

# Child Protection Policy

Adopted by the Governing Body on:  
28<sup>th</sup> November 2017

To be reviewed:  
September 2018

Our Nominated Governor for Safeguarding is:

**Mr Mark Preece**

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead is:

**Mrs Caroline Mahon**

Our Deputy Safeguarding Leads are:

**Mr Gavin White and Mrs Mary Joint**

# Child Protection Policy

The child protection policy for Rushcombe First School is based on a template provided by the Dorset Safeguarding and Standards Team; it reflects the Pan-Dorset Inter-Agency Safeguarding Procedures (on the Dorset Safeguarding Children Board website) and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2016.

This policy consists of three main documents:

- A. The overarching safeguarding policy (statement of principles)
- B. Detailed child protection procedures and
- C. Child protection summary sheet. The latter 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.

## A. Safeguarding Policy

Rushcombe First School recognise(s) that the welfare of the child is paramount: the needs and wishes of each child will be put first. 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.

Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2015, HM Government statutory guidance, defines safeguarding as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best life chances.

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' 2016 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in this school.

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 Dorset Safeguarding Standard (recommended by the Dorset Safeguarding Children Board) that governors receive an annual report from the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Nominated Governor in order to help monitor compliance with statutory responsibilities.

The Dorset Standards also include that each school and college completes and submits to the Safeguarding Children Board an annual audit of its safeguarding and child protection arrangements, including an action plan.

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

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 in order 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, regular volunteers (ie those who come into school once a week or more or 4 times in a 30 day period), governors or anyone working on behalf of the school.

We will endeavour to safeguard children and young people by:

- 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 being drawn into terrorism
- supporting attendance and taking action if a child is missing school regularly
- 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
- 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
- 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
- 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
- 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 all those named above (ie DSLs and Deputy DSLs; Designated Teacher; Headteacher, all staff and regular volunteers) have training appropriate to their roles as set out in statutory guidance or recommended by the Dorset Safeguarding Children Board
- identifying any concerns early and providing appropriate help [Inclusion Leader, ELSA support] to prevent them from escalating, including working with parents/carers and other agencies as appropriate

- 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 Dorset Safeguarding Children Board 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 (including host families) safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made in accordance with statutory guidance and legal requirements and also making sure that at least one appointment panel member has undertaken safer recruitment training
- 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
- ensuring our online safety process includes appropriate filters and monitoring systems
- ensuring staff and volunteers understand about 'whistle blowing' and how to escalate concerns about pupils or staff if they think the right action has not been taken to safeguard children
- promoting a culture in which staff feeling able to report to senior leaders 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
- dealing appropriately with any allegations/concerns about the behaviour of staff or volunteers in accordance with the process set out in statutory guidance

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)
- E-Safety Policies for pupils and staff, which include use of mobile technology
- 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 in Education
- Anti-Bullying Procedures
- and other relevant policies

These policies and procedures can be located in the school office.

## **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' 2016, plus Annex A.

### **1. What is Child Protection?**

1.1 Child protection is one very important aspect of safeguarding. It refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

## **2. What is significant harm?**

2.1 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.

## **3. Purpose of these procedures**

3.1 These procedures explain what action should be taken if there are concerns that a child is or might be suffering harm. A 'child' is a person under 18 years but the principles of these procedures apply to all pupils at this school, including those over 18.

## **4. Responsibilities and roles**

4.1 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.

4.2 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.

### 4.3 *For independent schools/multi-academy trusts with an overarching 'proprietor body' which also have local governing bodies*

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 person on the *add name of board* who takes leadership responsibility for safeguarding in this school is: *add name of safeguarding lead*.

The nominated person on the local governing body, working closely with school staff, is: *add name of nominated governor*.

*Or*

4.3 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 person who takes leadership responsibility for safeguarding on the governing body of this school is: Mr Mark Preece.

4.4 This school has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). 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. More information about the DSL role can be found in Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead in this school is: Mrs Caroline Mahon.

The school also has at least one Deputy Safeguarding Lead.

The Deputy Safeguarding Leads are: Mr Gavin White and Mrs Mary Joint.

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

See Appendix 1 for contact details.

4.6 All action is taken in line with the following guidance:

- DfE guidance (2016) – Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015) – published by HM Government
- Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Inter-Agency Safeguarding Procedures & Guidance, accessed through the Dorset Safeguarding Children Board website [www.dorsetlscb.co.uk](http://www.dorsetlscb.co.uk)
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused – Government Guidance (2015)

## 5. What is child abuse?

5.1 It is generally accepted that there are four main forms of abuse. The following definitions are from Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015).

### i) **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.

### ii) **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.

### iii) **Sexual abuse**

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

### iv) **Neglect**

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur

during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance 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.

5.2 It is accepted that in all forms of abuse there are elements of emotional abuse, and that some children are subjected to more than one form of abuse at any one time. In most cases multiple issues will overlap with one another.

## **6. Recognising child abuse – signs and symptoms**

6.1 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 be in need of help or protection'.

6.2 Recognising child abuse is not always easy, and it is not the responsibility of school staff to decide whether or not child abuse has definitely 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.

Appendix 2 details examples of possible indicators of each of the four kinds of abuse.

## **7. Allegations made by children about other children, including peer on peer abuse**

7.1 If one pupil causes harm to another, it is not always necessary for it to be dealt with through a referral to Children's Social Care: sexual experimentation within 'normal parameters', bullying and fighting, for example, are not generally seen as child protection issues. All incidents will, however, be taken seriously, parents/carers will be contacted and appropriate action taken.

7.2 The nature and severity of the allegation or concern will determine whether staff will implement the school's anti-bullying or other school procedures or whether a referral needs to be made to social workers or the Police. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should be consulted if there is any doubt about the right course of action.

7.3 A referral to Children's Social Care will be made in all cases of domestic abuse relating to young people aged 16 and 17 who experience physical, emotional, sexual and/or financial abuse, or coercive control, in their intimate relationships.

7.4 A referral to Children's Social Care will be made if a child or young person displays sexually harmful behaviour. This involves one or more children engaging in sexual discussions or acts that are *inappropriate for their age or stage of development*. It is also considered harmful if it involves coercion or threats of violence or if one of the children is much older than the other.

7.5 The process for managing sexually harmful behaviour can be found in the inter-agency safeguarding procedures on the DSCB website. In brief, a multi-agency meeting should be convened by Children's Social Care following a referral and an action plan agreed.

7.6 A school risk assessment will be put in place, preferably by way of a meeting, which includes parents/carers and other professionals where they are involved.

7.7 Staff should not dismiss abusive behaviour as 'normal' between young people and should not develop high thresholds before taking action.

7.8 Staff should be aware of the potential uses of information technology for bullying and abusive behaviour between young people.

7.9 **Sexting** involves images or videos which are indecent or of a sexual nature, generated by children under the age of 18 or of children under the age of 18, shared via a mobile phone, handheld device or website.

When an incident involving youth produced sexual imagery comes to the school's attention:

- The incident should be referred to the DSL as soon as possible
- The DSL should hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff
- The DSL should meet with the children involved [if appropriate]
- Parents should be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless
- there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put the young person at risk of harm
- At any point in the process if there is a concern a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately

The school:

- Will seek advice from the Safeguarding and / or Children's Services team
- Will work with the children involved and have a discussion with parents, if required
- Will regularly request that children do not bring mobile phones with them to school
- Will ensure appropriate monitoring and support is in place

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

8.1 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, taking into account such things as any imbalance of power, wide difference in ages or developmental stages etc.

8.2 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.

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

## **9. Child sexual exploitation**

9.1 This form of abuse involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (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.

9.2 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.

9.3 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.

9.4 Any concerns about child sexual 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 inter-agency safeguarding procedures on the DSCB website.

## **10. 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 (ie 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** 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. In addition to reporting any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, teachers (along with regulated health and social care professionals) have a statutory duty to report personally to the Police if they discover that female genital mutilation has or appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions.

**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 being 'monitored' by siblings. There might be a request for extended absence from school or might not return from a holiday abroad. We recognise that school staff can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage.

**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.

## **Radicalisation and extremism**

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

Extremism is defined by HM Government as 'Vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs; and/or calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas'.

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 by e-mailing the Safeguarding Referral Unit: [sru@dorset.pnn.police.uk](mailto:sru@dorset.pnn.police.uk).

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is also the Prevent Lead.

Dorset has a Channel Panel in place, in accordance with its duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015. This is a multi-agency meeting which discusses individuals who have been referred by the Police as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Where pupils at this school are being discussed, the DSL or Headteacher will attend the Panel meetings.

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.

## **11. Children Missing in Education**

11.1 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 and/or travelling to conflict zones.

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

11.3 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. The school will refer to the local authority's policies on the procedure for unauthorised attendance [Attendance Policy] and Children Missing in Education Guidance [updated September 2016].

**There is more information about specific safeguarding issues including links to websites in Part one and Annex A of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2016.**

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

All staff and volunteers will:

- Listen carefully to what is said
- 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 in order 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...
- Reassure the child, if necessary, that s/he has done the right thing in telling
- 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'

### **13. Taking action**

13.1 Where physical injuries have been observed, these will be carefully noted 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.

13.2 Any disclosure or indicators of abuse will be reported verbally to the DSL or Deputy straightaway or, where they are not available and concerns are immediate, ensure a referral is made without delay to Children's Social Care. In Dorset, from 5 September 2016, these teams will be known as 'Help and Protection' teams. Staff at schools with boarding provision can seek advice in the first instance from the single point of contact (will be known as Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub from Spring 2017) when the child's home address is not Dorset. (See Appendix 1 for contact numbers).

13.3 Where the child already has an allocated social worker, that person or a manager or duty worker in the same team will be contacted promptly. (See Appendix 1 for contact numbers).

13.4 A written record will then be made (ideally on a standard school 'concern' form) of what was said, including the child's own words, as soon as possible and given to the DSL.

13.5 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 taken into account, the school has a responsibility to take whatever action is required to ensure the child's safety and that of other children.

13.6 The DSL will decide whether to contact parents at this stage, judging whether to do so is likely to place the child at risk of harm from their 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 duty worker first and agree with him/her 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.

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

13.8 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.

13.9 The Dorset Safeguarding Children Board's 'Threshold Document' 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).

13.10 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 social workers.

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

14.1 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.

14.2 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.

14.3 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. The DSL will advise accordingly and later confirm that this referral has been made.

14.4 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.

14.5 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.

#### **15. Remember**

15.1 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 or college 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
- the duty worker in the Help and Protection Team – single point of contact (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub from Spring 2017)

Anyone can make a referral, not just the DSLs.

15.2 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 or not 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.

15.3 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.

15.4 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.

15.5 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.

15.6 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 3 below for detailed record keeping guidance.**

## **16. 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 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 seen as 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.

## **17. Responding to allegations or concerns about staff or volunteers**

17.1 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. However, if a member of staff, or any other person, has any reason to believe that another adult has acted inappropriately or abused a child or young person, they will take action by reporting to the Headteacher (not the DSL if this is a different person). 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 taking action.

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

17.3 In all cases of allegations against staff or volunteers, the Headteacher and Chair of Governors, will contact the 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' 2016.

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

18.1 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.

18.2 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;
- 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

18.3 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.

18.4 Staff responsible for intimate care of children will undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times and in accordance with the school's intimate care policy. For children with communication difficulties, staff work and liaise with parents and healthcare professionals.

## **19. Safer Working Practice**

19.1 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.

19.2 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 number.)

## **20. Training**

20.1 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 'Keeping Children Safe in Education: information for all school and college staff' plus Annex A if they work directly with children.

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

20.3 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.

20.4 Staff who do not have designated responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including the Headteacher, will undertake suitable refresher training at appropriate intervals. The DSCB recommends this is at least every three years.

20.5 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 WRAP.

20.6 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.

20.7 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.

20.8 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 DSCB on matters such as domestic abuse, attachment and child sexual exploitation; completing on-line training on FGM; attending local DSL forums etc.

20.9 Designated Teachers for Looked-After Children (mandatory for maintained schools and academies; good practice in independent schools which have or likely to have Looked-After

Children) will undertake appropriate training. In Dorset this is provided by the Virtual School for Children in Care.

See Appendix 1 for contact details.

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

20.11 It is recommended by the DSCB 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' 2016. Attendance includes those who also work with children and have attended child protection training in that role.

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

21.1 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.

21.2 Any issues which they have not been able to resolve with 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 designated officer (also known as the LADO).

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

## **22. Information for parents and carers**

22.1 At this school we are committed to keeping our pupils safe. Our first priority is your child's welfare and we will usually discuss with you any concerns we have about your child. There might be rare occasions, however, when we have to provide information to or consult other agencies such as Children's Social Care before we contact you. This will include situations where we judge that to tell you first will or might put your child at risk of significant harm.

22.2 Our responsibilities are set out in this policy. It reflects statutory guidance and the Inter-Agency Safeguarding Procedures, which can be found on the Dorset Safeguarding Children Board website.

22.3 If you have any questions about this please speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mrs Caroline Mahon.

## C. Child Protection Summary for all Visiting Professionals

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) or the Deputy/ies who are Mrs Caroline Mahon, Mr Gavin White and Mrs Mary Joint.

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.