

Safeguarding Children in Education

Kingsdown School Child Protection Policy

KINGSDOWN SECONDARY SCHOOL

Name of school: Kingsdown Secondary School

Child Protection Policy

(Including the Management of Allegations against Staff & Volunteers)

Date policy agreed: June 2008 Annual Review date: July 2009

The Designated Person in school for Child Protection is

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This policy is based upon the guidance from Croydon Department for Children Young People and Learners (CYPL)

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Introduction

Child Protection policy for Kingsdown Secondary School

The staff and governors of the School are committed to ensuring that all pupils achieve the best outcomes in line with Government's Every Child Matters: Change for Children programme.

That is for every child to

- ❖ Be healthy
- ❖ Stay safe
- ❖ Enjoy and achieve
- ❖ Make a positive contribution
- ❖ Achieve economic well being

This policy relates to the "staying safe" outcome and contributes to multi agency local safeguarding practice.

"All people working in education and schools contribute to the safeguarding and promoting of children's welfare. All schools and further education institutions have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Consequently the staff in these establishments play an important part in safeguarding children from abuse and neglect by early identification of children who may be vulnerable or at risk of harm and by educating children, about managing risks and improving their resilience through the curriculum. All schools and further education institutions should create and maintain a safe environment for children and young people, and should be able to manage situations where there are child welfare concerns."

HM Government 2007 -"Statutory Guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004".

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children (as defined by 'Safeguarding Children & Safer Recruitment, Jan. 2007) is:

- ❖ Protecting children from maltreatment;
- ❖ Preventing impairment of children's health and development;
- ❖ Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- ❖ Undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

"Safeguarding" is taken to mean all agencies working with children, young people and their families take all reasonable measures to ensure that the risk of harm to children's welfare are minimised" and "where there are concerns about children and young people's welfare, all agencies take all appropriate actions to address those concerns, working to agreed local policies and procedures in full partnership with other agencies"

This policy is based upon the guidance from Croydon Department for Children Young People and Learners (CYPL)

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1. The aims of this policy

An effective whole school child protection policy is one that provides clear direction to staff and others about the expected behaviour when dealing with child protection issues. An effective policy makes explicit the school's commitment to the development of good practice and sound procedures. This ensures that child protection concerns, referrals and monitoring are handled sensitively, professionally and in ways that support the child's needs.

This policy applies to all pupils, staff, governors, volunteers and visitors to the School.

2. Framework

Key documents, which inform this policy, are:

“Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education” DCSF Jan 2007
Working Together to Safeguard Children – DH 1999
Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families – DH 2000
What to do if you are worried a Child is being Abused - DfES 2003
The London Child Protection Procedures – LSCB 2007
Croydon LEA Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures 2005

Our school procedures for safeguarding children will be in line with the Croydon Safeguarding Children Board (CSCB) child protection procedures which are based on the London Child Protection Procedures.

The development of appropriate procedures and the monitoring of good practice are the responsibilities of the Croydon Safeguarding Children Board.
www.croydon.gov.uk/lscb

3. There are three main elements of our child protection policy.

3.1 Prevention

Providing an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued and respected, feel confident and know how to approach adults if they are in difficulties.

Raising awareness of all staff, of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.

Ensuring that all adults within our school who have access to children have been rigorously checked as to their suitability using safe recruitment procedures

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3.2 Protection

Through the establishment of a systematic means of monitoring children, known or thought to be at risk of harm.

Through the establishment of structured procedures within the school which will be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse.

Through the development of effective working relationships with all other agencies, involved in safeguarding children.

3.3 Support

Ensuring that key concepts of Child Protection are integrated within the curriculum via PSHE and pupils are educated about risks associated with internet use and new technology.

Ensuring that children are listened to and their concerns taken seriously and acted upon.

Working with others to support pupils who may have been abused to access the curriculum and take part in school life

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body takes seriously its statutory responsibility under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; and to work together with other agencies to ensure adequate arrangements within our school to identify, assess, and support those children who are suffering harm. For independent schools - the responsibility is placed on the proprietor under section 157 of the Education Act 2002 and The Education (Independent Schools Standards (England) Regulations 2003.

Safeguarding also encompasses issues such as pupil health and safety, bullying and a range of other issues, e.g. arrangements to meet the medical needs of children with medical conditions, providing first aid, school security, drugs and substance misuse.

Where there are statutory requirements, the school will have in place policies and procedures that satisfy and comply with any guidance issued by the secretary of state. (DfES 'Safeguarding Children & Safer Recruitment, Jan. 2007)

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4.1 Training and support

The Governing body will ensure that:

We have a designated senior member of the leadership team for child protection who has undertaken appropriate Designated Senior Person Child Protection training in agreement with the CYPL Safeguarding Children Coordinator.

We identify and train a nominated governor for child protection

We have a senior member of staff who will act in the Designated Persons absence, who has also received the multi-agency training.

The designated person will attend appropriate training as required.

All members of staff will receive appropriate training to develop their:

understanding of signs and indicators of abuse, (appendix 1)

understanding of how to respond to a pupil who discloses abuse, (appendix 2).

understanding of the procedures to be followed in sharing a concern of possible abuse or a disclosure of abuse, (appendix 3).

New staff, supply staff and volunteers will be advised of the school's child protection arrangements and contact details of the Designated Person, as part of their induction into the school.

4.2 Safe Recruitment

Preventing unsuitable people from working with children and young people is essential to keeping children safe. Rigorous selection and recruitment of staff and volunteers is therefore key to a key responsibility of the head teacher and Governing Body. We will therefore ensure that the following areas are addressed.

Recruitment advertisements will include a child protection statement. DfES List 99 check; Criminal Records Bureau checks; identity checks and qualification checks will be carried out in accordance with the DCSF guidance "Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education" 2007.

The head teacher and nominated governor will complete the National College for School Leadership online training in Safer Recruitment and ensure that safe recruitment procedures are followed.

A central record of checks will be maintained and reviewed regularly by the Governing body.

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5. Records and monitoring

Well kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Our school is clear about the need to record any concern held about a child/ren within our school, the need to keep child protection records separate from the main school file and in a locked cabinet, and when they should be passed to other agencies.

The Governing Body is responsible for reviewing this policy on an annual basis and ensuring that practice is in line with the policy.

6. Extended schools and lettings –the use of school premises by other organisations.

Where services or activities are provided separately by another body using the school premises, the Governing Body will seek written assurance that the body concerned has appropriate policies and procedures in place in regard to safeguarding children and child protection.

7. Responsibilities of the Head Teacher

The Head teacher will:

Ensure that the safeguarding policies and procedures are fully implemented and followed by all staff.

Ensure that resources are allocated to enable the designated person and other staff as needed, attend strategy discussion, inter-agency meetings, contribute to assessments etc.

Ensuring that appropriate members of staff have received training on the use of the Common Assessment Framework (a standardised early assessment) in order to identify any additional needs that a child or young person may have so that they may receive appropriate support at an early stage.

Ensure that there is an identified deputy to take on the above responsibilities in the absence of the head teacher.

Be responsible for receiving allegations against staff and volunteers.

Record details of all allegations against staff and volunteers and report to the LA Allegations Manager in order to ensure allegations are dealt with in an objective and transparent way.

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Consult with the LA designated allegations manager before responding to an allegation.

Be responsible for carrying out any actions agreed with the LA allegations manager and reporting on outcomes.

8. Responsibilities of the Designated Person for Safeguarding Children

Referring a child if there are concerns about a child's welfare, possible abuse or neglect to the Children's Social Care duty team.

Ensuring that detailed and accurate written records of concerns about a child are kept, even if there is no need to make an immediate referral.

Ensuring that all such records are kept confidentially, securely and are separate from pupil records. The file will contain a front sheet listing dates and brief entry to provide a chronology.

Ensuring that an indication of further record-keeping is marked on the pupil records.

Acting as a focal point for staff concerns and liaising with other agencies and professionals.

Ensuring that either they or another appropriately informed member of staff attends case conferences, family support meetings, core groups, or other multi-agency planning meetings, contributing to the Framework for Assessments process, and provide a report which has been shared with the parents.

Ensuring that all school staff and volunteers are aware of the school's CP policy and procedures, and know how to recognise and refer any concerns.

Attend appropriate training as required by the Croydon Safeguarding Children Board in order to keep up to date with current knowledge in fulfilling the role.

Attend the training provided specifically for the designated persons at least once every two years.

Ensure that all staff receive appropriate training once every three years.

Attend Designated Teacher network meetings organised by the CYPL Safeguarding Children Coordinator, to ensure that staff are updated regularly on current child protection issues such as Sexually Active Children, Female Genital Mutilation, Forced Marriage of a Child and to provide a forum for the development of good practice.

Providing, with the head teacher, an annual report for the governing body, detailing any changes to the policy and procedures; training undertaken by the designated person, and by all staff and governors; and the number of children who have a 'Child protection Plan'.

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9. Responsibilities of the teaching and non teaching staff in the school

Undertake appropriate training in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children at least once every three years and apply in practice.

Be alert to signs of abuse and report immediately to the Designated Teacher.

Comply with the school policies and procedures on behaviour management and the staff code of conduct.

10. Confidentiality

We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential.

The Designated Senior Person will disclose personal information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need to know basis only.

All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or well-being or that of another.

We will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to Children's Social Care with their parents /carers unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm, or impede a criminal investigation.

11. 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 Senior Person and to seek further support. This could be provided for all staff by, for example, the Head teacher, by Occupational Health, and/or a teacher/trade union representative as appropriate.

12. Allegations against staff

All school staff should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child. It is always advisable to that your work with individual children or meetings with parents are conducted in view of other adults.

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All staff should be made aware of the school's behaviour/discipline policy and the staff code of conduct, with reference to professional boundaries.

We understand that a pupil may make an allegation against a member of staff. If such an allegation is made, the member of staff receiving the allegation will immediately inform the head teacher or the most senior teacher if the head teacher is not present.

The head teacher/senior teacher on all such occasions will discuss the content of the allegation with the LA Allegations Manager or Lead Officer for Safeguarding in Education before discussing the details with the member of staff concerned.

We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so. All staff will therefore be made aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues.

If an allegation is made to a member of staff concerns the behaviour of the Head teacher, the person receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Chair of Governors who will consult the LA Allegation Manager without notifying the head teacher.

13. Physical Intervention/Positive Handling

Our policy on physical intervention/positive handling by staff is set out separately, as part of our Behaviour Policy. It complies with the DCSF non -statutory guidance "Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils" 2007 which is available on Teachernet. This guidance replaces Circular 10/98, which should no longer be used.

Such events should be recorded and signed by a witness.

We understand that physical intervention of a nature which causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under L.A. child protection or disciplinary procedures.

14. Bullying - (refer to school's anti-bullying policy document)

Our procedures on the prevention and management of bullying are set out in a separate policy and acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under achievement for children

15. Cyberbullying

The school's procedures to prevent and manage cyberbullying are set out within separate policy and cross referenced to our anti-bullying policy.

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16. Racist Incidents – (refer to the school Race Equality policy)

Our procedure on dealing with racist incidents are set out in a separate policy and acknowledges that repeated racist incidents or a single serious incident may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

17. Sexual exploitation/substance misuse

Pupils who are identified to be at risk will be referred to Children's Social Care within CSCB child protection procedures.

18. Pupils with Medical Needs

Our procedures for dealing with the medical needs of its pupils is set out in a separate policy and has regard to:

DfEE/DoH Good Practice Guide 'Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs' and DfES Circular14/96 Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs and complies with the Schools Health and Safety Policy.

There is no legal duty for school staff to administer medication to pupils and the staff who do so act in a voluntary capacity. Staff who provide medication, will be appropriately trained and be provided with all relevant information about the pupil's needs. No pupils under 16 will be given medication without his or her parent's/career's consent.

19. Looked After Children

The head teacher will ensure that a member of staff is appointed as a Designated Teacher for LAC.

The education staff will contribute to the 'in care reviews' and/or case conferences of children who are subject of a child protection plan and to the Personal Education Plan.

The designated person for looked after children in the school is:

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20. Whistleblowing

We recognise that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff fail to do so

All staff should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues. If necessary, they should speak to the head teacher or the chair of governors.

21. Photography, Video, Internet use – The policy on the subject is set out in a separate document.

22. Health & Safety - The policy on the subject is set out in a separate document.

23. Work Experience - The policy on the subject is set out in a separate document.

24. Female genital Mutilation

This form of abuse involves mutilation by way of female circumcision, excision or infibulations. It causes long term mental and physical suffering, difficulty in giving birth, infertility and even death.

The designated person for child protection will:

Ensure that all of the school staff are aware of the indicators of the possibility that a child be undergoing or has undergone FMG.

Ensure that such concerns are brought to the attention of the designated person.

25. Forced Marriages

Forced marriage is a marriage conducted without the full consent of both parties and where duress is a factor. Such a marriage is a human rights abuse and falls within the Crown Prosecution Service definition of domestic violence.

If there is a concern that a child / young person (male or female) is in danger of forced marriage, the designated person for child protection will contact Children's social care without informing the parent/carer.

If there is an imminent threat of a child/young person being taken out of the country, the police and the Government's Forced Marriage Unit (www.fco.gov.uk / 020 7008 0230) will be contacted.

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26. Self Harming & Suicidal Behaviour

Self-harm and suicide threats and gestures by a child put the child at risk of significant harm, and should always be taken seriously. They may also be indicative of psychological or emotional disturbance triggered by physical, sexual and / or emotional abuse or chronic neglect which may also constitute significant harm.

27. Sexually Active Children

27.1 Children under 13 years

A child under 13 is not legally capable of consenting to sexual activity. Any offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 involving a child under 13 is very serious and should be taken to indicate a risk of significant harm to the child.

Cases involving children under 13 should always be discussed with the child protection designated person.

Under the Sexual Offences Act, penetrative sex with a child under 13 is classed as rape. Where a member of staff is concerned that a child is involved with penetrative sex or other intimate sexual activity, there will always be reasonable cause to suspect that a child, whether girl or boy, is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm.

The case should be referred to LA children's social care followed by a strategy meeting / discussion to discuss appropriate next steps.

27.2 Children 13 to 16 years

Sexual activity with a child under 16 is also an offence. Where it is consensual it may be less serious than if the child were under 13, but may nevertheless have serious consequences for the child's welfare. In every case of sexual activity involving a child aged 13 to 15, professionals should consider, with the school's child protection designated person, whether they should initiate a discussion with other agencies about the risk of harm to the child and whether a referral should be made to LA children's social care. (Refer to appendix 4 for an assessment of risk).

If you are concerned that a Child/young person is at risk of being groomed for sexual exploitation, the case should be referred to Children's Quality Assurance Manger.

28. Young Carers

In many families, children contribute to family care and well-being as a part of normal family life. A young carer is a child who is responsible for caring on a regular basis for a relative (usually a parent, grandparent, sometimes a sibling or very occasionally a friend) who has an illness or disability.

Many young carers may experience:

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- Social isolation;
- A low level of school attendance;
- Some educational difficulties;
- Impaired development of their identity and potential;
- Low self-esteem;
- Emotional and physical neglect;
- Conflict between loyalty to their family and their wish to have their own needs met.

Where a young carer is identified, the child's needs will be considered, using the Common Assessment Framework.

29. Supporting vulnerable pupils.

We recognise that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth or view the world as a positive place. We will try to ensure that this school provides a stable and secure place for all pupils through the development of policies and procedures that encourage self esteem and self motivation, good behaviour.

29.1 The school community will therefore:

Establish and maintain an ethos, which is understood by all staff, which enables children to feel secure and encourages them to talk knowing that they will be listened to.

Ensure that all children know there is an adult in the school whom they can approach if they are worried or in difficulty.

Provide across the curriculum, opportunities which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm and to know to whom they should turn for help.

30. Parental Involvement

It is important that parents/carers understand the school responsibility to:

Safeguard and promote the welfare of children

Share information and work in partnership with other agencies when there are concerns about a child's welfare.

In general the staff will seek to discuss any concerns about a child's welfare with the family and, where possible, seek their agreement to making referral to children's social care. However this should only be done where it will not place a child at increased risk of significant harm.

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Appendix 1 – Types of abuse and their symptoms

1.1 Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Physical Abuse - Indicators	
Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unexplained injuries – bruises / abrasions / lacerations ▪ The account of the accident may be vague or may vary from one telling to another. ▪ Unexplained burns ▪ Regular occurrence of unexplained injuries <p>Most accidental injuries occur on parts of the body where the skin passes over a bony protrusion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Withdrawn or aggressive behavioural extremes ▪ Uncomfortable with physical contact ▪ Seems afraid to go home ▪ Complains of soreness or moves uncomfortably ▪ Wears clothing inappropriate for the weather, in order to cover body. ▪ The interaction between the child and its carer

1.2 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 involve a parent failing to:

- ❖ Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter
- ❖ Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ❖ Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers);
- ❖ Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

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

Neglect – Indicators	
Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unattended medical need ▪ Underweight or obesity ▪ Recurrent infection ▪ Unkempt dirty appearance ▪ Smelly ▪ Inadequate / unwashed clothes ▪ Consistent lack of supervision ▪ Consistent hunger ▪ Inappropriately dressed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Poor social relationships ▪ Indiscriminate friendliness ▪ Poor concentration ▪ Low self-esteem ▪ Regularly displays fatigue or lethargic ▪ Frequently falls asleep in class ▪ Frequent unexplained absences

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1.3. Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development, and may involve:

- ❖ Conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person;
- ❖ Imposing age or developmentally inappropriate expectations on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction;
- ❖ Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another;
- ❖ Serious bullying, causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children;
- ❖ Exploiting and corrupting children.

Emotional Abuse – Indicators	
Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Poor attachment relationship ▪ Unresponsive / neglectful behaviour towards the child's emotional needs ▪ Persistent negative comments about the child. ▪ Inappropriate or inconsistent expectations ▪ Self harm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low self-esteem ▪ Unhappiness, anxiety ▪ Withdrawn, insecure ▪ Attention seeking ▪ Passive or aggressive behavioural Extremes

1.4 Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts.

Sexual abuse includes non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of pornographic materials, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Sexual Abuse – Indicators	
Physical Indicators	Behavioural Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sign of blood / discharge on the child's underclothing. ▪ Awkwardness in walking / sitting ▪ Pain or itching – genital area ▪ Bruising, scratching, bites on the inner thighs / external genitalia. ▪ Self harm ▪ Eating disorders ▪ Enuresis / encopresis ▪ Sudden weight loss or gain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sexually proactive behaviour or knowledge that is incompatible with the child's age & understanding. ▪ Drawings & or written work that is sexually explicit ▪ Self harm / Suicide attempts ▪ Running away ▪ Substance abuse ▪ Significant devaluing of self ▪ Loss of concentration

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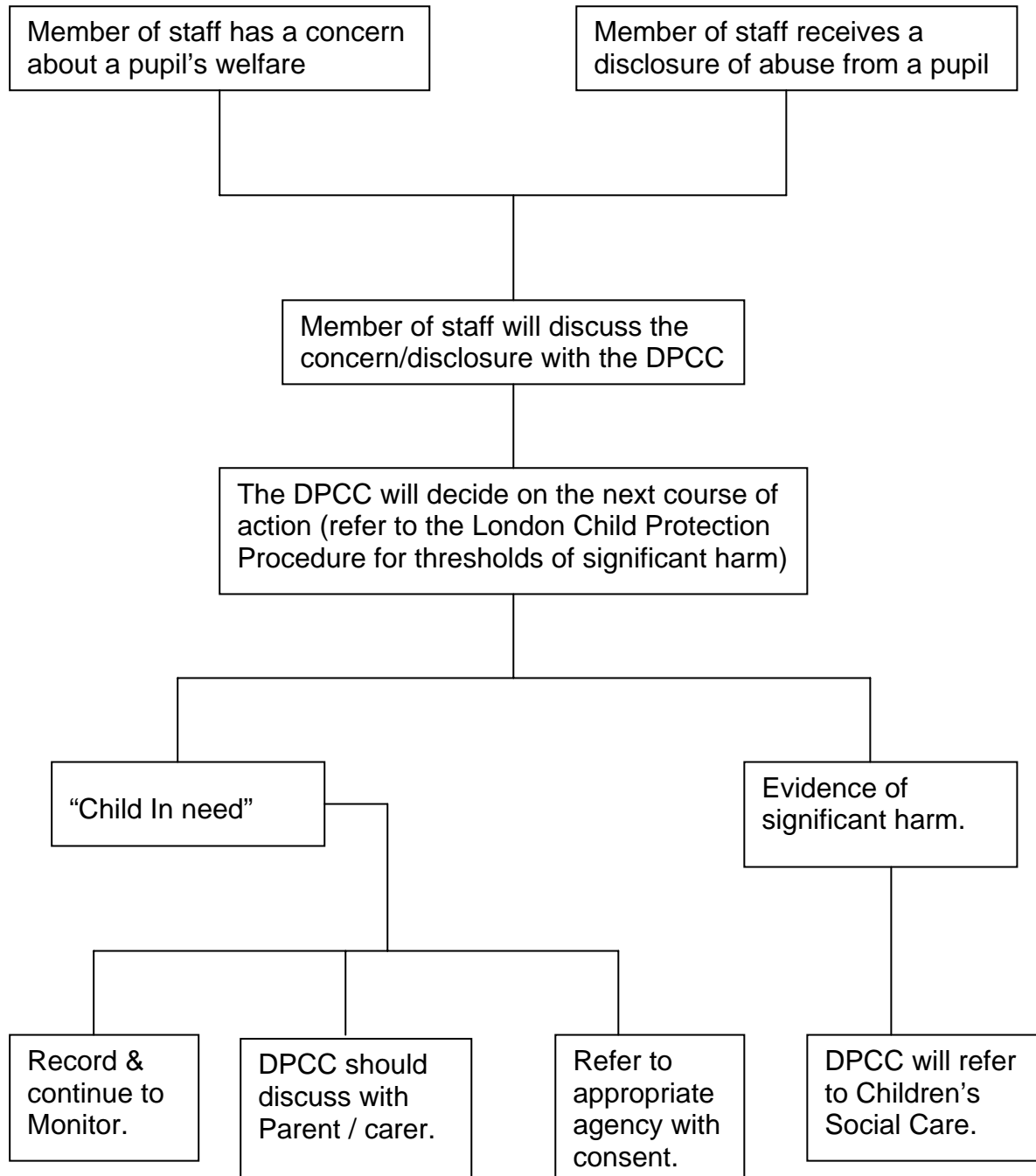
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Appendix 2 – Handling disclosures of abuse

- ❖ Always stop & listen to someone who wants to tell you about incidents or suspicions of abuse, without displaying shock & disbelief.
- ❖ Take the child seriously. Always assume that he/she is telling the truth.
- ❖ Do not promise confidentiality; you have a duty to refer to the designated senior person for child protection if 'child in need'.
- ❖ Do reassure and alleviate guilt.
- ❖ For example you could say; "you are not to blame."
- ❖ "You have done the right thing to tell someone."
- ❖ Do not ask leading questions.
- ❖ For example, "What did she do next?" (this assumes that she did),
- ❖ or "did he touch your private part". The child may well have to tell the story again, and to do so repeatedly will cause undue stress.
- ❖ In cases where criminal proceedings occur, such questioning can cause evidence to become invalid.
- ❖ Do not ask the child to repeat the incident for another member of staff.
- ❖ End by summarising what has been said and what action has been agreed.
- ❖ Be clear about what you intend to do next.
- ❖ Record carefully what has been said and what actions have been agreed.
- ❖ Discuss your concern/disclosure with the designated child protection person at the school.

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Appendix 3 – Procedures to be followed if you have a concern about a child’s welfare



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Appendix 4 – Assessment of Risk (Sexually active children)

In order to determine whether a relationship presents a risk of harm to a child, the following indicators should be considered:

- ❖ Whether the child is competent to understand, and consent to, the sexual activity they are involved in (children under 13 are not legally capable of consenting to sexual activity);
- ❖ What the child/ren in the relationship's living circumstances are, whether they are attending school, whether they or their siblings are receiving services from LA children's social care or another social care agency etc;
- ❖ The nature of the relationship between those involved, particularly if there are age or power imbalances;
- ❖ Whether overt aggression, coercion or bribery was or is involved, including misuse of alcohol or other substances as a disinhibitor;
- ❖ Whether the child's own behaviour (e.g. through misuse of alcohol or other substances) places them in a position where they are unable to make an informed choice about the activity;
- ❖ Any attempts to secure secrecy by the sexual partner beyond what would be considered usual in a teenage relationship;
- ❖ Whether methods used to secure a child's compliance, trust and / or secrecy by the sexual partner are consistent with grooming for sexual exploitation. Grooming is likely to involve efforts by a sexual predator (usually older than the child) to befriend a child by indulging or coercing them with gifts / treats (i.e. money or drugs), developing a trusting relationship with the child's family, developing a relationship with the child through the internet etc in order to abuse the child;
- ❖ Whether the child denies, minimises or accepts the concerns held by professionals.

Appendix 5 – The Common Assessment Framework

Common Assessment Framework can only be completed with the consent and involvement of the parent/carer (or child /young person where appropriate).

It provides a standard method of assessment used across all children's services. It facilitates **early identification of needs**, leading to co-ordinated provision of services, involving a lead professional where appropriate, and sharing information to avoid the duplication of assessments.

NB. Child protection concerns should be referred without delay to Children's Social Care duty team using the locally agreed child protection procedures.

If a CAF has previously been completed it will be helpful to pass on the information already gathered, but do not wait to complete a CAF.

The common assessment is designed for when:

- ❖ There are concerns about how well a child is progressing in terms of their health, welfare, behaviour, progress in learning or any other aspect of their well-being;
- ❖ There is signed consent from a parent/carer;
- ❖ The child's needs are unclear or broader than a single service can address.

A common assessment should be completed when a professional in any agency (all health, childcare, early years settings, schools, education, Connexions, adult social care, crime reduction and the voluntary sector) has concerns that a child will not progress towards the five *Every Child Matters* priority outcomes (being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being), without additional services.

Completing a common assessment should:

- ❖ Enable the professional to identify the child's needs;
- ❖ Provide a structure for systematic gathering and recording of information;
- ❖ Record evidence of concerns and a base-line for measuring progress in addressing them;
- ❖ Provide an evidence base for a decision to refer to another agency if necessary, or to children's social care for an initial or core assessment or to another service for a specialist assessment.