



BARNARD CASTLE SCHOOL

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

This policy informs practice in the Senior, Prep and Pre Prep Departments of the School, including the Early Years Foundation Stage. It applies to all teaching and non-teaching staff, both full time and part-time, and volunteers within the School. It is an approved policy and has been confirmed as such by the Governing Body. It is available for parents on the school website.

The policy and procedures are reviewed annually by the Governors, who also review the effectiveness and efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged. Any deficiencies will be remedied without delay.

Designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) within the School:

Miss Amy Jackson, Assistant Head Pastoral in the Senior School
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Mrs Rebecca Robertson, Director of Studies in the Prep School
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In the absence of either DSL, the other deputies.

Name of Safeguarding link Governor:

Mrs Ruth Dent

1. Policy Statement

1.1 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

1.1.1 Barnard Castle School (“the School”) and its Governing body (the “School Governing Body”) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and believes that all pupils, regardless of age, special needs or disability, racial/cultural heritage, religious belief or sexual orientation have the right to be protected from all types of harm and abuse. This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (“this Policy”) forms a fundamental part of our approach to providing excellent pastoral care to *all* pupils, including young people who may be over the age of 18 years.

1.1.2 Key documents with which this Policy is in accordance:

- The Education Acts
- Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2010 (as amended from time to time)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Protection of Freedom Act 2012

- The Children Act 2004
- What to do if you are worried a Child is being Abused 2006
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013 (A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education – Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges April 2014 (replaces Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education 2007)
- Information Sharing: Guidance for Practitioners and Managers 2008
- DBS Referral Guidance (as may be amended from time to time)
- Independent Schools Inspectorate Handbook April 2014 – the regulatory requirements (and as amended).
- National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools January 2013
- Teacher Misconduct – Disciplinary Procedures 2013 (National College for Teaching and Learning (NCTL) and Teacher misconduct regulating the teaching profession 2014 (NCTL)
- Use of Reasonable Force in Schools 2013
- Information Commissioner's Office Data Sharing Code of Practice May 2011
- Multi Agency Practice Guidelines: Female Genital Mutilation (2014)
- Equality Act 2010

1.1.3 The School recognises and acts upon the legal duties set out in the above statutes, regulations and guidance, to protect its pupils (and staff) from harm, and to co-operate with other agencies in carrying out those duties and responding to safeguarding concerns.

1.1.4 This policy is used in accordance with locally agreed inter-agency procedures, and specifically in accordance with Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) guidance.

1.1.5 This policy is addressed to all members of staff and volunteers at the School (temporary or permanent), and members of School Governing Body. Adherence to this policy is mandatory for all staff, peripatetic teachers and volunteers and its use is not subject to discretion. This policy applies whenever staff or volunteers are working with pupils including where this is away from the School, for example at another institutions, school visits and trips, as well as sporting and cultural activities.

1.1.6 This policy is available to all parents, staff and volunteers on the School's website.

1.1.7 Pupils are made aware of the contents of this policy through their programme of PSHE. Teaching about safety and relationships as part of PSHE contributes to the safeguarding of pupils. It helps them to recognise when they and others are at risk and equips them with the skills, strategies, and language which they need to take appropriate action.

2.1 Creating a Culture of Safeguarding

In order to fulfil these aims the School will take the necessary steps to ensure that:

2.1.1 The School recognises that safeguarding covers much more than child protection and so this policy will operate in conjunction with other related policies and procedures, covering areas such as Anti-Bullying, Behaviour, ICT Acceptable User, E-safety and Missing Pupils.

2.1.2 'Safeguarding' is broader than 'child protection'. As well as protecting children from harm, 'safeguarding' widens the responsibility to preventing harm and

promoting the well-being of children. It is recognised that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children includes:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing the impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.

2.1.3 The School takes its responsibilities very seriously. As well as ensuring the School's policies and procedures support its safeguarding responsibilities, the School will work with pupils, their families, Social Services Departments, the Police and other relevant agencies to ensure the risk of harm to children is minimised.

2.1.4 The School is committed to working partnership with parents, Social Services Departments, Police and diverse communities, to continuously develop and improve the safeguarding culture within our School.

2.1.5 Having these safeguards in place not only protects and promotes the welfare of children but also it enhances the confidence of our staff, volunteers, parents/carers and the general public.

2.1.6 The School has systems to:

- Prevent unsuitable people working with pupils
- Identify pupils who are at risk of and/or are likely to suffer significant harm and take appropriate action with the aim of making sure they are safe
- Promote safe practice and challenge poor practice and unsafe practice
- Ensure that staff do not, through their actions, place pupils at risk of harm, or themselves at risk from an allegation of harm (by providing guidance in the Common Room Handbook on areas such as 1-1 tuition, sports coaching, conveying by car, inappropriate electronic communication).

2.1.7 The School encourages the pupils in its care to raise any concerns that they might have and ensure that these are taken seriously. The School also encourages pupils to contribute their own ideas, according to their age and understanding, about how their safety and welfare could be further improved.

2.1.8 All staff are required to adhere to the ICT Acceptable Use Agreement, and specifically to ensure that any images taken of pupils are appropriate and stored and managed safely. Pupils are encouraged to contribute their own ideas, according to their age and understanding, about how their safety and welfare could be further improved.

2.1.9 All staff and volunteers receive training in Safeguarding Children as part of their induction. All supply staff and temporary staff also receive training in Safeguarding.

2.1.10 All staff, volunteers and the Head receive updated safeguarding training on a schedule in accordance with advice from the LSCB.

2.1.11 The School operates safe recruitment procedures which are in accordance with the Independent School Standards Regulations. This includes ensuring that at least one member of any recruitment panel involved in all stages of the recruitment process has undertaken the appropriate training in Safer Recruitment, and carrying out all required checks on the suitability of all staff and volunteers to work with children and young people in accordance with the guidance and regulations set out at paragraphs 1.1.2. These checks include: two references from previous employers, which are verified; identity check; right to work in the UK; DBS and Barred List checks; a standard pro-forma application; specific job descriptions; interviews with the Head. Appropriate supervision arrangements are put in place if staff start work

before their DBS disclosure has been obtained and a Barred List Check will have been undertaken.

2.1.12 The School obtains assurance that appropriate child protection checks are carried out and procedures apply to any staff or volunteer of another organisation who work with the School's pupils on another site (for example, in a separate institution).

2.1.13 The School carries out the mandated checks on the suitability of all people who serve on our School Governing Body in accordance with the guidance and regulations set out at paragraphs 1.1.2.

2.1.14 Where the School ceases to use the services of any persons staff (including agency staff), peripatetic teacher, volunteer or any other person – because it is considered that the person may be unsuitable to work with children, a referral will be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS: PO Box 181, Darlington, DKL1 9FA. Tel: 01325 953795) promptly, and in any event within 28 days in accordance with its legal duty. With reference to teaching staff, where a dismissal does not reach the threshold for DBS referral, a separate consideration will be given to a referral to the National College for Teaching and Learning (NCTL).

2.1.15 All School staff are alert to signs of abuse and neglect (appropriate to their role) and all staff know to whom they should report concerns or suspicions of abuse or neglect.

2.1.16 All School staff keep themselves updated on safeguarding issues and child protection procedures by accessing advice, guidance and training as appropriate to their role.

2.2 Early Years Foundation Setting

2.2.1 This policy applies to the School's provision for the Early Years Foundation Setting ('EYFS'). The identity of and contact details for the Designated Safeguarding Leads with lead responsibility for safeguarding within this setting are set out in section 6.

2.2.2 Only school cameras and school iPad/tablets are to be used in EYFS and these are not to be removed from School. These school devices are locked away overnight. Staff must not use their own mobile phones or other cameras to take photographs with the EYFS setting. All staff in the EYFS are required to adhere to the ICT Acceptable Use Agreement, and specifically to ensure that any images taken of pupils are appropriate and stored and managed safely.

2.2.3 Safeguarding training for staff in the EYFS will include guidance on identifying signs of possible abuse and neglect (such as significant changes in a pupil's behaviour, deterioration in wellbeing, physical indications, or comments which give cause for concern) and on how to respond in a timely and appropriate way to such signs or to inappropriate behaviour in other members of staff or any other person working with children (Statutory Framework for the EYFS (2014) Section 3.6).

2.3 Boarding

2.3.1 Within the Boarding context, relationships may develop. The School forbids sexual acts between pupils. The School aims to keep such incidents confidential from

other pupils, but will always refer concerns to the Social Care Assessment Team for advice.

2.3.2 Peer abuse – where there is suspicion of abuse between pupils, the School recognises the importance of rapid investigation (notwithstanding its duty to refer concerns without delay to the Social Care Assessment Team for advice) and protection of all parties involved. This may include separation and additional supervision. The possibility of peer abuse is minimised by: an open atmosphere of mutual trust among the boarding community; experienced boarding staff; good staffing provision and supervision; access to the independent School Counsellor.

3. Monitoring & Review

3.1 The working of this policy will be monitored by the Designated Safeguarding Leads in the School and will report as required to the Head.

3.2 The School Governing Body will undertake an annual review of the School's safeguarding policies and procedures together with a review of the safeguarding incidents that have arisen and how they were managed. This policy will also be reviewed as necessary to reflect changes in legislation, guidance and practice. This process is carried out to ensure that the School is continuing to provide the very highest standard of safeguarding possible.

3.3 Any deficiencies or weaknesses identified in this policy or in any of the School's child protection arrangements will be remedied without delay.

TARGETS

3.4 We believe that our School should provide a caring, positive, safe and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of the individual child. With that in mind the aims of this policy are:

- To support the child's development in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence.
- To provide an environment in which children and young feel safe, secure, valued and respected, and feel confident and know how to approach adults if they are in difficulties believing they will be effectively listened to.
- To raise awareness in all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, of responsibilities in identifying and reporting cases and possible cases of abuse to the Designated Safeguarding Leads, or the Chair of Governors, as appropriate.
- To maintain a system of monitoring of those thought to be at risk of harm, and to ensure that we, the School, contribute to assessments of need and support packages for those children.
- To promote links with other agencies such as Social Care and the Police with a view to developing a productive and effective partnership.
- To ensure that all adults within our School who have substantial access to children have been checked as to their suitability.
- To ensure that any member of another organisation, if responsible for the School's pupils at any time, has had the appropriate checks.
- To develop further a network of support for staff and pupils.

4. Safe Recruitment

4.1 The School will operate safe recruitment procedures as outlined in the guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)*, and in accordance with the Recruitment and Selection Policy. It will check all staff, School Governing Body members, volunteers and others coming into regular contact with pupils to ensure their suitability. This

includes checks on identity, qualifications, Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) history, the right to work in the UK, references, employment history, medical fitness and overseas checks for those appointed from overseas. The School will also ensure that at least one member of each interview panel has completed the Safer Recruitment course.

4.2 The use of mobile phones and cameras must keep to the School's Computer Acceptable Use Policy. Cameras are used for educational purposes only. On entry to the School, parents must write to the Head of Barnard Castle School if they do not wish their child to be photographed for educational purposes and school website material. Where students need to evidence work for educational purposes, permission is sought from a senior member of staff and the parents.

5. Identifying Abuse

5.1 Staff who have day-to-day contact with pupils are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse such as changes in behaviour or developmental concerns. A child protection concern may come to the attention of School staff or volunteers in a variety of ways, such as pupil disclosure, third party disclosure or staff suspicion.

5.2 Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately.

5.3 It is not the responsibility of the School to investigate suspected or alleged abuse; this is the role of the Police and Social Services.

5.4 **What is Child Abuse?** The definitions in this document are drawn from Keeping Children Safe in Education (2014).

5.4.1 **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. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

5.4.2 **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.

5.4.3 **Emotional abuse** – 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 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.

5.4.4 **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They

may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

5.4.5 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: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

5.4.6 Who are the abusers? – abusers can be parents or carers, siblings or members of the extended family, neighbours, teachers, strangers or other pupils; in short, an abuser could be anyone.

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

5.4.8 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM): professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. There is a range of potential indicators that a child or young person may be at risk of RGM, which individually may not indicate risk but if there are two or more indicators present this could signal a risk to the child or young person. Victims of RGM are likely to come from a community that is known to practise FGM. It should be noted that girls at risk of RGM may not yet be aware of the practice or that it may be conducted on them, so sensitivity should always be shown when approaching the subject. Warning signs that FGM may be about to take place, or may have already taken place, can be found on pages 11-12 of the Government Publication "*Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines: Female Genital Mutilation*". Staff should activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children's social care.

5.5 Signs of abuse

The following may help staff be aware of possible signs of abuse but *these do not necessarily mean that the child has been abused:*

Physical Abuse

- Unexplained injuries/burns
- Untreated injuries
- Bruises/abrasion around the face

- Bi-lateral injuries e.g. two bruised eyes
- Bite marks
- Bruising abrasions to lips, cheeks, outer ear

Emotional Abuse

- Excessive overreaction to mistakes
- Continual self-deprecation
- Extreme compliance/aggression
- Drug, alcohol and substance misuse
- Significant peer relationship difficulties

Sexual Abuse

- Sexual awareness inappropriate to child's age, including provocative sexual behaviour
- Self harm
- Pregnancy
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Sudden changes in behaviour or school performance
- Fear of undressing for gym
- Depression/withdrawal
- Drug, alcohol, substance abuse

Neglect

- Constant hunger, tiredness and/or poor personal hygiene
- Untreated medical problems
- Destructive tendencies
- Social isolation
- Poor self-esteem and/or relationship with peers
- Excessive rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking

6. The Role of the Governing Body and the DSLs

The Governing Body has appointed Miss Amy Jackson as the DSL of the Senior School and Mrs Rebecca Robertson as the DSL of the Prep School. In the absence of either DSL, the other named DSL deputises.

Mrs Ruth Dent is the link Governor for Safeguarding matters within the School.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads have the responsibility to:

- Ensure that effective communications and liaison with Social Care and other agencies take place as appropriate in the event of staff having child protection concerns about a pupil.
- Ensure that the Head, and all staff, members of the Governing Body and others have regular annual training on child abuse and its main indicators and that they are aware of their own child protection responsibilities and those of the School. Any volunteers, or temporary staff, will be made aware of child protection arrangements and will also undergo appropriate training.
- Ensure that all new members of staff, new School Governors and others, including volunteers, are trained as soon as possible after joining the School.

- Ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Leads and the Governing Body member responsible for child protection are properly trained and re-trained on a two-yearly cycle.
- Review annually the safeguarding policy and the efficiency with which related duties have been discharged.
- Ensure that where the School ceases to use the services of any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) because that person was considered unsuitable to work with children, a detailed report is made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) within one month of the person leaving the School. The Governing Body have noted that failure to make a report constitutes an offence which may result in the School being removed from the register of independent schools.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads will:

- Arrange to provide induction Safeguarding Training as laid down by the LSCB to all members of staff, as well as training any volunteers or temporary members of staff, to include the School Safeguarding Policy, the guidance in the Common Rom Handbook about Staff behaviour in relation to pupils, the identity and function of the DSLs, and providing a copy of Part 1 of KCSIE.
- Support, advise and liaise with staff in their safeguarding work.
- Ensure that any pupil who is subject to a Child Protection Plan who is absent without explanation for two days is referred to their key Social Care Team.
- Liaise with, when appropriate, (e.g. if the allegation is against the Head or the Designated Safeguarding Lead), the Chair of Governors and/or the Governor responsible (see procedures below).

7. Procedures

All members of staff, volunteers and Governors must know:

- The signs and symptoms of abuse.
- How to respond to a pupil who discloses abuse.
- What to do if they are concerned about a child.

A member of staff aware of or suspecting abuse:

- Must listen carefully to the child, be supportive and keep an open mind. Staff should not take a decision as to whether or not the abuse has taken place.
- Must respond in a calm and non-judgemental way, asking questions which are open-ended e.g. is there anything else you want to tell me? Yes? And?
- Must not ask leading questions, that is, a question which suggests its own answer. Use words: ‘Tell’, ‘Explain’, ‘Describe’, never ‘Why’. If at all possible the questions asked should be recorded.

- Must reassure the child, but never give a guarantee of absolute confidentiality. The member of staff should explain that they need to pass the information to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will ensure that the correct action is taken.
- Must keep a sufficient written record of the conversation. This should be done immediately. The record should include the date, time and place of the conversation and the essence of what was said and done by whom and in whose presence. Include any observations on noticeable non-verbal behaviour and actual words used by the child. The record should be signed by the person making it and should use names, not initials.
- Must hand the record immediately to a Designated Safeguarding Lead: **Miss A G Jackson or Mrs R A Robertson.**

When an allegation is made

Concerns may be raised with staff through a direct disclosure, by a pupil or indirectly through their work or via friends. A parent may approach the School directly, or may contact social services or the police. An anonymous report will be acted on, but this fact will be kept in mind when considering the context of the allegation.

When an allegation is made, the DSL will establish in writing the general nature of the allegation, including:

- What is alleged to have happened?
- Where and when the incident is alleged to have occurred.
- Who was involved?
- Whether there were any others present.

At this stage, no attempt will be made to determine the truth or otherwise of the allegation by investigation the incident as this may jeopardise any subsequent investigations by external agencies.

It is recognised that allegations can be made mistakenly, whether or not for frivolous or malicious reasons, which can jeopardise or damage irretrievably the career of an adult. However, all **allegations against the staff or volunteers** must be considered to be possible of substantiation, until otherwise proved, and the following course of action will be followed:

Initial Assessment

When making the initial assessment, the context in which the alleged incident occurred may provide important information. This includes:

- The conduct of the member of staff (e.g. previous concerns, past disciplinary action, exemplary professional behaviour).
- The conduct of the pupil (e.g. Record of behaviour and any previous allegations made).
- Any special circumstances (e.g. Family problems or special needs)
- The perspective of the person making the allegation.

A trivial allegation does not have to result in a child protection referral, but the danger is that what may appear trivial to staff may be significant to the pupil and may still constitute an assault.

The three possible outcomes of the initial assessment:

- i. Where it is clear that the pupil has suffered, is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm or has alleged that a criminal offence has been committed, including abuse by one or more pupils against another, a referral will be made to the local agency and the police may carry out a criminal investigation.
- ii. The allegation, whilst not in the first category, represents inappropriate or poor practice by a member of staff that needs to be dealt with by the School's disciplinary procedures.
- iii. The immediate circumstances show that it is not possible for the allegation to be true.

All evidence, (for example, scribbled notes, and mobile phones containing text messages, clothing, and computers), must be safeguarded and preserved.

- If an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer, the member of staff receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Head. The Head will, on all such occasions, discuss the content of the allegation with the Local Authority Designated Office (LADO) within 24 hours. Suspension of the member of staff against whom an allegation has been made needs careful consideration and the Head will seek the advice of the LADO.
- Staff should, however, take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. It is always advisable for the interviews or work with individual children or parents to be conducted in view of other adults.
- If a member of staff living in school boarding accommodation is suspended in circumstances of a child protection nature, the School will provide alternative accommodation, away from pupils.
- If any person (employed, contracted, volunteer or student) has to leave the School because he or she is considered unsuitable to work with children, it is the School's responsibility to report that person to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) within one month of that person leaving the School.
- Where a member of the teaching staff has been dismissed (or would have been dismissed had he/she not resigned) and a prohibition order may be appropriate, because of unacceptable professional conduct, conduct that may bring the profession in to disrepute, or a conviction, at any time, for a relevant offence, the School will consider making a referral to the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL).
- Where a referral has been made to the DBS, it is not necessary for the School to make a separate referral to the NCTL, but where a dismissal does not reach the threshold for DBS referral, separate consideration will be given to an NCTL referral.

Arrangements for dealing with allegations of abuse against teachers, volunteers, the DSL and the Headmaster

- If the allegation made to a member of staff concerns the Headmaster, the person receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Chair of Governors/Designated Member of Governors who will consult the LADO as above without notifying the Head first.
- If the allegation is made to a member of staff concerns either of the named DSL, the person receiving the allegation will immediately inform the other DSL and the Headmaster
- As above, any decision to suspend the Head would be taken by the Chair of Governors, having sought the advice of the LADO. If an allegation of abuse is made against a pupil at the School, that pupil may be suspended from the School during the investigation and the School's policy on behaviour, discipline and sanctions will apply.
- In the case of serious harm, the police will be informed from the outset.

Whistle Blowing

The School recognises that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so.

Where staff or volunteers reasonably believe that safeguarding concerns exist, or where they have concerns regarding the management of safeguarding issues, it is their duty to raise concerns.

The member of staff or volunteer should bring their concerns to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or in a case where the concerns relate to the actions or inaction of the Designated Safeguarding Lead, to the Head.

If it becomes necessary to consult outside the School, the staff or volunteer should first liaise with the Chair of Governors.

8. Referring Concerns to Children's Social Care

8.1 Within 24 hours of receipt of information about abuse or suspected abuse, the Designated Safeguarding Lead must report the matter to the Social Care Assessment Team which will investigate the issue and advise on the action the School must take. It is important to note that anyone can make a referral to Children's Social Care Services. A written record of the referral will be sent to the Assessment Team by the end of the working day the referral is made. If there are concerns about a child, but there is no need to make an immediate referral (this will be on the advice of the Assessment Team), written records will still be kept (and placed in the Child Protection File).

8.2 Written records of all Child Protection concerns will be kept confidentially and securely (with access only to Designated Safeguarding Lead) on the Child Protection File, separate from pupil records. There will be a note on pupil files that there is further record keeping if a pupil has a Child Protection file.

8.3 The parents and pupil will be informed in writing of the referral to the Social Care Assessment Team **only after advice is given by the Social Care Assessment Team.**

8.4 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will advise the Social Care Assessment Team of any allegation or suspicion of abuse against a pupil.

8.5 The flowchart *Action when a child has suffered or is likely to suffer harm* from KCSIE (2014) illustrates the action that should be taken when there are concerns about a child. (Appendix A)

8.6 **Supporting Children.** We recognise that a child who is abused or who witnesses violence may feel helpless and humiliated, may blame themselves, and may find it difficult to develop and maintain a sense of worth. Five messages that should be conveyed to a child who has disclosed abuse are:

- **“I believe you”.** Children rarely lie about abuse (especially sexual abuse). The role of the member of staff is not to determine the validity of the disclosure.
- **“It’s not your fault”.** It is always the adult’s responsibility – but the member of staff should avoid condemning the alleged abuser – especially if it is a family member.
- **“I’m glad you told me”.** Children who talk about their concerns are less likely to be seriously affected.
- **“I’m sorry this happened to you”.**

- “**I’m going to try to help you**”. BUT staff should NOT make promises which they may not be able to keep – especially with regard to confidentiality – disclosures must be reported and staff must not make blanket claims, e.g. they should avoid saying phrases such as “Everything will be all right”.

Advice for Staff Dealing with Pupils

Staff act in loco parentis and should therefore aim to act as a reasonable parent would. Staff should be approachable and friendly but there is a line which teachers should not cross. Staff should be consistent, open and honest.

When speaking to pupils on a one to one basis staff should try to avoid rooms with closed doors (and windows in doors should always be kept clear). Depending on the circumstances it may be good practice to have another member of staff present or nearby. There should always be another member of staff within calling distance.

In general, physical contact with pupils should be avoided. When a pupil is making a disclosure physical contact must be avoided.

9. Training and Support

The Designated Safeguarding Leads, the Head, the Named Governor and School Nurse will receive regular training appropriate to their role. In addition, we will ensure all staff, volunteers and governors are also given regular and appropriate training.

Professional Confidentiality

Confidentiality is essential when dealing with child protection issues. Professionals can only work together to safeguard children if there is an exchange of relevant information between them. Normally, personal information should only be disclosed to third parties with the consent of the subject of that information. In some circumstances, obtaining consent may not be possible nor in the best interests of the child and the law permits the disclosure of confidential information necessary to safeguard children.

We recognise that the School may provide the only stability in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm. Our School will support all pupils by

- a. Encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness, whilst not condoning aggression or bullying.
- b. Promoting a caring, safe and positive environment within the School.
- c. Liaising and working together with all other support services and those agencies involved in safeguarding children.
- d. Providing continuing support to a pupil about whom there have been concerns who leaves the School by ensuring that appropriate information is forwarded under confidential cover to the pupil’s new school and ensuring the school medical records are forwarded as a matter of priority.

Supporting Staff

We recognise that staff working in the School who have become involved with a child who has suffered harm, or appears to be likely to suffer harm, may find the situation stressful and upsetting.

We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the Designated Safeguarding Leads and to seek further support as appropriate.

Equal Opportunities

In meeting its safeguarding obligations the School will be mindful of the obligations under the Equality Act 2010, which covers discrimination against a pupil or prospective pupil on grounds of sex, race, caste, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity. All staff, volunteers and governors with responsibilities under this policy must take into account the Equal Opportunities Policy when discharging their duties.

10. Contact Numbers

The telephone numbers of the County Durham Social Services Department are as follows:

Social Care Direct (24 hours 7 days)

Durham County Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB):

First Contact: 03000 267979

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) 01325 953795

The following telephone numbers may be useful for pupils:

Childline: 0800 1111

NSPCC: 0808 800 5000

Policy Review Dates

This policy was reviewed by the Governing Body on 13.03.15

by (name) AJ Fielder

(Signed) _____

(position) Chairman

and will undergo annual review.

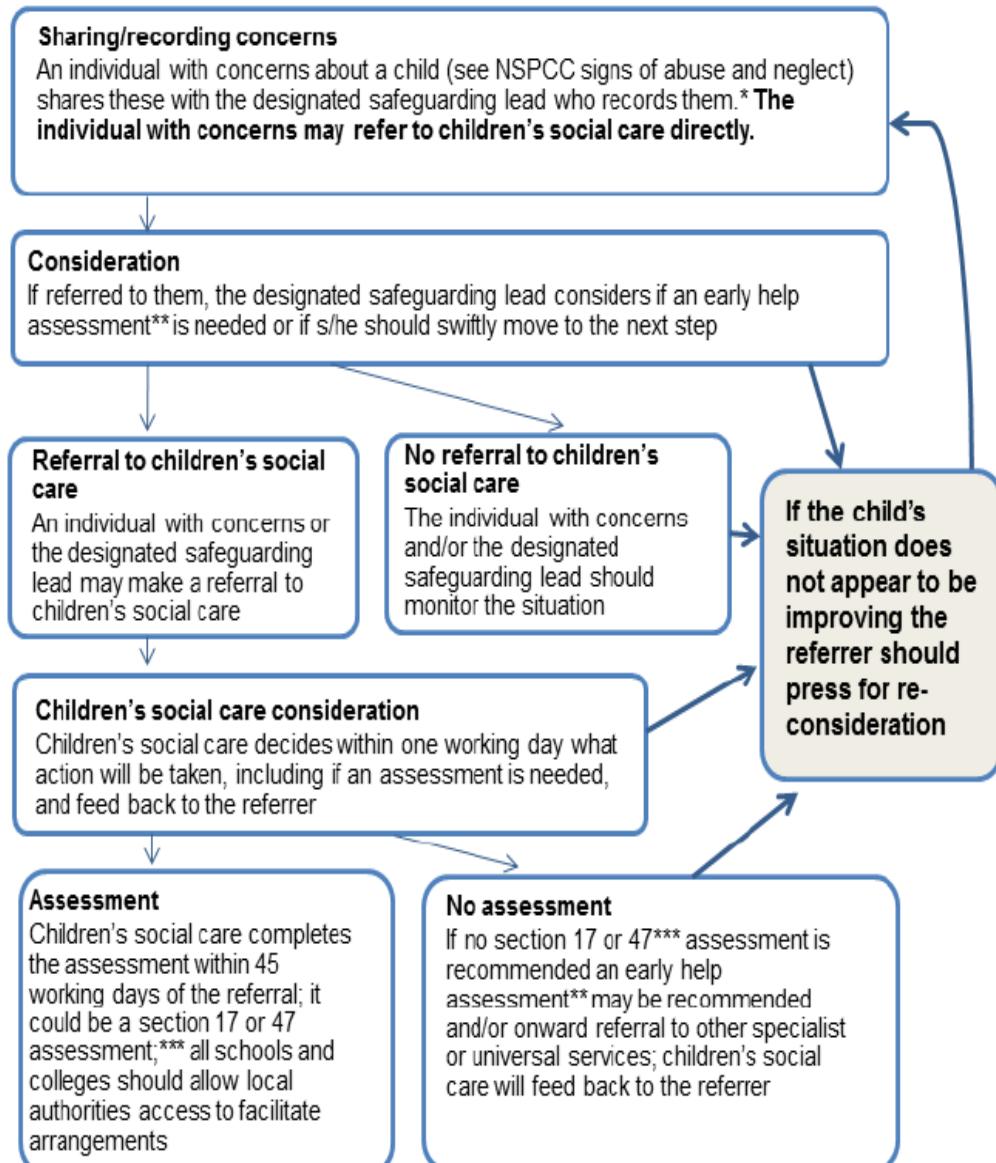
Authors: AGJ and RAR

Review date: March 2016

Action when a child has suffered or is likely to suffer harm

This diagram illustrates what action should be taken and who should take it when there are concerns about a child. If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child a referral should be made to children's social care immediately.

Anybody can make a referral.



* In cases which also involve an allegation of abuse against a staff member, see part four of this guidance which explains action the school or college should take in respect of the staff member

** Where a child and family would benefit from coordinated support from 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 require to prevent needs escalating to a point where intervention would be needed via a statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989. The early help assessment should be undertaken by a lead professional who could be a teacher, special educational needs coordinator, General Practitioner (GP), family support worker, and/or health visitor.

*** Where there are more complex needs, help may be provided under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 (children in need). Where there are child protection concerns local authority services must make enquiries and decide if any action must be taken under section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

Appendix B

Links to other School Policies and Procedures

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following School policies or Common Room Handbook.

Policies and the Common Room Handbook can be found on the School network or the School website.

- Antibullying (Policy)
- Behaviour (Common Room Handbook)
- Code of Conduct for Staff
- Complaints: Parents and Children (Policy)
- Data Protection (Both for staff and pupils and parents) (Policy)
- Disclosure and Barring Service (Policy)
- Missing Pupils (Policy)
- Computer Acceptable Use (Policy)
- Visitors (Common Room Handbook)