needs of Children in Need (as specified in section 17 of the Children Act 1989), those with Special Educational Needs, pregnant teenagers and young carers.

4.2 Undertake Prevent awareness training.

4.3 Ensure each member of staff has access to and understands the school's child protection policy and procedures, including providing induction on these matters to new and part-time staff members.

4.4 Organise whole-school child protection training for all staff members annually. Ensure staff members who miss the training receive it by other means, e.g. by offering in-year training sessions.

4.5 Link with Brighton and Hove Local Safeguarding Children Board to make sure staff are aware of training opportunities and the latest local policies on safeguarding.

4.6 Obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses.

4.7 Ensure the school allocates time and resources every year for relevant staff members to attend training.

4.8 Encourage a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings in any action the school takes to protect them.

4.9 Maintain accurate records of staff induction and training.

5 Awareness Raising

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

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



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

6 Quality Assurance

- 6.1 Monitor the implementation of and compliance with policy and procedures, including periodic audits of child protection and welfare concerns files (at a minimum once a year).
- 6.2 Complete an audit of the school's safeguarding arrangements at frequencies specified by the Brighton and Hove Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- 6.3 Provide regular reports, including an annual report, to the governing body detailing changes and reviews to policy, training undertaken by staff members and the number of children with child protection plans and other relevant data.
- 6.4 Take lead responsibility for remedying any deficiencies and weaknesses identified in child protection arrangements.



APPENDIX B – Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures

1 Definitions

- 1.1 **Abuse**, including neglect, is a form of maltreatment. A person may abuse a child by inflicting harm or by failing to prevent harm. Children may be abused within their family, in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them, or, more rarely, by a stranger.
- 1.2 **Children** are any people who have not yet reached their 18th birthday; a 16-year-old, whether living independently, in further education, in the armed forces or in hospital, is a child and is entitled to the same protection and services as anyone younger.
- 1.3 **Child protection** is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and refers to activity undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.
- 1.4 **Early Help** means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years to teenage years.
- 1.5 **Harm** is ill treatment or impairment of health and development, including impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another.
- 1.6 **Safeguarding children** is the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. **Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children** is defined in [Working Together to Safeguard Children: A Guide to Inter-Agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children \(March 2015\)](#) as:
 - protecting children from maltreatment;
 - preventing impairment of children's health and development;
 - ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
 - taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
- 1.7 **Significant harm** is the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in the family in the best interests of the child. Section 31 of the Children Act 1989 states 'where the question of whether harm suffered by a child is significant turns on the child's health or development, his health or development shall be compared with that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child.'
- 1.8 For more definitions, see [Pan-Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures](#).



2 Categories of Abuse

2.1 **Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such that it causes severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve:

- making a child feel worthless, unloved or inadequate
- only there to meet another's needs
- inappropriate age or developmental expectations
- overprotection and limitation of exploration, learning and social interaction
- seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another, e.g. domestic abuse
- making the child feel worthless and unloved - high criticism and low warmth
- serious bullying (including cyber bullying)
- exploitation or corruption

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

2.2 **Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse. Once a child is born, it may involve a parent failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, including exclusion from home or abandonment
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision, including the use of inadequate care givers
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

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

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

2.4 **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. Activities may involve physical contact, including penetration of any part of the body, or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children looking at or in the production of sexual images, including on the



internet, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

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

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

3 Specific Safeguarding Issues

3.1 School staff members need to be aware of specific safeguarding issues, as listed below in 3.2, and be alert to any risks. Chapter 8 of the [Pan-Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures](#) has detailed information about specific issues such as Child Sexual Exploitation, Female Genital Mutilation, Private Fostering, etc., and the local procedures to respond to risks.

3.2 Within Keeping Children Safe in Education, the following specific safeguarding issues are highlighted:

- Child missing from education
- Child missing from home or care
- Child sexual exploitation
- Bullying including cyberbullying
- Domestic violence
- Drugs
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Faith abuse
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Forced marriage
- Gangs and youth violence
- Gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- Hate
- Mental health
- Missing Children and Adult Strategy
- Preventing radicalisation
- Private Fostering
- Sexting
- Trafficking



3.3 Further Information on Children Missing from Education

A child going missing from education is a potential sign of abuse or neglect, particularly on repeat occasions.

Educational establishments and colleges should put in place appropriate safeguarding responses to children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect and to help prevent the risks of their going missing again.

All educational establishments must inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend educational establishment regularly, or has been absent without the educational establishment's permission for a continuous period of 10 educational establishment days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the educational establishment and the local authority (or in default of such agreement, at intervals determined by the Secretary of State).

Refer to Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2016 Annex A for further guidance

3.4 Further information on Child Sexual Exploitation

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

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



Some of the following signs may be indicators of sexual exploitation:

- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation
- Children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant
- Children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being
- Children who misuse drugs and alcohol
- Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late
- Children who regularly miss educational establishment

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

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

3.5 Further Information on Domestic Violence

The definition of “domestic violence and abuse” was updated by the Home Office in March 2013 to include the reality that many young people are experiencing domestic abuse and violence in relationships at a young age. They may therefore be Children in Need or likely to suffer significant harm. The latest definition from the Home Office is as follows:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:

- Psychological
- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional

Staff should be aware that any disclosures made by children may have a background in domestic abuse and that this abuse may be part of an overall pattern of abuse or violence towards women and girls in the family. That said domestic abuse can also be experienced



by males and assumptions should not be made based on the gender of perpetrators of domestic abuse.

3.6 Further information on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. There are a range of potential indicators that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM, which individually may not indicate risk but if there are two or more indicators present this could signal a risk to the child or young person. Victims of FGM are likely to come from a community that is known to practise FGM. Professionals should note that girls at risk of FGM may not yet be aware of the practice or that it may be conducted on them, so sensitivity should always be shown when approaching the subject. Staff should activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children's social care.

Warning signs that FGM may be about to take place, or may have already taken place, can be found in the [Brighton and Hove FGM Multi Agency Resource Pack](#) or within the E.learning for all professionals, developed by the Home Office, available at www.fgmelearning.co.uk

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

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

Staff should be aware of new mandatory reporting requirements with regards to known cases of female genital mutilation (FGM) which require teachers to personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Further details can be found Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2016



3.8 Further Information on Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is one in which at least one participant does not (or cannot) consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used. It is recognised in the UK as a serious abuse of human rights.

The pressure put on people to marry against their will can be physical (including threats of violence, actual physical violence and sexual violence) or emotional and psychological (e.g. shame and coercion) Financial abuse can also be a factor.

Whilst it is unlikely that primary-age pupils will be the victims of forced marriage, they may disclose that older siblings or parents are at risk.

3.9 Further information on Preventing Radicalisation

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act, which received Royal Assent on 12 February 2015, places a duty on specified authorities, including local authorities and childcare, education and other children's services providers, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism ("the Prevent duty"). This came into force on 1 July 2015. The Prevent duty directs inspectors to examine a educational establishment's response to extremist behaviour when considering the behaviour and safety of pupils, as well as the effectiveness of the leadership and management of the educational establishment in preventing extremism.

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

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

Channel Training

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



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

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

You can complete a short general awareness course online [here](#):

Prevent is the pan-Sussex strategy for preventing vulnerable people from being radicalised into violent extremism: The pan Sussex Prevent describes partner's (including educational establishments) role in the Prevent agenda:

Sharing with colleagues

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

The Department for education has published The Prevent duty

Departmental advice for educational establishments and childcare providers at:

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

3.10 Further Information on Sexting

Sexting among children and young people can be a common occurrence, where they often describe these incidents as 'mundane'. Children involved in sexting incidents will be dealt with by the police as victims as opposed to perpetrators, unless there are mitigating circumstances. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should record all incidents of sexting. This should include both the actions taken and the actions not taken, together with justifications. In applying judgement to the sexting incident consider the following:

- Significant age difference between the sender/receiver involved
- If there is any external coercion involved or encouragement beyond the sender/receiver.
- If you recognise the child as more vulnerable than is usual.
- If the image is of a severe or extreme nature.



- If the situation is not isolated and the image has been more widely distributed.
- If this is not the first time children have been involved in a sexting act
- If other knowledge of either the sender or recipient may add cause for concern..

If these characteristics present cause for concern then escalate or refer the incident. If not, manage the situation accordingly, recording details of the incident, action and resolution. See CEOP website for further information.

3.11 Further information on Private Fostering

Parents and carers often fail to notify schools about private fostering arrangements even though they are legally required to notify Children's Services. Often this is because they are unaware of the requirements. They believe that this is a private family arrangement which does not concern anybody else.

This lack of awareness means that many privately fostered children remain hidden and can be vulnerable, as in the case of Victoria Climbié who was a privately fostered child.

Private Fostering definition

Private fostering occurs when a child under 16 (or 18 if the child is disabled) is cared for and lives with an adult who is **not** a relative for 28 days or more. The following are considered to be relatives: a step parent (by marriage or civil partnership), grandparent, step grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt.

Private fostering is a private arrangement made by the parent(s), (or those with parental responsibility) for someone to care for their child because they are unable to do so (permanently or temporarily). This may be due to a number of reasons such as parental ill health, a parent going abroad or in to prison, a child being brought to the UK to study English or the relationship between the child and parent has broken down.

School staff play an essential role in identifying privately fostered children. If you know a child is being privately fostered you should advise the parent/carer that they have a legal obligation to report the arrangement to Children Social Care at least six weeks before it happens or within 48 hours if the arrangement is current having been made in an emergency.

Alert your Designated Safeguarding Lead who will ensure this is followed up with Children Social Care and the arrangement is assessed, approved and monitored

- 3.12 Under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 teachers have a mandatory duty to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18.
- 3.13 Under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 schools have a duty to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. Schools are expected to assess the risk of children being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology and to refer these children/families for support/intervention as necessary.



4 Recognition – What to look for

- 4.1 Staff members should refer to the detailed information about the categories of abuse and risk indicators in the [Pan-Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures](#) for further guidance.
- 4.2 In an abusive relationship, the child may:
- appear frightened of their parent(s)
 - act in a way that is inappropriate to their age and development, although full account needs to be taken of different patterns of development and different ethnic groups
- 4.3 In an abusive relationship, the parent or carer may:
- persistently avoid child health services and treatment of the child's illnesses
 - have unrealistic expectations of the child
 - frequently complain about or to the child and fail to provide attention or praise
 - be absent
 - be misusing substances
 - persistently refuse to allow access on home visits by professionals
 - be involved in domestic violence and abuse
 - be socially isolated
- 4.4 Serious case reviews have found that parental substance misuse, domestic abuse and mental health problems, sometimes referred to as the 'toxic trio', if they coexist in a family could mean significant risks to children. Problems can be compounded by poverty, frequent house moves or eviction.
- 4.5 Staff should be aware that children with special educational needs and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges including:
- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability
 - children with special educational needs and disabilities are particularly vulnerable to bullying and often show no outward signs
 - communication issues can be a barrier to effective safeguarding

5 Allegations of abuse made against other children

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



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

5.2 **Safeguarding allegations**

It is important to remember that Peer-on-Peer Abuse does not occur in a vacuum. It occurs in a society where there are structures and norms that shape young people's views, experiences and behaviours, as well as responses to them. Consequently there are different issues of gender that will need to be considered when responding to allegations made against pupils by others in the school, which are of a safeguarding nature. Safeguarding issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. It is likely that to be considered a safeguarding allegation against a pupil, some of the following features will be found.

The allegation:

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

5.3 **Examples of safeguarding issues against a pupil could include:**

Physical Abuse

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

Emotional Abuse

- blackmail or extortion
- threats and intimidation

Sexual Abuse

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

Sexual Exploitation

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



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

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

We will provide a developmentally appropriate PSHE syllabus which develops pupils' understanding of acceptable behaviour and keeping themselves safe.

Have systems in place for any pupil to raise concerns with staff, knowing they will be listened to, believed and valued.

Deliver targeted work on assertiveness and keeping safe to those pupils identified as being at risk.

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

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

5.5 What to do

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

The Designated Safeguarding Lead should make a MASH referral, as appropriate..

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



6 Children's Services Threshold Document

- 6.1 The Children's Services Threshold Document has been developed so that everyone working with children in Brighton and Hove has a common language for understanding the needs and risks surrounding children and their families.
- 6.2 For example, if the school has concerns about a child and needs advice or support from the MASH, they will use the Threshold Document as a guide to understand the school's concerns and provide advice about what to do or to decide whether the child and family need social care involvement. The Threshold Document does not replace professional judgement, but it is intended to support decision-making and discussions between services and practitioners.
- 6.3 It is important that staff members are familiar with the Threshold Document, which can be accessed [here](#).
- 6.4 The Threshold Document shows that a child's or family's additional needs can be on a range from none to very high, and that needs can shift from early help to child protection and back to preventative early help. It covers children whose needs are increasing as well as children whose needs are decreasing after Children's Social Work Services involvement. The Threshold Document will help practitioners to identify the right level of support for the child in the least intrusive way while keeping the child safe.
- 6.5 The Threshold Document identifies four levels of need.

Level 1:

- children who are achieving expected outcomes
- their needs are met by their parents and by accessing universal services such as health and education
- they do not have additional needs

Level 2:

- children with additional needs
- parents need professional support or guidance to help them meet their children's needs
- extra support can usually be provided by agencies that already know the family, e.g. their pre-school, school or college or NHS community services such as Health Visiting

Level 3:

- children with multiple and complex needs



- children and parents need targeted early help or specialist services to meet the children's needs
- needs are met through multi-agency support and the use of Early Help Plans

Level 4:

- children with acute needs, including those in need of protection
- children and parents need multi-agency responses which include specialist intervention from Children's Social Work Services through the family assessment process

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



7 What action to take if you have concerns about a child

Staff member	What action to take if you have concerns
Any member of staff, governor, volunteer, contractor or activity provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss your concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead Ruth King, or in their absence, with the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead Carolyn Bennett, as soon as possible, before the child leaves for the day. It is important that the child is not sent home at the end of the day without taking the right protective action. • Complete the child protection incident/welfare concern form and pass it to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. • If the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their deputy is not available, you should contact the MASH yourself. Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead about what actions you have taken.
Designated Child Protection Teacher	<p>You are concerned that the child is at risk of significant harm (Level 4 Threshold Document)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact the MASH immediately. • If you believe that the child is in immediate danger, or you suspect a crime has been committed, you must also contact the police immediately.
	<p>You believe the child is not at risk of significant harm, but the child or their family may need support (Level 2 or 3 Threshold Document)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the Threshold Document to identify the level of need. • Discuss your concerns with senior colleagues in another agency, if necessary • If your consultation results in the decision that the child and family are in need of help at Level 2 or 3 of the Threshold Document, provide additional support in the school and/or refer the child or their family to other agencies providing early help services. • Record all your consultations and decision-making on the child protection incident/welfare concern form sent by the staff member who contacted you originally. Update the chronology and add referral letters and forms to the child's file; create a stand-alone file, if one does not exist. Continue to update the file, including the chronology, as work progresses.



8 Dealing with a disclosure made by a child – advice for all members of staff

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

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief.
- Only ask questions when necessary to clarify, and without suggesting what the answer might be.
- Accept what is being said.
- Allow the child to talk freely – do not put words in the child’s mouth.
- Reassure the child that what has happened is not his or her fault.
- Do not make promises that you may not be able to keep.
- Do not promise confidentiality – it may be necessary to refer the child to Children’s Social Care.
- Stress that it was the right thing to tell.
- Do not criticise the alleged perpetrator.
- Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told.
- Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay.
- Complete the child protection incident/welfare concern form and pass it to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Dealing with a disclosure from a child and safeguarding issues can be stressful. Consider seeking support for yourself and discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

9 Discussing concerns with the family and the child – advice for the designated safeguarding lead

9.1 In general, you should always discuss any concerns the school may have with the child’s parents. They need to know that you are worried about their child. However, you should not discuss your concerns if you believe that this would place the child at greater risk or lead to loss of evidence for a police investigation.

9.2 **If you make a decision not to discuss your concerns with the child’s parents or carers** this must be recorded in the child’s child protection file with a full explanation for your decision.

9.3 **It is important to consider the child’s wishes and feelings**, if age appropriate, as part of planning what action to take in relation to concerns about their welfare.



9.4 When talking to children, you should take account of their age, understanding and preferred language, which may not be English. It is also important to consider how a disabled child may need support in communicating.

9.5 How you talk to a child will also depend on the substance and seriousness of the concerns.

You may need to seek advice from the MASH or the police to ensure that neither the safety of the child nor any subsequent investigation is jeopardised.

9.6 If concerns have arisen as a result of information given by a child, it is important to reassure the child but not to promise confidentiality.

9.7 **It is expected that you discuss your concerns with the parents/carers before making a referral to the MASH, unless you consider that this would place the child at increased risk of significant harm.**

9.8 Parents will ultimately be made aware of which organisation made the referral.

10 Early help for children and families

10.1 Most parents can look after their children without the need of help other than from their family or friends. However, some parents may need additional help from our school or other services such as the NHS. Providing help early is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later.

10.2 Our school will work together with other agencies to provide a coordinated offer of early help, in line with [Working Together to Safeguard Children March 2015](#) and local guidance, to any child who needs it.

10.3 We will pool our knowledge within the school and with other agencies about which families or children need additional support in a range of ways so that we can work out how best to help them. We will use the Threshold Document to identify what level of need the child or their family has.

10.4 We will work closely with targeted early help services, via the Early Help Hub, and Children's Social Work Services if we feel families need more support and input, or children are at risk of harm, and we will continue to provide support if other services are also needed.

10.5 Within the Early Help Hub there are three teams working together to deal with enquiries and referrals:



- The Support Team: The Support Team will take enquiries from practitioners and either deal with the enquiry themselves or pass it on to a colleague in another part of the Hub. They will recommend when a referral should be made to Early Help and manage the administration of all referrals that come in.
- The Early Help Engagement Team: The Early Help Engagement Team will link with families that are 'stepped down' (previously known as re-directed) by Social Work to Early Help. This team will be the interface between Social Work and the Early Help Hub including 'step up' discussions.
- The Family Mentoring Team: The Family Mentoring Team will offer mentoring, advice, guidance and support to professionals on all aspects of Early Help. They will have some limited involvement with families and processes such as Team Around the Family (TAF) meetings.

10.6 Early help support is accessed by making an Early Help Referral. Consent for this will need to be gained from the family first.

10.7 Our school will work with other services in early help planning and coordination of interventions to meet young peoples and families.

11 MASH Responses to concerns about a child

11.1 Once Children's Social Work Services has accepted our referral as needing a social-care-led response (Level 4 of the Threshold Document), a senior social work practitioner and their manager will evaluate the concerns to identify the sources and levels of risk and to agree what protective action may be necessary.

11.2 The evaluation of concerns and risks involve deciding whether:

- the child needs immediate protection and urgent action is necessary; or
- the child is suffering, or at risk of suffering, significant harm and enquiries need to be made under section 47 of the Children Act 1989; or
- the child is in need and should be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

11.3 We will cooperate with Children's Social Work Services and the police in any emergency action they take using their legal powers for immediate protection of the child. This may involve removing the child from their home.

11.4 We will participate in any multi-agency discussions (strategy discussions), if invited to do so, and share information about the child and their family to plan the response to concerns.



- 11.5 We will share information about the child and their family for section 47 enquiries and family assessments undertaken by Children's Social Work Services.
- 11.6 We will ensure that a relevant staff member participates in all initial and review child protection conferences, if we are invited to attend. The staff member will work together with other agencies to discuss the need for and agree to an outcome-focused child protection plan and will ensure that the child's wishes and views are considered in their own right in planning.
- 11.7 If we are members of the core group to implement a child protection plan, we will ensure a relevant staff member participates in all core group meetings.
- 11.8 We will ensure that we complete all actions allocated to us as part of the outcome-focused plan, whether a child protection plan or a family support plan, in a timely way.
- 11.9 We will continue to monitor children once their plans are ended to ensure that they are supported and kept safe.

12 Information Sharing and Consent

- 12.1 It is essential that people working with children can confidently share information as part of their day-to-day work. This is necessary not only to safeguard and protect children from harm but also to work together to support families to improve outcomes for all.
- 12.2 The school may have to share information about parents or carers, such as their medical history, disability or substance misuse issues, for investigations of child abuse carried out by Children's Social Work Services.
- 12.3 We will proactively seek out information as well as sharing it. This means checking with other professionals whether they have information that helps us to be as well informed as possible when working to support children.
- 12.4 The Data Protection Act 1998 is not a barrier to sharing information. It is there to ensure that personal information is managed in a sensible way and that a balance is struck between a person's privacy and public protection.
- 12.5 We should be sharing any concerns we have with parents at an early stage, unless this would put a child at greater risk or compromise an investigation. Parents need to know what our responsibilities are for safeguarding and protecting children and that this involves sharing information about them with other professionals.



- 12.6 Be clear about the purpose of sharing confidential information and only share as much as you need to achieve your purpose.
- 12.7 Try to get consent from parents (or the child, if they have sufficient understanding¹) to share information, if possible. However, **you do not need consent if you have serious concerns about a child's safety and well-being.**
- 12.8 **Consent is not necessary** in cases where Children's Social Work Services are making child protection enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989. Information needs to be shared with Children's Social Work Services; staff members must make sure to record what information has been shared.
- 12.9 **Consent is necessary, for:**
- Children's Social Work Services investigations or assessments of concerns under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Children's Social Care will assume that we have obtained consent from the parents to share information unless we make them aware that there is a specific issue about consent. This must be discussed with a social worker in the MASH.
 - Early Help Assessments. Assessments are undertaken with the agreement of the child and their parents or carers.
- 12.10 If you are in any doubt about the need for seeking consent, get advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- 12.11 Keep a record of your decision to share information, with or without consent, and the reasons for it. Remember also that it is just as important to keep a record of why you decided not to share information as why you did so.

13 Record Keeping

- 13.1 Good record keeping is an important part of the school's accountability to children and their families and will help us in meeting our key responsibility to respond appropriately to welfare concerns about children.
- 13.2 Records should be factual, accurate, relevant, up to date and auditable. They should support monitoring, risk assessment and planning for children and enable informed and timely decisions about appropriate action to take.



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

14 Professional Challenge and Disagreements

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

14.2 We will promote a culture within our school that enables all staff members to raise, without fear of repercussions, any concerns they may have about the management of child protection in the school. This may include raising concerns about decisions, action and inaction by colleagues about individual children. If necessary, staff members will speak with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the head teacher, the chair of governors or with the Local Authority Designated Officer.

14.3 Cooperation across agencies is crucial; professionals need to work together, using their skills and experience, to make a robust contribution to safeguarding children and promoting their welfare within the framework of discussions, meetings, conferences and case management.

14.4 If there are any professional disagreements with practitioners from other agencies, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the head teacher will raise concerns with the relevant agency's safeguarding lead in line with guidance in the [Pan-Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures](#).

14.5 If the school disagrees with the child protection conference chair's decision, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the head teacher will consider whether they wish to challenge it further and raise the matter with Children's Services Head of Safeguarding.

15 Safer Recruitment

15.1 Our school has robust recruitment and vetting procedures to help prevent unsuitable people from working with children, which are in line with those stipulated within [Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, September 2016](#)

15.2 Our job advertisements and application packs make explicit reference to the school's commitment to safeguarding children, including compliance with disclosure and barring regulations and clear statements in the job description and person specification about the staff member's safeguarding responsibilities.



- 15.3 All staff members, including volunteers, who have contact with children, young people and families will have appropriate pre-employment checks in line with [Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, September 2016](#)
- 15.4 School governors are required to have an enhanced DBS check completed.
- 15.5 Where appropriate, all staff members, who have contact with children and young people, aged 8 years old and under, will be informed of their obligation to make declarations about household members, in line with [Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006](#)
- 15.6 At least one member on every short listing and interview panel will have completed safer recruitment training.
- 15.7 The head teacher and the nominated governor for child protection are responsible for ensuring that our **single central record of pre-employment checks** is accurate and up to date.

16 Procedure for managing allegations of abuse made against school staff members

- 16.1 The school takes seriously all allegations of abuse made against staff members, including volunteers, and will investigate them in line with the statutory guidance, [Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges, September 2016](#) and the [Pan-Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures](#).
- 16.2 The process described below is a summary of the procedure described in the above documents. The case manager for the investigation should refer to them for details.
- 16.3 **The procedure applies to all adults working in the school or providing a service on behalf of the school to our pupils either within or outside school premises**, i.e. all permanent, temporary and ancillary staff, governors, volunteers, contractors and external service or activity providers (**collectively referred to as staff or staff members** in this procedure).
- 16.4 The allegations management procedure will be used in all cases where it is alleged that a staff member, has:
- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child; or
 - possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
 - behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates that they would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children.



16.5 Allegations may arise in a number of ways, for example a report from a child, a complaint from a parent, or a concern raised by another adult within the school. An allegation may concern someone's behaviour or actions within their job or a voluntary activity, or within their family or private life.

16.6 **Any concerns will be considered in the context of the four types of abuse** (see section 2 above).

16.7 Concerns include inappropriate relationships between adults and children. For example:

- a sexual relationship between a child under 18 and an adult in a position of trust with them, even if the relationship may appear to be consensual;
- grooming, i.e. meeting a child under 16 with intent to commit a relevant offence (section 15 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003); or
- other behaviour that gives rise to concerns, such as possession of abusive images of children or inappropriate contact through texts or online, inappropriate messages, gifts or socialising with children.

16.8 If an allegation or concern arises about a staff member outside of their work with children, and this may present a risk to children for whom the staff member is responsible, the general principles outlined in these procedures will still apply.

16.9 Roles and responsibilities:

- Anyone who has concerns about, or has received an allegation about, the behaviour of a staff member needs to report the concerns immediately to the head teacher. In the absence of the head teacher, or if the head teacher is the subject of the allegation, concerns must be reported to the chair of governors. If both the head teacher and the chair of governors are absent, the allegation needs to be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
- The head teacher will act as the case manager for investigations of allegations and liaise with the LADO.
- The chair of governors will act as the case manager, if the allegation is made against the head teacher.
- The LADO is involved in the overall management and oversight of individual cases. They will provide advice and guidance to the case manager, liaise with the police and other agencies and monitor the progress of cases to ensure that they are dealt with as quickly as possible, consistent with a thorough and fair process.



16.10 Initial action by the person noticing concerns or receiving an allegation first:

- Treat the matter seriously and keep an open mind.
- Do not make assumptions or offer alternative explanations.
- Do not investigate or ask leading questions, if seeking clarification.
- Do not promise confidentiality, but give assurance that the information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.
- Act quickly.
- Make a written record of the information. Where possible, record the exact words of the person making the allegation or the child's own words.
- Record the time, date and place and names of people present when the allegation was made or concerning behaviour was observed. Record the time, date and place of alleged incidents, persons present and what was said, if these were mentioned by the person making the allegation.
- Sign and date the written record.
- Immediately report the matter to the head teacher or the chair of governors, as in 15.9 above and give them the written record.

16.11 Initial response by the case manager:

- Do not investigate the matter immediately or interview the staff member or the child concerned.
- Obtain written details of the concern or allegation, signed and dated by the person reporting it. Countersign and date the written details and record the decisions made and the reasons for those decisions.
- Contact the LADO immediately to report the allegation and for a consultation. The allegation must be reported within one day at the most.
- If the allegation requires immediate attention but is received out of hours, contact the Children's Services Emergency Duty Team or the police and inform the LADO as soon as possible.
- Refer allegations against a staff member who is no longer working in the school to the police in the first instance and then inform the LADO.

16.12 Initial consideration of the allegation by the case manager and the LADO:

- The case manager and the LADO will consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action, including whether further information is needed.
- The case manager may need to obtain relevant additional information, such as previous history, whether the child or their family have made similar allegations in the past and the staff member's current contact with children.



- If the allegation is not demonstrably false and there is cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, the LADO will refer the case to Children’s Social Work Services and ask them to convene a strategy discussion.
- The LADO will consult the police if a criminal offence may have been committed. If the threshold for significant harm is not reached but a police investigation may be needed, the LADO will immediately inform the police.
- If an investigation by Children’s Social Work Services or the police is not necessary, the case manager and the LADO will discuss the options open to the school depending on the nature of the allegation and the evidence available. This will range from taking no further action to dismissal or a decision not to use the staff member’s services in the future.
- If the initial evaluation leads to no further action against the staff member concerned, the decision and justification should be recorded by both the case manager and the LADO. Agreement should be reached on what information should be put in writing to the individual and what action should follow, including informing the person who made the allegation originally.

16.13 Persons to be notified:

- After consultation with the LADO, the case manager should inform the accused person about the allegation as soon as possible.
- **However, if a strategy discussion is needed, or the police or Children’s Social Work Services need to be involved, the case manager should not inform the accused person until those agencies have been consulted and have agreed what information can be disclosed to the individual.**
- In principle, the case manager should inform the parents or carers of the children involved about the allegation. The LADO should be consulted first to ensure that this will not impede any investigation or disciplinary process. In some cases, the parents or carers may need to be informed right away, e.g. if a child is injured and needs medical attention.
- The parents or carers and the child, if sufficiently mature, should be helped to understand the process and kept informed about the progress of the case and the outcome if no criminal prosecution will take place.

16.14 Confidentiality:

- Every effort should be made to maintain confidentiality and guard against publicity while an allegation is being investigated. Information should be restricted to only those who need to know in order to protect the children concerned, carry out the investigation and manage the disciplinary process.
- The Education Act 2011 introduced **reporting restrictions** preventing the publication of any material that may lead to the identification of a teacher who has been accused by, or on behalf of, a pupil from the same school.



- Reporting restrictions apply until the point that the accused person is charged with an offence, or until the Secretary of State publishes information about the investigation or decision from the disciplinary process. Reporting restrictions also cease if the accused person goes public themselves, thereby waiving their right to anonymity.
- Breaching reporting restrictions is a criminal offence. Therefore, the case manager should inform the parents or carers concerned about the implications of publishing details of the allegation on social networking sites. They should be advised to seek legal advice, if they wish to apply to court for removal of reporting restrictions.
- The case manager should discuss with the LADO how best to manage speculation, leaks and gossip within the school and the community at large, and press interest, if it arises.

16.15 Supporting people:

- The school together with Children's Social Work Services and the police, if they are involved, will consider the impact on the child concerned and provide support as appropriate.
- The head teacher will ensure that the child and family are kept informed of the progress of the investigation.
- The staff member who is the subject of the allegation will be advised to contact their union, professional association or a colleague for support.
- Personnel Services will be consulted at the earliest opportunity to ensure that the staff member is provided with appropriate support, if necessary, through occupational health or welfare arrangements.
- The head teacher will appoint a named representative to keep the staff member updated on the progress of the investigation; this will continue during any police or section 47 investigation or disciplinary investigation.

16.16 Managing risk during the investigation:

- The perceived level of risk during the investigation needs to be considered and managed. In some situations the level of risk may require the staff member not to be working with specific children or all children in the school until the investigation is completed.
- There are several options open to the employer, including:
 - redeployment so as not to come into direct contact with one or more children; or
 - refraining (agreeing that the person will not work with children during the investigation); or
 - suspension.
- Refraining and suspension should be considered as neutral acts and should not be automatic. Suspension should be considered only in cases where there is



cause to believe children in the school are at risk of harm or the allegation is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal.

- Decisions about risk are best made in a multi-agency forum such as the strategy discussion. The LADO will canvass the views of the agencies participating and inform the case manager. However, only the employer has the power to refrain or suspend.
- Possible risks to the children involved and any children in the accused staff member's home, work or community life will be evaluated and managed.

16.17 Timescales:

- Cases will be resolved as quickly as possible, consistent with a thorough and fair investigation.
- It is expected that the majority of cases should be resolved within one month and all but the most exceptional cases should be resolved within 12 months.
- However, the timing will depend on the nature, seriousness and complexity of the case and the right outcome is far more important than meeting timescales.
- Cases where it is immediately apparent that the allegation is unsubstantiated or malicious should be resolved within one week.
- The school should discuss the timing of actions with the LADO for all allegations that do not require police involvement but for which there are child protection concerns.
- If the nature of the allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, the school should start appropriate action within three working days.
- If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, the hearing should be held within 15 working days.

16.18 Resignations and compromise agreements:

- The allegation will be investigated according to procedure, even if the accused staff member resigns or ceases to provide their services.
- Every effort will be made to reach a conclusion to the case should the staff member refuse to cooperate, having been given a full opportunity to answer the allegation and make representation.
- Although it would not be possible to apply disciplinary sanctions if the period of notice expires before the conclusion of the investigation, the outcome of the disciplinary process will be recorded.
- The school will not use 'compromise/settlement agreements', for example where the staff member agrees to resign provided that disciplinary action is not taken and that a future reference is agreed.

16.19 Outcomes of investigations of allegations:

- **Substantiated** – there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation



- **Malicious** – there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive
- **False** – there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation
- **Unsubstantiated** – there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation. The term, therefore, does not imply guilt or innocence.

16.20 Disciplinary or suitability process and investigations:

- The LADO and the case manager will discuss whether disciplinary action is appropriate in all cases where:
 - it is clear at the outset, or decided by a strategy discussion, that a police investigation or section 47 enquiry is not necessary; or
 - the police or the Crown Prosecution Service informs that the criminal investigation and subsequent trial are complete, or that an investigation is to be closed without charge, or prosecution is discontinued.
- The discussion will consider any potential misconduct or gross misconduct by the staff member, and take into account:
 - the information provided by the police and Children’s Services;
 - the result of any investigation or trial; and
 - the different standards of proof in disciplinary and criminal proceedings.
- In the case of supply, contract or volunteer workers, the LADO and the case manager will work with the providing agency in deciding whether to continue using the person’s services or whether they can provide future work with children or whether to report them for barring considerations.

16.21 Record keeping:

- The case manager will keep a clear and comprehensive summary of the case record and provide a copy to the accused staff member. A copy of the record should also be given to the LADO.
- The record will include details of how the allegation was investigated and resolved and the decisions reached. It will be completed in collaboration with the LADO.
- Details of allegations that are found to be malicious will be removed from personnel records.
- In the case of all other allegations, the summary will be placed in the staff member’s personnel file and kept until the person reaches retirement age or for a period of 10 years from the date of the allegation, if that is longer.

16.22 References:

- If the allegation was proven to be malicious, false or unsubstantiated, it will not be included in any references for the staff member.
- A history of repeated concerns or allegations which have all been found to be malicious, false or unsubstantiated will also not be included in any references.



16.23 Informing the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS):

- The LADO will discuss with the case manager whether the school will refer the staff member to the DBS and, in the case of a teacher to the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL), if the allegation is substantiated and the person is dismissed or the school ceases to use the person's services, or the person resigns or ceases to provide their services.
- **It is a legal requirement for schools to refer to the DBS anyone:**
 - **who has harmed, or is likely to harm, or poses a risk of harm to a child; or**
 - **if there is reason to believe that they have committed one of a number of listed offences (as set out in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (Prescribed Criteria and Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2009), and have been removed from working in paid or unpaid regulated activity or would have been removed had they not left.**