



**Heath Farm School**

**SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

**LEAD DSL: Mark Jones**

**SAFEGUARDING GOVERNOR: Craig Ribbons**

## 1. Policy statement

1.1 Heath Farm School, Acorn Education and Care (AEC) and Outcomes First Group is committed to ensuring that children and young people are effectively safeguarded in all services including fostering, schools and residential homes.

1.2 All Heath Farm School employees **must** ensure that:

- they are familiar with Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020);
- children and young people feel safe and that they are listened to;
- they create an environment in which children and young people feel valued;
- safer recruitment procedures are rigorously followed (please refer to the Recruitment Policy for further details);
- they understand their roles and responsibilities in keeping children and young people safe through ongoing learning, development and supervision;
- they are vigilant in monitoring possible signs of abuse including for those children and young people who have complex learning difficulties or specific communication needs;
- they follow the appropriate procedures in place for sharing safeguarding concerns and that these are shared with relevant professionals in a timely manner;
- they understand and implement local safeguarding procedures as set out in local authority arrangements;
- children and young people have opportunity to learn about appropriate relationships with adults and recognise unacceptable behaviour by adults.

## 2. What is safeguarding and child protection?

### 2.1 Safeguarding

Safeguarding relates to the action taken to promote the welfare of children and young people to protect them from harm. This policy includes the safeguarding of young adult learners within Heath Farm School and AEC schools and other settings.

2.2 Safeguarding is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, Sept 2018) as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment;
- Preventing impairment of children's health and 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.

2.3 Heath Farm School adopts a contextual safeguarding approach to safeguarding and child protection. Contextual safeguarding is: *'...an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships. Contextual Safeguarding, therefore, expands the objectives of child protection systems in recognition that young people are vulnerable to abuse in a range of social contexts.'* (Dr Carlene Firmin)

## 2.4 Child Protection

Child protection is an important aspect of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. Effective child protection is essential as part of wider work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. However, all agencies and individuals should aim to proactively safeguard and promote the welfare of children so that the need for action to protect children from harm is reduced.

## 2.5 Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

While local authorities and placing authorities have statutory responsibilities regarding safeguarding, Heath Farm School believes that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Heath Farm School expects that staff keep the child or young person at the centre of all that they do and that any actions taken are in the best interests of the child. We also expect that children and young people are listened to and their voices are always heard. This is without exception and regardless of whether the child or young person is being cared for in a residential setting, foster home or being educated within school.

## 2.6 Defining Significant Harm/Child Abuse

'Children may be vulnerable to neglect and abuse or exploitation from within their family and from individuals they come across in their day-to-day lives. These threats can take a variety of different forms, including sexual, physical and emotional abuse; neglect; exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups; trafficking; online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation. Whatever the form of abuse or neglect, practitioners should put the needs of children first when determining what action to take' (Working Together to Safeguard Children July 2018)

2.7 The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of 'Significant Harm' as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children. Under Section 47 of the Act, local authorities have a duty to make enquiries to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is suffering, or is likely to suffer Significant Harm.

## 2.8 Under s31(9) of the Children Act 1989 as amended by the Adoption and Children Act 2002:

'**harm**' means ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development, including for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another;

'**health**' means physical or mental health; and

'**ill-treatment**' includes Sexual Abuse and forms of ill-treatment which are not physical.

Abuse or neglect is not always easy to identify; staff are more than likely to have some information but not the whole picture.

2.9 There are four defined categories of child abuse, which are deemed to be forms of 'Significant Harm':

- Neglect;
- Physical Abuse;
- Emotional Abuse;
- Sexual Abuse.

**2.10 All staff must be aware of the signs and indicators of child abuse.**

### **3. Local Arrangements for the school**

**3.1** All staff must be aware of the local arrangements for safeguarding relevant to the school in which they work.

**3.2** The local arrangements for Heath Farm School are as follows:

**3.3** Heath Farm School's safeguarding arrangements are in line with local safeguarding partnership arrangements. The local safeguarding partnership consists of the three safeguarding partners (the local authority; a clinical commissioning group for an area within the local authority; and the chief officer of police for a police force in the local authority area).

**3.4** The Local Authority Designated Officer is 03000 410888 and e-mail Kentchildrenlado@kent.gov.uk.

**3.5** All safeguarding referrals must be reported to the local authority 03000 41 11 11 or email social.services@kent.gov.uk.

**3.6** The local authority safeguarding referral procedure is:

#### **Worried about a child?**

If you are worried about the safety of a child or young person, please complete the Kent Front Door referral process:

The new Integrated Front Door is operational from Monday 1 October 2018 to access support for children, young people and families requiring intensive or specialist support at levels 3 and 4.

The <https://webapps.kent.gov.uk/KCC.ChildrensPortal.Web.Sites.Public/Default.aspx> replaces the Single Request for Support Form, Early Help Notification (EHN) and the Inter-agency Referral (IAR) forms. The new form is intended to be used by professionals making requests for children and families requiring intensive or specialist support at levels 3 and 4 only. Any referrals that do not meet the criteria should be referred to the appropriate service for additional or universal services or **consideration given as to whether the identified needs can be met within the referrer's own service.**

The new online [Support Levels Guidance](#) (previously the Threshold Document) has been developed in a way which will better assist partner agencies when considering where children, young people and families sit within the continuum of need. The guidance comes with an accompanying [Support Levels Guidance sheet \(PDF, 323.6 KB\)](#) which is a double-sided sheet that is colour coded for ease of use and can be easily downloaded.

Partners should have a discussion with the parents or carers; and with the children and young people where appropriate, before making any request for support to ensure that they are aware of any worries or concerns that you have and to be given the opportunity to discuss solutions with you. This should inform your decision as to whether to complete a Single Request for Support Form or whether there are alternative sources of support available that might be more suitable.

The parent/guardian's agreement to engage with Kent Children's Social Work and Early Help teams should be sought before discussing a 'Request for Support' about them with other agencies, unless this may itself place a child at risk of significant harm. A completed copy of the form should be shared with the family and the family should be aware that the Request for Support Form will be used to determine the most appropriate advice and support for the them, and for the planning and evaluation of this support. Please see the guidance on [Completion of the Form - Section 2: Family Agreement to Engage with Services \(PDF, 159.5 KB\)](#).

If completing the form, it is important that partners provide all the relevant information. The quality of the information received will enable the Front Door team to direct the request to the most appropriate service where the criteria is met - an Early Help Unit or Children's Social Work Team.

If the child is in immediate danger, call the emergency services using 999.

If you need to make contact out of working hours please call the Out of Hours Service on 03000 41 91 91.

For professionals:

If you are a professional making a referral have you considered the following:

- Discussing the matter with your Designated Safeguarding Lead; Including any risk assessment already completed with the referral;
- Ensuring that all decisions are informed by the Kent Front Door Threshold Criteria.

Early Help

If you would like to make a referral to the Early Help and Preventative Services, they can be contacted using 03000 41 92 22 or email [earlyhelp@kent.gov.uk](mailto:earlyhelp@kent.gov.uk).

'Say Something If You See Something'

If you have concerns about a child or young person whom you believe is at risk of sexual exploitation please call Kent Police on 101. You can also contact the National Child Sexual Exploitation Helpline on 11 60 00.

### **3.7** For all referrals regarding radicalisation:

The Prevent strategy aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. While it remains rare for children and young people to become involved in terrorist activity, young people from an early age can be exposed to terrorist and extremist influences or prejudiced views. As with other forms of safeguarding strategies, early intervention is always preferable.

Key Documents

- Prevent Duty Guidance - <http://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/>
- Tackling Extremism
- Prevent Strategy
- Prevent Referral Form - <https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/preventreferrals>

- Channel Guidance - <http://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/>

To access the Channel General Awareness E-Learning please click here: <https://www.elearning.prevent.homeoffice.gov.uk/channelawareness>

For more information regarding Prevent within Schools, please visit the KELSI website.

If you are concerned about the radicalisation of a young person or other family members please refer the case to the County Channel Panel, or contact Early Help or the Central Referral Unit.

### 3.8 For all referrals regarding exploitation:

CSE Intelligence Form: <https://www.kscb.org.uk/guidance/sexual-abuse-and-exploitation>

The new electronic CSE partner information sharing form (eINTEL) has been created so that multiagency staff can share any information with regard to Child Sexual Exploitation that may be important and relevant for the Multi-Agency Child Sexual Exploitation Team (CSET) in order to build intelligence about CSE and better target the response to prevent and disrupt it.

It must be emphasised that this form is NOT a referral in to Specialist Children's Services or to Early Help. If you have concerns that meet the Threshold for EH or SCS, these must be discussed with your safeguarding lead and the appropriate referral/notification made.

To access eINTEL please see this link: <https://www.qes-online.com/Kent/eIntel/Live/m/eintel/public/index>  
Guidance on completing the electronic form can be found below:

[KSCB Multi-Agency Guidance for sharing CSE information and intelligence \(DOCX, 23.7 KB\)](#)  
[eINTEL User Guidance Presentation \(PPTX, 306.9 KB\)](#)

### 3.9 The local authority procedure for an early help referral is:

If you would like to make a referral to the Early Help and Preventative Services, they can be contacted using 03000 41 92 22 or email [earlyhelp@kent.gov.uk](mailto:earlyhelp@kent.gov.uk).

### 3.10 The Chair of Governors for Heath Farm School is: Craig Ribbons.

### 3.11 The Outcomes First Group Head of Safeguarding is Nicola Thomas - 07733808705 or email [nthomas@nfa.co.uk](mailto:nthomas@nfa.co.uk).

## 4. Safeguarding Training and Updates

4.1 This policy **must** be read in conjunction with Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020). **All staff are expected to follow this policy and statutory guidance including KCSIE 2020.**

4.2 This policy is written so as not to replicate information contained within KCSIE part 1 (2020).

#### 4.3 All staff must read the following documents:

- Part 1 of KCSIE (2020)
- The school's Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy
- The school's Anti-bullying policy
- Outcomes First Group's Exploitation policy
- Outcomes First Group's Protecting Children from Radicalisation policy
- Outcomes First Group's Harmful Sexual Behaviours policy
- Outcomes First Group's Safer Recruitment policy
- Outcomes First Group's Data Protection policy
- Outcomes First Group's Web Filtering policy
- The school's Whistle blowing and complaints policy
- The school's staff behaviour policy (Code of Conduct)
- The school's description and guidance of the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- The school's description and guidance of the role of the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- DfE guidance on sexual violence and harassment between children in schools and colleges
- DfE guidance on children missing in education
- DfE guidance on Promoting the Education of Looked After Children
- DfE guidance on Teaching Online Safety in Schools

#### 4.4 Safeguarding updates must be regularly provided to staff, either through face-to-face training, meetings or through regular written updates.

- **Face to face safeguarding training must be provided (and recorded) to all staff at least annually.**
- **Designated Safeguarding Leads must refresh their advanced training at least every two years.**

#### 4.5 All members of school leadership teams, including the Headteacher and designated safeguarding lead should also be familiar with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.

### 5. Partnership working and sharing information

5.1 Partnership working and the sharing of information is key in keeping children safe. Everyone who has a role to play in caring for children has a duty to share good quality information with the relevant professionals in a timely manner.

#### 5.2 General Data Protection Regulations

All schools must ensure that they comply with the Heath Farm School and AEC's Data Protection policy which incorporates the GDPR requirements. The GDPR works around the principles of consent and assumes the automatic right of privacy to all individuals. This applies to children and young people's personal information, as well as that of staff and parents/carer's.

5.3 **All staff must complete the GDPR training. All staff have a responsibility to ensure that they comply with the GDPR requirements.**

- 5.4 Schools must ensure that they inform pupils, parents and carers of how their personal information will be stored and used.
- 5.5 **The GDPR is not a barrier to sharing safeguarding information. Safeguarding concerns must always be passed on.**
- 5.6 Schools must ensure that they hold emergency contact details of the parents/carers of pupils. This is to be done with the agreement of the parents/carers. In line with KCSIE (2020) schools must hold more than one set of contact details for pupils.

Data breaches must be reported immediately to the Data Protection manager as set out in the Data Protection Policy.

## 6. **Designated Safeguarding Lead**

- 6.1 *'Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure an appropriate senior member of staff, from the school or college leadership team, is appointed to the role of designated safeguarding lead. The designated safeguarding lead should take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection. This should be explicit in the role-holder's job description.'* (KCSIE 2020)
- 6.2 The Headteacher must appoint one individual to be the lead Designated Safeguarding Lead, and make arrangements for there to be deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads in place who will manage any immediate safeguarding incidents in the Designated Safeguarding Lead's absence. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and deputies) will receive DSL training every two years.
- 6.3 The Headteacher must ensure that job descriptions for Designated Safeguarding Leads and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are kept on personnel files and clearly state their responsibilities.
- 6.4 The DSL (or deputy) must always be available during school hours for staff to discuss any concerns. The DSL must be an appropriate senior member of the leadership team.
- 6.5 **The main responsibilities of the Designated Safeguarding Lead are to:**
- provide support to staff regarding safeguarding concerns;
  - lead on advising staff of any action to be taken due to a safeguarding concern;
  - ensure that children and young people are immediately safeguarded from harm and abuse;
  - ensure that there is appropriate cover during their absence, and that staff know who to approach if the Designated Safeguarding Lead is unavailable;
  - liaise with local authorities and other professionals, sharing information and fully assisting with any enquiries;
  - adopt a child focused and holistic approach to deciding on further action;
  - refer allegations to the Local Authority Designated Officer;
  - refer safeguarding concerns to placing and host local authorities;
  - refer suspected cases of radicalisation to Channel;
  - refer suspected case of Female Genital Mutilation to the police;
  - refer suspected cases of Child Sexual Exploitation and trafficking to the police;
  - refer cases to the Disclosure and Barring Service after staff have been dismissed or there is suspected harm having been caused to children and young people;



- liaise with AEC Quality Assurance Team and HR Team of any allegations or suspected harm having been caused to a child by an employee, supply staff or volunteer of or for AEC;
- ensure that the school complies with the work of the local safeguarding partnership.
- ensure that all staff receive regular update training in relation to safeguarding;
- provide safeguarding updates to senior managers and school governors;
- ensure that there is effective monitoring and oversight of all safeguarding concerns;
- promoting the educational achievements of Looked After Children in line with the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

**6.5** It is important that all staff understand the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead on their appointment within the school and as part of their induction. The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for ensuring that all staff understand their roles and responsibilities regarding safeguarding children and that a child focused approach is taken. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will assess safeguarding concerns within the context of young people's environments. This is known as contextual safeguarding. The Designated Safeguarding Lead must ensure that clear, concise and good quality documents are kept of all allegations or safeguarding concerns. Data protection is not a barrier to record keeping or information sharing.

**6.6** When young people move schools or move into further or higher education, the Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for ensuring that the necessary information is shared with the new school or college. It is the Designated Safeguarding Lead's responsibility to ensure that a pupil's child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as quickly as possible and as securely as possible. Confirmation of receipt must be obtained. **Files must be transferred securely.**

**6.7** Consideration must be given to sharing information verbally with the new school or college prior to the child or young person leaving. The Designated Safeguarding Lead must ensure that confidentiality of any third parties is not breached and that they comply with GDPR. Records must contain factual information and must not be speculative. These documents must be kept confidential with the exception of sharing them with relevant professionals as part of safeguarding and protecting the child or young person. Records must be updated and any actions must be followed up and completed. It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that a safe and satisfactory outcome has been reached and that all actions have been completed.

## **7. Roles and Responsibilities of Staff**

**7.1** Heath Farm School recognises that it is not just one person's role to safeguard children but that it requires a collective response to safeguarding. All Heath Farm School and AEC employees must understand their roles and responsibilities regarding keeping children safe and reporting concerns.

**7.2** During staff induction, staff will receive safeguarding training. Staff must be familiar and understand the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the local safeguarding partnership and the individual systems relating to safeguarding within the school. Staff must also know, understand and implement the school's behaviour management policy, the child protection policy, the school's code of conduct, the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020, Part 1.

### 7.3 Staff are responsible for:

- compliance with Heath Farm School and AEC's policies, statutory guidance and legislation including Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018);
- understanding the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead;
- helping to develop and deliver a curriculum which helps children and young people to understand about abuse, appropriate and safe relationships with adults and peers, and keeping safe both online and off line;
- helping to provide an environment where children and young people feel safe and valued;
- attending training and meetings;
- ensuring that they fully understand how to report concerns and if not, asking for further training and support;
- understand the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education;
- listening to children and young people;
- supporting children and young people if they disclose safeguarding information;
- ensuring that they are alert to signs of abuse by peers or adults;
- ensuring that they are aware of indicators or possible signs of neglect;
- ensuring that they closely monitor any possible signs of abuse or harm for those children who are unable to communicate verbally or who have complex health and care needs;
- keeping sensitive information confidential and sharing it only with those professionals for whom it is relevant;
- helping to identify those children or young people who may benefit from Early Help;
- helping to implement Child Protection Plans.

**7.4** Staff are in a close position to children and young people within schools as they know the children and young people. They have regular contact with them and so are in the best position to know if a child or young person is behaving in a way which could possibly indicate that they are being hurt or harmed. Any concerns, whether these are nagging doubts, worries, concerns or based on information told to them, must be reported **immediately** to the Designated Safeguarding Lead both verbally and in writing. **It is the staff member's responsibility to ensure that this information is acted upon. They have a duty to follow up with the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that action has been taken.**

### 7.5 Early Help

*'A child in need is defined under the Children Act 1989 as a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development, or whose health and development is likely to be significantly or further impaired, without the provision of services; or a child who is disabled. Local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. Children in need may be assessed under section 17 of the Children Act 1989' (KCSIE 2020).*

**7.6** It is important that staff take swift and effective action to safeguard children and young people and to stop concerns from escalating. It may be that some children and young people will benefit from Early Help.

**7.7** Staff must be aware and alert to the possibility of Early Help being needed for those children and young people who have particular vulnerabilities, such as those who:

- are disabled or who have specific additional needs;
- have special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory education, health and care plan);
- are young carers;
- are showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups;
- are frequently missing/going missing from care or from home;
- are misusing drugs or alcohol themselves;
- are at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation;
- are in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as substance abuse, adult mental health problems or domestic abuse;
- have returned home to their family from care;
- are showing early signs of abuse and/or neglect;
- are at risk of being radicalised or exploited;
- are a privately fostered child.

**7.8** When a child or young person has been referred for Early Help, it is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to set up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead professional. Any such cases should be kept under constant review and consideration must be given to a referral to children’s social care for assessment for statutory services, if the child’s situation does not appear to be improving or is getting worse.

## **8. Reporting concerns**

### **8.1 What to do if a child or young person discloses**

If a child or young person discloses information to a member of staff, they must ensure that they:

- listen to the child or young person;
- do not dismiss what the child or young person tells them. All concerns must be acted upon rigorously;
- do not promise to keep it a secret. They must explain that they have a duty to share information to keep them safe and protect them;
- write down what the child or young person tells them. This must be accurate and in the child's words;
- immediately report the concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy. If neither is available, the member of staff must report the information to the Headteacher, Principal or Regional Director for Education and Care;

**8.2** Staff must be alert to not just potential familial abuse, but also to children and young people making allegations against staff, volunteers or peers.

- 8.3 All concerns, however small or trivial they may seem, **must** be immediately reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. This must be done verbally and then followed up **on the same day** and documented on the electronic recording system. The member of staff has a responsibility to ensure that action has been taken with regards to the concerns on the **following day** and that the concern is documented on the electronic system. If action is not taken in a timely way as the member of staff sees fit, they have a duty to escalate their concerns to the Headteacher or the Regional Director for Education and Care.
- 8.4 Staff must prioritise the child or young person's immediate safety. They must remain professional and adhere to all safeguarding and confidentiality procedures. After sharing the information with the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy, they must not share it with anyone else.
- 8.5 On receipt of the information, the Designated Safeguarding Lead must consider all information and then report this within **one working day** to the host authority, placing authority, Regional Director for Education and care and where relevant, the Local Authority Designated Officer.

## 9. Peer on Peer Abuse and Bullying

- 9.1 **KCSIE (2020) states; ' ... abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”'.**
- 9.2 Staff must ensure that they create a school environment where children and young people's safety is paramount and where unacceptable or unsafe behaviour will not be tolerated. Staff must be aware and alert to incidents of on line abuse, sexting, sexual violence and sexual harassment between pupils and bullying. This includes upskirting which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks for sexual gratification, or to cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. Staff must be alert to possible signs of peer on peer abuse. Inappropriate language must be rigorously and consistently challenged.
- 9.3 A contextual safeguarding approach must be taken when considering possible peer on peer abuse. Children and young people who display harmful behaviours must be seen as potential victims themselves, and the wider environmental risks must be taken into account. Staff must challenge any gender bias or derogatory language used by staff or pupils. Staff must not dismiss any concerns brought to them by pupils. Staff can report concerns verbally but they must ensure that all concerns are recorded onto the schools

Electronic recording system by the end of the school day.

- 9.4 **Staff must act immediately and report any concerns regarding peer on peer abuse to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.**
- 9.5 When making decisions about how to deal with allegations, the age and understanding of the young person who has displayed harmful behaviour must be taken into consideration, as well as any relevant personal circumstances and how this relates to their behaviour. Schools must consider any disparity in age between the young person who has displayed harmful behaviour and the victim, the impact the behaviour has had on the victim, and any element of coercion or violence.

## 9.6 What to do if there are concerns

Designated Safeguarding Leads must deal with any concerns of peer on peer abuse immediately and sensitively. As much information as possible must be gathered from the victim and the young person who has allegedly displayed harmful behaviour in order to gain the facts of what has happened.

9.7 The language used must be sensitive, non-judgemental and must not blame the victim. Victims must be supported and reassured that their safety and welfare within the school is the priority. Risk assessments must be implemented where necessary.

9.8 Where the Designated Safeguarding Lead believes that there has been significant harm caused to the pupil, a referral must be made to the local authority immediately. In agreement with the local authority, parents/carers must be informed. Where possible, as best practice, parents/carers are to be informed face to face.

9.9 If the local authority do not believe it meets their threshold for further action and the Designated Safeguarding Lead is not in agreement, this must be challenged with the local authority.

## 9.10 After the outcome/conclusion of the incident:

- a contextual safeguarding approach must be taken;
- schools must take all necessary action to learn from the incident and prevent future incidents from occurring, such as through targeted education around specific types of peer on peer abuse;
- support for the victim must be offered and provided where possible. If necessary, appropriate risk assessments must be implemented to provide reassurance and safety for the victim;
- schools must ensure that they **do not** adopt a victim blaming approach;
- the Designated Safeguarding Lead must complete an investigation into the incident; The investigation must consider the occurrence of the incident itself as well as whether it is an isolated incident, and the personal circumstances of the young person who is alleged to have displayed harmful behaviour;
- if necessary, appropriate referrals must be made to support services for the young person who has displayed harmful behaviours;
- a risk assessment to be completed and implemented for the young person who has displayed harmful behaviours in order to safeguard them and other pupils.

## 9.11 Bullying

Severe or persistent forms of bullying can result in Significant Harm, which is why those providing services for children should have adequate policies, procedures and training to counter bullying. Bullying occurs when a person or group of people behave in ways which are designed to cause distress or to hurt a person or group of people. Bullying can be overt and plain for all to see. It can be subtle and insidious. Bullying can become part of the culture, recognised or believed by all or a significant number of people as 'acceptable'; it can even be encouraged and rewarded.

- 9.12** Heath Farm School has a zero tolerance approach to bullying. All staff have a responsibility to challenge bullying even at a low level. Staff must help children and young people to understand what bullying is and how to report it. Bullying must be dealt with as a safeguarding matter. Staff must report any bullying concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead **on the same day**. The concerns must be documented appropriately.
- 9.13** Schools have a responsibility to ensure that those children and young people who bully, are supported and helped to understand the impact of their actions.
- 9.14** For further information please refer to the school's anti-bullying policy, child protection policy, the Web Filtering policy, and the DfE guidance 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges' December 2017.
- 9.15** **All staff have a responsibility to report any suspicions or concerns that a child has or may be mistreated or harmed.**
- 9.16** **Preventative Strategies**
- The school will take all appropriate action to ensure that children and young people learn about appropriate relationships with adults, keeping safe, online safety as well as sex and healthy relationships. PSHE lessons, Relationships Education, and Relationships and Sex Education will focus on important age appropriate issues in line with Government guidance. Staff must ensure that children and young people have opportunity to learn about safe relationships between peers as well as who they can talk to if they have any concerns.
- 9.17** Children should be supported by staff to understand what abuse is. Children must be listened to and enabled to report any abuse or neglect at the earliest opportunity. They should be given information about how to report abuse or any concerns about possible abuse. This should include being able to access in private, relevant websites or help lines such as Childline to seek advice and help.
- 9.18** The school recognises that some children and young people are more vulnerable by virtue of their complex health or behavioural needs, or disabilities. In these instances, all staff have a responsibility to be the 'eyes and ears' and report all concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- 9.19** For further information, refer to Part 5 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) 'Child on Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment'.

## 10. Children Missing Education

**10.1** All staff must be aware of the risks associated with children who go missing from education, and particularly that very often missing incidents are a warning sign of other safeguarding concerns such as exploitation, forced marriage, FGM, substance misuse or mental health problems. The risk of exploitation and abuse increases for those children and young people who go missing from home and school.

Early identification and intervention is a priority. Schools must have appropriate procedures in place for monitoring the attendance of children and young people in school. Children and young people's attendance must be monitored through Senior Leadership Team Meetings and Governance.

**10.2** The Headteacher must ensure that there are two contact numbers on a pupil's file. The Designated Safeguarding Lead must contact the main emergency contact as detailed on the pupil's file should there be concerns regarding the pupil missing education.

Staff must report all unauthorised absences to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Designated Safeguarding Lead must make contact with the child or young person's parent/carer immediately to establish the child or young person's whereabouts. The Designated Safeguarding Lead must inform the placing authority of a pupil's poor attendance.

**10.3** The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for investigating any unexplained absences. Reasonable enquiries must be made to locate a child or young person who is missing from education. The Designated Safeguarding Lead **must** refer any safeguarding concerns regarding the absence of a pupil to the local authority. In cases where there are immediate concerns regarding forced marriage or FGM, the Designated Safeguarding Lead must refer to the police immediately. All information **must** be documented appropriately.

**10.4** Children and young people who are repeatedly missing from education are at particular risk of harm. Attempts must be made to talk to the child or young person about why they are missing from education. Records must be kept of those discussions. Any safeguarding information which the child or young person discloses must be shared **immediately** with the local authority. If the child or young person discloses immediate safeguarding concerns, the Designated Safeguarding Lead must share this information with the police.

## 11. Exploitation

**11.1** Exploitation of children and young people is a form of child abuse and can include sexual exploitation or criminal exploitation. Schools must write and implement a local exploitation procedure which staff must be familiar with.

**11.2** All staff **must** know the definitions, signs and indicators of CSE and County Lines. Designated Safeguarding Leads must provide ongoing training and learning to staff around exploitation. All staff **must** have training in exploitation.

**11.3** All staff **must** read Heath Farm School's Exploitation policy as well as refer to Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020).



- 11.4** Staff **must** report concerns regarding exploitation **immediately** to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Staff must document their concerns appropriately **on the same day**. Where there are immediate concerns relating to children and young people's safety due to exploitation, Designated Safeguarding Leads must make a same day referral to the local authority and report the concerns to the police as well as to the Regional Director for Education and Care.
- 11.5** Where there are low level concerns, Designated Safeguarding Leads must document the concerns on a chronology in order to establish a full picture of what is happening for the child or young person.
- 11.6** It is everyone's responsibility to help children and young people know about grooming and exploitation. Schools must ensure that children and young people know who to talk to if they are concerned about child exploitation.
- 11.7 Female Genital Mutilation**
- In line with KCSIE (2020), teachers have a legal duty to share concerns regarding FGM; 'If a **teacher**, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher **must** report this to the police'.
- 11.8** Staff must read and be familiar with statutory guidance regarding reporting FGM 'FGM Fact sheet' as outlined within KCSIE 2020 page 88.
- 11.9** Teaching staff have a legal duty to share concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and to report any concerns. In suspected cases of FGM, staff must refer to the local authority as well as the police. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will assist and support staff with this.
- 11.10** The Designated Safeguarding Lead must ensure that immediate concerns regarding potential abuse, harm, honour based abuse including FGM, forced marriage and breast ironing, CSE and Trafficking or Radicalisation are shared **immediately** with the relevant Regional Director for Education and Care (chair of governors) and that staff have documented them appropriately.

## **12. Preventing Radicalisation**

- 12.1** Heath Farm School and AEC fully recognises its responsibility to have arrangements in place to safeguard and protect children from radicalisation. Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a statutory responsibility on schools to 'have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'. This is known as the 'Prevent' duty.
- 12.2** All staff must be aware of the signs and indicators of radicalisation. Staff must be proactive in reporting any concerns, regardless of how small they may be, to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Designated Safeguarding Leads must assist staff to report all concerns regarding radicalisation to the Police as well as the Regional Director for Education and Care. Staff must document their concerns appropriately.
- 12.3** All staff must be aware of the local procedures relating to reporting radicalisation concerns.



### **13. Children Requiring Support with their Mental Health**

**13.1** Heath Farm School recognises that schools have an important role in supporting the health and wellbeing of children and young people. Mental ill-health can be an indicator of a child suffering or at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation. All schools should systems in place for identifying mental health problems and referring to appropriate agencies for additional support. This will ordinarily be with the consent of the child and their family. All details of concerns and any referrals or other support arranged for the child should be documented on the schools electronic recording system.

**13.2** Schools can refer to the Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools guidance (2018)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2>

The guidance provides advice on how to create a whole school culture in promoting positive Mental health outcomes for children and young people.

### **14. Physical Interventions**

**14.1** While every school creates an atmosphere of nurturing, unconditional positive regard and warmth, Heath Farm School and AEC recognises that on occasion it may be necessary to use physical intervention to keep a child or young person safe. Physical intervention must be a last resort.

**14.2 All staff must read and know the school's individual Physical Intervention Policy.**

**14.3** If a child or young person makes an allegation after a physical intervention, it is important that the member of staff writes down as much information as possible. Staff must complete body maps immediately after the event and make an appropriate electronic record. Staff must also verbally inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead/deputy as well as recording it onto the schools electronic recording system. **Medical attention must always be sought for the young person.** Staff must inform their parents or carers. Allegations of harm relating to physical interventions must be reported to the Regional Director for Education and Care, [safeguarding@ofgl.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@ofgl.co.uk) and the Local Authority Designated Officer.

### **15. Allegations against Staff**

**15.1** Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) considers an allegation to be any concern, complaint or disclosure that indicates a member of staff, agency staff or volunteer or has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or relate to a child
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

- 15.2** All allegations must be treated seriously. Staff must maintain an open mind and suspend all judgement. Allegations must never be dismissed. When managing allegations, it is important that staff maintain a level of professional curiosity. Staff have a responsibility to look after themselves and not to place themselves into situations which could present as unsafe. Staff must report any concerns to the Regional Director for Education and Care and the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- 15.3** When a child makes an allegation about a member of staff, the member of staff receiving the complaint must write everything down and document it on the electronic recording system used by the school. The member of staff must immediately report the allegation to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy. The Designated Safeguarding Lead has a responsibility to take all allegations seriously regardless of whether a child or young person has made previous allegations. The Designated Safeguarding Officer may wish to speak with the LADO and seek advice about next steps on the same day. Allegations must be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer within one working day. The Designated Safeguarding Lead must ensure that they follow the Heath Farm School and AEC's Managing Allegations Procedure.
- 15.4** Part four of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) outlines the importance of retaining oversight of any concerns or allegations about agency or supply staff, volunteers or any member of staff employed by a third party working in the school setting. Whilst the individual may not be employed by Heath Farm School, **schools must ensure** that allegations are managed properly. KCSIE (2020) states *'In no circumstances should a school or college decide to cease to use a supply teacher due to safeguarding concerns, without finding out the facts and liaising with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to determine a suitable outcome. Governing bodies should discuss with the agency whether it is appropriate to suspend the supply teacher or redeploy them to another part of the school whilst they carry out their investigation.'*
- 15.5** If the allegation is regarding the Headteacher/Principal then the Regional Director for Education and Care must be informed immediately. They will then seek advice from the LADO.
- 15.6** **All allegations made against staff must be reported to the Regional Director for Education and Care and HR and the Group Head of Safeguarding via [safeguarding@ofgl.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@ofgl.co.uk) . Heath Farm School and AEC recognises that managing allegations can be challenging and so will support with the process.**
- 15.7** It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that all allegations are managed in line with local safeguarding partnership procedures.
- 16. Working with the Local Authority Designated Officer**
- 16.1** In all referrals, the Designated Safeguarding Lead is the lead professional within the school for ensuring that a timely response is received from the local authority or LADO. If a response is received which the Designated Safeguarding Lead believes is inappropriate and does not prioritise the child or young person's safety, this must be escalated to the Headteacher or Governors of the school to agree further action.

## 17. Whistleblowing

- 17.1** Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Heath Farm School and AEC recognises that on occasion staff may feel that they are unable to tell someone within their immediate place of work about any safeguarding concerns that they may have. Heath Farm School and AEC also recognises that children will be unable to voice their concerns if they are in an environment where staff also fail to voice their concerns.
- 17.2** All staff have a duty first and foremost to the children in their school. Any concerns, regardless of how small they may seem, must be reported. Designated Safeguarding Leads and Headteachers have a responsibility to ensure that they create an environment where staff feel safe to openly voice any concerns and that they feel listened to. It is also important that staff feel supported if concerns are raised about them. If staff see or heard about other colleagues practice which they are concerned about, which potentially may cause emotional or physical harm to a pupil, or if the standard of care being provided falls short of expectations, they must report this.
- 17.3** Heath Farm School and AEC has an anonymous telephone support system (Safecall) where staff are able to share any concerns that they may have, safely and without fear of reprisal. All whistleblowing concerns will be taken seriously and treated as such.
- 17.4** Staff can call Safecall on **08009151571**, report online **[www.safecall.co.uk/reports](http://www.safecall.co.uk/reports)**, or email **[outcomesfirstgroup@safecall.co.uk](mailto:outcomesfirstgroup@safecall.co.uk)**

## 18. The role of Senior Manager and Governor

- 18.1** Like teaching staff and volunteers, senior managers and Governors must be safely recruited and have all relevant checks on file. Please see the Safer Recruitment policy for further information.
- 18.2** Governors must have oversight of safeguarding policies and procedures that they are being effectively implemented within the school and that training is effective. In line with KCSIE (2020), which states that; '*Governing bodies and proprietors should have a senior board level (or equivalent) lead to take **leadership** responsibility for their schools or college's safeguarding arrangements*'. The named Governor for the school is Mr. Craig Ribbons.
- 18.3** It is the Governors' responsibility to ensure that there is a named Designated Safeguarding Lead and that the school contributes to multi-agency working in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018).

## 19. Safer Recruitment

- 19.1** The Heath Farm School and AEC Safer Recruitment Policy sets the processes which must be followed for the recruitment of staff and volunteers.
- 19.2** It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to ensure that the Single Central Record is compliant with legislation and statutory guidance and kept up to date and is stored confidentially.

- 20. Managing Referrals to Disclosure and Barring Service, Social Work England, or other professional bodies including the Care Council for Wales (CCW), and/or the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC), Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) or Teacher Regulation Authority.**
- 20.1** A Sub-Committee of the Outcomes First Group Safeguarding & Quality Committee takes an overview of all professional conduct issues to ensure the Group is compliant and consistent with all legal duties relating to referrals to professional bodies and the Disclosure and Barring Service.
- 20.2** Heath Farm School and AEC managers must notify the Safeguarding Sub-Committee of all Referrals and potential referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service or any relevant professional body in the UK.
- 20.3** All professional conduct issues which may require a referral to a professional body, whether they relate to safeguarding children or not, must be referred to this sub-committee. For example, a teacher may be prohibited from teaching for a wide range of reasons which do not relate to the safety of children or young people.
- 20.4** The Safeguarding Sub-Committee will support the decision-making process to refer an employee to a professional body / DBS and make it clear who is responsible for the submission of any relevant documentation. This will normally be delegated to a senior manager within the division.

## APPENDIX A

### Role of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputies at Heath Farm School

#### **The DSL should:**

- work with the Senior Leadership Team to ensure safeguarding is at the heart of the school ethos and that all staff are supported in knowing how to recognise and respond to potential concerns;
- liaise with the headteacher to keep them informed of any safeguarding of issues especially ongoing enquiries and police investigations;
- As required, liaise with the local authority case manager or the designated officer at the local authority if a concern has arisen regarding a member of staff;
- liaise with staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies;
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise for staff.

#### **Managing referrals: The DSL should:**

- refer cases of suspected abuse to Children's Social Care, and support staff who have raised concerns about a child or have made a referral to Children's Social Care;
- where there are concerns about radicalisation, to make referrals to the Channel programme and offer support to other staff who have concerns about radicalisation;
- refer cases to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS);
- refer cases to the police where a crime has been or may have been committed.

#### **Policies and procedures - the DSL must:**

- Ensure the safeguarding / child protection policies and procedures are reviewed and updated at least annually, and that any changes during the year are incorporated into policies, procedures and practice and staff advised;

- Make safeguarding policies and procedures available to parents/carers as a hard copy or on the settings website;
- Ensure that all staff, volunteers, students and governors have a copy of safeguarding policies and procedures and ensure these are both understood and practised by staff, volunteers, students and committee members;
- Ensure that safer recruitment practice is followed in line with current guidance.

### **Undertake training and develop knowledge**

In addition to formal training, the DSL (and deputies) should keep knowledge and skills up to date via online training, e-bulletins, opportunities to network with other DSLs, and attend locally arranged briefings. These opportunities should be taken up at least once a year but more regularly if possible so that the DSL:

- understands the referral and assessment process for early help and intervention;
- knows about child protection case conferences and reviews and can contribute to these effectively when required;
- ensures that all staff have access to and understand the school's child protection policy;
- is aware of the needs of any vulnerable children i.e.; those with special educational needs, young carers and those receiving support from the local authority including a child in need, a child on a child protection plan or a looked after child;
- keeps detailed, accurate and secure records of concerns and referrals;
- understands the role of the school in terms of the Prevent duty where required;
- attends refresher and other relevant training;
- encourages a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings in terms of what the school does to protect them.

## **Raise awareness**

The designated safeguarding lead's role is to:

- work with the governing body to ensure the school's child protection policy is updated and renewed annually and that all members of staff have access to it and understand it;
- provide regular briefings and updates at staff, departmental and governor meetings to help ensure that everyone is kept up to date on latest policy developments and reminded of their responsibilities;
- ensure the child protection policy is available publicly and that parents are aware of the policy and that schools may make referrals to children's social care if there are concerns about abuse or neglect;
- Ensure a contextual safeguarding approach is being followed and being considered, particularly in peer on peer incidents;
- link with the KSCB and child protection governors to keep up to date with training opportunities and the latest local policies.

## **Record keeping**

It is also the designated safeguarding lead's responsibility to keep detailed, accurate and secure written records of safeguarding concerns. These records are confidential and should be kept separately from pupil records. They should include a chronology of concerns, referrals, meetings, phone calls and emails.

Where children leave the school or college, ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible. This should be transferred separately from the main pupil file, ensuring secure delivery and confirmation of receipt should be obtained.

## **Training of other staff**

It is the role of the designated safeguarding lead, working with the headteacher, to ensure all staff:

- have induction training covering child protection, an understanding of safeguarding issues including the causes of abuse and neglect are able to identify the signs and indicators of abuse, respond to disclosures appropriately and respond effectively and in a timely fashion when they have concerns. It is good practice to invite all governors to this training (not just the nominated governor for child protection) so that they all have a basic awareness of child protection, please see Appendix B.

## APPENDIX B

### How to deal with a disclosure at Heath Farm School

#### Child Protection - Dealing with disclosures Heath Farm School

Children experiencing distress or abuse may seek to 'tell' in school, often because this is the place where they feel most safe, secure and listened to. It is not unusual for them to choose members of staff seen to be on the periphery of the staff team such as midday supervisors, caretakers or class-room support staff because they may be perceived as having less authority and less intimidating. It is important to make sure therefore that ALL staff know how to respond to a disclosure from a child.

If a child discloses harm to any staff member it must be remembered that the school role is **to recognise and refer abuse, not to investigate**. This is to avoid contamination of evidence gained in any subsequent investigation undertaken by Police &/or Social Services and to ensure that the child is not placed in the stressful position of having to repeat their story over and over again.

'Not investigating' does not mean that the staff member receiving the concern cannot ask any questions. However, careful thought needs to be given to how and what questions are asked, avoiding anything that can be interpreted as 'leading' the child. The basic rule of thumb is that staff should **ONLY** ask enough questions of the child to clarify whether there is a child protection concern. Once the child has clarified that they are being harmed or are at risk (or the staff member is reassured that the child is safe), no further questions are required.

If a child presents with an injury accompanied by a clear disclosure that they have been harmed, or makes a clear sexual disclosure it should not be necessary to question the child other than perhaps to clarify who was involved and when an incident took place. The child should be listened to actively and their story carefully recorded. In this situation the staff member should ensure **immediate** information sharing with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or alternative senior contact point in DSL's absence). It is likely that such a scenario will require **immediate** consultation about action to be taken and an urgent referral to Specialist Children's Services will be necessary.

In other situations where the child appears to be making a possible disclosure or has a suspicious injury, it is reasonable to ask open, non-leading questions in order to establish the child's story. Examples of questions are. "That's a nasty bruise, how did it happen? Tell me about what happened? You seem a bit upset and I'm worried about you, is anything troubling you? Can you tell me more about that?"

You may wish to use the acronym 'TED' as a reminder that the child can be encouraged to 'Tell', 'Explain' and 'Describe' the concern. If it is necessary to seek further clarification, staff should keep to open questions such as what? When? Who? How? Where? It is important to remember that questions should only be asked to help clarify whether the child is at risk of harm. Once clarification is achieved, no further questions should be asked.



Sometimes children choose to disclose concerns through a third party such as a friend 'telling' on their behalf, or indirectly e.g. sounding out information and reaction by asking 'what if my friend.....?' If such concerns arise they should be taken equally seriously and be followed up with the DSL in the same manner as a direct disclosure.

Children may also seek to disclose and share their experiences through drawings, writing and play. If concerns arise, it is appropriate to talk further with the child to allow wider discussion and clarification. This might involve inviting the child to 'tell me more about what is happening in your picture' / story / game"

**If a child discloses abuse, this information requires immediate sharing with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead.**

**Basic guidelines for dealing with disclosures**

1. Remember that the child's welfare and interests **must** be the paramount consideration at all times.
2. **Listen** carefully and actively to the child. At this stage there is no necessity to ask questions. Let the child guide the pace.
3. **Do not show shock** at what you are hearing. This may discourage the child from continuing their disclosure as they will feel that the adult receiving the information is unable to cope with what they are hearing and may be thinking badly of the child.
4. **Do not investigate.** If you need to clarify what is being said and whether the child is at risk, ask open questions (TED, what, when, who, how, where, do you want to tell me anything else? etc.) but only to the point of clarification being achieved. Avoid the question 'why?' as this can imply guilt / responsibility on the child.
5. Stay calm and **reassure** the child that they have done the right thing in talking to you.
6. **Never promise to keep a secret or confidentiality.** You have a duty to ensure the information is passed on to DSL and possibly other agencies in order to keep the child safe. If a child requests confidentiality, use a 'prepared' response, such as 'I'm really concerned about what you have told me and I have a responsibility to help ensure that you are safe. To help make sure you are safe, I have to tell someone (name person) who will know how to help us to do this'. **Make sure the child understands what will happen next with their information.**
7. **Record** factually what the child has told you or what you have observed as soon as possible. Ensure records include the date, time, place of disclosure, behaviour and words used **by the child**. Failure to accurately record information or writing down your 'interpretation' of the child's account may lead to inadmissible evidence.
8. If you have seen bruising or an injury, use a **body map** to record details. Again ensure that the map is dated and attached to information relating to the child's comments about the injury.
9. **Tell your DSL as soon as possible** but **do not ask the child to repeat what they have told** you to another staff member. This is stressful for the child. The more times a child is asked to tell their story the greater the chance of the facts becoming lost and any subsequent investigation being compromised.
10. **Do not gossip** to other staff about what you have heard. The information should remain confidential to those who 'need to know'.

11. **Maintain contact** with the child. They have trusted you enough to 'tell', will need to know that they are not rejected as a result and may need continued support.
12. Ensure that you have **support for yourself** in managing the information you have received.

**NOTE: Disclosures relating to allegations against colleagues and members of staff should be treated in the same way. This information must be passed immediately to the Headteacher or DSL who will contact the LADO and ensure the appropriate procedures are followed.**

### **Basic guidelines for dealing with disclosures**

When a child discloses abuse:

1. Stay calm and listen
2. Go slowly
3. Reassure them that they have not done anything wrong
4. Be supportive
5. Gather essential facts
6. Tell what will happen next
7. Report
8. Make notes

#### **1. Stay calm**

- An abused or neglected child or young person needs to know that you are available to help them.
- Reactions of shock, outrage, or fear might make them feel more anxious or ashamed.
- A calm response reassures that what has happened is not so bad and can be worked through.

#### **2. Go slowly**

It is normal to feel inadequate or unsure about what to do or say when a child or young person tells you about their abuse.

- Proceed slowly.
- Gentle and open-ended questions such as: "Can you tell me more about what happened?" are helpful.
- Avoid questions that begin with "why".

#### **3. Be reassuring**

- Reassure the child or young person that they have not done anything wrong.
- Avoid questions that are usually associated with getting into trouble. Avoid using "why" questions.

**4. Be supportive**

Let the child or young person know:

- they are not in trouble
- they are safe with you
- you are glad that they have chosen to tell you about this
- they have done the right thing telling about this
- you are sorry that they have been hurt or that this has happened to them
- you will do everything you can to make sure they are not hurt again
- you know others who can be trusted to help solve this problem

**5. Get only the essential facts**

- Be brief.
- Limit your discussion to finding out generally what took place.
- When you have sufficient information and reason to believe that abuse and/or neglect has occurred, gently stop gathering facts and be supportive.

**6. Tell what will happen next**

- Don't make promises to the child about what may or may not happen next.
- Provide only reassurance that is realistic and achievable.
- Discuss with the child what you think will happen next and who will be involved.

**7. Report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead**

- Report disclosures of abuse or neglect immediately to the DSL for follow-up and referral.
- Express your willingness to help the child through the steps which will follow, if appropriate.

**8. Make notes**

- Make notes of all comments. Use the child's or young person's exact words where possible.
- Save all drawings and artwork. This information may need to be shared with Children's Social Services and the police.

**NOTE: Disclosures relating to allegations against colleagues and members of staff should be treated in the same way. This information must be passed immediately to the Headteacher or DSL who will ensure the appropriate procedures are followed.**

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