

Child Protection Policy
Reviewed Date: May 2026
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Our Designated Safeguarding Lead is:
Elizabeth Brooks

Our Deputy Safeguarding Leads are:
James Scott
Amy Reeder

The person who takes leadership responsibility for
safeguarding on the Proprietor body is:
Elizabeth Brooks

Child Protection Policy

The child protection policy for Dorset Trade Skills (SW) Limited is based on a template provided by the Dorset Safeguarding and Standards Team; it reflects the Pan-Dorset Inter-Agency Safeguarding Procedures (on the Dorset Safeguarding Children Board website) and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2025.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

This policy consists of three main documents:

- A. The overarching safeguarding policy (statement of principles)
- B. Detailed child protection procedures and
- C. Child protection summary sheet. The latter is printed separately and provided routinely for those adults who will not have the opportunity to read this policy in its entirety but will have unsupervised contact, even as a 'one-off', with pupils on a temporary or intermittent basis such as supply, peripatetic or visiting professionals.

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A. Safeguarding Policy

Dorset Trade Skills (SW) Limited recognise(s) that the welfare of the child is paramount: the needs and wishes of each child will be put first. Throughout this document, 'child' refers to a young person under the age of 18.

We take seriously our duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children and young people in our care.

Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2023, HM Government statutory guidance, defines safeguarding as:

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

The Proprietor will act in accordance with Section 175 / Section 157 of the Education Act 2002 and the supporting statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2025 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in this Centre.

The Advisory Group is accountable for ensuring that the Centre meets its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding and that all policies, procedures and training are in place and effective.

It is a Dorset Safeguarding Standard (recommended by the Dorset Safeguarding Children Board) that Advisory Group receive an annual report from the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Nominated Governor to help monitor compliance with statutory responsibilities.

The Dorset Standards also include that each school and Centre 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

The Proprietor, staff and regular volunteers in this Centre understand the importance of taking appropriate action and working in partnership with children, their parents/carers and other agencies to safeguard children and promote their welfare.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- afford protection for all pupils
- enable staff and volunteers to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- promote a culture which makes this Centre a safe place to learn and in which children feel safe

This policy applies to the staff, including supply and peripatetic staff, regular volunteers (i.e. those who come into Centre once a week or more or 4 times in a 30-day period), Advisory Group or anyone working on behalf of the Centre.

We will endeavour to safeguard children and young people by:

- always acting in their best interests
- valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- involving them in decisions which affect them
- never tolerating bullying, homophobic behaviour, racism, sexism or any other forms of discrimination, including through use of technology
- ensuring the curriculum affords a range of opportunities to learn about keeping themselves safe, particularly when using technology

- exercising our duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- by ensuring all staff attend 'Prevent' training in respect of radicalisation and extremist behaviour and by assessing the risk of our pupils being drawn into terrorism
- supporting attendance and taking action if a child is missing from the Centre regularly
- appointing a senior member of staff from our leadership team as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and ensuring this person has the time, funding, training, resources and support to perform the role effectively
- appointing at least one Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure there is always someone available during Centre hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns
- appointing a Designated Teacher to promote the educational achievement of children who are Looked-After (in care) and to work closely with the virtual school head to discuss how pupil premium plus additional funding can support the progress of these children
- ensuring that staff working with Looked-After Children have information appropriate to their role regarding, for example, the child's care arrangements, legal status and contact with birth parents
- and will also have the responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children who have left care.
- making sure all staff and volunteers are aware of and committed to the safeguarding policy and child protection procedures and also understand their individual responsibility to take action
- ensuring that all those named above (i.e. DSLs and Deputy DSLs; Designated Teacher; Headteacher, all staff and regular volunteers) have training appropriate to their roles as set out in statutory guidance or recommended by the Dorset Safeguarding Children Board
- identifying any concerns early and providing appropriate help to prevent them from escalating, including working with parents/carers and other agencies as appropriate
- sharing information about child safeguarding concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving children and their parents/carers appropriately
- acknowledging and actively promoting that multi-agency working is the best way to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm
- taking the right action, in accordance with Dorset Safeguarding Children Board inter-agency safeguarding procedures, if a child discloses or there are indicators of abuse
- keeping clear, accurate and contemporaneous safeguarding and child protection records
- recruiting staff and volunteers (including host families) safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made in accordance with statutory guidance

- and legal requirements and also making sure that at least one appointment panel member has undertaken safer recruitment training
- providing effective management for staff through induction, support and regular update training appropriate to role
 - adopting a code of conduct for all staff and volunteers which includes acceptable use of technologies, staff/pupil relationships and communications including the use of social media
 - ensuring our online safety process includes appropriate filters and monitoring systems
 - ensuring staff and volunteers understand about 'whistle blowing' and
 - ensuring staff know how to escalate concerns about pupils or staff if they think the right action has not been taken to safeguard children
 - promoting a culture in which staff feel able to report to senior leaders with what they consider to be unacceptable behaviour or breaches of the Centre Code of Conduct by their colleagues, having faith that they will be listened to and appropriate action taken
 - dealing appropriately with any allegations/concerns about the behaviour of staff or volunteers in accordance with the process set out in statutory guidance

This child protection policy forms part of a suite of policies and other documents which relate to the wider safeguarding responsibilities of the Centre. In particular it should be read in conjunction with the

- staff behaviour policy (code of conduct)
- e-safety policies for pupils and staff, which include use of mobile technology
- safer recruitment policy and procedures
- procedures to handle allegations against members of staff and volunteers, including referring to the Disclosure and Barring Service (when appropriate)
- whistle blowing policy
- procedures to respond appropriately when children are missing education
- anti-bullying procedures

These policies and procedures are on Centre website, available from Centre office etc)

B. Child Protection Procedures

These procedures should be read in conjunction with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education, Part One: Information for all school and Centre Staff' 2025, plus Annex A.

1. What is Child Protection?

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

2. What is significant harm?

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

3. Purpose of these procedures

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

4. Responsibilities and roles

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

4.2 Governing bodies are accountable for ensuring their Centre has an effective child protection policy which should be reviewed annually and available publicly, such as on the Centre website.

4.3

The statutory safeguarding guidance for Centres: 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025' states that all schools and Centres should have 'a senior board level (or equivalent) lead to take leadership responsibility' for safeguarding.

The person who takes leadership responsibility for safeguarding in this Centre is: Elizabeth Brooks.

4.4 This Centre has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The DSL (and any deputies) are most likely to have a complete safeguarding picture. This is the person who takes lead responsibility for safeguarding. The DSL should have details of the local authority Personal Advisor appointed to guide and support the care leaver. 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 2025.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead in this Centre is: Elizabeth Brooks

The Centre also has at least one Deputy Safeguarding Lead.

The Deputy Safeguarding Leads are Amy Reeder and James Scott.

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

See Appendix 1 for contact details.

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

- DfE guidance (2025) – Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) – 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
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused – Government Guidance (2015)

4.7 The Centre has a designated teacher; Elizabeth Brooks.

4.8 The designated teacher on commencement of sections 4 to 6 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, has the responsibility to promote the educational achievement of children who are looked after (as above) and those children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or who were adopted from the state care outside England and Wales.

4.9 A previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable and all staff should have skills knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe. When dealing with looked after children and previously looked after children it is important that all agencies work together, and prompt action

is taken on concerns to safeguard these children, who are a particularly vulnerable group.

4.10 The Designated teacher must have appropriate training and the relevant qualifications and experience. In other Schools and Centres and appropriately trained teacher should take the lead.

5. What is child abuse?

5.1 It is generally accepted that there are four main forms of abuse. The following definitions are from Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023).

i) Physical abuse

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

ii) Emotional abuse

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

iii) Sexual abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether 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.

iv) **Neglect**

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy because of maternal substance use. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

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

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

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

6. Recognising child abuse – signs and symptoms

6.1 Keeping Children Safe in Education is clear 2025: 'All School and Centre staff members should be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect so that they are able to identify cases of children who may need help or protection'.

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

6.3 Knowing what to look for is vital to the early identification of abuse and neglect. If staff are unsure, they should **always** speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) Any concerns about a child's welfare, should be acted upon immediately.

6.4 All School and Centre 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.

6.5 All staff should be aware of the process for making referrals to children's social care and for statutory assessments under the children Act 1989, especially section 17 (children in need) and section 47 (a child suffering or likely to suffer, significant harm) that may follow a referral, along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments.

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

7. Child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment

7.1 All staff should recognise that children can abuse their peers. All staff should be clear about their School or Centres policy and procedure about peer on peer abuse.

7.2 Sexual violence and harassment can occur between two children of any age or sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

7.3 The School or Centres initial response to a report from a child is important. It is essential that **all** victims are reassured and that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.

7.4 Ultimately, any decisions are for the School or Centre to make on a case-by-case basis, with the DSL or deputy taking a lead role and using their professional judgement, supported by other agencies, such as children social care and the police as required.

7.5 Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are likely to be complex and require difficult decisions to be made, often quickly and under pressure. Pre-planning and effective policies will provide Schools and Centres with the foundation for a calm, considered and appropriate response to any reports.

7.6 Following a report of sexual violence, the DSL (or deputy) should make an immediate risk and needs assessment, considering;

- The victim
- The alleged perpetrator
- All the other children (if appropriate adult students and staff)

7.7 Centres need to consider the following options for managing a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment;

- Manage internally
- Early Help
- Safeguarding children – referral to children social care
- Reporting to the Police – in parallel to children's social care

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

7.9 A Centre risk assessment will be put in place, preferably by way of a meeting, which will consider;

- The wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed
- The nature of the alleged incident
- The ages of the children involved
- The developmental stages of the children involved
- Any power imbalance between the children
- Is the incident a one off or a sustained pattern of abuse?
- Are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children, School or Centre staff?
- Contextual safeguarding
-

All staff should act in the best interests of the child.

7.10 All staff should be aware of that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to;

- Bullying (including cyber bullying)
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment
- Sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery)
- ; and
- Initiation/hazing type violent rituals
-

All staff should be clear on the Schools or Centres policy and procedures with regards to peer on peer abuse.

7.11 Staff should not dismiss abusive behaviour as 'normal' between young people and should not develop high thresholds before acting.

7.12 there may be delays to a criminal process, but Schools and Centres should not wait for the outcome before protecting the victim, alleged perpetrator and other children in the Schools or Centre.

7.13 Centres need to manage the balance between supporting the victim and ensuring the alleged perpetrator has an education and safeguarding support themselves. Appropriate support should be ongoing basis to the victim.

Handling Incidents

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

Disclosure

Disclosures about youth produced sexual imagery can happen in a variety of ways. The young person affected may inform a class teacher, the DSL in Centre, or any member of the Centre staff. They may report through an existing reporting structure, or a friend or parent may inform someone in Centre, or inform the police directly.

All members of staff (including non-teaching) should be made aware of how to recognise and refer any disclosures of incidents involving youth produced sexual imagery. This should be covered within staff training and they should be made aware of the Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedures. Any direct disclosure by a young person should be taken very seriously. A young person who discloses they are the subject of sexual imagery is likely to be embarrassed and worried about the consequences. It is likely that disclosure in Centre is a last resort and they may have already tried to resolve the issue themselves.

See March 2024 guidance from UKCCIS: 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people', [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people \(updated March 2024\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people)

Each Centre Governing body and proprietor should ensure that the child protection policy includes all that is set out on Section 90 page 22 / 23 of keeping children safe in education 2025

- *set out what they have in place to minimise the risk of peer on peer abuse (e.g. what policies are in place; addressing issues through the curriculum /PSHE; working with other agencies; risk assessments etc)*
- *explain how allegations (in addition to those noted above) will be investigated and dealt with – e.g. initiation-type violence, incidents of sexual touching etc*
- *have its own policy on use of mobile technology*

8. Pupils engaging in under-age sexual activity

8.1 Sexual activity where one of the partners is under the age of 16 is illegal, although prosecution of young people who are *consenting partners of a similar age* is not usual. Designated Safeguarding Leads will exercise professional judgement when deciding whether to refer or take advice from social workers, **considering** such things as any imbalance of power, wide difference in ages or developmental stages etc.

8.2 Where a child is under the age of 13 penetrative sex is classified as rape under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 so must be reported to social workers in every case.

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

9. Child sexual exploitation/Criminal exploitation

9.1 This form of abuse involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money, mobile phones) as a result of their performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual acts. It can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; e.g. being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain.

9.2 Recognition of child sexual exploitation is part of staff training. We note that any child or young person may be at risk of this form of abuse, regardless of family background or other circumstances, and can experience significant harm to physical and mental health. *Trained staff include Elizabeth Brooks (DSL), Amy Reeder and James Scott (Deputy DSL)*

9.3 Due to the grooming methods used by abusers, it is common for young people not to recognise they are being abused and may feel they are 'in a relationship' and acting voluntarily. *A guest speaker, trained in 'Child sexual exploitation,' will be contracted to deliver an awareness talk.*

9.4 *"County Lines" is becoming Widley recognised and used to describe criminal exploitation of young people using the internal trafficking of young people for the purpose of criminal exploitation. Young people are groomed using the same techniques as above, with them completing a task on behalf of another individual or group of individuals which is of a criminal nature. Children are "trafficked" as part of the exploitation. They have their transport arranged for them for the purpose of selling drugs, firearms or sex.*

Young people will go missing for extended periods of time, missing education and moving away from their friendship groups.

9.5 Any concerns about child sexual exploitation/criminal 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 Pan Dorset-website [Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership - Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership \(pdscp.co.uk\)](http://Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership - Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership (pdscp.co.uk))

10. Forms of abuse linked to culture, faith or belief

All staff in this Centre 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.

10.1 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 the Centre / 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.

10.2 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 the Centre or might not return from a holiday abroad. We recognise that the Centre staff can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage.

10.3 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. However, there are some significant differences in the immediate response required as involving families in cases of forced marriage is dangerous:

- It may increase the risk of serious harm to the victim. Experience shows that the family may punish them for seeking help.
- Relatives, friends, community leaders and neighbours should not be used as interpreters – despite any reassurances from this known person.

10.4 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 Centre we recognise that safeguarding against radicalisation and extremism is no different from safeguarding against any other vulnerability.

Our curriculum promotes respect, tolerance and diversity. Children are encouraged to share their views and to understand that they are entitled to have their own different beliefs which should not be used to influence others.

We recognise that children with low aspirations are more vulnerable to radicalisation and therefore we strive to equip our pupils with confidence, self-belief, respect and tolerance as well as setting high standards and expectations for themselves.

Children are taught about how to stay safe when using the Internet and are encouraged to recognise that people are not always who they say they are online. They are taught to seek adult help if they are upset or concerned about anything they read or see on the Internet.

Any concerns about pupils becoming radicalised or being drawn into extremism will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will *not* speak to parents/carers or other family members at this stage but will take prompt advice from the Police.

10.5 Prevent

Prevent is about safeguarding people and communities from the threat of terrorism and violent extremism. Prevent is part of CONTEST, the Government's counter-terrorism strategy. It aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

The Prevent strategy: Responds to the ideological challenge we face from terrorism and aspects of extremism, and the threat we face from those who promote these views;

- Provides practical help to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. It ensures they are given appropriate advice and support
- Works with a wide range of sectors (including education, criminal justice, faith, charities, online and health) where there are risks of radicalisation that we need to deal with.
- Prevent covers all forms of terrorism and extremism and some aspects of non-violent extremism.

The Home Office works with local authorities, a wide range of government departments, and community organisations to deliver the Prevent strategy. The police play a significant role in Prevent, in much the same way as they do when taking a preventative approach to other crimes.

- The main aim of Prevent is to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremism.
- At the heart of Prevent is safeguarding children and adults. Providing early intervention to protect and divert people away from being drawn into terrorist activity is crucial.
- Prevent addresses all forms of extremism but continues to ensure resources and effort are allocated on the basis of threats to our national security.

Any individuals who are identified as being vulnerable to radicalisation are referred to a multi-agency Channel Panel. This ensures the appropriate interventions are put in place to protect the individual. Like child protection, Channel is a multi-agency safeguarding programme run in every local authority in England and Wales. It works to support vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism. It provides a range of support such as mentoring, counselling, assistance with employment etc. Where pupils at this Centre are being discussed, the DSL or Proprietor will attend the Panel meetings.

Channel is about early intervention to protect vulnerable people from being drawn into committing terrorist-related activity and addresses all types of extremism.

Staff and governors in this Centre have either attended a WRAP (Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent) session or have completed on-line Prevent training.

To referrer email MASH@dorset.pnn.police.uk

11. Children missing education

Emergency contacts

Where reasonably possible the School/Centre should hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil. This goes beyond the legal minimum and is good practice to give the School or Centre additional options to contact a responsible adult when a child missing education is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

11.1 We recognise that a child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including the specific types of abuse detailed above including child criminal exploitation /or travelling to conflict zones.

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

11.3 Actions could include involving other professionals and, if any of the criteria are met, informing the local authority where a pupil's name has been removed from the Centre roll.

There is more information about specific safeguarding issues including links to websites in Part one and Annex A of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2025.

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

All staff and volunteers will:

- Listen carefully to what is said
- Avoid showing shock or disbelief
- Observe the child's demeanour
- Find an appropriate opportunity to explain that the information will need to be shared with others. They will not promise to keep the information confidential or a 'secret'
- Allow the child to continue at her/his own pace and not interrupt if the child is freely recalling events. They will not stop him/her 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 by talking about it
- 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 Centre – including the DSL - or ask him/her or any other children who were present to write a written account or 'statement'

13. Taking action

13.1 If in exceptional circumstances, the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken.

13.2 Where physical injuries have been observed, these will be carefully noted but not photographed. The staff member will not ask to see injuries that are said to be on an intimate part of the child's body.

13.3 Any disclosure or indicators of abuse will be reported verbally to the DSL or Deputy straightaway or, where they are not available, and concerns are immediate, ensure a referral is made without delay to Children's Social Care. Staff at Centres with boarding provision can seek advice in the first instance from the MASH - Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub when the child's home address is not Dorset. (See Appendix 1 for contact details).

13.4 Where the child already has an allocated social worker, that person or a manager or duty worker in the same team must be contacted promptly.

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

13.6 If the child can understand the significance and consequences of making a referral to social workers, they will be asked for their views. It will be explained that whilst their views will be considered, the Centre has a responsibility to take whatever action is required to ensure the child's safety and that of other children.

13.7 The DSL will decide whether to contact parents at this stage, judging whether to do so, it is necessary to consider if contacting the parents/carers is likely to place the child at risk of harm from their parent's/carers 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 Children social care first and agree 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 Centre child protection file.

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

13.9 Where there is no disclosure by a child, but concerns are accumulating, such as in relation to neglect or emotional abuse, the DSL will ensure that all information is brought together and that s/he makes a professional judgement about whether to refer to outside agencies.

13.10 The Dorset Safeguarding Children Board's 'Threshold Document' should be used to help clarify the pathway required for a child: whether concerns will be managed within the Centre; or with the help of other agencies as part of early help; or whether they require specialised support such as a social work assessment or referral to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

13.11 A member of staff who reports concerns to the DSL should expect some feedback, although confidentiality might mean in some cases that this is not detailed. If the member of staff is not happy with the outcome s/he can press for reconsideration and if following this, s/he still believes the correct action has not been taken, will refer the concerns directly to children social care.

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

14.1 Occasionally parents or other people in the local community tell Centre 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 Centre.

14.2 If the incident or concern relates to *child protection*, the information cannot be ignored, even if there are suspicions about the motives of the person making the report. Members of staff will therefore pass the information to the DSL in the usual way.

14.3 It is preferable if the parent / community member who witnessed or knows about the concerns or incident makes a call to Children's Social Care themselves as they will be better able to answer any questions. They can ask for their name not to be divulged if a visit is made to the family.

14.4 If the parent / community member refuses to make the referral, the DSL will clarify that s/he (the DSL) has a responsibility to do so and will also need to pass on to social workers how s/he is aware of the information.

14.5 This process also applies to parents / community members who are also Centre staff. As professionals who work with children they cannot be anonymous when making the referral but can ask for the situation to be managed sensitively and, if necessary, for their identity to be withheld from the family if it will cause difficulties in their private life.

15. Remember

15.1 Any suspicion or concern that a child or young person may be suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm, **MUST** be acted on. Doing nothing is not an option. Any suspicion or concerns will be reported without delay to the DSL or a Deputy. During term time the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or a Deputy should always be available (during School or Centre 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
- MASH - Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub

Anyone can make a referral, not just the DSLs.

15.2 It is important that everyone in the Centre is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for making a judgement about whether 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 Centre staff is to act promptly on the information received.

15.3 This applies regardless of the alleged 'perpetrator': whether the child raises concerns about a family member or someone outside Centre, a member of staff or another child/pupil.

15.4 A careful record will be made of what has been seen/heard that has led to the concerns and the date, time, location and people who were present. As far as possible, staff should record verbatim what was said and by whom. The record will be passed to the DSL.

15.5 The DSL will keep a record of the conversation with the duty worker and other social workers, noting what actions will be taken and by whom, giving the date and time of the referral. The referral will be confirmed in writing on the inter-agency referral form (available on the Pan-Dorset website) as soon as possible and at least within 48 hours. Any pre-existing assessments such as through the Common Assessment Framework should be attached.

15.6 A Centre child protection file will be started in the child's name, where the child is not already known to social workers. If a file already exists, the new information will be added to the chronology.

See Appendix 3 below for detailed record keeping guidance.

16. Response from Children's Social Care to a Centre referral

- Referral

Once a referral is received by the team, a manager will decide on the next course of action within one working day. When there is concern that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm, this will be decided more quickly, and a strategy discussion held with the Police and Health professionals and other agencies as appropriate (section 47 Children Act 1989).

The Designated Safeguarding Lead should be told within three working days of the outcome of the referral. If this does not happen s/he will contact the duty worker again.

- Assessment

All assessments should be planned and co-ordinated by qualified social worker. They should be holistic, involving other professionals, parents/carers and the children themselves as far as practicable. Assessments should show analysis, be focused on outcomes and usually take no longer than 45 working days from the point of referral. Centre staff have a responsibility to contribute fully to the assessment.

- S47 Enquiries (regarding significant harm)

The process of the investigation is determined by the needs of the case, but the child/young person will always be part of that process and sometimes without parents' knowledge or permission. On occasions, this will mean the child/young person is jointly interviewed by the Police and social workers, sometimes at a special suite where a video-recording of the interview is made.

- The Child Protection Conference

If, following the s47 enquiries, the concerns are substantiated and the child is judged to be at risk of significant harm, a Child Protection Conference (CPC) will normally be convened. The CPC must be held within 15 days of the first strategy discussion and Centre staff will be invited to attend - normally the DSL or Headteacher. This person will produce a written report in the correct format. 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 on the Pan-Dorset 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, *particularly* if the child's situation does not appear to be improving.

17. Responding to allegations or concerns about staff or volunteers

17.1 Rigorous recruitment and selection procedures and adhering to the Centre'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 act by reporting to the Proprietor (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 acting.

17.2 If the allegation/concern is about the Proprietor or the person with concerns will contact the Advisory Group **Dorset Trade Skills (SW) Limited** or the Local Authority Designated Officer (also known as the LADO) in the Local Authority Safeguarding and Standards Team. See Appendix 1 below for contact details.

17.3 In all cases of allegations against staff or volunteers, the and Chair of Governors, will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) without delay and follow the correct procedures as set out in the separate Centre policy. This must comply with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2025.

18. Children with special educational needs and who are disabled

18.1 Research shows that children with special educational needs and who are disabled are especially vulnerable to abuse and adults who work with them need to be vigilant and take extra care when interpreting apparent signs of abuse or neglect.

18.2 Additional barriers can exist for adults who work with such children, in respect of recognising abuse and neglect. These can include

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- Being more prone to peer group isolation than other children
- Children with SEN and who are disabled can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying – without outwardly showing any signs; and
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers

18.3 These child protection procedures will be followed if a child with special educational needs or who is disabled discloses abuse or there are indicators of abuse or neglect. There are no different or separate procedures for such children. To address these additional challenges Schools and Centres should consider extra pastoral support for children with SEN and disabilities.

18.4 Staff responsible for intimate care of children will undertake their duties in a professional manner always and in accordance with the Centre's intimate care policy.

At present there is no requirement to have a Intimate policy as there are no students appropriate at this time (However should the situation arise one will be prepared)

19. Safer Working Practice

19.1 All adults who come into contact with children at this Centre 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 Centre's Code of Conduct.

19.2 We promote a culture whereby members of the Centre community should feel able to raise with the Headteacher, or any member of the leadership team, any concerns about staff conduct. If the reporter feels that the issue has not been addressed, they should contact someone outside of the Centre, such as the Advisory Group or the LADO. (See Appendix 1 below for contact details.)

20. Training

20.1 Child protection will be part of induction for all staff and regular volunteers new to the Centre. 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 24: information for all School and Centre staff' plus Annex A if they work directly with children.

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

20.3 A proportional risk-based approach will be taken regarding the level of information provided to all temporary staff and volunteers. As a minimum they will be provided with, and will be expected to follow, the child protection summary sheet which forms part of this policy.

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

20.5 All staff will have training in preventing radicalisation and extremism ('Prevent') – either by attending a Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP) or completing an on-line course, followed by a discussion with the DSL. The DSL is the Prevent Lead and will attend WRAP.

20.6 In addition, all staff members will receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates from the DSL as required, but at least annually. This will include learning from local and national serious cases when the learning becomes available.

20.7 When DSLs and Deputies take up the role they will attend enhanced (Level 3) training provided through the DSCB multi-agency course. They must be updated at 2 yearly intervals after that.

20.8 In addition, their knowledge and skills will be updated regularly - at least annually. These individuals are expected to take responsibility for their own learning about safeguarding and child protection by, for example: taking time to read and digest newsletters and relevant research articles; attending training offered by NEXUS on matters such as domestic abuse, attachment and child sexual and criminal exploitation; completing on-line training on FGM; attending local DSL forums etc.

20.9 Designated Teachers for Looked-After Children (mandatory for maintained Schools and academies; good practice in independent Centres which have or likely to have Looked-After Children) will undertake appropriate training. In Dorset this is provided by the Virtual Centre for Children in Care.

See Appendix 1 for contact details.

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

20.11 It is recommended by the DSCB that all governors attend training, briefings or other input which equips them to understand fully and comply with their legal safeguarding duties *as governors*, set out in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2025. Attendance includes those who also work with children and have attended child protection training in that role.

20.12 In multi-academy trusts and other independent Centres with an overarching proprietor body, the person who takes leadership responsibility for safeguarding should attend similar training, briefings or other input.

21. Raising concerns about safeguarding practice in our Centre

21.1 In this Centre we promote a culture where any staff or volunteers feel able to raise with the Proprietor any concerns about safeguarding or child protection practice.

21.2 Any issues which they have not been able to resolve with the Proprietor should be reported to the governors in the first instance. If they are still not satisfied, they should approach the Director for Children's Services or, if the issue relates to the conduct of or allegation against a member of staff, should contact the Local Authority designated officer (also known as the LADO).

21.3 Staff should refer to the Centre's whistle-blowing policy for more information or can use the NSPCC whistle blowing helpline: 0808 8005000.

22. Information for parents and carers

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

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

22.3 If you have any questions about this please speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead: Elizabeth Brooks

23 Contextual Safeguarding

23.1 What is contextual safeguarding?

Safeguarding incidents and or behaviours can be associated with factors outside of School or Centre and /or can occur between children outside of School or Centre. All staff especially the DSL or deputy should consider the context within which such incidents and or behaviour occur. This is contextual safeguarding and means assessments should consider such factors, so it is important that Schools and Centres provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and the context of the abuse.

This page should be printed separately and given to all supply/peripatetic/ temporary staff who will be working unsupervised with children, even if just for part of a day

C. Child Protection Summary for all Visiting Professionals

Dorset Trade Skills (SW) Limited

As an adult working directly with children in this Centre you have a duty of care towards all pupils. This means you must act at all times in a way that is consistent with their safety and welfare.

It is your responsibility to keep your child protection training up to date; you might be asked for evidence of this.

You must follow the principles of safer working practice, which include use of technology – on no account should you contact or take images of pupils on personal equipment, including your mobile 'phone.

If the behaviour of another adult in the Centre gives rise to concern you must report it to the Headteacher.

If you have a concern about a child, particularly if you think s/he may be suffering or at risk of suffering harm, it is your responsibility to share the information promptly with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the Deputy/ies who are;

Elizabeth Brooks, James Scott and Amy Reeder

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 Centre, 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.

Appendix 1

Useful Contacts

Bournemouth, Christchurch, & Poole – Children's First Response Hub: Childrensfirstresponse@bcpcouncil.gov.uk	01202 123334
Dorset – Children's Advice and Duty Service (CHAD) Professionals Number: This is for professional-only number to discuss your concerns; you will no longer complete a referral form.	01305 228558
Dorset families and Members of the public	01202 228866
In an emergency contact;	
Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Out of Hours Service: childrensOOHS@bcpcouncil.gov.uk ,	01202 738256
Dorset Out of Hours Service:	01305 228558
Police Non-Emergency:	101
Police Emergency:	999
Dorset LADO and BCP LADO contact: 2. Dorset LADO and BCP LADO contact:	



If you would prefer to contact the LADO directly, or to discuss a concern that the LADO is already aware of, then please contact: 01202 817600 or LADO@bcpcouncil.gov.uk.

Dorset:

In the first instance, please could you report your concern/allegation against a person who works with children in Dorset, via our e-referral form which can be accessed here [Referral – Management of Allegations against people who work with children \(Dorset\)](#) . Please complete the form according to your particular circumstance. Once completed, the form will be sent directly to the LADO, who will respond to your query as soon as possible.

If you are unsure whether the concern meets the Management of Allegations threshold for consideration, then please select the option for advice and guidance only within the form. The LADO will then contact you back via the contact details you provide in the form to discuss your query further.

If you would prefer to contact the LADO directly, or to discuss a concern that the LADO is already aware of, then please contact 01305 221122 or LADO@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

For more detailed advice on what to do if an allegation is made against a member of staff, please go the [Pan-Dorset Multi-agency Safeguarding Procedures](#) and refer to the [Richard Inquiry Report](#)

In case of emergency outside of the above hours please contact the **Out of Hours Team**;

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole

01202 738256

ChildrensOOHS@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Dorset
01305 228558

3. DSCB is now referred to as Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership (PDSCP)

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

- The Education Safeguarding Standards Advisor who offers advice and support to Centres 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

Dorset Virtual Centre for Children in Care

01305 228350

Dorset Governor Services (for governor safeguarding training)

01305 224382

Possible Indicators of Abuse

The following information is not designed to turn Centre 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.

i) Physical Abuse

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 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 commonest 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 from the Centre
- running away from home

ii) Emotional Abuse

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

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 from the Centre
- 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 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 Centre 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 Centre 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 can care for themselves and have made a 'choice' to neglect themselves. Lack of engagement with services should be a potential indicator of neglect.

Centre 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.

Appendix 3

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 (DSL)'s 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. (The 'My Concern' system in use in many local Centres has been checked for compliance.)

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 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 ideally be on a standard 'concerns' form (LA model available from the Safeguarding and Standards Team or on Nexus) but if this is not used, 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 child protection file 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.

2.4 Centres should never ask pupils, 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 Centre.

3. Records kept by the Designated Safeguarding Lead

3.1 As stated at 2.2 above it is useful and recommended practice for Centre staff to have one standard pro forma for recording all 'welfare' and child protection concerns.

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 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 Centres 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 Centre child protection file

4.1 A Centre 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 Centre 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 Centre child protection file when a social worker is or was involved, e.g.: -

- a) A formal referral is made by the Centre to Children's Social Care on an inter-agency referral form or
- b) Social Care inform the Centre they have commenced an assessment in relation to a pupil resulting from information from another source or
- c) A child protection file is forwarded to the Centre by a previous school or pre-school attended by the pupil or
- d) A child who is in care/looked after transfers into the Centre or
- e) 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 Centre at the time of transfer. The names of siblings and/or other children who live in the household who also attend the Centre should be clearly noted on individual files.

4.4 If two (or more) pupils at the Centre 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 pupils.

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

4.6 Centre child protection files are never 'closed' or de-categorised. Once a Centre 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 Centre 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 Centre 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 Centre 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 Centre 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 Centre (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 Centre as long as the child remains or sent onto a new Centre/school as described (at 9) below.

5.6 Please note that once a child is adopted, all Centre 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.

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 Centre 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.

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.

6.5 It should make sense as a 'stand-alone' 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 Centre to support and protect the child. This will be particularly useful for DSLs in receiving Centres when pupils transfer, for professionals involved in collating information for Serious Case Reviews and for parents/pupils/ex-pupils 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, Centre 'concern forms', copies of correspondence, Centre 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 Centre files, and accessible through the DSL, the Deputy(ies) and other senior staff in larger Centres.

7.2 The pupil's general Centre file should be marked in some way (e.g. a yellow star) to indicate that a child protection file exists. All staff who may need to consult a child's Centre file should be made aware of what the symbol means and to speak to the DSL if necessary if they see this symbol and have concerns. For example, a member of the office staff who is looking in the main file for a parent's contact details because of unexplained absence might decide to report this to the DSL if they see the indicator, in case the absence is significant.

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. In general, 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 pupils 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 pupils, to be removed.

8.6 In respect of requests from pupils or parents for information which wholly or partly consists of an educational record, access should be granted within 15 Centre days. This might be relevant to 'welfare' concerns in a main Centre 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 Centre 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 Centre inspectors can view individual child protection files. Information should not be released to parents' solicitors on request; advice should be sought from the Centre'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 Centre (including to a Learning Centre because of permanent exclusion) the DSL should inform the receiving Centre/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 Centre 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 Centre. 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 Centre.) This receipt **should be retained by the originating Centre 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 Centre 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 Centre without a forwarding address and no contact is received from a new Centre the DSL should follow the Centre'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 Centre in an unplanned way and / or there are concerns about them from the outset, it is worth contacting the previous Centre for a discussion with the DSL. There might be a child protection file which has not been passed on.

9.7 Centre '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 Centre for their information and can be included in the main Centre 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 Centre 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' pupils

10.1 Where a pupil is on roll at the Centre 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 pupils, the two DSLs 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 Centre should retain the record for as long as the pupil remains in Centre and then transfer as described above.

11.2 Guidance from the Records Management Society is that when a pupil with a child protection record reaches statutory Centre leaving age (or where the pupil completed 6th form studies), the last Centre attended should keep the child protection file until the pupil's 25th 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 Centres, 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 Centres unless there is a secure system in place 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 Centre, the computer record should be deleted.

13. Sharing information with Further Education (FE) Centres

13.1 A protocol is in place with DSLs at FE Centres: at the start of each academic year they will send to secondary Centre DSLs a list of newly enrolled students who have previously attended the Centre, requesting any relevant information. Secondary Centre 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 Centres and FE Centres with whom the protocol has been agreed.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

<http://email.nspcc.org.uk/c/11GngS4ynzyeFlpf8UCnVZW088>