



## Safeguarding Policy

<b>Policy Number</b>	ACE 17 Final
<b>Updated Date</b>	April 2018
<b>Names and Job Titles</b>	Hannah Bates Group Quality and Audit Officer Safeguarding Jo Johnson - Acting Headteacher

**This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Site Policies:**

- Allegations Against Staff Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Promoting Good Behaviour and Discipline
- Curriculum Policy
- PSHE Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Missing from Home/Absconding Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Acorn Policy on CSE, 2016

Further Information on safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures can be accessed through

**Kent Safeguarding Children's Board ([www.kscb.org.uk](http://www.kscb.org.uk))**

Designated safeguarding lead:

**Mark Jones**

Deputy designated safeguarding lead:

**Jo Johnson**

## Contents

1.	Policy Statement	Page 5
2.	Introduction	Page 7
3.	Roles and Responsibilities	Page 9
4.	Definitions and Signs of Abuse	Page 14
5.	Safeguarding Referral Procedure	Page 31
6.	Managing Allegations against Staff	Page 38
7.	Promoting Good Behaviour and Discipline	Page 40
8.	Information Sharing and Confidentiality	Page 41
9.	Power and Position of Trust	Page 43
10.	Child Centred Approach	Page 43
11.	Whistle Blowing	Page 44
12.	Induction and Training	Page 45
13.	Safer Recruitment	Page 46
14.	Missing Children	Page 47
15.	Bullying	Page 49
16.	Protection of Vulnerable Adults	Page 50
17.	E-Safety	Page 50
18.	Risk Assessment	Page 51
19.	Recording and Reporting	Page 52
20.	Evaluation and Monitoring	Page 54

## Appendices

2	Chronology of Events Form
3	Signs of Abuse
4	Dealing with disclosures at Heath Farm School
5	Flowchart of Disclosure and Barring Service

## 1. Policy Statement

**1.1** Acorn Care and Education is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people. It recognises its responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect and prevent children from harm, abuse and exploitation.

Acorn Care and Education acknowledges its duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse or harm.

All Acorn Care and Education staff and volunteers will endeavour to work together through our policies, practices and procedures to encourage the development of an ethos which embraces difference and diversity and respects the rights of children, young people and adults in its care.

**1.2** To fulfil their commitment to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people, all Acorn Care and Education organisations (schools and homes) that provide services for, or work with children and young people must have:

- Clear priorities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, explicitly stated in strategic policy documents
- Arrangements in place to effectively implement the Prevent Strategy and Duty
- Arrangements in place to comply with statutory and mandatory requirements
- A clear commitment by senior management (Directors and Principals) to the importance of safeguarding and promoting children and young people's welfare
- A clear line of accountability within the organisation for work on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people
- Recruitment and human resources management procedures that take account of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people, including arrangements for appropriate checks on all staff and volunteers
- Procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against members of staff and volunteers
- Arrangements to ensure that all staff undertake appropriate training (see Training Matrix) to equip them to carry out their responsibilities effectively, and to keep this up-to-date by refresher training at regular intervals
- Procedures to ensure that all staff, including temporary staff and volunteers who work with children and young people, are made aware of the establishment's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people
- Policies for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and procedures that are in accordance with guidance and locally agreed inter-agency procedures

- Arrangements to work effectively with other organisations to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people, including arrangements for sharing information
- A clear commitment to develop and implement systems that enable children and young people to use online and mobile technology safely and reduce the risks of potentially harmful behaviours
- A culture of listening to and engaging in dialogue with children and young people - seeking their views in ways that are appropriate to their age and understanding, and taking account of those views in individual decisions and in the establishment or development of services
- Definitive whistle-blowing procedures and a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people to be addressed.

**1.3** The principles upon which the Safeguarding Policy is based are:

- The welfare of a child or young person will always be paramount
- The welfare of families will be promoted
- The rights, wishes and feelings of children, young people and their families will be respected and listened to
- Keeping children and young people safe from harm requires people who work with children and young people to share information
- Those people in positions of responsibility within the organisation will work in accordance with the interests of children and young people and follow the policy outlined below

**1.4** This document is written in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Boards' Policies, 'Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups', 2006, 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' March 2015 and **Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2016**.

**Hannah Bates**  
**Group Quality and Audit Officer Safeguarding**  
**April 2018**

## 2. Introduction

**2.1** Heath Farm School staff fully recognises their primary responsibilities are to protect and safeguard the welfare of children and young people. The school recognises its legal duty under s175 Education Act 2002 (section 157 in relation to independent schools and academies) and the 1989 Children Act and takes seriously its responsibilities to protect and safeguard the interests of all pupils/students. This organisation recognises that effective child protection work requires sound procedures, good inter-agency co-operation and a workforce that is competent and confident in reporting and responding to child protection situations.

Heath Farm School recognises and accepts that the School and their staff form part of a wider safeguarding system for children, and that promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, schools and their staff should make sure their approach is child centred, this means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the BEST INTERESTS of the child.

Heath Farm School and their staff do not always have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances, therefore they have a role and responsibility identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action to provide support and help to children and families at the right time.

**2.2** Heath Farm School adopts the definition of safeguarding used in the Children Act 2004 and in the Department for Education guidance, **Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2016)** which have a focus on safeguarding and promoting children and young people's welfare. This can be summarised as:

- Protecting children and young people and from maltreatment;
- Preventing impairment of children's and young people's health or development;
- Ensuring that children and young people are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care;
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

This document has regard to the statutory guidance **Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2016)**. The Policy is in keeping with Kent Safeguarding Children Board's framework and policies, Procedures and Training Strategy and reflects what Kent Safeguarding Children's Board considers to be safe and professional practice in this context. Child Protection has to be considered within professionals' wider "safeguarding" responsibilities that include a duty to co-operate under the Children Act 2004 and takes account of the need for children to 'be healthy' and 'stay safe'.

**2.3** It is a statutory requirement for all schools to have a safeguarding policy which is published on the relevant website and is made available to parents and carers on request. Parents and carers are made aware through the admission process that the Safeguarding Policy is referenced in the school prospectus.

**2.4** This Safeguarding Policy applies to Heath Farm School and supports Acorn Care and Education's commitment to provide caring and safe environments in which all children and young people can develop socially, emotionally, physically and educationally and in which all children, young people and staff feel safe, secure and valued.

**2.5** Children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities, including Children Looked After, can face additional safeguarding challenges. Acorn Care and Education should ensure their child protection policy reflects the fact that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. These can include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- The potential for children with SEN and disabilities being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs;
- Communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

**2.6** This policy shall meet the requirements of the Independent School Standards 2014.

### **2.7 Underpinning Values**

Where there is a safeguarding issue, Heath Farm School will work in accordance with the principles set out in this policy and those outlined in the Kent Safeguarding Children Board Inter-agency Child Protection procedures:

- A child's welfare is paramount. Each child has a right to be protected from harm and exploitation and to have their welfare safeguarded;
- Each child is unique. Action taken by schools and their staff should always act in the child's BEST interest and should be child-centred, taking account of a child's cultural, ethnic and religious background, their gender, their sexual orientation, their individual ability and any special needs;
- Children, parents and other carers should be made aware of their responsibilities and their rights, together with advice about the power of professionals to intervene in their family circumstances;
- Individual family members must be involved in decisions affecting them. They must be treated with courtesy and respect and with due regard given to working with them in a spirit of partnership in safeguarding children's welfare. However, it may not be appropriate to advise parents/carers immediately about a referral depending on circumstances and the advice given by Children's Social Care. The welfare of the child is paramount in such situations;
- Each child has a right to be consulted about actions taken by others on his/her behalf in an age appropriate way. The concerns of children and their families should be listened to and due consideration given to their understanding, wishes and feelings. However, it may not always be possible to respect a child/carer's request for confidentiality. If a child may be at risk of significant harm, there is a duty on the school to share information with Children's Social Care in the area that the event or incident took place. If the incident or event has taken place within Kent then Kent KSCSB and the pupil's home local authority children's services need to be informed. Kent LADO needs to be notified **if the concern relates to a member of school staff or volunteer staff**. This will be explained to the child or family member and appropriate reassurance given;

- Personal information is usually confidential. It should only be shared with the permission of the individual concerned (and/or those with parental responsibility) unless the disclosure of confidential personal information is necessary in order to protect a child or promote their welfare. In all circumstances, information must be confined to those people directly involved in the professional network of each individual child and on a strict “need to know” basis;
- Professionals should be aware of the effects of outside intervention upon children, upon family life and the impact and implications of what they say and do;
- Explanations by professionals to children, their families and other carers should be plainly stated and jargon-free. Unavoidable technical and professional terminology should be explained in simple terms;
- Sound professional practice is based upon positive inter-agency collaboration, evidence-based research and effective supervision and evaluation;
- Early help assessment and intervention is an overriding principle in providing support for children at risk of abuse. Providing support services will utilise the Common Assessment Framework Process and if necessary an assessment under Section 17 of the Children Act (1989). This is an important principle of practice in inter-agency arrangements for safeguarding the welfare of children.

### **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

**3.1** All staff working at Heath Farm School have a statutory duty and shared responsibility to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people.

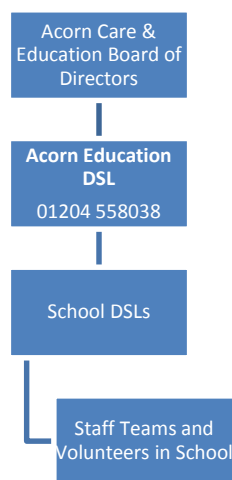
**3.2 The Directors of Acorn Care and Education** through Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) (Julie Taylor, Senior Assistant Director - Education) have responsibility for:

- Ensuring Heath Farm School operate and practice in line with the organisations safeguarding policies and procedures that comply with Kent KSCB arrangements;
- Providing the necessary support and resources to ensure schools and keep children and young people safe, through at least good standards of care and education;
- Reporting on a monthly basis an overview of safeguarding concerns and issues, actions taken and any potential implications for future practice;
- Organising an safeguarding audit (Autumn Term 2016), with the designated safeguarding leads and ensuring recommendations have been effectively implemented through monthly monitoring visits;
- Providing support and resources to the staff involved in managing safeguarding issues, as the organisation acknowledges how stressful safeguarding situations are e.g. providing additional staffing or therapy if required;
- To review the organisation’s safeguarding policy annually, next review date September 2017;
- The DSL in Heath Farm School is a member of the senior leadership team;



- Within the Governance process, there are procedures that monitor the schools systems to safeguard children who go missing from school on a repeated basis and those at risk of abuse and sexual exploitation. Governors monitors these issues and ensure schools take appropriate action, on a regular basis;
- To ensure Schools policy and procedures comply with The New Common Inspection Framework September 2015 and the Independent School Standards 2014.

**3.3** If there is a concern or allegation against the Headteacher the staff should inform Julie Taylor (Assistant Director - Education) on 01204 558038. If there is a concern or allegation against Julie Taylor, staff should inform Managing Director of Education and Residential Care on 01024 558038.



**3.4 The Principal/Headteacher** has responsibility for:

- Ensuring the organisation’s safeguarding policies and procedures are effectively embedded in the culture of the school and are compliant with Kent KSCB procedures and relevant legislation e.g. **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015** and **Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2016**;
- Ensuring the school delivers a curriculum which promotes the prevention of and protection from child abuse or harm for example ensuring children are taught about safeguarding, including online, through teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum. This may include covering relevant issues through PSHE and through sex and relationship education (SRE);
- Ensuring policies and procedures are in place to protect children from harm on work experience placements;
- Ensuring that there is a Designated Safeguarding Lead on the Senior Leadership Team, with the appropriate training (see Heath Farm School Training Matrix and section 12.3 of this policy) and time and support to fulfil their role and responsibilities;
- Ensuring there is a trained deputy DSL;

- Ensuring all staff and volunteers are trained, and receive regular updates (see Kent KSCB Training Matrix and section 12.3 of this policy) in the definitions and signs of abuse, and are conversant with their safeguarding duties, and have sound knowledge of the referral process and always act in the BEST INTERESTS of the child;
- Ensuring that there is a designated manager of allegations against staff, normally a member of the senior leadership team and that they implement the procedures within the Allegations against staff policy;
- To ensure confidentiality protocols are respected and that information is shared with the relevant agencies and personnel;
- To ensure safeguarding practices and procedures, prevent, protect and support children and young people from the risks of harm and potential abuse;
- To ensure any child or young person who has been subject to harm or abuse receives the support required including hospital treatment;
- To ensure the staff including agency staff and volunteers are aware of who the LADO (Kent), lead (Mark Jones) and deputy (Jo Johnson) DSLs are and Acorn DSL (Julie Taylor) through, policy, induction, training, briefings and displays on notice boards.

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**3.5 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for:**

**(The DSL should be a member of the senior leadership team, and should take lead responsibility for safeguarding)**

- Ensuring that they, or their Deputy, is always be available to staff during school hours in term time;
- Ensuring that if the school chooses to have a deputy DSL that they are trained to the same level as the DSL;
- Ensuring that The DSL retains overall responsibility for safeguarding even when the activities associated with the role are delegated to deputies;
- Ensuring that the LADO for Kent KSCB is informed of any allegations about staff members or other persons in a professional role at the earliest opportunity. Kent LADO's team email kentchildrenslado@kent.gov.uk or tel. no: 03000 410 888;
- Ensuring that children and young people who are at risk of harm or who have been potentially abused are immediately protected and safe from harm or abuse (DSL to reinforce with all staff the difference between a concern and immediate danger or risk of harm);
- Ensuring they have details of the child's social worker and the name of the virtual school head in the authority that looks after the child;
- Referring cases of suspected abuse to the relevant local Children's Services team;
- Referring allegations against professional staff and volunteers to the LADO;
- Referring cases to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern;
- Referring cases where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required; and refer cases where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required;

- If the concerns or alleged abuse relate to the child or young person's home life, then the DSL should contact the relevant local Children's Services team. At the point of referral the DSL should seek advice with regards contacting parents/carers;
- The DSL referring must ensure the school does not take any further action without first consulting the relevant Children's Services team;
- Providing a full written record of the referral and accurate chronology (**Appendix 2, Chronology and Record of Events Form**) outlining communication and actions taken to the local area Children's Services team within 24 hours;
- Ensuring that all records are maintained confidentially, securely and separately from other children and young person's records. Access to the confidential records is restricted to the DSLs;
- Providing support and guidance to staff on safeguarding issues;
- Ensuring that the DSL or Deputy DSL attends case conferences, CORE groups or other multi agency planning meetings, contributes to assessments and provides a report that has been shared with the parents;
- Liaising with other agencies and professionals (e.g. contact details of local Children's Services team);
- **Kent KSCB - 0333 240 1727;**

For further information and guidance on the role of DSL please refer to Annex B in **Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2016**.

### **3.6 The Staff** at Heath Farm School are responsible for:

- Supporting and delivering a curriculum which promotes the prevention of and protection from child abuse or harm;
- Supporting the school in providing an atmosphere and ethos in which pupils feel secure and are encouraged to talk and be listened to;
- Listening to any child who approaches them wishing to share worries and concerns and to act in their best interests;
- Staff should be prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help, this means providing support as soon as a problem emerges;
- Staff should be able to support other professionals in an early help assessment and interventions;
- Being supportive of children and young people, while helping them understand that they cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality;
- Being alert to any signs of abuse or harm in the children and young people they have contact with;
- **Immediately reporting any pastoral concerns both orally and in writing on Sleuth to the lead DSL Mark Jones or in his absence the deputy DSL Jo Johnson;**
- **Serious concerns should immediately be reported both orally and in writing on Sleuth to the lead DSL Mark Jones or in his absence Deputy DSL Jo Johnson or direct to Kent KSCB 03000 41 11 11;**

- Understanding that individual staff with concerns may refer to the local children’s services directly;
- Taking part in safeguarding training provided by the school on child protection and specific safeguarding issues identified in Keeping Children Safe In Education September 2016;
- Understanding and practising the school’s safeguarding procedures;
- Having an awareness of safeguarding issues- some of which are listed below. Staff should be aware that behaviours linked to the likes of drug taking, alcohol abuse, truanting and sexting put children in danger;
- Being aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse. This is most likely to include, but not limited to: bullying (including cyber bullying), gender based violence/sexual assaults and sexting. Staff should be clear as to the school or college’s policy and procedures with regards to peer on peer abuse;

**3.7** Expert and professional organisations are best placed to provide up-to-date guidance and practical support on specific safeguarding issues. For example, information for schools can be found on the TES, MindEd and the NSPCC websites. School and care staff can access government guidance as required on the issues; these can be referred to on P12 and Annex A of **Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2016**.

Further safeguarding information and guidance for staff please refer to Part One in **Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2016**.

## **4. Definitions and Signs of Abuse**

### **4.1 What is child abuse?**

Child abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child or young person. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child or young person by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children or young people may be abused in a family or institutional or community setting by those known to them, or more rarely, by others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

There are four broad categories of child abuse (**Appendix 3, Signs of Abuse**):

1. Physical abuse;
2. Emotional abuse;
3. Sexual abuse;
4. Neglect;

All school 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.

### **4.2 General signs of abuse:**

Abused children may be afraid to tell anybody about the abuse. They may struggle with feelings of guilt, shame or confusion – particularly if the abuser is a parent, caregiver or other close family

member or friend. Anyone working with children or young people needs to be vigilant to the signs listed below.

**Whilst these signs do not necessarily mean that a child is being abused, they probably indicate that the child or family is having some problems which should be investigated.**

- Regularly experiencing nightmares or sleeping problems;
- Changes in personality;
- Outbursts of anger;
- Changes in eating habits;
- Showing an inexplicable fear of particular places or making excuses to avoid particular people;
- Self-harming (includes head banging, scratching, cutting);
- Not receiving adequate medical attention after injuries;
- Showing violence to animals, toys, peers or adults;
- Knowledge of "adult issues" e.g. alcohol, drugs, sexual behaviour;
- Lacking in confidence or often wary/anxious;
- Regressing to the behaviour of younger children;
- Regular flinching in response to sudden but harmless actions, e.g. someone raising a hand quickly.

**4.3. 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.

**Signs and Symptoms of Physical abuse:** It is normal for children to have cuts and bruises on their bodies caused by accidents which happen whilst they are moving about and/or playing. These are marks that have an acceptable and reasonable explanation.

Marks or injuries which do not have an acceptable explanation may indicate that a child has been abused. This may include:

Bruising:

- Bruises on the cheeks, ears, palms, arms and feet;
  - Bruises on the back, buttocks, tummy, hips and backs of legs;
  - Multiple bruises in clusters, usually on the upper arms or outer thighs;
  - Bruising which looks like it has been caused by fingers, a hand, or an object i.e. belt, shoe;
  - Large oval shaped bite marks;
- Burns or scalds:
- Any burns which have a clear shape of an object, e.g. cigarette burns,
  - Burns to the backs of hands, feet, legs, genitals, or buttocks.

Other signs of physical abuse include multiple injuries (i.e. bruising, fractures) inflicted at different times. It is particularly concerning if parents/carers are unable to explain these injuries and it is not clear whether they took the child to receive medical treatment at the time of the injury.

Be vigilant to possible abuse if a child is frequently described as ill by their parent but does not have any symptoms which are obvious to others. In addition, the parent will be unable to provide details of a medical diagnosis for the child's apparent condition.

**4.4 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 a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying\*), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

\*cyberbullying is a growing problem and includes:

- Sending threatening or disturbing text messages;
- Homophobia, racism or sexism;
- Making silent, hoax or abusive calls;
- Creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos;
- 'Trolling', the sending of menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games;
- Excluding children from online games, activities or friendship groups;
- Setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child;
- Encouraging young people to self-harm;
- Voting for someone in an abusive poll;
- Hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name;
- Sending 'sexts' to pressure a child into sending images or other activity.

#### **Signs and Symptoms of Emotional abuse:**

It is important to remember that some children are naturally open and affectionate whilst others are quieter and more self-contained. Children also develop at different rates from one another and some may be slightly more or less advanced than other children in their age group. Mood swings and challenging behaviour are also a normal part of growing up for teenagers and children going through puberty. Be alert to behaviours which appear to be out of character for the individual child.

The following signs may indicate emotional abuse:

- Inappropriate knowledge of 'adult' matters such as sex, alcohol and drugs;

- Extreme emotional outbursts;
- Very low self-esteem, often with an inability to accept praise or to trust;
- Lack of any sense of fun, over-serious or apathetic;
- Excessive clingy or attention seeking behaviour;
- Over-anxiety, either watchful and constantly checking or over-anxious to please;
- Developmental delay, especially in speech;
- Substantial failure to reach potential in learning, linked with lack of confidence, poor concentration and lack of pride in achievement;
- Self-harming, compulsive rituals, stereotypic repetitive behaviour;
- Unusual pattern of response to others showing emotions.

**4.5 Sexual abuse:** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Signs and Symptoms of Sexual abuse:**

Sexual abuse often presents itself in a veiled way. Although some child victims have obvious genital injuries, a sexually transmitted disease or are pregnant, relatively few show such obvious signs.

Recognition of sexual abuse generally follows either a direct statement from the child (or very occasionally from the abuser), or more often, suspicion based on the child's circumstances, behaviour, or physical symptoms or signs.

The following list of commonly observed indicators is not exhaustive and there may be situations where none of them is present, even though a child is known to have been abused sexually. Equally, even if some are present it may also not be definitive of sexual abuse. These physical signs should alert professionals to the possibility of abuse. Suspicion increases where several features are present together.

**Physical manifestations:**

- Sexually transmitted diseases;
- Pregnancy (especially in younger girls or when identity of father is uncertain);
- Genital lacerations or bruising;
- Vaginal bleeding in prepubescent girls;
- Abnormal dilation of vagina, anus or urethra;
- Additional physical signs.

Although these signs are not on their own indicative of sexual abuse, they include:

- Itching, redness, soreness;
- Unexplained bleeding from vagina or anus;
- Daytime wetting;
- Faecal soiling or retention.

### **Emotional and behavioural manifestations**

Behaviour with sexual overtones (depending on age and understanding):

- Explicit or frequent sexual preoccupation in talk and play;
- Sexual relationships with adults or other children;
- Hinting at sexual activity or secrets through words, play or drawings.

Children may also behave in the following ways:

- Withdrawn, fearful or aggressive behaviour to peers or adults;
- Running away from home;
- Suicide attempts and self-mutilation;
- Child psychiatric problems, including behaviour problems, withdrawal from social contact, onset of wetting or soiling when previously dry and clean, severe sleep disturbances, arson (fire setting);
- Learning problems which do not match intellectual ability, or poor concentration (NB: for some sexually abused children, school may be a haven - they will arrive early, are reluctant to leave and perform well);
- Marked reluctance to participate in physical activity or to change clothes for PE, etc.

**4.6 Neglect:** the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

**Signs and Symptoms of Neglect:** It is important to remember that some children are very picky eaters whilst others may refuse to wear a coat regardless of how cold it is outside. A child may also appear to be underweight, but is, in fact, naturally thin.

Some of the most obvious signs of neglect (e.g. children being thin, dirty or not wearing a coat) are not in themselves indicators of abuse. However, if, over time, it is clear that a child is not receiving an adequate level of care and supervision appropriate to their age, it may indicate that the child is being neglected. The following are general and age-specific signs of neglect:

Further Signs of Neglect:



## **Hygiene**

- Poor hygiene, frequently smelly or dirty and regularly have dirty and unwashed clothing.

## **Health**

- Untreated health and dental problems;
- Poor muscle tone and prominent joints;
- Poor skin; sores, rashes, flea bites, scabies and ringworm;
- Thin swollen tummy;
- Injuries caused by accidents, e.g. cuts or burns becoming infected;
- Anaemia;
- Incontinence;
- Faltering growth and not reaching developmental milestones;
- Recurring illness or infections.

## **Nutrition**

- Often hungry;
- No breakfast.

## **Development**

- Being tired;
- Withdrawn and unhappy;
- Anxious and avoiding people;
- Difficulty making friends;
- Poor language and communication skills;
- Poor social skills;
- Missing school.

**4.7 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE):** Sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse in which a young person is manipulated or forced into taking part in a sexual act.

**The definition of child sexual exploitation is as follows:**

*Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.* Sexual exploitation can take many forms ranging from the seemingly consensual relationship where sex is exchanged for attention, affection, money, drugs, alcohol, food, somewhere to stay, gifts, to serious organised crime by gangs and groups. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power in the relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim which increases as the exploitative relationship develops. Technology is widely used by perpetrators as a method of grooming and coercing victims, often through social networking sites and mobile devices. This form of abuse usually occurs in private, or in semi-public places such as parks, cinemas, cafes and hotels. It is increasingly occurring at ‘parties’ organised by perpetrators for the purposes of giving victims drugs and alcohol before sexually abusing them.

Like all forms of child sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation:

- can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex;
- can still be abuse even if the sexual activity appears consensual;
- can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity;
- can take place in person or via technology, or a combination of both;
- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence;
- may occur without the child or young person’s immediate knowledge (through others copying videos or images they have created and posting on social media, for example);
- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse; and is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the abuse. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. Child sexual exploitation is a complex form of abuse and it can be difficult for those working with children to identify and assess. The indicators for child sexual exploitation can sometimes be mistaken for ‘normal adolescent behaviours’. It requires knowledge, skills, professional curiosity and an assessment

which analyses the risk factors and personal circumstances of individual children to ensure that the signs and symptoms are interpreted correctly and appropriate support is given. Even where a young person is old enough to legally consent to sexual activity, the law states that consent is only valid where they make a choice and have the freedom and capacity to make that choice. If a child feels they have no other meaningful choice, are under the influence of harmful substances or fearful of what might happen if they don't comply (all of which are common features in cases of child sexual exploitation) consent cannot legally be given whatever the age of the child.

**Child sexual exploitation is never the victim's fault, even if there is some form of exchange:** all children and young people under the age of 18 have a right to be safe and should be protected from harm. One of the key factors found in most cases of child sexual exploitation is the presence of some form of exchange (sexual activity in return for something); for the victim and/or perpetrator or facilitator. Where it is the victim who is offered, promised or given something they need or want, the exchange can include both tangible (such as money, drugs or alcohol) and intangible rewards (such as status, protection or perceived receipt of love or affection). It is critical to remember the unequal power dynamic within which this exchange occurs and to remember that the receipt of something by a child/young person does not make them any less of a victim. It is also important to note that the prevention of something negative can also fulfil the requirement for exchange, for example a child who engages in sexual activity to stop someone carrying out a threat to harm his/her family.

Whilst there can be gifts or treats involved in other forms of sexual abuse (e.g. a father who sexually abuses but also buys the child toys) it is most likely referred to as child sexual exploitation if the 'exchange', as the core dynamic at play, results in financial gain for or enhanced status of, the perpetrator. Where the gain is only for the perpetrator/facilitator, there is most likely a financial gain (money, discharge of a debt or free/discounted goods or services) or increased status as a result of the abuse. If sexual gratification, or exercise of power and control, is the only gain for the perpetrator (and there is no gain for the child/young person) this would not normally constitute child sexual exploitation, but should be responded to as a different form of child sexual abuse.

**Signs and Symptoms of Child Sexual Exploitation:** Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying including cyber bullying and grooming. It is important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse and some do not recognise that they are being exploited. However, there are a number of tell-tale signs that the child may be being groomed for sexual exploitation.

These include:

- Going missing for periods of time or regularly returning home late;
- Regularly missing school or not taking part in education;
- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation;
- Having older boyfriends or girlfriends;
- Suffering from sexually transmitted infection;
- Mood swings or changes in emotional well-being;
- Drug and alcohol misuse;
- Displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour.

## **Child Victims of Trafficking**

Trafficking of children is a form of human trafficking which means the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, and/or receipt of a child by means of a threat or use of force or other forms of coercion for the purposes of exploitation.

Trafficking specifically targets the child as an object of exploitation; the child may be unaware of their fate:

- Reason for trafficking children;
- Sexual exploitation;
- Domestic servitude;
- Sweatshop, restaurant and other catering work;
- Agricultural labour, including tending plants in illegal cannabis farms;
- Benefit fraud;
- Involvement in petty criminal activity;
- Organ harvesting;
- Drug mules, drug dealing or decoys for adult drug traffickers;
- Illegal inter-country adoption.

It is possible that unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) may have been trafficked into the UK and are likely to remain under the influence of their traffickers, even whilst they are looked after.

Any child who has been a victim of trafficking will have a risk assessment setting out how the child will be protected from any trafficker, to minimise any risk of traffickers being able to re-involve a child in exploitative activities. This plan should include contingency plans to be followed if the young person goes missing.

### **Signs that a child may be trafficked include:**

- Is withdrawn and refuses to talk or appears afraid to talk to a person in authority;
- Does not appear to have money but does have a mobile phone;
- Possession of large amounts of money or expensive belongings with no plausible explanation;
- Receives unexplained/unidentified phone calls whilst in placement;
- Has a history with missing links and unexplained moves.

## **Grooming**

Grooming can happen in person, online and in gangs or groups.

Once they have established trust, groomers will exploit the relationship by isolating the child from friends or family and making the child feel dependent on them. They will use any means of power or control to make a child believe they have no choice but to do what they want.

Groomers may introduce 'secrets' as a way to control or frighten the child. Sometimes they will blackmail the child, or make them feel ashamed or guilty, to stop them telling anyone about the abuse.

Groomers can use social media sites, instant messaging apps including teen dating apps, or online gaming platforms to connect with a young person or child.

They can spend time learning about a young person's interests from their online profiles and then use this knowledge to help them build up a relationship.

It's easy for groomers to hide their identity online - they may pretend to be a child and then chat and become 'friends' with children they are targeting.

Groomers may look for:

- usernames or comments that are flirtatious or have a sexual meaning;
- public comments that suggest a child has low self-esteem or is vulnerable.

Groomers don't always target a particular child. Sometimes they will send messages to hundreds of young people and wait to see who responds.

Groomers no longer need to meet children in real life to abuse them. Increasingly, groomers are sexually exploiting their victims by persuading them to take part in online sexual activity.

Groomers may be male or female. They could be any age.

Many children and young people don't understand that they have been groomed, or that what has happened is abuse.

Grooming can be more than just one single person, it can happen in gangs or groups of people who are of both the same, and different, age, ethnicity, religion and social backgrounds.

For further guidance please refer to [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

#### **4.8 Honour Based Violence including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage.**

So-called 'honour-based' violence (HBV) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of so called HBV are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. If in any doubt, staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBV, or already having suffered HBV.

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is the partial or total removal of external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It's also known as female circumcision, cutting or sunna.

Religious, social or cultural reasons are sometimes given for FGM. However, FGM is child abuse. It's dangerous and has been a criminal offence in the UK since 1985. In 2003 it also became a criminal offence for UK nationals or permanent UK residents to take their child abroad to have female genital mutilation. Anyone found guilty of the offence faces a maximum penalty of 14 years in prison.

There are no medical reasons to carry out FGM. It doesn't enhance fertility and it doesn't make childbirth safer. It is used to control female sexuality and can cause severe and long-lasting damage to physical and emotional health.

FGM is a hidden crime, so we don't know exactly how common it is. Even partial removal or 'nipping' can risk serious health problems for girls and women.

FGM is usually performed by someone with no medical training. Girls are given no anesthetic, no antiseptic treatment and are often forcibly restrained. The cutting is made using instruments such as a knife, pair of scissors, scalpel, glass or razor blade.

Girls are more at risk if FGM has been carried out on their mother, sister or a member of their extended family.

A girl at immediate risk of FGM may not know what's going to happen. But she might talk about:

- being taken 'home' to visit family;
- a special occasion to 'become a woman';
- an older female relative visiting the UK.
- 

She may ask a teacher or another adult for help if she suspects FGM is going to happen or she may run away from home or miss school.

A girl or woman who has had FGM may:-

- have difficulty walking, sitting or standing;
- spend longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet;
- have unusual behaviour after an absence from school or college;
- be particularly reluctant to undergo normal medical examinations;
- ask for help, but may not be explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear.

FGM can be extremely painful and dangerous. It can cause:

- severe pain;
- Shock;
- Bleeding;
- infection such as tetanus, HIV and hepatitis B and C;
- organ damage;
- blood loss and infections that can cause death in some cases.

### **Long-term effects**

Girls and women who have had FGM may have problems that continue through adulthood, including:

- difficulties urinating or incontinence;

- frequent or chronic vaginal, pelvic or urinary infections;
- menstrual problems;
- kidney damage and possible failure;
- cysts and abscesses;
- pain when having sex;
- Infertility;
- complications during pregnancy and childbirth;
- emotional and mental health problems.

FGM helpline on **0808 028 3550**.

- Heath Farm School is an 'open environment', where students feel able to discuss issues that they may be facing;
- the Designated Safeguarding Leads are aware of the issues surrounding FGM and Forced Marriage;
- advice and signposting is available for accessing additional help, e.g. the NSPCC's helpline, ChildLine services, Forced Marriage Unit;
- awareness raising about FGM is incorporated in the school's safeguarding training.

If there is a disclosure of abuse of this kind, or staff are concerned for any other reason, they are advised:

- to alert the Designated Safeguarding Lead to their concerns. This member of staff will then refer concerns to children's social care, who will inform the police. If a pupil has disclosed that they are at risk in this way, the case will still be referred to social care even if it is against the pupil's wishes. Where a staff member discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl who is aged under 18, there will be a statutory duty for it to be reported to the police;
- not to consult or discuss with the pupil's parents or family, or others within the community.

Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a girls being at risk from FGM, or already having suffered from FGM;

There is a range of potential indicators that a girl may be at risk of FGM. Warning signs that FGM may be about to take place, or may have already taken place, can be found on pages 16-17 of the Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines and chapter 9 of those guidelines (p42-44) focuses on the role of schools and colleges;

Section 5C of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 75 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) give Government powers to issue statutory guidance on FGM to relevant persons;

Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) will place statutory duty upon staff, along with social workers and healthcare professionals, to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions;

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.

For further information see Annex A in **Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2016**.

#### **4.9 Vulnerable to Extremism and Radicalisation**

Extremism and radicalisation is another part of safeguarding children and young people. As with any concern, the risk of harm and abuse is raised when young people are vulnerable and is often noticed when students change their behaviour, clothing or attitudes. One aspect of safeguarding children and young people from radicalisation is to set out in 'Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools'. This guidance sets out British values as:

- Democracy;
- The rule of law;
- Individual liberty;
- Mutual respect;
- The tolerance of those with different faiths and values.

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism. There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. It can happen in many different ways and settings. Specific background factors may contribute to vulnerability which are often combined with specific influences such as family, friends or online, and which specific needs for which an extremist or terrorist group may appear to provide and answer. The internet and the use of social media in particular has become a major factor in the radicalisation of young people.

As with managing other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviours which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff should use their professional judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include making a referral to the Channel programme.

The Government Prevent Strategy, inclusive is the approach to reducing the risk of terrorism, this is called '**CONTEST**' and has four parts:

- **Protect;** to strengthen protection against a terrorist attack;
- **Prepare;** to mitigate the impact of a attack;
- **Pursue;** to stop terrorist attacks;
- **Prevent;** to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

#### **Definition of terrorism**

**Extremism** is 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. Calls for the death of members of the British armed forces is also included in this definition.



From July 1 2015, specified authorities, including all schools are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of their functions, to have “due regard” to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. This duty is known as the prevent duty. It applied to a wide range of public-facing bodies. Bodies to which the duty applies MUST HAVE REGARD TO STATUTORY GUIDANCE ISSUES UNDER SECTION 29 OF THE CTSA 2015 (the prevent guidance) Paragraphs 57-76 of the Prevent guidance are concerned specifically with schools.

Extremism takes many forms and all ideologies are included in this area of safeguarding:

- Islamic extremism;
- Left wing extremism;
- Right wing extremism;
- Animal rights extremism.

The statutory Prevent guidance summarises the requirements on schools in terms of four general themes: risk assessment, working in partnership, staff training and IT policies.

- Acorn schools are expected to assess the risk of children being drawn into terrorism, including support for extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology. This means being able to demonstrate both a general understanding of the risks affecting children and young people in the area and a specific understanding of how to identify individual children who may be at risk of radicalisation. These procedures may be set out in existing safeguarding policies on implementing the Prevent Duty;
- The Prevent duty builds on existing local partnership arrangements. For example, governing bodies and proprietors of all schools should ensure that their safeguarding arrangements take into account the policies and procedures of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs);
- The Prevent guidance refers to the importance of Prevent awareness training to equip staff to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas. Individual schools are best to assess the training needs of staff in the light of their assessment of the risk to pupils at the school of being drawn into terrorism. As a minimum however, schools should ensure that the designated safeguarding lead undertakes Prevent awareness training and is able to provide advice and support to other members of staff on protecting children from the risk of radicalisation;
- Acorn schools must ensure that children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in schools. Schools should ensure that suitable filtering is in place. It is also important that schools teach pupils about E-Safety more generally.

The Department for Education has also PUBLISHED ADVICE FOR SCHOOLS ON THE PREVENT DUTY. The advice is intended to complement the Prevent Guidance and signposts other sources of advice and support.

Staff should understand when it is appropriate to make a referral to the Channel Programme. Channel is a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. It provides a mechanism for schools to make referrals if they are concerned that an individual might be vulnerable to radicalisation. An individual's engagement with the programme is entirely voluntary at all stages.

Section 36 of the CTSA 2015 places duty on local authorities to ensure Channel panels are in place. The panel must be chaired by the local authority and include the police for the relevant local authority area. Following a referral, the panel will assess the extent to which identified individuals are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism, and, where considered appropriate and necessary, consent is obtained, arrange for support to be provided to those individuals. Section 38 of the CTSA 2015 requires partners of Channel panels to co-operate with the panel in the carrying out of its functions and with the police in providing information about a referred individual. Schools and colleges which are required to have regard to **Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2016** are listed in the CTSA 2015 as partners to co-operate with local Channel panels.

**Indicators of vulnerability (signs and symptoms) include:**

**Identity**

- The student is distanced from their cultural/religious heritage and experiences;
- Discomfort about their place in society;
- Personal crises, the student may be experiencing family tensions;
- A sense of isolation;
- Low self-esteem;
- They may be disassociated from their existing friendship group and become involved with a new and different group of friends;
- They may be searching for answers to questions about their identity, faith and belonging.

**Personal Circumstances**

- Migration;
- Local community tensions and events affecting the student's country of origin may contribute to a sense of grievance that is triggered by a personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of Government policy.

**Unmet Aspirations**

- The student may have perceptions of injustice;
- A feeling of failure;
- Rejection of civic life.

**Experiences of Criminality**

- Involvement with criminal groups;
- Imprisonment and poor resettlement/reintegration on release.

**Special Educational Needs**

- Social interaction;
- Empathy with others;
- Understanding the consequences of their actions; and awareness of the motivation of others.

**More Critical Risk factors could include;**

- Being in contact with extremist recruiters;
- Accessing violent extremist websites, especially those with a social networking element;
- Possessing or accessing violent extremist literature;
- Using extremist narratives and a global ideology to explain personal disadvantage;
- Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues;
- Joining or seeking to join extremist organisations;
- Significant changes to appearance and/or behaviour;
- Experiencing a high level of social isolation, resulting in issues of identity crises and/or personal crises.

**De-radicalisation**

- All inclusive ethos;
- Create doubt or disillusionment;
- Question ideas;
- Safe discussions;
- Range of views.

**4.10 Bullying** (including cyber-bullying): See also Acorn Care and Education's and Heath Farm School Anti-Bullying Policy and procedures and E-Safety Policy.

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 or can be subtle and insidious. It can take many forms, but the three main types are:

- Physical – e.g. hitting, kicking, theft;
- Verbal – e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name calling;
- Psychological – e.g. excluding from social groups and activities, spreading hurtful rumours.

#### 4.11 Allegations of abuse made by other children

- Heath Farm School and staff should recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. Heath Farm School should ensure their child protection policy includes procedures to minimise the risk of peer on peer abuse and sets out how allegations of peer on peer abuse will be investigated and dealt with. The policy should reflect the different forms peer on peer abuse can take, make clear that abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as “banter” or “part of growing up”. It should be clear as to how victims of peer on peer abuse will be supported.
- Peer on peer abuse can manifest itself in many ways. The department provides searching screening and confiscation advice for schools. The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) Education Group has recently published sexting advice for schools.
- Heath Farm School and staff should be vigilant and aware of potential of peer on peer abuse both in day and residential settings. Reporting and recording of these incidents are essential in the continuing protection of all children and young people in our care.

## 5. Safeguarding Referral Procedure

**5.1** The first steps to be taken should a member of staff have reasonable cause to suspect that a **child or young person is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm is to ensure the immediate safety of that child or young person and others who may be judged to be at risk of abuse.**

Consultation must take place with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or named deputy) who will be the most appropriate person to initiate any referral, or the member of staff may make a referral directly to Kent KSCB First Response Team.

- **A written record of pastoral concerns should be made using the schools internal recording system Sleuth. This should then be given to Mark Jones the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Jo Johnson, Deputy if DSL unavailable) who will then make the decision whether a referral is needed to the Kent Central Duty Team (0333 240 1727) or equivalent other Local Children’s Services Care team, or the child’s existing social worker. If the child lives in an authority outside of Kent, the matter will be referred by the Designated Safeguarding Lead to the relevant Children’s Social Care team in that area;**
- **If a member of staff has serious concerns or that a child is at significant risk of harm they must immediately inform the lead DSL Mark Jones or in his absence the Deputy DSL Jo Johnson or inform Kent KSCB (03000 41 11 11).**
- For a Kent student referral to a Kent KSCB use **(03000 41 11 11)**. The phone call will be followed up with written confirmation on within 48 hours. The multi-agency form is available from the Kent KSCB website (procedure 3B): ([www.kscb.org.uk](http://www.kscb.org.uk)).

**5.2** The person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for deciding whether or not abuse has occurred and should not conduct an investigation to establish whether the child is telling the truth. The role of the person to whom a child **makes a disclosure or**

**allegation** is to act promptly on the information they have received by following identified procedure below and immediately informing the DSL. The Data Protection Act is not a barrier to sharing information but provides a framework to ensure that personal information is shared appropriately.

**5.3** If a child makes a disclosure or allegation (see **Appendix 4, how to deal with a disclosure at Heath Farm School**) you should:

- Stay calm and listen carefully to what is said. You do not need a 'witness';
- Carefully explain that it is likely that the information will need to be shared with others - do not promise to keep secrets;
- Allow the child to continue at her/his own pace and do not interrupt if they are freely recalling events;
- Ask questions for clarification only, and at all times avoid asking questions that suggest a particular answer. Questions should be framed in an open manner and not 'lead' the child in any way. For example, say, "Tell me what has happened", rather than, "Did s/he do...";
- Reassure the child that s/he has done the right thing in telling you. Explain what you will do next and with whom the information will be shared;
- Do not ask the child to repeat the disclosure to anyone else in school or ask him/her to write a 'statement';
- Contact your DSL as soon as you can or, where such contact is not possible, ensure a referral is made without delay to the local children's services team;
- Record in writing what was said, including the child's own words, as soon as possible – any names mentioned, to whom the information was given and ensure that the record is saved on the Sleuth System at Heath Farm School.
- Do not discuss with parents/carers.

**5.4** Guidance on Information Sharing is available, in the following document:

- 'Information Sharing: Guidance for practitioners and managers 2008/2015'.

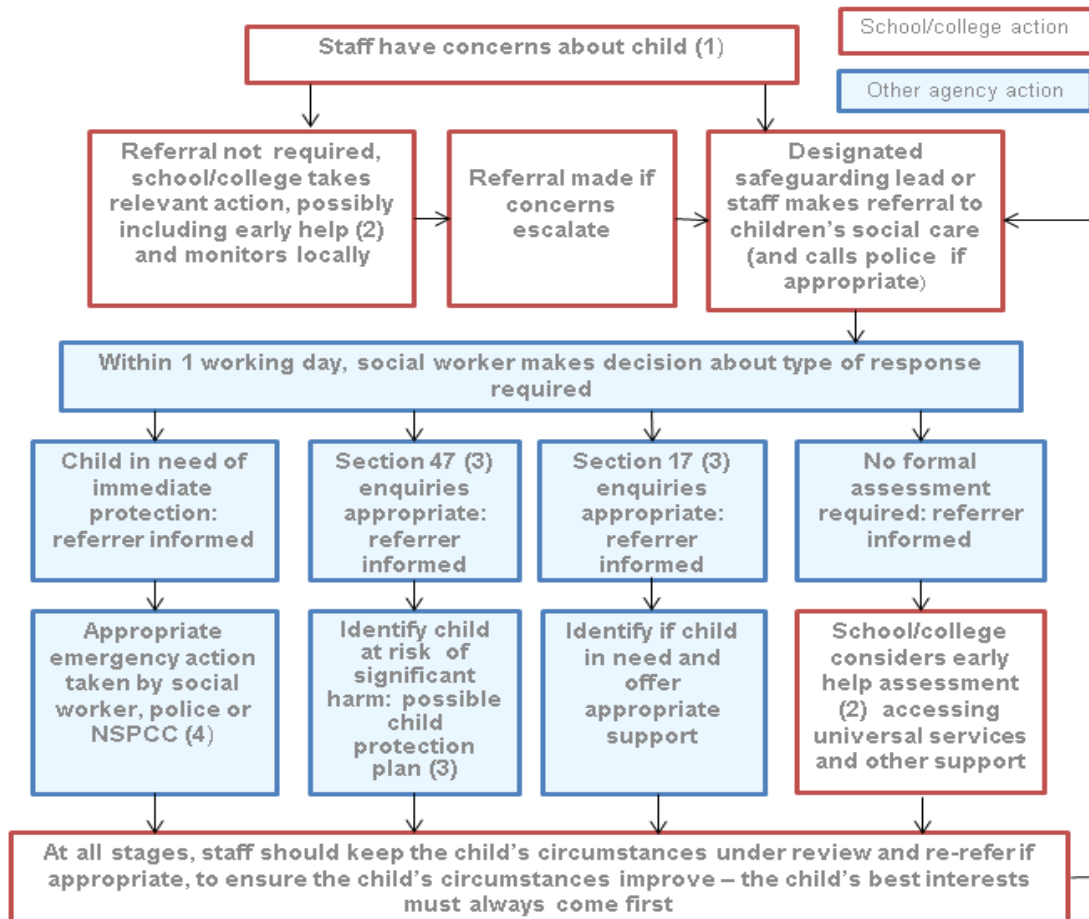
**5.5** A referral should always be made following a **restrictive physical intervention** if any of the following criteria applies:

- A child or young person is injured or makes an allegation that they have been harmed by an adult;
- The child or young person wishes to complain about the manner that they have been restrained;
- The parent/ carer of the child or young person makes a complaint on behalf of the child or young person about the use of the restrictive physical intervention;
- The referral to the local children's services and the LADO is managed by the person responsible for managing allegations against staff within the school, initially the DSL – see the Allegation against staff policy.

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**5.6** This diagram illustrates what action staff, volunteers and consultants should take when there are concerns about the welfare of a child or young person. If, at any point, there is a risk of serious immediate harm to a child or young person, a referral must be made to the local Children's Services team immediately:

## Actions where there are concerns about a child



1. In cases which also involve an allegation of abuse against a staff member, see Part four of this guidance.
2. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life. Where a child would benefit from co-ordinated early help, an early help inter-agency assessment should be arranged. Chapter one of Working together to safeguard children provides detailed guidance on the early help process.
3. Under the Children Act 1989, local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. This can include s17 assessments of children in need and s47 assessments of children at risk of significant harm. Full details are in Chapter one of Working together to safeguard children.
4. This could include applying for an Emergency Protection Order (EPO).

### Responding to concerns relating to Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking

If a practitioner is concerned that a child or young person is involved or likely to be involved in sexual exploitation and / or trafficking, they should immediately refer to the DSL who will make a Referral to Children's Social Care.

If the child or young person has (or is awaiting allocation of) a social worker, the duty team should send the referral to the named social worker, or in their absence the team manager. Sending all sexual exploitation referrals to the duty teams enables Children's Social Care to ensure a coordinated response.

Acorn Care and Education recognise, at all stages, the need for urgent action that may be necessary to secure the child or young person's safety.

Should the DSL have concerns that they would like to discuss prior to a referral, they can do so by consulting with Acorn's DSL or directly with the key contact in Children's Social Care. All professionals are encouraged to seek advice if they are not sure there is sufficient 'evidence' or are not sure about the possible risk indicators.

In relation to confidentiality, where there are concerns that a child or young person is subject to sexual exploitation/trafficking, all agencies have a responsibility to report their concerns and share information. The need for a child or young person to be safeguarded overrides their right to confidentiality. Data protection should not prevent the sharing of information but ensures that relevant information is shared appropriately.

## **5.7 Thresholds for Intervention:**

Early Help assessment:

DSL's should be aware and conversant with the Early Help Strategies and Assessment process. And will lead in this area. Staff at Heath Farm School have regular opportunity to discuss children who appear to have additional needs with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The DSL will lead on the early help assessment process, an outline of the process is identified below.

### **Early Help in the SEND process**

From January 2016 there are changes to the Early Help stage of the SEND process. Until now we have expected completion of a SEND Early Help Assessment. However we have now developed a single Early Help Assessment form that accommodates both the SEND Early Help process and the other generic Early Help Assessment process.

***As a result the form to be completed when considering the needs of children and young people with SEND is the revised Early Help Assessment Form.***

The principle is that when any additional need is identified with a young person whether social emotional, developmental or educational an Early Help Assessment form is completed. This incorporates aspects of the old SEND Early Help Assessment form. It is structured around categories used in the new SEND Code of Practice (DfE, 2015) and its structure will be echoed in the format of reports written by SEND staff, such as Specialist Advisory Teachers and Educational Psychologists (EPs). The emphasis is on assessing all aspects of a child or young person's circumstances, *developing*



*a plan to meet those needs, and reviewing progress systematically. This form will be essential for SENCOs moving through the 'Graduated Response' referred to in the Code of Practice.*

**If a request is to be made for an additional service for a young person following completion of the Early Help Assessment.**

If, following review, the assessment concludes that the young person requires an additional service from the SEND team e.g. a Specialist Advisory Teacher or EP, decide on *one* service to request, acquire and record explicit parental consent, send the assessment form to the local SEND office and register the Assessment with the Early Help team at: [early.help@kent.gov.uk](mailto:early.help@kent.gov.uk). (Please note that if you wish to refer to Health then you will need to access the relevant Health referral documentation.)

If the Assessment concludes that the young person would benefit from services in addition to your own that are *not* educational or developmental and relate to home circumstances, call a Team Around the Family (TAF) meeting and invite the relevant agencies to attend and follow the Early Help process as previously.

If the assessment concludes that the young person's needs cover a wide spectrum and that they would benefit from a multi-agency response combining both of the above e.g. any educational and developmental delay may be due to home circumstances or is impacting on home circumstances, call a TAF meeting and send the assessment form to your local SEND office. When an additional service is identified via the SEND process they will join the TAF.

**If a SEND statutory assessment (for an Education Health and Care Plan) is to be requested.**

*If, following a review of interventions, it is concluded that a request should be made for statutory assessment, there is separate field on the form for doing this. This also requires the securing of separate and explicit parental permission for such a request.*

**For any further advice regarding the completion of the Early Help process – visit the Early Help page on the KSCB website [www.kscb.org.uk](http://www.kscb.org.uk).**

**Child in Need – Section 17 of the Children Act 1989:**

A 'Child in Need' referral should be considered where the needs of the child are unlikely to be met under an Early Help Assessment, such as a child with complex disabilities, when a social work led assessment is required.

Section 17 of the Children Act says that an assessment for services should be undertaken by the Local Authority in the following circumstances:

- Child(ren) are unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have opportunity to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development, without the provision of services by a local authority;

- Their health or development is likely to be impaired, or further impaired without the provision of such services;
- They are disabled.

If the Designated Safeguarding Lead considers that the welfare concerns indicate that a 'Child in Need' referral is appropriate, he/she will speak with parents / young person and obtain their consent for referral to the Central Duty Team (or other appropriate Children Service Care Team) to request an assessment. If parents refuse to give consent, but the child's needs are not being met, the Designated Safeguarding Person will discuss the issues with the CDT.

Appropriate school staff should be invited to participate in Child in Need (CIN) meetings convened by Children's Social Care when children are deemed to require section 17 services.

Some children in 'acute need' (**see and follow Kent Threshold guidance**) may require Child in Need Section 17 support.

### **Child Protection:**

Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 says the Local Authority has a statutory duty to investigate when there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm due to the actions or inactions of others. Staff from Heath Farm School do not investigate whether a child has been abused. This is the duty of Social workers from the Safeguarding team and the police. Education staff refer reasonable concerns which indicate that a child may be at risk of significant harm.

It is the 'significant harm' threshold that justifies statutory intervention into family life. A professional making a child protection referral under S.47 must therefore provide information which clearly outlines that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. It is not possible to rely on one absolute criterion when judging what constitutes significant harm. Consideration of the severity of ill-treatment may include the extent of the harm suffered, the context within which it occurred and its duration. Significant harm may also arise from a combination of significant events which are both acute and long standing and which may impair the child's physical, psychological and social development.

In order to both understand and evidence 'significant harm', it is necessary to consider the family context, together with the child's development within their wider social and cultural environment. It is also necessary to consider any special needs, e.g. medical condition, communication difficulties or disability that may affect the child's development and care within the family. The nature of harm, in terms of ill-treatment or failure to provide adequate care also needs consideration alongside the impact on the child's health and development and the adequacy of care provided.

If staff have significant concerns about any child they must make them known to the Designated or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads without delay in accordance with reporting and recording procedures.

## 6. Managing Allegations against Staff

### Duties as an employer and an employee

**6.1** This part of the guidance is about managing cases of allegations that might indicate a person who would pose a risk of harm if they continue to work in regular or close contact with children in their present position, or in any capacity. It should be used in respect of all cases in which it is alleged that a teacher or member of staff (including volunteers) in a school that provides education for children under 18 years of age has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, or;
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children.

**6.2** We are aware of the possibility of allegations being made against members of staff or volunteers that are working with or may come into contact with children and young people at Heath Farm School. Such allegations are usually that some kind of abuse has taken place. They can be made by children and young people or other concerned adults.

- If an allegation is made, the member of staff receiving the allegation will immediately inform the Headteacher or the Deputy Headteacher if the Headteacher is not present.
- The DSL or Headteacher should on all such occasions follow the procedures of the LSCB Procedures, and inform the Local Authority Designated Manager (**LADO**) **Becky Cooper on 03000 410 888, email [kentchildrenslado@kent.gov.uk](mailto:kentchildrenslado@kent.gov.uk).**
- If the allegation made concerns the Head teacher, the person receiving the allegation will immediately notify Senior Assistant Director for Education Julie Taylor on 01204 558038 who will consult the LADO as above, without notifying the Headteacher first.
- The DSL or Headteacher will discuss with the LADO the nature of the allegations in order for appropriate action to be taken. This may constitute an initial evaluation meeting or strategy discussion depending on the allegation being made.

**6.3** The Headteacher and lead DSL will also:

- Consider the safeguarding arrangements of the child or young person to ensure they are not in contact with the alleged abuser;
- Contact the parents or carers of the child/young person if advised to do so by the LADO;
- Consider the rights of the staff member for a fair and equal process of investigation and provide support;

- Ensure that the appropriate disciplinary procedure is followed, including whether suspending a member of staff from work until the outcome of any investigation is deemed necessary i.e. where there is cause to suspect a child or other children at the school is/are at risk of harm or the case is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal;
- Act on any decision made in any Section 47 strategy meeting - The decision of the strategy/Joint evaluation meeting could be: investigation by children's social care, police investigation if there is a criminal element to the allegation, single agency investigation completed by the school which should involve the Senior HR advisor for the School;
- Inform the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) where a member of staff has been disciplined or dismissed as a result of the allegations founded, or would have been if they have resigned;
- Ensure that a clear comprehensive summary of the allegation, details of the allegation was followed up and resolved, and a note of any action taken and decisions reached, is kept on the confidential personal file of the accused and a copy provided to the person concerned;
- Heath Farm School have a legal duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child or vulnerable adult; where the harm test is satisfied in respect of that individual; where the individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence, or if there is reason to believe that individual has committed a listed relevant offence; and that individual has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left. The DBS will consider whether to bar the person. Referrals should be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the individual.

For further details see Acorn's Managing Allegations against Staff Policy.

### **Protecting yourself against allegations of abuse**

**Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2016)** says that all staff members should be aware of systems within their school which support safeguarding and these should be explained to them as part of staff induction. This includes the school's staff behaviour policy (sometimes called a code of conduct). The school's code of conduct is set out in the school Staff Handbook (and based on 'Guidance for Safer working Practice for Adults who work with children and young people in Education Settings' March 2009). You should seek to keep your personal contact with children under review and seek to minimise the risk of any situation arising in which misunderstandings can occur. The following sensible precautions can be taken when working alone with children:

- work in a room where there is a glass panel in the door or leave the door open;
- Make sure that other adults visit the room occasionally;
- Avoid working in isolation with children unless thought has been given to safeguards;
- Never give out personal mobile phone numbers or private e-mail addresses;
- Do not give pupils lifts home in your car (unless this has been specifically agreed by senior management);
- Do not arrange to meet pupils outside of school activities;
- Never 'befriend' or chat to pupils/students on social network sites.

Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 it is a criminal offence for anyone working in an education setting to have a sexual relationship with a pupil or student even when the pupil/student is over the age of consent but under 18 years of age.

## **7. Promoting Good Behaviour and Discipline**

At Heath Farm School we aim to promote positive social, emotional and behavioural change in our children and young people through a supportive and consistent approach across education and care based on their needs. Our positive behaviour strategy is a holistic person centred approach to the development of our children and young people, based on effective evidence based teaching, learning and quality of care.

Many of children and young people, exhibit and display behaviours that act as barriers to learning and inclusion. An integral part of our holistic approaches is to overcome those barriers. We aim to provide a consistent, supportive and well supervised environment, where children and young people feel safe, secure and reach their potential through the promotion of positive relationships.

Many of our children and young people display a variety of challenging behaviours which are managed by a range of strategies, including the use of Restrictive Physical Interventions, in order to reduce risk. Staff are principally encouraged to adopt different methods of de-escalation via appropriate training and the promotion of positive relationships. By using a range of positive behaviour management strategies we aim to create an environment where all parties are kept safe, but also encourages children to be involved in the process of being reflective about their behaviour.

**7.1** The use of physical intervention should, wherever possible, be avoided. It should only be used to manage a child or young person's behaviour if it is necessary to prevent personal injury to the child, other children or an adult, to prevent serious damage to property or in what would reasonably be regarded as exceptional circumstances.

**7.2** When physical intervention is used it should be undertaken in such a way that maintains the safety and dignity of all concerned. The scale and nature of any physical intervention must be proportionate to both the behaviour of the individual to be controlled and the nature of the harm they may cause.

**7.3** Heath Farm School accepts the definition of reasonable force:  
"Reasonable force uses the minimum degree of force necessary for the shortest period of time to prevent a pupil harming him/herself, others or property".

**7.4** Heath Farm School supports and endorses the legal position that it is unlawful to use force as a punishment and believes reasonable force should not be used as a method of compliance.

**7.5** The 1996 Education Act (Section 550A) and subsequently, Section 93 of the 2006 Education and Inspections Act (April 1st 2007), and reinforced in the DfE Guidance, The Use of reasonable Force in schools (2013) all stipulate that reasonable force may be used to prevent a pupil from doing, or continuing to do any of the following:

- Preventing him/herself from hurting themselves, or placing themselves at risk;
- Preventing children and young people from hurting others;
- Behaviour leading to serious damage to property;
- Engaging in any behaviour prejudicial to maintaining good order and discipline at the school or among any of its children and young people, whether the behaviour occurs in a classroom during a teaching session or elsewhere within school (this includes authorised out-of-school activities).

**7.6** The staff at Heath Farm School are trained to use Team Teach. All staff are trained every two years with the emphasis on de-escalation and preventative strategies.

## **8. Information Sharing and Confidentiality**

**8.1** Based upon Government guidance 'Information Sharing: Guidance for Practitioners and Managers', DfE 2008/2015, Heath Farm School will ensure that data regarding children is correctly stored and managed in line with these principles defined in the 2008 guidance, and that we will take all appropriate action regarding the sharing of information as follows:

- Recognise that legislation (Data Protection Act) is not a barrier to sharing information about concerns;
- Be honest and open with the person (be they a child or an adult) about why, what, how and with whom information will be shared;
- Seek advice when we are in doubt, without disclosing the identity of the person (be they a child or an adult) where possible;
- Share information with consent where appropriate and respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information where possible;
- Base our information sharing decisions on considerations of safety and well-being;
- Ensure the information we share is necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure;
- Keep a record of our actions, decisions, and reasons.

### **8.2 Confidentiality**

- We recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential;
- Confidentiality is an issue that needs to be understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection. This is a complex area and involves consideration of a number of pieces of legislation;

- Professionals can only work together to safeguard children if there is an exchange of relevant information between them. This has been recognised in principle by the courts. However, any disclosure of personal information to others, including children’s social care departments, must always have regard to both common and statute law;
- Normally, personal information should only be disclosed to third parties (including other agencies) with the consent of the subject of that information (Data Protection Act 1998 European Convention on Human Rights, Article 8). Wherever possible, consent should be obtained before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances, however, consent may not be possible or desirable but the safety and welfare of the child dictate that the information should be shared;
- The law requires the disclosure of confidential information necessary to safeguard a child or children. Under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 statutory agencies have a duty to co-operate. Therefore, if the Police or Social Care/Services are conducting a Section 47 investigation under the 1989 Children Act, staff must share requested information relevant to the investigation. Legal advice should be sought if in doubt from the County Legal Services Department;
- When children transfer to a new school or college at any time other than key transition points (e.g. move to primary or high school), it may be necessary to inform other partners;
- The Principal or DSL will disclose personal information about a pupil to other members of staff on a need to know basis only;
- All staff must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children;
- All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child’s safety or well-being, or that of another; and we will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child to the local children’s services and with their parents/carers, unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm, or impede a criminal investigation. If in doubt, we will consult with **KSCB**.

## **9. Power and Position of Trust**

**9.1** Heath Farm School acknowledges all adults working with children and young people are in positions of trust in relation to the children and young people in their care. A relationship of trust can be described where one party is in a position of power or influence over the other by virtue of their work or the nature of their activity. All staff must recognise the power this can give them over those they care for and the responsibility they must exercise as a consequence of this relationship. Please see **‘Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who Work with Children and Young People in Education Settings’, DCSF March 2009.**

**9.2** All staff must uphold public trust in the teaching profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school, by:

- Treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to the member of staff’s professional position;

- Having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions;

## **10. Child Centred Approach**

**10.1** Heath Farm School and their staff recognises and understands that effective safeguarding systems are child centred. Children and young people in our school are clear what they want from an effective safeguarding system, we know this via our regular children and young people questionnaire feedback.

**10.2** All our children want to be respected, their views to be heard, to have stable relationships with professionals built on trust and for consistent support provided for their individual needs. This guides the behaviour of our staff. Anyone working with children should see and speak to the child; listen to what they say; take their views seriously; and work with them collaboratively when deciding how to support their needs. A child-centred approach is supported by:

- The Equality Act 2010 which puts a responsibility on public authorities to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity. No child or group of children must be treated any less favourably than others in being able to access effective services which meet their particular needs; and;
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This is an international agreement that protects the rights of children and provides a child-centred framework for the development of services to children.

**10.3** At Heath Farm School we ensure that a broad and balanced PSHE curriculum is taught. This includes enabling children and young people to develop self-awareness, positive self-esteem and confidence, encouraging them to:

- Keep themselves and others safe;
- Stay as healthy as possible;
- Have worthwhile and fulfilling relationships;
- Respect the differences between people;
- Develop independence and responsibility;
- Play an active role as members of a democratic society;
- Make the most of their own abilities and those of others;
- Behave in a socially and morally acceptable way including towards authority and each other;
- To become involved in the life of their community;
- To know about democracy and how to be an active citizen;
- To know about economic wellbeing.

Please refer to the school's Curriculum Statement and PSHE policy.



## 11. Whistle Blowing

**11.1** Whistle blowing is the mechanism by which adults can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear of repercussion. Heath Farm School has a clear and accessible Whistle Blowing Policy that meets the terms of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. Adults who use whistleblowing procedure are made aware that their employment rights are protected.

**11.2** Staff must acknowledge their individual responsibility to bring matters of concern to the attention of senior management and/or relevant agencies. Although this can be difficult this is particularly important where the welfare of children may be at risk.

**11.3** All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in the school or college's safeguarding regime and that such concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.

**11.4** Through our staff induction process we provide procedures on how staff can implement the Whistleblowing Policy. Staff are aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude and actions of colleagues where these are inappropriate or unsuitable. Staff are required to approach their immediate manager in the first instance, if necessary the member of staff should speak to the DSL for Education - Julie Tayloruli: 01204 558038.

**11.5** Staff will be protected from harassment or victimisation, and no action will be taken against staff if the concern proves to be unfounded and was raised in good faith. Malicious allegations may be considered as a disciplinary offence.

**11.6** The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Monday to Friday and Email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

## 12. Induction and Training

**12.1** When new staff, volunteers or regular visitors join our school they will be informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place. They will be given a copy of our school's Safeguarding Policy and told who the Senior Designated Lead and deputy for safeguarding is. They will also be provided with the recording form, given information on how to complete it and who to pass it to.

**12.2** Every new member of staff or volunteer will have an induction period that will include essential safeguarding information. This programme will include basic safeguarding information relating to, signs and symptoms of abuse, how to manage a disclosure from a child, how to record any issues of confidentiality. After the induction all staff will have a clear understanding of the definition of emotional, physical, sexual and neglectful child abuse and the risks of child sexual exploitation. New staff will be made aware of the **Kent's** Safeguarding Children Board procedures.

**12.3** New staff who have not had any Child Protection/Safeguarding training will be provided with safeguarding awareness training through the induction process. Staff will be provided with Level one and two training will be updated every 2 years and recorded. The Designated and Deputy Designated

Safeguarding Leads will attend approved DSL Courses at Level 3 and above at least every 2 years in order to maintain continuous professional development and comply with statutory guidance.

**12.4** All regular visitors and volunteers to our school will be given a set of our safeguarding procedures; they will be informed of whom our SDL and Deputy SDL are. They will also be informed with reference recording and reporting procedures.

**12.5** Acorn Care and Education will also undertake appropriate training to ensure they are able to carry out their duty to safeguard all of the children at our schools and homes.

**12.6** We actively encourage all of our staff at Heath Farm School to keep up to date with the most recent local and national Safeguarding advice and guidance. All staff should now receive safeguarding updates as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. This can be provided via, for example, email, e-bulletin and staff meetings.

**12.7** The knowledge and skills of the DSL and his/her deputy/deputies should now be updated at regular intervals, but at least annually, to ensure he/she keeps up with developments relevant to the role (paragraph 58). This could be provided via, for example, e-bulletins, meeting other DSLs, or taking time to read about recent safeguarding developments.

### **13. Safer Recruitment**

**13.1** We will ensure that the Principal / Headteacher and at least one other member of staff have completed appropriate safer recruitment training, recognised by the DfE. At all times the Headteacher and Acorn Care and Education will ensure that safer recruitment practices and procedures are followed in accordance with the requirements of '**Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2016**'. We will ensure that at least one member of any interview panel is appropriately trained in safer recruitment.

**13.2** Heath Farm School will use the recruitment and selection process to deter and reject unsuitable candidates. We require evidence of original academic certificates. We do not accept testimonials and insist on taking up references prior to interview and verify the references accordingly. We will question the contents of application form e.g. breaks in employment history (including overseas), if we are unclear about them. We will undertake enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks and use any other means of ensuring we are recruiting and selecting the most suitable people to work with our children. Under no circumstances will we consider offering employment to anyone who is barred from working in schools under Section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, including Proprietors, Governors. All professional/Voluntary staff working with children in a regulated activity and this will be kept under regular review. Identity checks will include evidence of right to work in the UK and teachers will be subject to prohibition from teaching checks.

**13.3** We will maintain a Single Central Register of all safer recruitment checks carried out in line with statutory requirements and is signed off on a termly basis by the Principal.

**13.4** Any staff member, volunteer or governor who becomes the subject of a police investigation in relation to physical or sexual offences against adults or children, or are charged with such a criminal

offence, must inform the Headteacher. Staff must disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children whether received before, or during their employment at the school. The Principal/Headteacher or DSL will discuss any potential safeguarding matters with the LADO and any required action will be agreed.

**13.5** Any staff member, volunteer or governor whose own children become subject to child protection investigations must inform the Principal/Headteacher. The Principal/Headteacher or DSL will discuss with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in regard to procedures for dealing with allegations against Persons who work in a position of trust with children. Appropriate action will be agreed.

**13.6** Acorn Schools have a legal duty to refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child or vulnerable adult; where the harm test is satisfied in respect of that individual; where the individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence, or if there is reason to believe that individual has committed a listed relevant offence; and that individual has been removed from working (paid or unpaid) in regulated activity, or would have been removed had they not left. The DBS will consider whether to bar the person. Referrals should be made as soon as possible after the resignation or removal of the individual.

**13.7** Heath Farm School should ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, who is to work at the school or college, has been subject to the appropriate level of DBS check. Contractors engaging in regulated activity will require an enhanced DBS certificate (including barred list information). For all other contractors who are not engaging in regulated activity, but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children, an enhanced DBS check (not including barred list information) will be required. In considering whether the contact is regular, it is irrelevant whether the contractor works on a single site or across a number of sites.

**13.8** Under no circumstances should a contractor in respect of whom no checks have been obtained be allowed to work unsupervised, or engage in regulated activity. Schools and colleges are responsible for determining the appropriate level of supervision depending on the circumstances.

**13.9** Heath Farm School should ensure that individuals who have lived or worked outside the UK must undergo the same checks as all other staff in the school. In addition, Heath Farm School must make any further checks they think appropriate so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered. These further checks should include a check for information about any teacher sanction or restriction that an EEA professional regulating authority has imposed, using the NCTL Teacher Services' system.

For further information regarding Safer Recruitment, see Acorn Care and Education Safer Recruitment Policy.

#### **Appendix 5 (flowchart of Disclosure and Barring Service criminal record checks and barred list checks)**

Please refer to the Heath Farm School Safer Recruitment Policy.

## **14. Missing Children**

**14.1** Heath Farm School recognises that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is a key duty and requires effective joint working between agencies and professionals. When a child goes missing or runs away they are at risk. Safeguarding children therefore includes protecting them from this risk.

**14.2** Heath Farm School refers to the definitions set out by the police force in April 2013. These are:

- Missing: anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character, or the context suggests the person may be the subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another; and;
- Absent: a person not at a place where they are expected or required to be.

**14.3** The police classification of a person as 'missing' or 'absent' will be based on on-going risk assessment. Note that 'absent' within this definition would not include those defined as "away from placement without authorisation" above: a child whose whereabouts are known would not be treated as either 'missing' or 'absent' under the police definitions.

**14.4** Heath Farm School has procedures for managing children who are missing, preventative strategies, risk assessments, debriefing with children and young people when issues occur.

Please refer to Missing from school Policy and procedures.

### **14.5 Attendance**

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

A child going missing from education / care is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Staff should follow the procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education or home, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

Heath Farm School's safeguarding policies and procedures are in place for children who go missing from education and care, particularly on repeat occasions. It is essential that all staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

The Law requires all schools to have an admission register and with the exception of schools where all pupils are boarders, an attendance register. All pupils must be placed on both registers.

Heath Farm School will inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school systems e.g. home education;
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school which they are registered;
- Have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he or she nor his or her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age;
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period;
- Have been permanently excluded.

Please refer to **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006** for more information regarding attendance.

The local authority must be notified when a school is to delete a pupil from its register under the above circumstances. This should be done as soon as the grounds for deletion are met, but no later than deleting the pupil's name from the register. It is essential that schools comply with this duty, so that the authorities can, as part of their duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing education, follow up with any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse or neglect.

**Heath Farm School will/must inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or have been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the school and the local authority (or in default of such agreement, at intervals determined by the Secretary of State).**

## **15. Bullying**

**15.1** Heath Farm School acknowledges and recognises that under the Children Act 1989 bullying incidents should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm'. Where this is the case, the school staff should report their concerns to the relevant local authority Children's Services team. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, we may need to draw on a range of external services to support the child or young person who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child or young person engaging in bullying, (DfE 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying', March 2014).

**15.2** Bullying can have a profound impact on emotional and mental health. We have an Anti-Bullying policy setting out the respective rights and responsibilities of the young people and our staff in preventing and dealing with bullying.

**15.3** Staff raise awareness of bullying through developing a culture in which respect and consideration for others is fundamental. We encourage young people to report bullying in the knowledge that it will be taken seriously.

**15.4** Staff are trained in conflict management techniques to help them boost a young person's self-esteem and create a positive environment both of which we recognise as important factors in preventing young people from being bullied or becoming bullies.

**15.5** School staff should apply intervention or disciplinary measures to children and young people to show clearly that their behaviour is wrong. Intervention or disciplinary measures should be applied fairly, consistently and reasonably taking into account any special educational needs or disabilities that the children or young people may have and taking into account the needs of vulnerable children and young people. It is important that the school considers the motivations behind the bullying and whether it reveals any concerns for the safety of the perpetrator.

Please also see Anti-Bullying Policy.

## **16. Protection of Vulnerable Adults**

**16.1** A vulnerable adult is a person who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness, and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

**16.2** This could include:

- People with learning disabilities;
- People with mental health problems;
- Older people;
- People with a physical disability or impairment.

**16.3** The need for additional support to protect themselves may be increased when it is complicated by additional factors such as:

- Physical frailty or chronic illness;
- Sensory impairment;
- Challenging behaviour;
- Drug or alcohol problems;
- Social or emotional problems;
- Poverty or homelessness.

**16.4** It is every adult's right to live free from abuse in accordance with the principles of respect, dignity, autonomy, privacy and equity. Anyone who is concerned about a vulnerable person should contact social care and placing authority.

## **17. E-Safety**

**17.1** The growth of different electronic media in everyday life and an ever developing variety of devices including PC's, tablets, laptops, mobile phones, webcams etc. place an additional risk on our children.

**17.2** Internet chat rooms, discussion forums or social networks can all be used as a means of contacting children and young people with a view to grooming them for inappropriate or abusive relationships. The anonymity of the internet allows adults, often pretending to be children, to have conversations with children and in some cases arrange to meet them. Access to abusive images is not a 'victimless' act as it has already involved the abuse of children. The internet has become a significant tool in the distribution of indecent photographs of children and should be a concern to all those working with pupils at this school.

Pupils can engage in or be a target of cyber-bullying using a range of methods including text and instant messaging to reach their target. Mobile phones are also used to capture violent assaults of other children for circulation (happy slapping), or distributing indecent images of children (e.g. sexting).

**17.3** The best protection is to make pupils aware of the dangers through curriculum teaching particularly PSHE and sex and relationship education.

### **Protection is Prevention**

- Software is in place to minimise access and to highlight any one accessing inappropriate sites or information;
- Pupils will be encouraged to discuss openly their use of technology and anything which makes them feel uncomfortable. (If this results in child protection concerns the school's Designated Safeguarding Person should be informed immediately);
- Pupils should not give out their personal details, phone numbers, schools, home address, computer passwords etc.;
- Pupils should adhere to the Heath Farm School E-Safety Policy.

The police will be involved if there is any criminal element to misuse of the internet, phones or any other form of electronic media.

**17.4** Heath Farm School will consider the age range of pupils, the number of pupils, how often It systems are accessed and the costs versus the risks when deciding on the filters and monitoring systems that are needed to prevent assess to materials in line with their Prevent Duty.

**17.5** As Schools increasingly work online it is essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. As such governing bodies and proprietors should ensure appropriate filters and appropriate monitoring systems are in place.

## **18. Risk Assessments**

**18.1** Heath Farm School will ensure risk assessments are in place and regularly updated for children, specific activities and visits. Heath Farm School will maintain a risk register in respect of known safeguarding risks both site specific and child specific and the control measures in place to control these risks.

**18.2** Heath Farm School and staff will ensure we are doing everything possible to assess, control, and reduce the risks to acceptable levels. Thus promoting a safe, positive environment and promoting and protecting children from known and unnecessary risks

**18.3** Heath Farm School will ensure staff are regularly briefed and informed of changes to risk assessments to effectively manage the risks.

## **19. Recording and Reporting**

Learning from Serious Case Reviews continues to identify the need for improved record keeping and information sharing, both within and between agencies.

All concerns, discussions and decisions made and the reasons made for these decisions should be recorded in writing. In in doubt about recording requirements staff should discuss with the DSL.

**Heath Farm School recognise that accurate and up-to-date record keeping is essential for a number of reasons:**

- It helps the school identify causes for concern at an early stage. Often it is only when a number of seemingly minor issues are taken as a whole that a safeguarding or child protection concern becomes clear;
- It helps the school to monitor and manage its safeguarding practices;
- It helps to evidence robust and effective safeguarding practice in inspections and audits;
- Accurate and specific records are important where there are child protection and safeguarding concerns e.g. a chronology of information gathered and action taken;
- Heath Farm School has clear procedures for reporting and recording child protection concerns (please refer to the 'Child Protection Record keeping procedures' document). This should be read in conjunction with:
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2016)**  
**Information Sharing: Guidance for practitioners and Managers (DfE 200/15)**



The procedures give clear guidance on:

- Recording reports;
- Storing child protection (CP) files;
- Who has access to CP files and information sharing;
- Transferring CP Files;
- Retention of CP files;
- Auditing of CP file.

Well-kept records are essential in situations where it is suspected or believed that a child may be at risk from harm.

Records should:

- state who was present, time, date and place;
- use the child's words wherever possible;
- be factual/state exactly what was said;
- differentiate clearly between fact, opinion, interpretation, observation and/or allegation;
- be written in ink and signed by the recorder.

Records about child protection or pertaining to welfare concerns or issues, including CAF paperwork, will be retained securely and separately to the curriculum records of the child. A clear 'sign post' will indicate in a young person's main file that a confidential report is held in a separate Child Protection file. If the child moves to another school or education setting, these records will be suitably redacted in regard to the identification of other children or adults and sent in a timely and secure manner to the Designated Safeguarding Person of the receiving school.

### **Attendance at Child Protection Conferences**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead or their deputy will be expected to attend the initial Child Protection Conference and Reviews, and provide a written report. A suggested template for this report is available on KSCB website; [www.kscb.org.uk](http://www.kscb.org.uk).

Parents should be informed of what is in the report as there should be no surprises about the information shared at Conference.

If a child is made subject to a Child Protection Plan it may be more relevant for the class teacher or head of year to attend the subsequent core group meetings and they will be given appropriate support around safeguarding issues by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If a child is made subject to a Child Protection Plan this will be clearly signposted in his/her main file but confidential records will not be kept in the main file, these will be securely stored separately.

## **20. Evaluation and Monitoring**

**20.1** Heath Farm School will monitor and evaluate policies, practices and procedures in relation to safeguarding with the school on a regular basis to ensure it keeps current with the most modern guidance and legislation.

**20.2** Heath Farm School requires safeguarding as a regular item on the agenda of Senior Management Teams meetings, therefore being at the forefront of senior managers thinking. In these meetings safeguarding training, the risk assessment and risk register should be reviewed and updated where necessary.

**20.3** To ensure the school responds positively to advice regarding safeguarding concerns and adapt its practice and procedures accordingly, monthly reports are requested to be sent outlining any recent concerns or welfare issues. The Senior Designated Lead (Care or Education) will then choose the level of intervention and support required to further support the establishment.

**20.4** Heath Farm School will undertake a Safeguarding Audit in the Autumn Term 2016 by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Heath Farm School will respond and act within set time-lines to any recommendations, and an Acorn Manager will monitor progress against actions.

**20.5** This Policy Framework is reviewed and evaluated on annual basis by a Policy Review team, comprising of Senior Managers from our care, education, management, and health teams.

**The Designated Safeguarding Lead is as follows: Mark Jones**

**The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is as follows: Jo Johnson**

**The Nominated Acorn Director (Education) for Safeguarding is: Julie Taylor**

**Further advice on Safeguarding matters in Kent can be obtained from:**

**Central Duty Team including LADO advice (03000 41 11 11).**

**Emergency Duty Team (for out of office hours referrals for children and vulnerable adults) 03000 41 91 91.**

**Kent County Council - Education Safeguarding Advice Service 03000 418503**

- 1. E-mail: [countydutysenior@kent.gov.uk](mailto:countydutysenior@kent.gov.uk)**
- 2. Website Kent Education Safeguarding Advice: [www.kscb.org.uk](http://www.kscb.org.uk)**

**Key documents referred to and underpinning this policy are:**

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2016)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)
- Kent Local Safeguarding Children Board Procedures

- **SEND Code of Practice 2014**
- **Equality Act 2010**
- **Preventing and tackling bullying (July 2017)**
- **Child Sexual Exploitation; Definition and Guide for Practitioners (DfE Feb 2017)**
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups 2006
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Education Acts 1996 and 2002
- The Education and Skills Act 2008
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Guidance for Safer Working Practice with Adults who work with children and young people in education settings 2009
- Section 93 of the 2006 Education and Inspections Act (April 1st 2007)
- The 1996 Education Act (Section 55OA)
- The Use of reasonable Force in schools (2013)
- Safeguarding Children with Disabilities (2009)
- Independent School Standards (Amended) 2014
- Kent inter – agency threshold criteria for children and young people (2015)



**Appendix 2: Chronology and Record of Events Form**

**CONFIDENTIAL: Chronology and Record of Events**

Name of Child/Family: .....

Reasons for starting this chronology:

.....  
.....  
.....

Signed:

Date:

Date	Event/Information	Action Taken (if any)	Signed

### Appendix 3: Signs of Abuse

Physical Signs	Changes in Behaviour
<b>Physical Abuse</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body</li> <li>• multiple bruises- in clusters, often on the upper arm, outside of the thigh</li> <li>• cigarette burns</li> <li>• human bite marks</li> <li>• broken bones</li> <li>• scalds, with upward splash marks,</li> <li>• multiple burns with a clearly demarcated edge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fear of parents being approached for an explanation</li> <li>• aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts</li> <li>• flinching when approached or touched</li> <li>• reluctance to get changed, for example in hot weather</li> <li>• depression</li> <li>• withdrawn behaviour</li> <li>• running away from home</li> </ul>
<b>Emotional</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speech disorders</li> <li>• Delayed physical development</li> <li>• Substance abuse</li> <li>• Ulcers, severe allergies</li> <li>• Failure to thrive</li> <li>• Self-harm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• neurotic behaviour e.g. sulking, hair twisting, rocking</li> <li>• being unable to play</li> <li>• fear of making mistakes</li> <li>• sudden speech disorders</li> <li>• self-harm</li> <li>• fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour</li> <li>• developmental delay in terms of emotional progress</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pain or itching in the genital area</li> <li>• bruising or bleeding near genital area</li> <li>• sexually transmitted disease</li> <li>• vaginal discharge or infection</li> <li>• stomach pains</li> <li>• discomfort when walking or sitting down</li> <li>• pregnancy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn</li> <li>• fear of being left with a specific person or group of people</li> <li>• having nightmares</li> <li>• running away from home</li> <li>• sexual knowledge which is beyond their age, or developmental level</li> <li>• sexual drawings or language</li> <li>• bedwetting</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• eating problems such as overeating or anorexia</li> <li>• self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts</li> <li>• saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about</li> <li>• substance or drug abuse</li> <li>• suddenly having unexplained sources of money</li> <li>• not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)</li> <li>• acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults</li> </ul>
<b>Neglect</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children</li> <li>• constantly dirty or 'smelly'</li> <li>• loss of weight, or being constantly underweight</li> <li>• inappropriate clothing for the conditions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• complaining of being tired all the time</li> <li>• not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments</li> <li>• having few friends</li> <li>• mentioning being left alone or unsupervised</li> </ul>

## Appendix 4: 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 classroom 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.
8. **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.
9. **Do not gossip** to other staff about what you have heard. The information should remain confidential to those who ‘need to know’.
10. **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.



11. 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 Head Teacher 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.

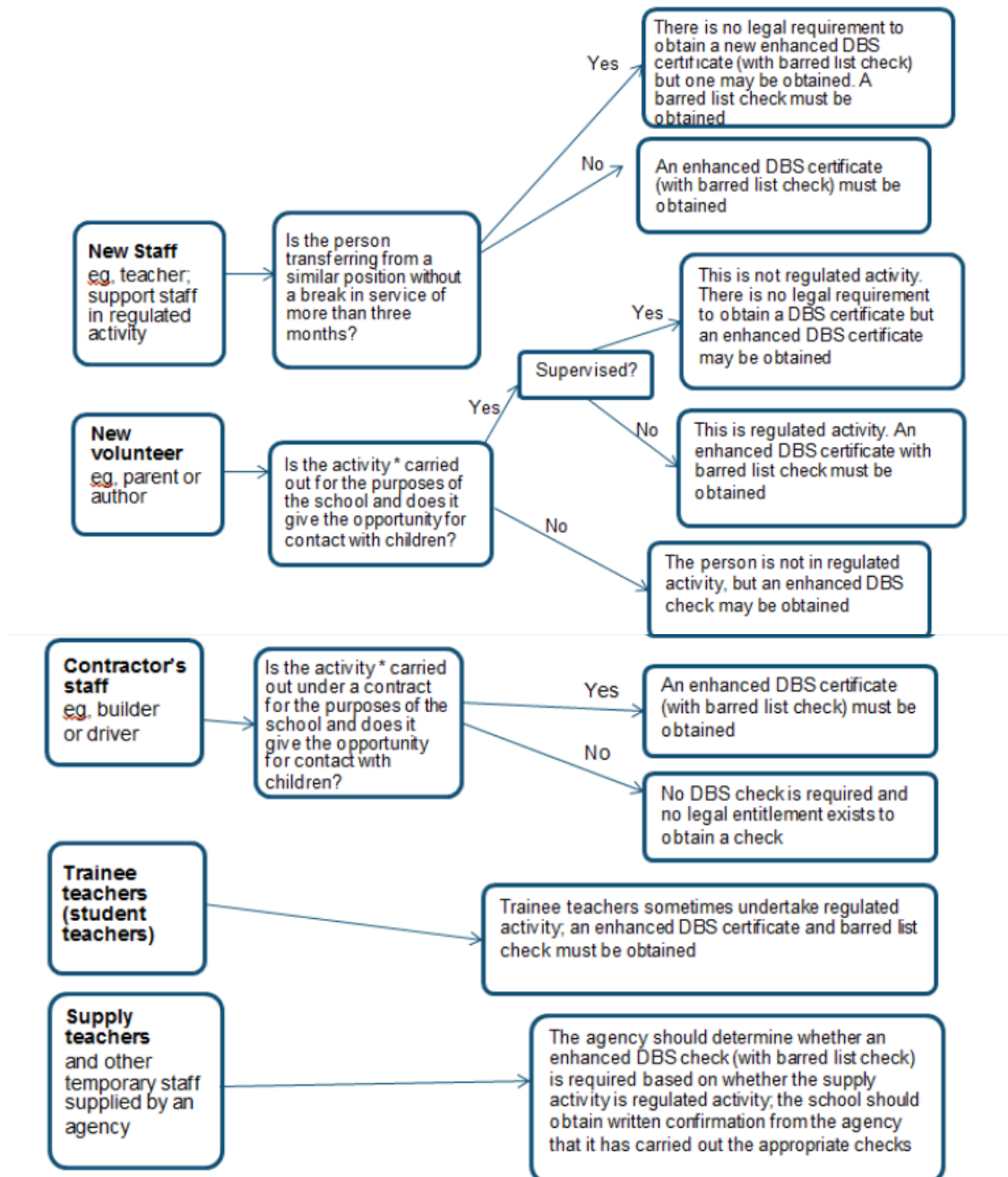
#### **8. Make notes**

- 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 Head Teacher or DSL who will ensure the appropriate procedures are followed.**

Appendix :5

Flowchart of Disclosure and Barring Service criminal record checks and barred list checks



\* Activities listed under the guidance's definition of regulated activity and which are carried out 'frequently'