

## POLICY

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<b>Policy name</b>	Child Protection Procedure
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<b>Owner</b>	Senior Leadership Team

Adopted by the Governing Body on

18<sup>th</sup> December 2019

Our Nominated Governor for Safeguarding is  
Graham Whitehead

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead is  
Jemma Dudgeon

Our Deputy Safeguarding Leads are  
Nicky Edwards; Alice Cherry,  
Michelle Harvey, and Serena Bennett

## **Child Protection Procedures December 2019**

The child protection policy for Portfield School (including Life Skills Provision) is based on the information provided in the **Pan-Dorset Multi-Agency Safeguarding Policies and Procedures Manual published in October 2018** it reflects the Pan-Dorset Inter-Agency Safeguarding Procedures these incorporating **Dorset Safeguarding Children Board and the Bournemouth & Poole Local Safeguarding Children Board** and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2019.

This procedure consists of three main documents:

- A. The overarching safeguarding procedure (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 students on a temporary or intermittent basis such as supply, peripatetic or visiting professionals.

### **1. Safeguarding**

Portfield 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. For students over the age of 18 The Adult Service User Protection Policies should be adhered to.

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' 2018, 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
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

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' 2019 part 2' 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 and 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. This report is issued after Dorset Safeguarding Children Board circulate their annual audit (usually Spring Term)

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 procedure is to:

- Afford protection for all students
- 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 procedure applies to the Head Teacher, all staff, including supply and peripatetic staff, regular volunteers (i.e. 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 students being drawn into terrorism
- Supporting attendance and taking action if a child is missing School regularly
- Appointing a senior member of staff from our Senior 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 a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads to ensure there is always someone available during School hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns
- All teacher will promote the educational achievement of children who are Looked- After (in care) and will identify educational outcomes in individual PEP (Personal Education Plans), usually discussed at the EHCP review.
- Making sure all staff and volunteers are aware of and committed to the Safeguarding Children Policy and these child protection procedures and also understand their individual responsibility to take action

- Ensuring that all those named above (i.e. DSLs and Deputy DSLs; Head Teacher, 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 to prevent them from escalating, including working with parents/carers and other agencies as appropriate. This is led by the Health and Wellbeing Manager and in partnerships with Social Care, health and the Local Education Authority. This support includes referring on to other agencies, holding Team around the family meetings as well as statutory reviews e.g. Child In Need etc.
- Sharing information about child safeguarding concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving children and their parents/carers appropriately – records of this are kept on the confidential ‘School Pod’ system.
- Acknowledging and actively promoting that multi-agency working is the best way to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm
- Taking the right action, in accordance with Pan-Dorset Multi-Agency Safeguarding Policies and Procedures Manual published in October 2018, 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 (Linked to behaviour policy) and volunteers which includes acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil relationships and communications including the use of social media (linked to policy GM25 and PS28)
- Ensuring our online safety process includes appropriate filters and monitoring systems
- Ensuring staff and volunteers understand about ‘whistle blowing’ (aka confidential reporting) and how to escalate concerns about students 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 procedure document 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

- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct – PS06
- E-safety policies for students and staff, which include use of mobile technology – PS28
- Safer recruitment policy and procedures – HR1 & GM 38
- Procedures to handle allegations against members of staff and volunteers, including referring to the Disclosure and Barring Service (when appropriate) – PS08
- Whistle blowing policy – GM19 Confidential Reporting -
- Anti-bullying procedures – PS29

These policies and procedures are available on the School website [www.portfieldSchool.org.uk](http://www.portfieldSchool.org.uk)

## **2. 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' 2019, plus Annex A.

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

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.

### **2.2 What is significant harm?**

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

### **2.3. Purpose of these procedures**

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

### **2.4. Responsibilities and roles**

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

Governing bodies are accountable for ensuring their School has an effective child protection policy and procedures (this document) which should be reviewed annually and available publicly, on the School website.

The statutory safeguarding guidance for Schools: 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019' 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:

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 2018.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead in this School is named at the start of this policy.

The School also has a Deputy Safeguarding Lead who is named at the start of this policy.

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

See Appendix 1 for contact details.

All action is taken in line with the following guidance:

- DfE guidance (2019) – Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) – 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)

### **3. What is child abuse?**

**Abuse:** a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children (part 1 KCSIE 2019).

**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 (part 1 KCSIE 2019).

**Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and 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 a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from 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, although it may occur alone. (part 1 KCSIE 2019).

**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. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education (part 1 KCSIE 2019).

**Neglect** is 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, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. 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. (part 1 KCSIE 2019).

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

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 is clear: 'All school and college staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another'.

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.

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

5.1 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.

5.2 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.

5.3 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.

5.4 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.

5.5 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.

5.6 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.

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

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

5.9 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. All incidents will be investigated by the Senior Leadership Team and advice (where doubt) sought from Angela Burr the Education Safeguarding Standards advisor.

Portfield School will:

- Respond to peer on peer abuse by involving families in the development of individual plans – the goal being able to restore peer relationships. This will be shared with both families.
- Where necessary, the School will make referrals to Autism Wessex Practice, Clinical Support Team to assist in restorative work.
- All students during PHSE will have a group based and individualised programme, specific to each challenge the student is experiencing. The SLT have adopted Fiona Spear's PHSE programme for learners with ASD – this will be consulted if/when required.
- Mobile Phone technology is detailed in the GM25 policy and the E-Safety policy.

## **6. Students engaging in under-age sexual activity**

6.1 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.

6.2 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.

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

## **7. Child sexual exploitation**

7.1 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.

7.2 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. Jemma Dudgeon Lead DSL and Health and Wellbeing Manager has attended level 3 CSE training and workshops have been developed for staff teams.

7.3 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. During May 2015 staff engaged in workshops where Chelsea's Choice film clips were watched and discussed.

7.4 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.

7.5 All staff should be made aware that 'upskirting' is now a criminal offence. A definition has been included which describes upskirting as, "taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm"

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

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

**Female Genital Mutilation** 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 students 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 students 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 students at this School are being discussed, the DSL or Head teacher will attend the Panel meetings.

Staff and Governors in this School have completed on-line Prevent training, prevent is also included in induction training and featured in annual whole safeguard training sessions.

### **9. Children missing education**

9.1 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.

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

9.3 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. Portfield School will report **all** instances of children missing from education (unauthorised

absence) due to the vulnerability of students who attend Portfield School. The reports will be made to the Local Education Authority and where allocated the students Social Worker.

**There is more information about specific safeguarding issues including links to websites in Part one and Annex A of ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ 2019.**

## **10. 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 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’

## **11. Taking action**

11.1 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.

11.2 Any disclosure or indicators of abuse will be reported verbally to the DSL or Deputy straightaway and recorded on School Pod – this will email the DSL immediately and alert them to the concern. Where they are not available and concerns are immediate, ensure a referral is made without delay to MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub).

11.3 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).

11.4 A written record will then be made on a standard School ‘welfare/concern’ slip located on School Pod of what was said, including the child’s own words, as soon as possible and saved so the DSL will receive an immediate notification.

11.5 If the child can understand the significance and consequences of making a referral to MASH, 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.

11.6 The DSL will decide whether to contact parents at this stage, judging whether 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 MASH 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 welfare Slip, this is stored online under the welfare/concern tab on the secured School Pod system.

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

11.8 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 via the MASH.

11.9 The Dorset Safeguarding Children Board's and the Bournemouth and Poole LSCB '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).

11.10 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, they should then implement the 'escalation procedure'. See appendix 5

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

12.1 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.

12.2 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.

12.3 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.

12.4 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.

12.5 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.

## **13. Remember**

13.1 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 life skills 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 See Appendix 5
- the duty worker in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub

Anyone can make a referral, not just the DSLs.

13.2 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.

13.3 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.

13.4 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.

13.5 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 or the students individual EHCP should be attached.

**See Appendix 3 below for detailed record keeping guidance.**

## **14. Response from Children's Social Care to a School referral**

### **14.1 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) .

14.2 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.

### **.3 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.

#### **.4 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.

#### **.5 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 Head Teacher. 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.

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

15.1 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 Head Teacher (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.

15.2 If the allegation/concern is about the Head Teacher the person with concerns will contact the Charity Safeguard Lead and 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.

15.3 In all cases of allegations against staff or volunteers, the Head Teacher and Chair of Governors, will contact the Designated Officer (LADO) without delay and follow the correct procedures as set out in Part Four of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2018.

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

16.1 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.

16.2 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

16.3 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.

16.4 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.

16.5 All student's communication preferences will be detailed in their individual 'green' guidance and when required, a referral to Speech and Language therapy service can be made to assist with communication support/therapy.

## **17. Safer Working Practice**

17.1 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.

17.2 We promote a culture whereby members of the School community should feel able to raise with the Head teacher, or any member of the senior 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 Charity Safeguarding Lead or the Chair of Governors and of course the LADO. (See Appendix 1 below for contact number.)

17.3 Opportunities to teach safeguarding Schools should consider opportunities for teaching safeguarding as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. This can be covered through Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education (formerly known as Sex and Relationships The government has made regulations which will make Relationships Education (for all Primary pupils) and Relationships and Sex Education (for all Secondary pupils) and Health Education (for all pupils in state funded schools) mandatory from 2020 (The Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education (England) Regulations 2019).

## **18. Training**

18.1 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 2019: information for all School and college staff' plus Annex A if they work directly with children.

18.2 This will be followed up by basic child protection training that equips individuals to recognise and respond appropriately to concerns about students; this is delivered during the induction phase.

18.3 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.

18.4 Staff who do not have designated responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including the Head teacher, will undertake suitable refresher training at appropriate intervals. All staff at Portfield School will attend at least 1 inset day per year that is dedicated to safeguarding (January Inset).

18.5 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.

18.6 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.

18.7 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.

18.8 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.

See Appendix 1 for contact details.

18.9 Head Teacher will complete safer recruitment training (mandatory in maintained Schools; best practice in others) either through a multi-agency taught session or by completing the Charities on-line course.

18.10 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' 2018. Attendance includes those who also work with children and have attended child protection training in that role.

18.11 Inspection: from September 2019 Ofsted will carry out inspections of early years, schools and post-16 provisions under the Ofsted's Education Framework (Ofsted, 2019a). Inspectors will always report on the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and Ofsted has published specific guidance on this entitled Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills (Ofsted, 2019b).

## **19. Raising concerns about safeguarding practice in our School**

19.1 In this School we promote a culture where any staff or volunteers feel able to raise with the Head Teacher/Senior Leadership Team any concerns about safeguarding or child protection practice.

19.2 Any issues which they have not been able to resolve with the Head Teacher should be reported to the Charity safeguarding Lead and then the Chair of governors. If they are still not satisfied they should approach the CEO 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).

19.3 Staff should refer to Confidential Reporting – GM19. For more information or can use the NSPCC whistle blowing helpline: 0800 0280285.

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

20.1 At this School we are committed to keeping our students 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.

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

20.3 If you have any questions about this please speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who is named at the start of this policy

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

### **PORTFIELD SCHOOL AND LIFE SKILLS PROVISION**

As an adult working directly with children in this School you have a duty of care towards all students. 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 students 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 one of the Head teacher.

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) Jemma Dudgeon or the Deputy who is Rachel Clarke (Deputy Head Teacher).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Useful Contacts****1) For NEW concerns**

**MASH Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub**  
**(regarding any concerns about a child)**  
**Bournemouth 01202 458101**  
**Poole 01202 735046**  
**Dorset 01202 228866**  
**(call the team of where the child lives)**

**2) To contact children's allocated social workers:**

**West Area** 01305 221450

(Previously Bridport and Dorchester teams)

**East Area** 01202 474106

(Previously Ferndown and Christchurch teams)

**Central Area**

Purbeck 01929 553456

North Dorset 01258 472652

**South Area**

(Weymouth & Portland) 01305 760139

**3) Out of Hours Service** 01202 657279**4) Dorset Safeguarding and Standards Team** 01305 221122

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

- The Education Safeguarding Standards Advisor who offers advice and support to Head teacher and Designated Safeguarding Leads in relation to safeguarding and child protection issues
- The Local Authority Designated Officer (the LADO) to whom allegations against adults who work with children in education establishments must be reported
- The Children's Services 'Prevent' Lead

**5) Dorset Virtual School for children who are in care/ Looked After**

01305 228307

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

01305 224382

## Possible Indicators of Abuse

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

**Abuse:** a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children (part 1 KCSIE 2019).

### i) Physical Abuse

**Physical abuse:** a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child (part 1 KCSIE 2019).

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

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

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

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

Other physical signs of abuse can include:

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

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate physical abuse:

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

## ii) Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and 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 a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child from 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, although it may occur alone. (part 1 KCSIE 2019).

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

The physical signs of emotional abuse can include:

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

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate emotional abuse include:

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

- self-harm
- fear of parents being approached

### iii) Sexual Abuse

Sexual Abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether 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. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education (part 1 KCSIE 2019).

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

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

The physical signs of sexual abuse can include:

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

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

- sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour, e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- having nightmares
- missing School
- running away from home
- sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or developmental level
- sexual drawings or language
- bedwetting
- eating problems such as overeating or anorexia
- self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts

- saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about
- alcohol / substance / drug use
- suddenly having unexplained sources of money
- not being allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults or other children

#### **iv) Neglect**

Neglect is 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, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. 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. (part 1 KCSIE 2019).

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

The physical signs of neglect can include:

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

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect can include:

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

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

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

School staff should be mindful of the above and discuss any concerns with the DSL who will take the appropriate action in accordance with the inter-agency neglect guidance on the DSCB website.

## Record Keeping: Best Practice

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

#### 1. Introduction

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

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

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

1.4 Any electronic record keeping system should comply with the general standards set out below.

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

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

2.2 The record should be recorded on a standard 'concern/welfare' slip on School Pod and, should include:

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

2.3 The record about a disclosure of abuse should be passed to the DSL and retained in the pupil's on line welfare/concern slip in its original and contemporaneous form (as it could be used as evidence in court proceedings), even if later typed or if the information is incorporated into a report. All hand written notes should be scanned and uploaded to the slip.

2.4 Schools should never ask students, regardless of their involvement in a child protection matter (i.e. the subject of an allegation, a witness or the alleged 'perpetrator'), to write out their 'statements' of what has happened. In some cases this could have the unintended consequence of jeopardising a child protection investigation. This applies regardless of whether the incident(s) took place within or outside School.

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

3.1 As stated at 2.2 above it is useful and recommended practice for School staff to have one standard pro forma for recording all 'welfare' and child protection concerns. This is found on the schools School Pod system.

3.2 The concern form should be passed to the DSL who will make a judgement about what action needs to be taken, in accordance with local inter-agency safeguarding procedures, using the Threshold Tool, if necessary. The decision about any action, whether or not a referral is made to Social Care, will be recorded clearly by the DSL.

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

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

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

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

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

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

A formal referral is made by the School to Children's Social Care on an inter-agency referral form or

Social Care inform the School they have commenced an assessment in relation to a pupil resulting from information from another source or

A child protection file is forwarded to the School by a previous School or pre- School attended by the pupil or

A child who is in care/looked after transfers into the School or a pupil is privately fostered

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

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

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

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

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

## 5. Adopted children

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

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

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

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

5.5 The overhauled file should only contain the new chronology and any information that has originated from within School (for example concern forms). This file should now be in the child's new name, contain no information which identifies the birth name or birth family, will be held in the School as long as the child remains or sent onto a new School as described (at 9) below.

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

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

6.1 It is helpful if individual files have a front sheet with key information about the pupil and contact details of parents/carers, social worker and any other relevant professionals. This will be found on the students 'home' page on School Pod.

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

6.3 If a pupil is or was subject of a child protection plan or in care/looked after, this should be highlighted in some way to make it immediately obvious to anyone accessing the record. This will be detailed on the home tab for each individual student – however details of the plan will not be available for all to view.

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

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

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

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

## **7. Storage**

7.1 All records relating to child protection concerns are sensitive and confidential so will be kept in a secure (i.e. locked at all times) filing cabinet, separate from other School files, and accessible through the DSL, the Deputies and other senior staff in larger Schools. These files are also scanned on to the student's individual behaviour watch pages; however these will only be assessable by DSL's.

7.2 Any concerns regarding any students should always be reported to the Senior Leadership Team – as Portfield School is a relatively small school, this information sharing occurs through the SLT 'open door' approach.

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

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

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

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

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

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

8.6 In respect of requests from students or parents for information which wholly or partly consists of an educational record, access should be granted within 15 School days. This might be relevant to 'welfare' concerns in a main School file, for example. Viewing-only

access to these records is free but it is reasonable to charge for copies on a sliding scale from £1 - £50 (maximum) depending on the number of pages.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **10. 'Dual registered' students**

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

## **11. Retention of records**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **13. Sharing information with Further Education (FE) Colleges**

13.1 A protocol is in place with DSLs at FE colleges: at the start of each academic year they will send to secondary School DSLs a list of newly enrolled students who have previously attended the School, requesting any relevant information. Secondary School DSLs will use their professional judgement but should always disclose if a young person is in care/looked after, is or has been subject of a child protection plan or is assessed as posing a risk to themselves or other students.

13.2 Note this applies only to Dorset Schools and FE Colleges with whom the protocol has been agreed.

# Child Protection Contact Information

**All** concerns about a child should be reported

**The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for Portfield School is:**  
Jemma Dudgeon – Acting Deputy Head Teacher

**The Deputy Safeguarding Lead for Portfield School are:**  
Rachel Clarke

Any concerns or queries about the designated safeguarding team or processes should be directed to:

**Our Nominated Governor for Safeguarding**

Reports should be made via **SCHOOL POD** welfare/concern tab

OR

Via **TELEPHONE CALL** 01202 573808 and reception will connect you any one of the DSL's

This is a county-wide single point of contact for any **new** referrals or safeguarding concerns you may have about a child or a young person (use the number of where the child lives).

**Dorset MASH 01202 228866.**

**Bournemouth MASH 01202 458101**

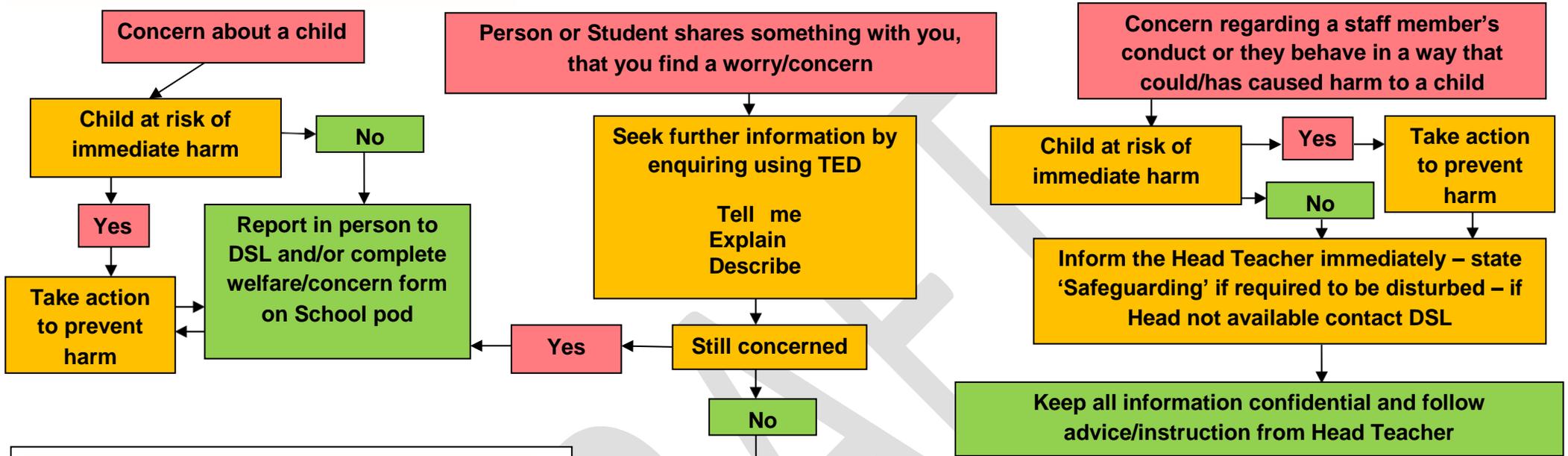
**Poole MASH 01202 735046**

**Concerns about any staff member or systems should be directed to**

Local Authority Designated Officer Patrick Crawford 01305 221122

**Advice and Support can be found by the**

Education Safeguarding Standards Advisor Louise Dodds 01305 221122



**AutismWessex**  
Portfield School

Designated Safeguarding Lead **Jemma Dudgeon**  
 Deputy Safeguarding Lead **Nicky Edwards**  
 Designated Safeguarding Governor **Graham Whitehead**  
 Designated Charity Safeguarding Lead **Anne Reakes**  
 Designated Charity Trustee **Malcolm Farrell**  
 Designated Charity Safeguarding Consultant **Liz Balfe**

Contact details are obtained from:  
 Portfield School reception 01202 573808 or  
 Charity Hub switch board 01202 483360

**DO NOT**  
 Keep any concerns to yourself  
 Ask Leading questions  
 Discuss with others (other than DSL)  
 Promise to keep confidentiality  
 Take photographs

**If you are unsure ASK your DSL....**

**CONTACT DETAILS**  
 PORTFIELD SCHOOL 01202 573808  
 CHARITY HUB SWITCH BOARD 01202 483360

External contact details  
*should you wish to escalate any concerns...*

**MASH Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub**  
 (regarding any concerns about a child)  
 Bournemouth 01202 458101  
 Poole 01202 735046  
 Dorset 01202 228866  
 (call the team of where the child lives)

**LADO** regarding a staff member including the  
 Head Teacher/DSL 01305 331133 Patrick Crawford

## Mobile Phone Use Procedures

The staff code of conduct states:

### 15. Mobile phones

Mobile phones should be switched off or silent at all times. Staff should only use their mobile phones for personal calls or messages during personal time in private away from the eyes of the students. Staff should never store parent's or student's telephone numbers on their mobile phone. Staff should not use their mobile phone or other mobile device as a camera or video /audio recorder to record sound or images of students. Mobile phones must be stored away when staff are working directly with a student – in some circumstances, class teachers will authorise staff keeping their mobile phones on them, and staff will need to complete a BYOD form.

All staff involved in direct contact and support are permitted to have their phone in situations where:

- A BYOD form has been completed and signed by your line manager
- To be used as raising an emergency situation
- To be used as a communication between staff for student welfare needs
- To be used on educational visits
- An agreement from SLT in exceptional situations
- Voice to voice calls are the preferred means of communication
- In the unlikely event of having to send a text message, these should only be used as a last resort and not have any identifiable information in the content

Staff CAN NOT:

- Have their phones on their person in environments where personal intimate care takes place such as the swimming pool, toilets and class changing for PE times
- At any time use their phones to act as an intervention e.g. 'google searching' 'you tube' etc.

Anyone using their phone outside of this framework will be subject to Autism Wessex disciplinary procedures