



Somerford Primary School

Child Protection Policy

Adopted by the Full Governing Body : November 2020
Review : November 2021
Update: March 2021 – Operation Encompass

Our Nominated Governor for Safeguarding is
Paul O'Connor

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead is
Helen Frampton

Our Deputy Safeguarding Leads are
Jeremy Wallace
Luke Thorne
Chris Walsh

The child protection policy for Somerford Primary School is based on a template provided by the Dorset Safeguarding and Standards Team and guidance from BCP Safeguarding team; it reflects the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2020.

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.

Content	Page
A Safeguarding Policy	3
B Child Protection Procedures	7

Sections

1.0 What is child protection?	7
2.0 What is significant harm?	7
3.0 Purpose of these procedures	7
4.0 Responsibilities and roles	7
5.0 What is child abuse?	9
❖ Physical	9
❖ Emotional	9
❖ Sexual	10
❖ Neglect	10
6.0 Recognising child abuse – signs and symptoms	10
7.0 Early Help	11
❖ Responding to disclosures -guidance for staff	12
❖ Responding to signs of abuse or neglect	13
❖ Following up Referrals	13
❖ Working in Partnership with Parents, Carers & the Community	13
8.0 Child on child sexual violence & sexual harassment	14
9.0 Pupils engaging in under-age sexual activity	16
10.0 Child sexual exploitation/criminal exploitation/serious violence	17
11.0 Forms of abuse linked to culture, faith or belief	17
11.1 Female genital mutilation	18
11.2 Forced Marriage	18
11.3 So called 'honour-based' violence	18
11.4 Breast Ironing	18
11.5 Radicalisation and Extremism	18
11.6 Prevent	19
11.7 Domestic Abuse	20
11.8 Pupils with Child Protection or Child in Need Plans	20
11.9 Children with Mental Health/Emotional Health Needs	20
11.10 Child who are looked after, those previously looked after and care leavers	21
11.11 Substance Abuse	21
11.12 Trafficking & Modern Day Slavery	22
12.0 Children missing education	22

13.0	Taking action in response to a disclosure	22
14.0	Responding to concerns reported by parents or others in the community	23
15.0	Remember	24
16.0	Response from Children's Social Care to a school referral	25
17.0	Responding to allegations or concerns about staff or volunteers	25
18.0	If you have any concerns about a colleague	26
19.0	Allegations against Supply Teachers	26
20.0	Children with special educational needs and who are disabled	26
21.0	Safer Recruitment	27
22.0	Safer Working Practice	27
23.0	Training	27
24.0	Raising concerns about safeguarding practice in our school	28
25.0	Information for parents' & carers	29
26.0	Contextual Safeguarding	29
27.0	Welcoming other Practitioners	29
28.0	Off Site Visits	29
29.0	Use of Alternative Provision	30
30.0	Photography & Images	30
	School Safeguarding Responsibility Summary	31
C	Child Protection Summary sheet	34

Appendices

1.0	Useful Contacts	35
2.0	Possible indicators of abuse	36
3.0	Record Keeping: Best Practice - to be read and followed by all DSLs and Deputies	39

A. Safeguarding Policy

Throughout this document, 'child' refers to a young person under the age of 18.

Somerford Primary School recognises that the welfare of the child is everyone's responsibility.

The Governors recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm or exploitation and that pupils cannot learn effectively unless they feel secure. The Governors will therefore provide a school environment which promotes self-confidence, a feeling of worth and the knowledge that pupil's concerns will be listened to and acted upon.

We take seriously our duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children and young people in our care and this responsibility permeates everything we do.

Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2018, HM Government statutory guidance, defines safeguarding as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and

- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

The Governing Body will act in accordance with Section 175 / Section 157 of the Education Act 2002 and the supporting statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2020 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in this school.

The Governing Body is accountable for ensuring that the school meets its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding and that all policies, procedures and training are in place and effective.

The Governors will also ensure that the school carries out its statutory duties to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Local Authority Children's Services (usually via the Children's Services First Response Hub) and to assist them in taking appropriate action on behalf of children in need or enquiring into allegations of child abuse or neglect. Somerford Primary School recognises the contribution they can make to protect and support pupils in their care and contribute to a coordinated offer of early help.

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

The Standards also include that each school and college completes and submits to the Local Authority an annual audit of its safeguarding and child protection arrangements, including an action plan. Somerford Primary School's most recent audit was completed in February 2019 and will be updated in February 2020.

All children have the right to be safeguarded from harm or exploitation whatever their

- age
- health or disability
- gender or sexual orientation
- race, religion, belief or first language
- political or immigration status

Governors, staff and regular volunteers in this school understand the importance of taking appropriate action and working in partnership with children, their parents/carers and other agencies 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 school a safe place to learn and in which children feel safe

This policy applies to the Headteacher, all staff, including supply and peripatetic staff, regular volunteers (i.e. those who come into school once a

week or more or 4 times in a 30-day period), governors or anyone working on behalf of the school.

We will endeavour to safeguard children and young people by:

- always acting in their best interests
- valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- involving them in decisions which affect them
- never tolerating bullying, homophobic behaviour, racism, sexism or any other forms of discrimination, including through use of technology
- ensuring the curriculum affords a range of opportunities to learn about keeping themselves safe, particularly when using technology
 - ❖ exercising our duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
 - ❖ by ensuring all staff attend 'Prevent' training in respect of radicalisation and extremist behaviour and by assessing the risk of our pupils being drawn into terrorism
 - ❖ supporting attendance and taking action if a child is missing school 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 school 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. At Somerford Primary School we employ a play psychotherapist who works a total of 1.5 days a week. We have a trained ELSA supporting children across the school. We have a Pastoral Leader who supports children and families across the school. We have a full time Inclusion Leader who is non class based. The school has formed strong relationships with the Family Partnership Zone to ensure children and families receive the support they need

at an early stage and we engage with the Team Around the Family and Team Around the school models.

- ❖ 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 Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership 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 school Code of Conduct by their colleagues, having faith that they will be listened to and appropriate action taken
- ❖ dealing appropriately with any allegations/concerns about the behaviour of staff or volunteers in accordance with the process set out in statutory guidance

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

- 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
- Behaviour policy

These policies and procedures are on the school website or available from the staffroom or on request from the school office.

Aims of Policy

- To raise awareness of all school staff of the importance of child protection and safeguarding pupils and of their responsibilities for identifying and reporting actual or suspected abuse, neglect or concerns about a child's welfare.
- To ensure pupils and parents are aware that the school takes the safeguarding agenda seriously and will follow the appropriate procedures for identifying and reporting abuse, neglect or concerns about a child's welfare and for dealing with allegations against staff.
- To promote effective liaison with other agencies in order to work together for the protection of all pupils.
- To support pupils' development in ways which will foster security, confidence and independence.
- To integrate a safeguarding curriculum within the existing curriculum allowing for continuity and progress through all key stages.
- To take account of and inform policy in related areas such as discipline, bullying, staff and pupil behaviour policies, Online-safety and the preventing extremism agenda, attendance and exclusion policy.

B. Child Protection Procedures

These procedures should be read in conjunction with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education, Part One: Information for all School and College Staff' 2020, plus Annex A.

There are 3 main elements to these procedures :

1. **PREVENTION** (positive and safe school environment, careful and vigilant teaching, accessible pastoral care, support to pupils, good adult role models).
2. **PROTECTION** (agreed procedures are followed, staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to safeguarding concerns).
3. **SUPPORT** (to pupils, who may have been at risk of significant harm and the way staff respond to their concerns and any work that may be required and to those in need of early help services).

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.

4. Responsibilities and roles

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

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

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

The person who takes leadership responsibility for safeguarding on the governing / proprietor body of this school is : *Paul O'Connor*. This lead will work closely with the DSL, HT and Chair of Governors.

4.3 This school has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The DSL (and any deputies) is most likely to have a complete safeguarding picture. This is the person who takes lead responsibility for safeguarding and online safety in the school. The DSL should have details of the local authority Personal Advisor appointed to guide and support care leavers. Any concerns about children should be discussed with / reported to the DSL who will decide what action to take including referring to Children's Social Care or Police as appropriate. More information about the DSL role can be found in Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead in this school is : *Helen Frampton*

The school also has three Deputy Safeguarding Leads.

The Deputy Safeguarding Leads are : *Jeremy Wallace, Luke Thorne and Chris Walsh*.

A Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead will always be available during school hours.

The DSL will have the appropriate training, authority, time, funding, support and resources to fulfil the duties of the role. The role of the DSL is set out in KCSIE 2020 (Annex B) and this is explicit in the DSL's job description.

The DSL and Deputy DSL should liaise with the three safeguarding partners of the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership and with other agencies in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children.

The NSPCC – 'When to call the Police' should help the DSL to understand when they should consider calling the police and what they should expect.

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

See Appendix 1 for contact details.

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

- DfE guidance (2018) – Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) – published by HM Government
- Pan Dorset Inter-Agency Safeguarding Procedures & Guidance, accessed through the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership website.
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused – Government Guidance (2015)

4.6 The school has a designated teacher who is : *Rachel Darley*

4.7 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.

4.8 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.

4.9 The Designated teacher must have appropriate training and the relevant qualifications and experience. In other schools and colleges an appropriately trained teacher should take the lead.

Rachel Darley takes this role at Somerford Primary School and has attended training on 'The Role of the Designated Teacher for Children in Care' run by Dorset County Council.

Statutory guidance contains further information on; [The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher.](#)

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 (2018).

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 caregivers); 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: 'All school and college 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 school 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 college staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

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. Early Help

Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. It means providing support as soon as a problem emerges.

Early help support must be kept under constant review and consideration given to a referral to the Children's Services First Response Hub if the child's situation does not appear to be improving.

In order to do this, the school will work with other local agencies to identify children and families who would benefit from early help.

- Undertake an assessment of the need for early help
- Provide or refer to local early help services e.g. School Nurse, Pastoral Worker, Play Psychotherapist, SENCO, Family Support, Team around the School, Parenting courses, breakfast club, ELSA
- Refer to appropriate services e.g. CAMHS, YADAS, Early Help Support Hub.

The school should ensure that pupils have a choice of staff who will listen to their concerns either about themselves or about one of their peers.

Emotional health including support for children is very important and the school provides :

- Worry boxes in all classes
- Graduated response – ELSA, trainee therapists, play psychotherapists
- Antibullying Champion
- Pastoral Lead
- Art Therapy Sessions
- Anxiety Gremlin programme
- Services to refer to outside of school
- Additional outside support services for pupils and parents including online support such as Childline

This is particularly relevant if the need is not thought to meet the threshold for CAMHS intervention. The SENCO, Pastoral Leader or DSL can discuss individual cases to gain information and advice with a CAMHS link worker. Training, supervision and support is available to staff to assist them with children's emotional issues and specialist roles in the school staff.

Contextual safeguarding issues i.e. children vulnerable to abuse or exploitation outside of their families is taken account of.

Responding to Disclosures – guidance for staff

If a child wishes to confide in you're the following guidelines should be adhered to:

- **Be Honest**
 - ❖ Do not make promises you cannot keep
 - ❖ Explain that you are likely to have to tell other people in order to stop what is happening
- **Create a safe environment**
 - ❖ Stay calm
 - ❖ Reassure the child and stress that he/she is not to blame
 - ❖ Tell the child that you know how difficult it must have been to confide in you
 - ❖ Listen to the child and tell them you believe them and are taking what is being said seriously
- **Record on My Concern exactly what the child has said to you and include:**
 - ❖ Child's name
 - ❖ Date and time of incident
 - ❖ What the child said and what you said
 - ❖ Your observations e.g. child's behaviour and emotional state
 - ❖ Any action you took as a result of your concerns – specific information about who you spoke to, names, phone numbers and resulting actions

- **Be clear about what the child says and what you say**
 - ❖ Do not interview the child and keep questions to a minimum
 - ❖ Use TED questions – Tell me Explain ... Describe ...
 - ❖ Encourage the child to use his/her own words and do not try to lead them into giving particular answers

- **Maintain Confidentiality**
 - ❖ Only tell those people that it is necessary to inform

- **Do not take sole responsibility**
 - ❖ Immediately consult your Designated Safeguarding Lead or a Deputy DSL so that any appropriate action can be taken to protect the pupil if necessary
 - ❖ The Designated Safeguarding Lead should refer these concerns to Social Care before the child goes home if still in school. A decision will be made by the Children's Services First Response Hub whether to convene a strategy meeting; undertake a social care or joint investigation or provide alternative services or advice.
 - ❖ Although referrals to the Children's Services First Response Hub would normally be made by the DSL or in their absence a deputy DSL or other member of the SLT, but in exceptional circumstances any other individual with concerns can take advice from the local children's Social Care (Children's Services First Response Hub) and any action taken should be shared with the DSL (or Deputy) as soon as is practically possible.

Children's Services First Response Hub will advise about if and when to share information with parents if there are concerns that this may be putting the child at more risk.

Responding to signs of abuse or neglect

- Through training, all staff need to be able to identify the signs of abuse or neglect and be able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection.
- They should be vigilant, protective and discuss any concerns with the DSL or deputy who will refer to Social Care or other agencies where appropriate.
- The DSL / SLT will use the Continuum of Need August 2019 when making decisions about appropriate support or referral for a child. This will include reference to the 'Four levels of need' and the 'Three domains'.
- All concerns must be recorded inline with Safeguarding Children Partnership guidance.
- Staff need to have an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned.
- When concerned about the welfare of a child, staff members should always act in the best interests of the child.
- Fear about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of the children.

Following up Referrals

- The agency to which the referral was made e.g. Social Care, should inform the referrer of their action. Where this does not happen promptly, the referrer should re-contact the agency to which it made the referral to be assured that action is being taken or that alternative support is being recommended.
- If after a referral the child's situation does not appear to be improving, the DSL should consider following local escalation procedures.
- It is essential that the school remains actively involved in support and plans even where another agency is taking the lead whether at early help, child in need or child protection level.
- Where there is a difference of opinion with another agency and this cannot be resolved, the Escalation policy should be used.
https://pandorsetscb.proceduresonline.com/p_escalation.html

Working in Partnership with Parents, Carers and the Community

The school shares a purpose with parents to educate, keep children safe from harm and have their children's welfare promoted.

We are committed to working with parents positively, openly and honestly. We ensure that all parents are treated with respect, dignity and courtesy. We respect parents' rights to privacy and confidentiality and will not share sensitive information until we have permission or it is necessary to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children. **The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR DO NOT prevent the sharing of information for the purpose of keeping children safe.**

Somerford Primary School will share with parents any concerns we may have about their child unless to do so may place a child at risk of harm.

We encourage parents to disclose any concerns they may have with Somerford Primary School. We make parents aware of our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies and parents are aware that these are on the school website.

The school has links with its local community which will promote the welfare and safeguarding of the pupils e.g. with respect to religious, cultural or other local issues.

The school will provide and/or access early help services and can refer to sign post you to services with your consent.

If you have any reason to make a complaint about the school, the procedures will be found on the school website (www.somerford.dorset.sch.uk)

8. Child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment

8.1 All staff should recognise that children can abuse their peers. All staff should be clear about the school policy and procedure about peer on peer abuse.

8.2 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.

8.3 The school's 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.

8.4 Ultimately, any decisions are for the school 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.

8.5 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 the school with the foundation for a calm, considered and appropriate response to any reports.

8.6 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)

8.7 School needs 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

8.8 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 Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership website. In brief, a multi-agency meeting should be convened by Children's Social Care following a referral and an action plan agreed.

8.9 A school 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 college staff?
- Contextual safeguarding

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

8.10 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 school's policy and procedures with regards to peer on peer abuse.

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

8.12 There may be delays to a criminal process, but the school should not wait for the outcome before protecting the victim, alleged perpetrator and other children in the school.

8.13 The School needs 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.

8.14 Sexting involves images or videos which are indecent or of a sexual nature, generated by children under the age of 18 or of children under the age of 18, shared via a mobile phone, handheld device or website. At Somerford Primary School sexting is defined as 'Youth produced sexual imagery' and staff are clear that making, possessing and distributing indecent imagery of someone under 18 is illegal. This includes imagery of yourself if you are under 18. Staff are also aware that the speed and ease of sharing imagery can expose children to risks including embarrassment, bullying and increased vulnerability to sexual exploitation. Staff will respond swiftly and confidently to ensure that children are safeguarded, supported and educated. If a case of youth produced sexual imagery is reported or disclosed the DSL will take the lead in following the school's 'Youth Produced Sexual Imagery Procedures' which are derived from the August 2016 guidance from UKCCIS: 'Sexting in schools and colleges: responding to incidents and safeguarding young people'.

8.15 At Somerford Primary School we work hard to minimise the risk of peer on peer abuse. We have a comprehensive PSHE curriculum 'Jigsaw' across the school that develops children's personal and social skills. It deals with issues of bullying and peer pressure in an age appropriate way and develops children's conflict resolution skills.

The school has a robust Anti Bullying Policy which details the proactive steps we take to prevent bullying but also the action we take when bullying occurs. Other policies such as the Positive Behaviour Policy and Internet Acceptable Use Policy, also help to reduce the risk of this abuse.

Children who may be vulnerable to peer abuse are identified by staff early and referred to school based ELSA, counsellors or therapists according to the level of need. This work endeavours to raise the child's self-esteem and resilience. It also provides them with a trusted adult to whom they can report any concerns.

If an allegation of peer abuse is made, this will be referred to the DSL using the normal reporting procedures. The DSL will then consider the action that needs to be taken to keep the child safe from harm.

This would include but not be limited to:

- informing parents of both the alleged perpetrator and alleged victim (unless it was felt this would out the children at greater risk of harm)
- invoking the Anti-Bullying Policy and putting the children on 'Red Alert'
- giving the children named adults to report any further issues to
- informing children's social care and, if the threshold for child protection has been met, making a referral under the interagency procedures
- writing a risk assessment, in conjunction with other agencies if appropriate, to ensure children are safe in school
- applying consequences in line with school policies

The school has a policy on the use of mobile technology.

9. Pupils engaging in under-age sexual activity

9.1 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.

9.2 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.

9.3 The inter-agency safeguarding procedures, on the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership website, have more information about under-age sexual activity.

10. Child sexual exploitation/Criminal exploitation / serious violence

10.1 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.

10.2 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. Helen Frampton (DSL) has received Level 3 training on CSE and is available to other staff for consultation.

10.3 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.

10.4 "County Lines" is becoming widely 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. Jeremy Wallace (Deputy DSL) has received additional training on County Lines.

10.5 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 and the Child Exploitation Toolkit. The form and more detailed local procedures are in the inter-agency safeguarding procedures on the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership website.

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

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

11.1 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 school / country for a prolonged period or talk of a 'special procedure' or celebration. In addition to reporting any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, teachers (along with regulated health and social care professionals) have a statutory duty to report personally to the Police if they discover that female genital mutilation has or appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions.

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

11.3 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.

11.4 Breast Ironing

Staff are aware of the signs of breast ironing and will report any concerns to the DSL immediately.

11.5 Radicalisation and extremism

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

Extremism is defined by HM Government as 'Vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs; and/or calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas'.

In this school we recognise that safeguarding against radicalisation and extremism is no different from safeguarding against any other vulnerability.

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

We recognise that children with low aspirations are more vulnerable to radicalisation and therefore we strive to equip our 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.

11.6 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 school are being discussed, the DSL or Headteacher 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 school have either attended a WRAP (workshop to raise awareness of Prevent) session or have completed online Prevent training. To refer, email MASH@dorset.pnn.police.uk

11.7 Domestic Abuse

Our school is part of Operation Encompass. This is a police and education early intervention safeguarding partnership which supports children and young people who experience Domestic Abuse. Operation Encompass means that the police will share information about Domestic Abuse incidents with our school soon after they have been called to a domestic incident.

All Key Adults (DSL/DDSL) have attended an Operation Encompass local briefing as well as national online training. Our parents are fully aware that we are an Operation Encompass school. The Operation Encompass information is stored in line with all other confidential safeguarding and child protection information. The Key Adult has also led briefings for all school staff and Governors about Operation Encompass, the prevalence of Domestic Abuse

and the impact of this abuse on children. We have also discussed how we can support our children following the Operation Encompass notification. The Safeguarding Governor will report on Operation Encompass in the termly report to Governors. All information is anonymised for these reports. The Key Adult has used the Operation Encompass Toolkit to ensure that all appropriate actions have been taken by the school.

Where a Multiagency risk assessment conference (MARAC) occurs the school may be asked for information and appropriate school related information may be shared with the school after the meeting.

The school website/information boards will provide contacts to local domestic abuse services e.g. National DV Helpline 08082000247, Poole Domestic Abuse Project 01202 710777, Bournemouth DA Services/You First

11.8 Pupils with Child Protection or Child in Need Plans

Pupils who are the subject of a Child Protection Conference will have either an agreed multi-disciplinary action plan or child protection plan. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will attend and provide reports for strategy discussions, CP conferences, core group meetings, Child in Need meetings and contribute to assessments and plans.

The school recognises that pupils who are the subjects of abuse, neglect or who live in situations of domestic abuse may exhibit distressed or challenging behaviour and may not be reaching their full academic potential. The school will ensure that appropriate support mechanisms are in place in school.

11.9 Children with Mental Health / Emotional Health Needs

Pupils identified with mental health/emotional issues or those with parents/siblings identified with mental health issues will be offered additional support. Pupils will have a choice of staff who will listen to their concerns about themselves or other pupils and appropriate early help services are available within school.

Some staff will practice mental health first aid. The lead member of staff for mental health is Luke Thorne. Referrals will be made to CAMHS or other appropriate services in conjunction with parents. The DSL or other appropriate member of staff may seek advice from the CAMHS Link Worker or consultation service.

There will be a strategy for providing ongoing education for children subject to S26 Mental Health (Children & Families) Act 2014.

The school is working in line with Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools Guidance 2018.

The school will support pupils with strategies to develop their own emotional well being i.e. emotional literacy and resilience without our best hut provision. Additional support will be available at times of need and children can self-refer at any time.

11.10 Children who are looked after, those previously looked after and care leavers

We will ensure that staff have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep looked-after children and previously looked-after children safe. In particular we will ensure that :

- Appropriate staff have relevant information about children's looked after legal status, contact arrangements with birth parents or those with parental responsibility, and care arrangements.
- The DSL has details of children's social workers and relevant virtual school heads.
-

We have appointed a designated teacher, Rachel Darley, who is responsible for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after children and previously looked-after children in line with statutory guidance.

The designated teacher is appropriately trained and has the relevant qualifications and experience to perform the role.

As part of their role, the designated teacher will :

Work closely with the DSL to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to

Work with virtual school heads to promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, including discussing how pupil premium plus funding can be best used to support looked-after children and meet the needs identified in their personal education plans.

11.11 Substance Abuse

As a school we provide drug education as part of our PSHE Jigsaw curriculum. If needed, school works with the appropriate agencies and services will be accessed. We work in partnership with the child and parents/carers.

11.12 Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery

Staff are made aware of this as an issue with safeguarding training and referrals will be made to the police or First Response Hub where there are safeguarding concerns for children.

12. Children missing education

Emergency contacts

Where reasonably possible the school 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 additional options to contact a responsible adult when a child missing education is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

12.1 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.

12.2 Therefore all staff will follow the school'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.

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

School procedures for unauthorised absence of children missing education are detailed in the Attendance Policy. This policy is in line with the Department of Education's updated (September 2018) statutory guidance on children missing education.

There is more information about specific safeguarding issues including links to websites in Part one and Annex A of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2020.

13. Taking action in response to a disclosure

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.

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 (at Somerford Primary School this completed via the online recording system 'My Concern') 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 school 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 school 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 PAN Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership Continuum of Need Document should be used to help clarify the pathway required for a child: whether concerns will be managed within the school; or with the help of other agencies as part of early help; or whether they require specialised support such as a social work assessment or referral to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

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 school staff about an incident in or accumulation of concerns they have about the family life of a child who is also a pupil at the school.

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 school staff. As professionals who work with children they cannot be anonymous when making the referral but can ask for the situation to be managed sensitively and, if necessary, for their identity to be withheld from the family if it will cause difficulties in their private life.

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 college 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 school is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for making a judgement about whether abuse has occurred and should not conduct an 'investigation' to establish whether the child is telling the truth. That is a task for social workers and the Police following a referral to them of concern about a child. The role of school staff is to act promptly on the information received.

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

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 DSCB 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 school 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 school referral

16.1 Referral

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

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.

16.2 Assessment

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

16.3 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.

16.4 The Child Protection Conference

If, following the s47 enquiries, the concerns are substantiated and the child is judged to be at risk of significant harm, a Child Protection Conference (CPC) will normally be convened. The CPC must be held within 15 days of the first strategy discussion and school staff will be invited to attend - normally the DSL or Headteacher. This person will produce a written report in the correct format (a pro forma is available on the DSCB website). This will be shared with the child/young person and his/her family before the conference is held. A copy will also be sent to the person chairing the initial CPC at least 24 hours in advance.

More information is in the inter-agency safeguarding procedures ('Child Protection Conferences') on the DSCB website.

If the DSL disagrees with the decisions made by social workers regarding the outcome of the referral, the conclusions of the assessment or any actions taken, the matter should be discussed and if necessary escalated to more senior managers (under the escalation policy available on the DSCB website), *particularly* if the child's situation does not appear to be improving.

17. Responding to allegations or concerns about staff or volunteers

17.1 Rigorous recruitment and selection procedures and adhering to the school's code of conduct and safer practice guidance will hopefully mean that there are relatively few allegations against or concerns about staff or volunteers. However, if a member of staff, or any other person, has any reason to believe that another adult has acted inappropriately or abused a child or young person, they will act by reporting to the Headteacher (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 Headteacher the person with concerns will contact the Chair of Governors 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 Headteacher 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 school policy. This must comply with Part Four of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2018.

18. If you have any concerns about a colleague

Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague towards a child are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. They may worry that they

have misunderstood the situation and they will wonder whether a report could jeopardise their colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount. The school's whistle blowing code enables staff to raise concerns or allegations in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place. (see Whistleblowing Policy)

All staff are made aware of the NSPCC whistle blowing helpline <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/report-abuse/dedicated-helplines/whistleblowing-advice-line/>

19. Allegations against Supply Teachers

Supply teachers, whilst not employed by the school/college are under the supervision, direction and control of the Governing body/ Proprietor when working on the site. As such they should ensure that any allegation is dealt with properly and in discussion with the LADO.

20. Children with special educational needs and who are disabled

20.1 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.

20.2 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

20.3 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 the school will consider extra pastoral support for children with SEN and disabilities.

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

Somerford Primary School includes children with communication difficulties in their whole school child protection training to staff. Teaching Assistants working 1:1 with children with additional needs are regularly reminded of the need to be attuned to changes in the child's presentation and wellbeing.

21. Safer Recruitment

- At least one person conducting any interview for a post at the school will have undertaken safer recruitment training. This will cover, as a minimum, the contents of the Department for Education's statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, and will be in line with local safeguarding procedures.

- Safer recruitment training has been undertaken by the Headteacher / Deputy Head and Headteacher's PA.
- Volunteers and Governors all have a DBS check, references are taken and a discussion about safeguarding guidelines takes place before they work in the school. (See Appendix 2)

22. Safer Working Practice

22.1 All adults who come into contact with children at this school will behave at all times in a professional manner which secures the best outcomes for children and also prevents allegations being made. Detailed advice on safer working practice can be found in the school's Code of Conduct.

22.2 We promote a culture whereby members of the school 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 school, such as the Chair of Governors or the LADO. (See Appendix 1 below for contact details.)

23. Training

23.1 Child protection will be part of induction for all staff and regular volunteers new to the school. They will be given a copy of this policy, the Code of Conduct, details about the role of the DSL and part one of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education: information for all school and college staff' plus Annex A if they work directly with children.

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

23.3 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.

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

23.5 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.

23.6 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.

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

23.8 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 Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership on matters such as domestic abuse, attachment and child sexual and criminal exploitation; completing on-line training on FGM; attending local DSL forums etc.

23.9 Designated Teachers for Looked-After Children will undertake appropriate training. In Dorset this is provided by the Virtual School for Children in Care.

See Appendix 1 for contact details.

23.10 Headteachers and at least one governor will complete safer recruitment training either through a multi-agency taught session or by completing the NSPCC on-line course.

23.11 It is recommended by the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership that all governors attend training, briefings or other input which equips them to understand fully and comply with their legal safeguarding duties as governors, set out in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2018. Attendance includes those who also work with children and have attended child protection training in that role.

24. Raising concerns about safeguarding practice in our school

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

24.2 Any issues which they have not been able to resolve with the Headteacher 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).

24.3 Staff should refer to the school's whistle-blowing policy for more information or can use the NSPCC whistle blowing helpline: 0800 0280285.

25. Information for parents and carers

25.1 At this school 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.

25.2 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.

25.3 If you have any questions about this please speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead: Helen Frampton

26. Contextual Safeguarding

26.1 What is contextual safeguarding?

Safeguarding incidents and or behaviours can be associated with factors outside of school or college and /or can occur between children outside of school or college. 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 colleges 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.

27. Welcoming other Practitioners

27.1 Visitors with a practitioner role, such as the school nurse, social worker, educational psychologist or members of the Police will have been vetted to work with children through their own organisation. Practitioners will be required to bring their identity badges on all visits and to wear these. They will complete signing in/out forms and wear a school I.D. badge if required to do so. For agency, third-party staff and contractors, safer recruitment procedures and the guidance in KCSIE must be followed.

28. Off Site Visits

28.1 Off site visits are the subject of a risk assessment on Evolve.

Safeguarding concerns or allegations will be responded to following the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures (as above). The member of staff in charge of the visit will report any safeguarding concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Headteacher, who will pass to the First Response Safeguarding Hub if appropriate. In emergency the staff member in charge will contact the police and/or the First Response Safeguarding Hub.

The child protection/safeguarding policy and procedures of an off site provider e.g. water sport activity, will be checked and the DSL satisfied that they are appropriate, before using the facility.

29. Use of Alternative Provision

29.1 If alternative provision is made for any pupils it is the school's continued responsibility for safeguarding and we ensure that appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place in any provision used.

30. Photography and images

30.1 The vast majority of people who take or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely innocent, understandable and acceptable reasons. Sadly, some people abuse children through taking or using images, so we must ensure that we have some safeguards in place. To protect children, we will:

- Seek their consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications)
- Seek parental consent for photographs to be taken or published
- Use only the child's first name with an image
- Ensure that children are appropriately dressed

- Encourage children to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them

At school events, where parents/ carers are taking photographs of children, everyone is reminded that these are to be for personal use only and are not to be shared on social media.

School Safeguarding Responsibility Summary

The school will:

- Abide by the Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance
 - ❖ Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility.
 - ❖ **Everyone** who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play.
 - ❖ School staff are particularly important as they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help and advice for children, and prevent concerns from escalating.
 - ❖ Schools and their staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children. This system is described in statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018*.
 - ❖ Schools and colleges should work with social care, the police, health services and other services to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. (KCSIE Part one).
 - ❖ Give all staff and volunteers a copy of Part 1 of KCSIE and ensure that it is read and understood with knowledge of and access to all of KCSIE - especially Part 4: Allegations of abuse made against teachers and other staff and Part 5 Child on Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment
- Have a child protection/Safeguarding policy with procedures which are in accordance with government guidance and refer to locally agreed inter-agency procedures put in place by the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership
- Appoint a lead Governor/Trustee responsible for safeguarding practice within the school
- Have safeguarding as a standing agenda item at staff meetings and governing body meetings and minutes recorded.
- Appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead who is a member of the Leadership Team and appoint other Deputy DSLs to provide adequate cover.
- Ensure that the DSL (usually) leads on the Prevent agenda.
- Appoint a named member of staff to support children who are Looked After Children (Designated teacher) and those previously looked after who will work closely with the Local Authority including Social Workers and the Virtual Head and DSL where this post is held separately.
- Require teachers, staff and volunteers to work within the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures, school policy and good practice guidelines
- Ensure that teachers, staff, peripatetic staff, contractors and volunteers have completed Disclosure and Barring Service checks as per the safer

recruitment guidance, and that contacts within extended services require safer recruitment and safeguarding compliance

- Undertake relevant safer recruitment and allegations management training
- Ensure any external contractors using, or are on, school premises i.e. after school clubs, sports clubs have up to date safeguarding policies and are signed up to Safeguarding Procedures. Also ensure that they follow guidelines on the use of restraint and comply with the safeguarding requirements.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers comply with Safer Working practice for adults who work with children in Education Settings and the agreed school code of conduct/ mental, emotional health and positive behaviour policy
- Sign up to the Dorset Information Sharing Charter (DISC) previously the Dorset overarching information sharing protocol and share information relating to MARAC and the Personal information sharing agreement with respect to receiving alerts about domestic abuse and advise parents accordingly
- Ensure that the relevant staff have undertaken appropriate training to contribute to multi-agency assessments of children
- Ensure management of allegations procedures are implemented
- Recognise that children with special educational needs may be especially vulnerable to abuse and expect staff to take extra care to ensure their needs are protected
- Have and use an 'Anti Bullying Policy' responding to any complaint of bullying or prejudice within the school. Have a member of staff as an Anti-Bullying Champion.
- Have an online-safety policy in line with KCSIE. Have a member of staff as an Online/E-Safety Champion.
- Have a whistle blowing policy where it is safe to discuss concerns
- Be aware of the needs of vulnerable groups, identify and action for all identified
- Make policies available to parents and pupils via the school website or other means.
- Provide education to children about safeguarding issues
- Ensure the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account in respect to individual matters as well as safeguarding generally
- Undertake an annual audit of safeguarding, using the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership Self Evaluation audit tool which will be shared with the Governing Body leading to appropriate actions to ensure that the school is meeting all the requirements in line with national guidance, legislation and local guidance
- Reporting on safeguarding to the Governing Body at least annually
- Review and update the safeguarding policy annually and when any significant changes occur.

The school has a responsibility to work with other agencies on all safeguarding issues which may include:

- Allegations against staff – work with the LADO
- Child exploitation including Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), serious violence, County Lines
- Bullying including cyberbullying and prejudice based bullying
- Children missing from education, EHE, exclusions and attendance

- Children and the court system
- Children with family members in prison
- Domestic abuse
- Drugs and alcohol misuse
- Early Help
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Faith abuse
 - Female genital mutilation (FGM)
 - Forced marriage
 - Gangs and youth violence
 - Gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG)
 - Health and Safety
 - Homelessness
 - Honour – based violence (HBV)
 - Illegal child employment
 - Mental health
 - Physical Intervention, reasonable force, isolation and deprivation of liberty
 - Private fostering/any regulated activity such as host families
 - Peer on peer abuse
 - Radicalisation/extremism
 - Sexting/grooming and other online safety issues
 - Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children
 - Teenage relationship abuse
 - Trafficking and modern slavery
 - Work related learning and child employment

For more information, see the links to Government guidance in KCSIE 2020

C. Child Protection Summary for all Visiting Professionals **Somerford Primary School**

As an adult working directly with children in this school 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 school 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;

- Helen Frampton
- Jeremy Wallace
- Luke Thorne
- Chris Walsh

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Useful Contacts

For all referrals (concerns about children, which require a social work assessment)

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| 1. Call BCP's MASH – First Response Hub : | 01202 458101 |
| 2. Out of Hours Service | 01202 458101 |
| 3. BCP's Safeguarding and Standards Team | 01202 456117 |
| 4. BCP's Virtual School for Children in Care | 01305 228350 |
| 5. LADO | 01202 714667 |

Possible Indicators of Abuse

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

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 school
- 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 school
- running away from home
- sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or developmental level
- sexual drawings or language
- bedwetting
- eating problems such as overeating or anorexia

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

iv) Neglect

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

The physical signs of neglect can include:

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

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect can include:

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

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

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

School staff should be mindful of the above and discuss any concerns with the

DSL who will take the appropriate action in accordance with the inter-agency neglect guidance on the Pan Dorset Safeguarding Children's Partnership website.

Record Keeping: Best Practice
To be read and followed by all DSLs and Deputies

1. Introduction

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

1.2 It is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (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 schools 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 (Somerset Primary School uses 'My Concern' an online reporting format) 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 Schools 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 school.

3. Records kept by the Designated Safeguarding Lead

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

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 schools have adopted their own systems of collating such welfare concerns, but whichever system is in place, these records should not be labelled 'child protection'.

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

4. Starting a school child protection file

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

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

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

- b) Social Care inform the school 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 school by a previous school or pre-school attended by the pupil or
- d) A child who is in care/looked after transfers into the school 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 school at the time of transfer. The names of siblings and/or other children who live in the household who also attend the school should be clearly noted on individual files.

4.4 If two (or more) pupils at the school are referred to Social Care for the same concern (for example, an allegation of sexually harmful behaviour), then child protection files will be started on both/all 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 School child protection files are never 'closed' or de-categorised. Once a school has started a child protection file, the chronology is maintained so that any future concerns can be considered in the context of past events, even if Social Care ceases involvement.

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

5. Adopted children

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

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

5.3 Once the adoption order has been made the DSL in the school that holds the child protection file must overhaul the file. The principle is that there must

be nothing that identifies the child's birth name or the birth family. In sifting the file, it is acceptable to destroy documents that will continue to be held by other agencies: for example, child protection conference minutes and LAC review minutes which will be in Social Care records.

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

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

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

6. The format of child protection files

6.1 It is helpful if individual files have a front sheet with key information about the pupil and contact details of parents/carers, social worker and any other relevant professionals.

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

6.3 If a pupil is or was subject of a child protection plan or in care/looked after, this should be highlighted in some way to make it immediately obvious to anyone accessing the record.

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 school to support and protect the child. This will be particularly useful for DSLs in receiving schools 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, school 'concern forms', copies of correspondence, school reports to and minutes of child protection conferences, documents relating to children in care/'looked after' etc. The DSL will decide which relevant information which pre-dates the starting of the child protection file, such as CAF or other pastoral care documentation, will also be included.

7. Storage

7.1 All records relating to child protection concerns are sensitive and confidential so will be kept in a secure (i.e. locked at all times) filing cabinet, separate from other school files, and accessible through the DSL, the Deputy(ies) and other senior staff in larger schools.

7.2 The pupil's general school 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 school 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 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 school days. This might be relevant to 'welfare' concerns in a main school file, for example. Viewing-only access to these records is free but it is reasonable to charge for copies on a sliding scale from £1 - £50 (maximum) depending on the number of pages.

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

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

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

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

9. Transfer of child protection records

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

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

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

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

9.5 If a pupil with a child protection record leaves the school without a forwarding address and no contact is received from a new school the DSL should follow the school's Child Missing Education (CME) procedures. If there is reason to suspect the pupil is suffering harm then the DSL will refer to Social Care in the usual way.

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

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

10. 'Dual registered' pupils

10.1 Where a pupil is on roll at the school and starts to attend a Learning Centre (LC), the chronology and other relevant information in the child protection file should be copied and passed to the DSL at the LC at the earliest opportunity. Because of the nature of such 'bespoke' arrangements for individual 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 school should retain the record for as long as the pupil remains in school 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 school leaving age (or where the pupil completed 6th form studies), the last school 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 colleges, that they should NOT destroy, for the foreseeable future, any of their records that could potentially come within the scope of the inquiry (i.e. any records relating to sexual abuse).

12. Electronic child protection records

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

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

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