



## **CHARD SCHOOL**

### **SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**

#### **This policy also applies to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting**

Everyone employed or engaged by Chard School has a responsibility in relation to child protection. In day-to-day contact with children at risk, members of staff have an opportunity to note concerns and to meet with parents and other associated adults. This policy aims to outline the role of the school, the procedures that staff should take and guidance on issues related to child protection generally. It is not exhaustive. All staff should use, as a rule of thumb, the needs and safety of the child as being at the centre of any decision they make. Increasingly, schools are expected to work with, support and sometimes lead different agencies to enable the most appropriate form of intervention to take place.

Chard School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our pupils and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

In line with this commitment, this policy should be read in conjunction with the other key safeguarding policies, including the Safer Recruitment, E-Safety, Acceptable Use of Cameras and Mobile devices, Safe use of technology in the EYFS and the Prevent Policies. Staff are also expected to read at least part one of the Keeping Children Safe in Education 2015 statutory guidance and to conform to the School's Staff Code of Conduct (School Rules) in the Staff Employment Manual.

A copy of this policy is made available to parents of pupils on the school website, and is sent to the parents of prospective pupils on request.

#### **Aims of the Policy**

- To raise awareness of individual responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse
- To provide systematic means of monitoring, recording and reporting concerns and cases
- To provide guidance on recognizing and dealing with suspected child abuse
- To provide a framework for the inter-agency communication and effective liaison
- To identify strategies and interventions available to support children at risk
- To ensure that any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements are remedied without delay
- To ensure that safe recruitment procedures are operated.

## CHILD PROTECTION AT CHARD SCHOOL

In all cases of actual or suspected abuse our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) must be informed and the South West Child Protection Procedures followed – these are online procedures, which are regularly updated. Key staff should upload this website to their desktop for instant access.

[www.swcpp.org.uk](http://www.swcpp.org.uk)

Amanda Downing is the nominated person responsible for safeguarding children within the EYFS and will liaise with the local statutory children's agencies as appropriate.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will inform the Head of all cases of actual or suspected abuse. The only exception to this would be if the Head were implicated in the concerns, in which case the Chair of Governors would be informed.

### **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**

Richard Lucas – Deputy Head

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### **Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)**

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### **Governor with responsibility for Child Protection at Chard School**

Edward Colgan

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### **Chair of Governors**

Sue Kirby

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Chard School fully recognises its responsibilities for child protection. Whilst we strive to minimise risk, we are fully aware that child protection risk cannot be eliminated.

***Chard School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare and protection of children. All staff at Chard School have enhanced DBS checks. Our Safeguarding Policy can be viewed on our website at [www.chardschool.co.uk](http://www.chardschool.co.uk) or by request to the Head.***

The Chard School Child Protection Policy is designed to help achieve these aims and keep our children safe, happy and free from harm.

Our policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working for and on behalf of the School. There are five main elements to our policy:

- Establishing a positive, supportive, secure environment in which children can learn and develop, together with the Chard School ethos, which promotes, in all pupils, a sense of being valued.
- Ensuring we practice safer recruitment in checking the suitability of all staff who work at Chard School
- Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep themselves safe through the content of the curriculum. See Chard School's E-Safety policy.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying and reporting cases, or suspected cases, of abuse.
- Supporting pupils who have been abused in accordance with his/her agreed child protection plan.

We recognise that because of the day-to-day contact with children, staff are well placed to observe the outward signs of abuse. Chard School will

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in Chard School whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Include opportunities in the PHSE (Personal, Health and Social Education) curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

We will follow the procedures set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board and take account of all guidance issued by the DfE, National Minimum Standard and the Independent School Standards. Chard School will

- Ensure we have a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) who have received appropriate training and support for this role. Training in child protection and inter-agency work is carried out every two years for the DSL and DDSL.

- Ensure we have a Nominated Governor responsible for child protection, (currently Edward Colgan). The governing body undertakes an annual review of the child protection policy and procedures and the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged.
- Ensure safer recruitment practices are always followed for all staff and volunteers who have a role in the school, including enhanced DBS checks. Nominated Governors and staff have undertaken the DfE Safer Recruitment training and have updated this training every 5 years.
- Ensure every member of staff (including temporary, supply staff and volunteers) and the governing body knows that Richard Lucas is the DSL, what their role is, how to contact them and who to go to in their absence.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers are DBS checked, understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns to the DSL. Through regular staff training we will foster a culture of mutual respect between pupils and members of staff, with adults modeling good practice in this context. Training in child protection is provided every three years for the Head and all staff as a minimum requirement.
- New staff are given a Child Protection induction in which they learn to identify signs of possible abuse and neglect at the earliest opportunity, and to respond in a timely and appropriate way. They are also given a copy of KCSIE Part1, a copy of the Safeguarding Policy which details the DSL and DDSL, and the Staff Code of Conduct (including whistleblowing) which is in the Employment Manual.
- Promptly report to the DBS any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) whose services are no longer used and the DBS referral criteria are met.
- Make aware to all part-time and voluntary staff the arrangements for child protection and provide a copy of the school's Child Protection Policy and Staff Code of Conduct when given Child Protection Induction Training and before working with children. Staff to sign on receipt they will read this.
- Notify Children's Social Care if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a pupil who is in receipt of a child protection plan.
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding child protection matters including attendance at case conferences.
- Keep written, dated and signed records of concerns about children, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately.
- Ensure all child protection records are regularly reviewed, kept secure and separate from the main pupil files, in a locked location accessible only to specified staff.
- Follow procedures where an allegation is made against a member of staff ensuring there are robust procedures to deal with allegations not only

against members of staff, but against anyone who has contact with pupils including volunteers, the Head and Governors. In the case of an allegation against the Head, the chair of Governors should be informed.

- Keep clear records of investigations and outcomes of allegations on staff files.
- Notify the DfE and/or any other designated authority (e.g. the Independent Safeguarding Authority) within one month when the services of a person are discontinued because he/she was considered unsuitable to work with children.
- Risk assess all activities organised by the school that take place off the school site. This includes ensuring that the off site providers have undertaken appropriate DBS checks for their staff that will have contact with pupils from the school.
- Ensure that any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements are remedied without delay.

The Children Act (1989), the Children Act (2004) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2015), confirm that the “welfare of the child is paramount”. This means that considerations of confidentiality which might apply to other situations should not be allowed to override the right of children to be protected from harm. However, every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned when an allegation has been made and is being investigated (see DfE Guidance “Dealing with Allegations of Abuse against Teachers and other Staff – October 2012).

We recognise that children who suffer any form of abuse may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. When at school, their behaviour may be challenging or they may be withdrawn (see DfE Ensuring Good Behaviour in Schools – July 2013). In such cases, we will liaise with other agencies that support the pupil such as Children’s Social Care, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Education Attendance Service and Educational Psychology Service. We will also ensure that, should a pupil in receipt of a child protection plan move schools, their information is securely transferred to the new school immediately and that the child's social worker is informed.

Chard School’s policies on Bullying and Cyber-bullying are to be read in conjunction with the Child Protection Policy (see DfE Preventing and Tackling Bullying – Advice for School Leaders, staff and Governing Bodies, March 2014) Any serious bullying concerns will be referred to the DSL and appropriate action will be taken (see Procedure for dealing with Bullying/Cyber-bullying incidents).

## **2. SAFEGUARDING IN EYFS**

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. The safeguarding and welfare requirements met by Chard School, set by the

Statutory Framework for EYFS, are designed to create a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment, where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence.

- Staff in the Early Years are trained to understand the Safeguarding Policy and procedures and have up-to-date information regarding safeguarding issues.
- Staff in the Early Years have appropriate qualifications, training, skills and knowledge and a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.
- Staff in the Early Years are given induction training to help them understand their role and responsibilities including; emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection, equality policy and health and safety training and policy. New EYFS staff are given the same induction training as other members of teaching staff (see above).
- All Early Years staff hold up-to-date Paediatric First Aid Certificates.
- All Early Years staff hold a Food Hygiene Certificate, Health and Safety Awareness at Work training and Fire Awareness training.
- Training is provided by the DSL enabling staff to identify signs of possible abuse and neglect at the earliest opportunity, and to respond in a timely and appropriate way.
- Staff are alert to any issues for concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere.
- Safe working practices are followed at all times. Refer to the Chard School Health and Safety Policy for details.
- Supervision provides staff with the opportunity to discuss any issues, particularly those concerning children's development or well-being, identify solutions to address issues as they arise and receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness.
- Regular staff appraisals are carried out to identify any training needs, and secure opportunities for continued professional development for staff.

### **3. STAFF : CHILD RATIOS**

Staffing arrangements at Chard School meet the needs of the children in our care and ensure their safety. In Reception class there is one member of staff for every 30 children (the size of Reception class is however limited to no more than 17).

### **4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**

Chard School has a DSL who is responsible for dealing with any concerns about the protection of children. The role of the DSL is to:

- Recognise how to identify signs of abuse and know which outside child protection agency to contact in the event of a child protection matter coming to his/her attention;
- Ensure that appropriate information is available at the time of referral and that the referral is confirmed in writing under confidential cover;
- Liaise with Somerset Direct/local Children's Social Care and other agencies, as appropriate;
- Act as a source of advice and expertise and keep relevant people within the school informed about any action taken and any further action required;
- Ensure that a proper record is kept of any referral and action taken, and that this is kept securely and in confidence, and
- Manage and deliver staff child protection training and review the operation of the Child Protection Policy annually (with the appropriate Nominated Governor) to ensure the procedures are working and that it complies with current best practice.

### **Staff**

Staff have a duty to be alert and report of any concerns immediately to the DSL (or the DDSL in their absence), who will then inform the Head. The Head will inform the Governor with responsibility for child protection and the LADO as appropriate. If the allegation involves the DSL or DDSL any concerns should be reported to the Head who will inform the LADO as appropriate. Allegations against staff are to be reported immediately and always within one working day without investigation.

Follow the advice given in this policy in relation to how to handle disclosures.

Staff should ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place pupils or themselves at risk or harm or allegations of harm to a pupil.

It is the responsibility of the DSL, working with the Head, to pass concerns on to the LADO.

In the event that the Head is the subject of an allegation, it should be reported directly to the Chair of Governors, Mrs. Sue Kirby, without the head being informed. The LADO would then be informed as appropriate.

Safeguarding and the protection of children from harm, is the inescapable, personal and professional responsibility of all staff.

### **Governors**

The Governing body fully recognises its responsibilities with regard to Child Protection and the need to safeguard and promoting the welfare of children. The Governor responsible for Child Protection will meet termly with the DSL prior to the Governors meeting, in order to discuss recent events and remain fully informed and up-to-date with any recent events or updates in this area. They will:

- Ensure that an annual report is made to the governing body on child protection matters as required by LSCB.

- Ensure that a copy of this report is forwarded to the LSCB Safeguarding Team.
- Ensure that all policies and procedures relating to Child Protection and safeguarding are reviewed and updated annually.
- Ensure that safeguarding is discussed as an agenda point at the termly Governors meeting.
- Ensure that all members of the Governing body are fully trained in Child Protection.

### **Partnership with Parents**

It is important that the school has an established approach to working with parents. Parents' and children's need for privacy should be respected. However, the priority is the needs of the child and effective liaison is crucial for this.

It should be recognized that families from different backgrounds and cultures will have different approaches in child-rearing. These differences should be acknowledged and respected provided they do not place the child at risk of abuse as defined later in this policy.

## **5. CHILD ABUSE**

- **Introduction**

All members of the School staff should be alert to the possible signs of abuse of a pupil. Abuse may take several forms, which are not mutually exclusive:

- **Physical abuse**

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.

- **Emotional abuse**

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

Emotional abuse may involve conveying to children that they are worthless, 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 cyber bullying) causing the child 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.

- **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 (e.g. 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.

- **Neglect**

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

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

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

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

There will be other circumstances, not amounting to abuse, which give cause for serious concern about the welfare of pupils. Other concerns, such as being uncared for, engaging in antisocial or inappropriate behaviour, etc, may be referred to the DSL, who will discuss the matter with the Head, and, as necessary, with Children's Social Care. Such cases may also be referred to the Health Centre and through them to Children's Social Care. In each case the School's DSL must be informed.

- **Children Missing in Education**

All children are entitled to an education and a child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. If a pupil of Chard School fails to attend school regularly, or is absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days the Head will inform the Local Authority.

- **Female genital Mutilation (FGM)**

FGM is illegal in the UK and is a form of child abuse with long-lasting and harmful consequences. Warning signs that FGM may take place or have already taken place can be found on pp16-17 of the Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines. PP42-44 focus on the role of schools and colleges. If staff have a concern they should activate local safeguarding procedures and, should a member of Chard School staff discover a pupil has been a victim of FGM they must report it to the police.

- **Child Sexual Exploitation**

CSE involves exploitative situations where a child receives something in exchange for sexual activity. The perpetrator always holds some sort of power over the victim. CSE involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement, and is not always easy to spot as some young people exhibit no obvious signs of this abuse.

- **Risk of Radicalisation and Extremism – see separate Prevent Policy**

#### **Children at Need or At Risk**

If a member of staff has any concerns about a child who is in need, those concerns should be reported to the DSL who will then contact CSC.

Where a form of abuse constitutes a crime, such as FGM, then the matter should always be reported directly to the police. If a member of staff has any concerns about a child who might be at risk those concerns should be reported to the DSL who will then contact CSC or the police immediately (ie within one working day) if a crime has been committed. A referral can also be made directly to those agencies.

If staff members have concerns about a child who may be in need or at risk and who might benefit from the support of more than one agency eg education, health, housing, police, there should be an inter-agency assessment. These assessments should identify what help the child and family might need to prevent needs escalating to the point where intervention would be needed via a statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989.

If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral should be made to CSC immediately.

## **6. PROCEDURES**

- **Cases where abuse may have been inflicted by parents or carers**

- i. Suspicion or knowledge of abuse must be reported to the DSL or their Deputy who will share such information with the Head and only relevant other staff on a 'need to know' basis.
  - ii. Any adult to whom abuse is reported by a pupil has a duty to listen to the pupil, to provide reassurance, and subsequently to record the pupil's statements. He/she must not press the pupil, ask probing questions or suggest answers. The situation should then be reported and discussed with the DSL who will consult with the Head. The online South West Child Protection Procedures must be referred to at all stages ([www.swcpp.org.uk](http://www.swcpp.org.uk)).
  - iii. Expert medical diagnosis may be required quickly. The DSL, their Deputy or the Head will arrange this following consultation with Children's Social Care.
- **Cases where abuse may have been inflicted by staff or volunteers**

If an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer it must be responded to; there is an obvious need to act immediately and with **utmost discretion**. The informant should be told that the matter will be referred in confidence to the appropriate people. This must be done, and the written record passed on the same day to the DDL and the Head.

The circumstances should be kept **strictly confidential** until the Head has been able to consult with Somerset's Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to judge whether or not an allegation or concern indicates possible abuse. It will always be the Somerset LADO even if the student's family home is in another county/country because the geographic location of the school is Somerset.

If it is decided, by the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), that an investigation is called for, it is the responsibility of the LADO to arrange a meeting (called a Strategy Meeting) to discuss how the next steps are handled. The strategy meeting is initiated by the LADO referring to Somerset Direct. The strategy meeting would normally involve the Police, Children's Social Care, the DSL, the Head and preferably a school Governor. The arrangements agreed upon in the strategy meeting will include informing the parents and seeking their consent for any immediate medical examination

The strategy meeting will decide when the member of staff against whom the allegation has been made, should be informed and no discussion should take place about the allegation without the permission of the LADO or the strategy discussion chair. The staff member against whom the allegation is made would normally be informed as soon as possible after the initial strategy meeting (or as a result of a discussion with the LADO).

If, at the strategy meeting, it is established that the allegation is not criminal but is still of concern, it will be agreed what further action, if any, needs to be taken. At the conclusion of the investigation, if criminal proceedings don't

ensue, there is a range of possible sanctions available to the school including, where the circumstances warrant it, dismissal. These decisions will be taken by the school in conjunction with the school's legal advisers and human resources advisers. Details of all investigation and outcomes should be carefully recorded and securely stored in staff personnel files.

The strategy meeting will also recommend to the employer whether the member of staff can remain on the school site or not, pending further investigation. It is the employer's decision alone whether suspension/leave of absence is implemented. If the allegation is against a member of staff, and the Police/Children's Social Care decides to take the case further, it is reasonable to ask the Police to give some indication of their timescales. The LADO can also advise in terms of process.

There is understandable concern amongst many teachers that careers may be irreparably damaged by flimsy or malicious allegations by children. This is actually extremely rare, though some incidents do end up only as 'unsubstantiated' one way or the other which is generally unsatisfactory. It is always better for a school to anticipate possible risks and to seek to prevent all reasonable risk of misunderstandings and false allegations. Proper policy and procedures are also likely to deter any individual seeking to use the school as a basis for inappropriate relationships with pupils; the Chard School Staff Code of Conduct (School Rules) in the Staff Employment Manual will help staff to know what behaviours are generally considered to be inconsistent with their professional status. Infringements should then be subject to disciplinary procedures as required. (Ensure all staff are aware of DfE – Use of Reasonable Force – July 2013).

It is a legal requirement to notify the DfE and DBS within one month if the services of a person are discontinued because he/she was considered unsuitable for work with children and meet the DBS criteria for referral. Independent schools are also under a duty to consider making a referral to the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL) where a teacher has been dismissed (or would have been dismissed had he/she not resigned) and a prohibition order may be appropriate. The reasons such an order would be considered are: "unacceptable professional conduct", "conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute" or a "conviction, at any time, for a relevant offence". Further guidance is published on the NCTL website. Where a referral has been made to the DBS, it is not necessary for a referral also to be made to NCTL, as information is shared between the two bodies. Where a dismissal does not reach the threshold for DBS referral, separate consideration should be given to an NCTL referral.

- **Cases where abuse may have been inflicted by the Head**

If an allegation or complaint is made against the Head, the person receiving the allegation should immediately inform the Chair of Governors, or in his/her absence the Nominated Child Protection Governor, without first notifying the Head

- **Cases where abuse may have been inflicted by a pupil**

A student against whom an allegation of abuse has been made may be suspended from the school during the investigation and the school's Behaviour Policy will apply. The school will take advice from the Somerset Direct on the investigation of such allegations and will take all appropriate action to ensure the safety and welfare of all students involved including the student or students accused of abuse. If it is necessary for a student to be interviewed by the police in relation to allegations of abuse, the school will be informed as soon as possible and the student will be supported during the interview by an appropriate adult.

- **Complaint or Allegation?**

It is important to draw a distinction between complaints and allegations. Complaints are made about a process; allegations are made about behaviour. In a school, concerns relating to behaviour of an adult towards a pupil are categorised as allegations.

Any allegation which involves the possibility of physical, emotional or sexual abuse will **always** be discussed with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and their advice taken. If the matter is a child protection concern, an investigation will be carried out by Children's Social Care and the Police, as happens with any other referral. The DSL, the Head and Governors **must not** carry out investigations themselves in these circumstances. They will be invited to a Strategy Meeting at a very early stage.

Decisions about suspension and the use of disciplinary procedures are for the Head and Governors alone, but action may need to be co-ordinated where there is a wider investigation involving Children's Social Care and/or the Police and where for example, bail condition may apply.

## 7. ALLEGATIONS INVOLVING SEXUAL IMPROPRIETY

Whenever a member of staff is informed by a pupil of an event involving sexual impropriety of any kind, whether between pupils or staff and pupils, the following steps should be taken:

- Listen sympathetically and afterwards briefly note the content of what was disclosed, sign and date it.
- Contact the DSL immediately, who will discuss with the Head and the LADO whether Children's Social Care should be notified.
- Once they are notified and if it is agreed that the school alone should follow up the issue, the DSL will interview the complainant and report as quickly as possible to the Head, who will oversee the disciplinary aspects of the enquiry;
- If Children's Social Care seeks further investigations, they will themselves open an enquiry. This would normally involve the Police and Designated safeguarding Lead and the Head. In these circumstances, the School's disciplinary enquiry will be suspended until cleared by Children's Social Care.

**This policy should be implemented regardless because of the potential for an abuse of trust.** Parents should be informed as soon as possible that a referral to Children’s Social Care will be made by DSL, **unless to do so would put the pupil at greater risk of harm.** If there is any doubt, the DSL will consult with the Police/Children’s Social Care beforehand.

## 8. STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT (School Rules)

Cordial relations between teaching staff and pupils are at the heart of a happy and thriving school. At the same time, in the interests of all parties, professional boundaries must be observed on all occasions. There is guidance on how staff should conduct themselves in the Staff Code of Conduct (School Rules) in the Staff Employment Manual.

We must all be aware of the possibility of accusations and try to avoid hazardous situations. A teacher should never speak to or touch a pupil in a manner that could be construed as having sexual overtones or that could be interpreted as a physical assault. Both the action and the intention may subsequently give rise to problems. One-to-one meetings between staff and a pupil (particularly those who may be more vulnerable) should be approached with caution. If in doubt it is advisable to have somebody else present, or let someone else know the meeting is taking place/ inform a manager, record the reason and circumstance of the meeting, leave the door open, sit behind a desk etc.

**Good practice includes valuing and respecting children as individuals, and the adult modeling appropriate conduct will always exclude bullying, shouting, racism or sexism.**

*For further advice on good professional practice see: Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with children and Young People in Education Settings.*

## 9. PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING CONCERNS

Staff could have their suspicion or concern raised in a number of ways, the most likely of which are:

- the conduct of a member of staff;
- a child, parent or member of staff “disclosing” abuse;
- bruising or evidence of physical hurt; which may or may not be accompanied by;
- unusual behaviour by a child.

If a member of staff has such concerns they should be reported to the DSL immediately (in person or by telephone) and confirmed in writing within 24 hours. **Delay could prejudice the welfare of a child.**

If the concerns relate to the conduct of a member of staff, these should be reported directly to the DSL and Head. There is an obvious need to act immediately and with **utmost discretion.**

The DSL will consider the report and either refer this immediately (and certainly within 24 hours) to the authorities or, after taking appropriate advice (which may include discussing the circumstances on a confidential basis with Children's Social Care or the Police Safeguarding Children Unit) decide not to refer the concerns to the authorities but keep a full record of the concerns.

## 10. WHAT TO DO IF A CHILD DISCLOSES

The following information is intended to assist you if you become involved in a potential child protection situation when a child or young person makes a disclosure.

***Note that this is a completely different procedure to interviewing pupils on disciplinary issues.***

- Listen, allow the pupil to finish without directly questioning or stopping them. Let them tell you what they want to and no more. They may need to disclose to a specialist later and too much detail now may interfere with later investigation.
- When the pupil has finished, make sure they feel secure and explain what you are going to do next.
- Write down notes, including date and time of the interview and sign the notes. Record as much as you can remember, as soon as possible (preferably immediately) afterwards, using the pupil's own words.
- Stay calm and convey this through word and action; reassure the child or young person that you are taking what they have to say seriously.
- Report to the DSL and give them the written record of the incident the same working day.

## 11. CONFIDENTIALITY

The management of confidentiality is an essential factor in all issues relating to Child Protection.

Staff should **never give pupils or adults an absolute guarantee of confidentiality**, but must ensure that the information is disclosed only to the people who need to know. Make sure that this is clear early on, not sprung on the pupil at the end. Education staff have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with the investigative agencies.

Members of staff, other than the DSL and DDSL and those involved closely, should only have enough details in order to help them to act sensitively and appropriately to a pupil. Sensitive information regarding pastoral issues and for children on the child protection register is kept separately in a folder in the secure filing area. Discretion should be used when talking about the personal and changing circumstances of children e.g. when a child goes into care.

It should be explained to children and young people that secrets cannot and should not be kept if keeping them means that they, or others, will continue to be harmed.

## 12. AFTER DISCLOSURE

- **STAY CALM** – try not to transmit your anger, shock, distress, or embarrassment to the child either verbally or through body language.
- **ACT AS THOUGH YOU BELIEVE IN THE CHILD**
- **REASSURE THE CHILD** – not your fault; glad they told you etc.
- **ALLOW CHILD TO TALK/FINISH STORY** – don't question the child
- **REPORT THE INCIDENT IMMEDIATELY TO THE DSL, or in their absence, the DDSL or Head, passing on the notes you have made** – explain to the child that you will need to talk to someone in another agency whose job it is to help and protect children and that they will want to talk to the child **but offer to stay with the child and support them.**

## 13. KEY NUMBERS

Somerset Direct  
0845 345 9122

DBS Confidential checking service  
[sensitive@dbs.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:sensitive@dbs.gsi.gov.uk)

DBS referrals helpline  
01325 953795

Liz Bidmead (LSCB Safeguarding Advisor - Somerset)  
[LKBidmead@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:LKBidmead@somerset.gov.uk)  
01823 358269

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) via Somerset Direct  
0845 345 9122

NSPCC Child Protection Line  
0808 800 5000

Emergency Duty team out of hours: 0300 123 2327

Last Reviewed: January 2017  
Next Review Due: January 2018  
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

