

Hollin Primary School



Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2016/2017

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2016/2017 Hollin Primary School

A. Named staff/personnel with specific responsibility for Child Protection

Academic Year	Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL	Nominated Governor
2016/2017	Mrs Louise Geere Children's Welfare Officer DSL	Mr Mike O'Hare
	Mr David Fenton Headteacher Deputy DSL	
	Mrs Rosemary Moorhouse Acting Deputy Headteacher Acting SENDco Deputy DSL	

B. Training for Designated Staff in School (DSLs) should refresh their multi-agency training every 2 years)

Name of Staff Member / Governor	Date when last attended Safeguarding Training	Provided by Whom (e.g. RBSCB, Governor Support Services, Fair Access Team)
Louise Geere	18.04.2016	RBSCB
David Fenton	02.11.2015	RBSCB
Rosemary Moorhouse	02.11.2015	RBSCB

C. Whole School Staff Safeguarding Children Training (all staff should receive induction and a training update at regular intervals)

Who attended (e.g. all teaching and welfare / support staff, Governors, volunteers)	Date	Training Delivered by
Rosemary Moorhouse (Teacher)	02.11.2015	Jude Crabtree
Susan Foss (Teacher)	02.11.2015	Jude Crabtree

Claire Reynolds (Teacher)	02.11.2015	Jude Crabtree
Paula Noon (Deputy Head)	02.11.2015	Jude Crabtree
Josie Atkinson (Teacher)	02.11.2015	Jude Crabtree
Vicky Cooper (Teacher)	02.11.2015	Jude Crabtree
Zoe Hughes (Teacher)	02.11.2015	Jude Crabtree
Julie Slade (Teacher)	02.11.2015	Jude Crabtree
Jill Catlin (Teacher)	02.11.2015	Jude Crabtree
Sophie Wright (Teacher)	02.11.2015	Jude Crabtree
Daniel Melia (Teacher)	02.11.2015	Jude Crabtree
Lorna Hirst (Teacher)	02.11.2015	Jude Crabtree
Ruth Derbyshire (Teacher)	02.11.2015	Jude Crabtree
Peter Read (Teacher)	02.11.2015	Jude Crabtree
Laura Hewitt (TA)	02.11.2015	Jude Crabtree
Cecilia Tomkins (TA)	02.11.2015	Jude Crabtree
Debbie Towle (HLTA)	02.11.2015	Jude Crabtree
Maria Callaghan (TA)	02.11.2015	Jude Crabtree
Anita Falconi-Manton (TA)	02.11.2015	Jude Crabtree
Gary Drinkwater (TA)	02.11.2015	Jude Crabtree
Joan Moore (TA)	02.11.2015	Jude Crabtree
Debi Townsend (TA)	02.11.2015	Jude Crabtree
Janet Wiltshire (TA)	02.11.2015	Jude Crabtree
Fiona McGrath (TA)	02.11.2015	Jude Crabtree
Margaret Costello (TA)	02.11.2015	Jude Crabtree
Bea Bednarska (TA)	02.11.2015	Jude Crabtree
Lloyd Brannigan (TA)	02.11.2015	Jude Crabtree
Alicia Nash (TA)	02.11.2015	Jude Crabtree
Gill Dean (TA)	02.11.2015	Jude Crabtree
Paula Brine (TA)	02.11.2015	Jude Crabtree
Duncan Vyse (HLTA)	02.11.2015	Jude Crabtree
Julie Haywood (Administrator)	02.11.2015	Jude Crabtree
Janet Howarth (Administrative Assistant)	02.11.2015	Jude Crabtree
Ann Turner (L/time Organiser)	02.11.2015	Jude Crabtree
Carol Welsh (L/time Organiser)	02.11.2015	Jude Crabtree
Jade Taylor (L/time Organiser)	02.11.2015	Jude Crabtree
Del Hey (ICT Technician)	03.03.2016	Local Authority
Shaheen Jahangir (TA)	03.03.2016	Jude Crabtree

D. Annual Review date for this policy

Review Date	Changes Made	By Whom
September 2017	Policy reviewed in line with L.A guidelines	Mrs Louise Geere To be agreed by Governor's

DEVELOPING A WHOLE SCHOOL POLICY ON SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION

1. PURPOSE OF A CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

- 1.1. An effective whole school Safeguarding policy is one which provides clear direction to staff and others about expected codes of behaviour in dealing with Safeguarding issues. An effective policy also makes explicit the school's commitment to the development of good practice and sound procedures. This ensures that Safeguarding concerns and Child Protection referrals may be handled sensitively, professionally and in ways which prioritise the needs of the child.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 At Hollin Primary School we provide a safe, stimulating learning environment where children thrive. All of our children are known, valued and respected as individuals who leave our school ready for the next stage in their education with life skills which prepare them for their future.
- 2.2 Hollin Primary School fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect children and support pupils in school.

'There are three main elements to our Safeguarding Policy'.

- (a) **Prevention:**
(e.g. positive school atmosphere, teaching and pastoral support to pupils).
- (b) **Protection:**
(By following agreed procedures, ensuring staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to Child Protection concerns/disclosures).
- (c) **Support:**
(To pupils and school staff and to children who may have been abused).

- 2.3 This policy applies to all Governor's, Staff, Volunteers and visitors at Hollin Primary School.

3. SCHOOL COMMITMENT

- 3.1 At Hollin Primary School we recognise that high self-esteem, confidence, peer support and clear lines of communication with trusted adults helps all children, and especially those at risk of or who are suffering significant harm.

Our school will therefore:

- (a) Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- (b) Ensure that children know that there are adults in the school who they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty.
- (c) Include in the curriculum activities and opportunities for PSHE which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe and / or communicate their fears or concerns about abuse.
- (d) Include in the curriculum material which will help children develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly with regard to childcare and parenting skills.
- (e) Ensure that every effort will be made to establish effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from other agencies.

4. FRAMEWORK

Education staff have a crucial role to play in helping identify welfare concerns and indicators of possible abuse or neglect, at an early stage: referring those concerns to the appropriate organisation, contributing to the assessment of a child's needs using the Children's Needs and Response Framework and, in particular, using and embedding the Common Assessment Framework as an early intervention assessment tool where the Child Protection threshold is not met. They will also be well placed to give a view on the impact of treatment or intervention on the child's care or behaviour.

4.1 Safeguarding is the responsibility of *all* adults and especially those working with children. The development of appropriate procedures and the monitoring of good practice are the responsibilities of the Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Children Board (RBSCB).

4.2 What is the Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Children Board (RBSCB – www.rbscb.org)?

The Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Children Board (RBSCB) is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how organisations in Rochdale will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Rochdale.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. There are, however, key people within schools and the Local Authority who have specific responsibilities under Child Protection procedures. The names of those carrying these responsibilities in school for the current year are listed on the cover sheet of this document.
- 5.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead will take the lead responsibility for dealing with all child protection issues; will provide advice and support and liaise with staff and volunteers, parents and carers and other agencies including the Local Authority.
- 5.3 The responsibilities of the Headteacher are to act as the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, to ensure adequate and appropriate training is offered to Staff and Volunteers and to ensure Staff are working within the guidelines set out by Hollin Primary School and the Local Authority.
- 5.4 The Governing body is accountable for ensuring that the education setting has effective policies and procedures in place in accordance with this guidance, and for monitoring the school's compliance with them. Neither the governing body, nor individual governors, have a role in dealing with individual cases or a right to know details of cases (except when exercising their disciplinary functions in respect of allegations against a member of staff). Some governing bodies have found it helpful for an individual member of the governing body to champion child protection issues within the school, liaise with the head teacher about them, and provide information and reports to the governing body. However, it is not appropriate for that person to take the lead in dealing with allegations of abuse made against the head teacher. That is the role of the chair of governors or, in the absence of a chair, the vice or deputy chair. Whether the governing body acts collectively or an individual member takes the lead, it is helpful if all members of the governing body undertake training about child protection to ensure they have the knowledge and information needed to perform their functions and understand their responsibilities.
- 5.5 Who is available within the Local Authority to offer advice and support?

Education Safeguarding Officer - 01706 925384

Education Welfare Service - Tel: 01706 925115

Multi Agency Screening Service - Tel: 0300 303 0440

Out of Hours, Emergency Duty Social Work Team - Tel: 0300 303 8875

**Local Authority Designated Officer (Allegations of Professional Abuse) -
Tel: 01706 925365**

Safeguarding Unit – 0300 303 0350

External Agency

**Police Protection and Investigation Unit (PPIU) - Tel: 0161 856 4810 (CP),
0161 856 8757 (DV)**

6. PROCEDURES

- 6.1 Where it is believed that a child is suffering from, or is at risk of significant harm, we will follow the Rochdale Borough Multi-Agency Safeguarding Children procedures located at www.rbscb.org
- 6.2 Please see the attached document for our full Child Protection Procedures

7. TRAINING AND SUPPORT

- 7.1. Our school will ensure that the Head Teacher, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the nominated governor for Child Protection attend training relevant to their role at regular intervals. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will also attend Multi-Agency Child Protection training within this timescale.
- All staff, as part of induction training will have in-school procedures and policies shared and explained to them.
 - Basic Safeguarding training will be periodically delivered on a 3 year cycle or as and when deemed necessary if sooner. Alternative training will be delivered as deemed appropriate and to the appropriate members of school staff for example, Child Sexual Exploitation, Self-Harm etc.
 - All relevant and necessary information will be shared with staff when new policies or procedures are implemented.

8. CONFIDENTIALITY

- 8.1 Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of Child Protection.
- 8.2 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. Any disclosure of personal information to others, (including Children's Social Care staff and the police), must always have regard to both common and statute law.
- 8.3 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, consent may not be possible or desirable but the safety and welfare of a child dictate that the information should be shared. The law permits the disclosure of confidential information necessary to safeguard a child or children. Disclosure should be

justifiable in each case, according to the particular facts of the case, and legal advice should be sought if in doubt.

9. RECORDS AND MONITORING

9.1 Well-kept records are essential to good Child Protection practice. Our school is clear about the need to record any concerns held about a child or children within our school, the status of such records and when these records, or parts thereof, should be shared with other agencies. There is also a need to share important education and Child Protection information at the point of a child's transition to another education establishment.

- When it becomes apparent there are child protection concerns, any member of staff or volunteer should complete a Child Protection Incident Report, also referred to as a 'pink form'. Once the report has been completed the person completing signs and dates it and immediately passes it on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who signs and dates it upon receipt. The form is then actioned before being stored securely and confidentially in the safeguarding files.
- Safeguarding files are kept separate from all other information about a child. The hard copies are kept in a secure filing cabinet in the Designated Safeguarding Lead's office and the electronic copies are kept on a secure drive which only the Designated and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads have access to.
- All teaching staff in the necessary class are notified via a 'Safeguarding Watch List' if a child is being monitored for safeguarding reasons. It is at the discretion of the Designated Safeguarding Lead as to what, if any, information is shared for the necessity of this monitoring.
- It is the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead to collate and monitor information being passed to her and to make decisions in relation to referrals to the appropriate bodies in line with the Rochdale Borough Needs and Response Framework.
- Information relating to individual children is dealt with on a 'need to know' basis. The Designated Safeguarding Lead can share information at her discretion if it is deemed necessary.
- If a child transfers or leaves Hollin Primary School the Designated Safeguarding Lead would initially telephone the school where the child is moving to (if known) and share any relevant information and inform the relevant Children's Social Care Team. If there are safeguarding records held, a copy of them would be transferred to the new school. When the new school is not known, Hollin Primary School would seek support from the LA in order to find out where the child has moved to.

10. CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCES

- A child protection case conference brings together family members (and the child where appropriate), with the supporters, advocates and

professionals most involved with the child and family, to make decisions about the child's future safety, health and development.

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will attend child protection case conference and is responsible for collating information and producing a relevant, concise and professional report to be shared at the conference.

11. SUPPORTING PUPILS AT RISK

11.1 Hollin Primary School recognises that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world in a positive way. This school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. Whilst at school, their behaviour may still be challenging and defiant and there may even be moves to consider exclusion from school.

It is also recognised that some children who have experienced abuse may in turn abuse others. This requires a considered, sensitive approach in order that the child can receive appropriate help and support!

11.2 Hollin Primary School will endeavour to support pupils through:

- (a) The curriculum, to encourage self-esteem and self-motivation;
- (b) The school ethos, which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and which gives all pupils and adults a sense of being respected and valued;
- (c) A consistent approach, which recognises and separates the cause of behaviour from that which the child displays. This is vital to ensure that all children are supported within the school setting;
- (d) Regular liaison with other professionals and agencies who support the pupils and their families, in-line with appropriate confidentiality parameters;
- (e) A commitment to develop productive, supportive relationships with parents, whenever possible and so long as it is in the child's best interests to do so;
- (f) The development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable staff group trained to respond appropriately in Child Protection situations.

11.3 This policy should be considered alongside other related policies in school. These are:

- Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs
- Behaviour Management

- Special Educational Needs
- Positive Handling Plans
- Health and Safety
- Safer Recruitment
- Staff Codes of Conduct
- Guidance for Safe Working Practice for the Protection of Children and Staff in Education Settings (updated by Rochdale BC in September 2016)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2016)

11.4 We recognise that, statistically, children with behavioural difficulties and disabilities are particularly vulnerable to abuse. School staff who work, in any capacity, with children with profound and multiple disabilities, sensory impairment and/or emotional and behaviour problems will need to be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse.

It must also be stressed that in a home environment where there is domestic abuse, drug or alcohol misuse, children may also be particularly vulnerable and in need of support or protection.

12. SAFER SCHOOLS, SAFER STAFF

If there are any organisational, personal or professional difficulties that could potentially get in the way of protecting children these must be provided to the Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead who will undertake a risk assessment and put measures in place to ensure that the protection and safeguarding of children is never compromised.

- The local authority recommended that there is no physical contact between staff and pupils wherever possible. Where there is any physical contact this must be in the presence of other colleagues. Due to the age of children taught in a primary setting it is important that staff do not work in an isolated one-to-one situation with a pupil. This is to ensure that school staff are not placed in situations where allegations may be made against them.
- If staff need advice on issues relating to underage sexual activity of pupils they should seek advice immediately from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Go to: www.rbscb.org 'Working with Sexually Active Young People under the Age of 18'.

Also, go to: www.rbscb.org for Allegations Management Procedures.

HOLLIN PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES

1. What Should Staff/Volunteers Do If They Have Concerns About A Child or Young Person in School?

Education professionals who are concerned about a child's welfare or who believe that a child is or may be at risk of abuse should pass any information to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (**DSL**) in school; this should *always* occur as soon as possible and certainly within 24 hours.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Mrs Louise Geere

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads are: Mr David Fenton and Mrs Rosemary Moorhouse

It is these senior colleagues who are responsible for taking action where the welfare or safety of children or young people is concerned. If staff are uncertain about whether their concerns are indeed 'Child Protection' then a discussion with their DSL/line manager will assist in determining the most appropriate next course of action.

Staff should never:

- Do nothing/assume that another agency or professional will act or is acting.
- Attempt to resolve the matter themselves.

What should the DSL consider right at the outset?

- Am I dealing with 'risk' or 'need'? (By definition, a child at risk is also a child in need. However, what is the *priority / level and immediacy* of risk / need and consider the Children's Needs and Response Framework?)
- Can the level of need identified be met:
 - In or by the school or by accessing universal services/without referral to the MASS or other targeted services?
 - By working with the child, parents and colleagues?
 - By completion of a CAF with parents/carers/child & other professionals
- What resources are available to me/the school and what are their limitations?
- Is the level of need such that a referral needs to be made to the Multi Agency Screening Service requesting that an assessment of need be undertaken? (**Section 17 Child in Need referral**)
- Is the level and/or likelihood of risk immediate and such that a Child Protection referral needs to be made (i.e. a child is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm? (**Section 47 Child Protection referral**))
- What information is available to me: Child, Parents, Family & Environment?
- What information is inaccessible and, potentially, how significant might this be?
- Who do/don't I need to speak to now and what do they need to know?

- Where can I access appropriate advice and/or support?
- If I am not going to refer, then what action am I going to take? (e.g. time-limited monitoring plan, discussion with parents or other professionals, recording, etc)

2. **Feedback to Staff Who Report Concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will decide which information needs to be shared, when and with whom. The primary purpose of confidentiality in this context is to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.

3. **Thresholds for Referral to the Multi Agency Screening Service (MASS)**

Where a Designated Safeguarding Lead or line manager considers that a referral to the MASS may be required, there are two thresholds for (and their criteria) and types of referral that need to be carefully considered:

(i) **Is this a Child In Need?**

Under section 17 (s.17(10)) of the Children Act 1989, a child is in need if:

- (a) S/he is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity to achieve or maintain, a reasonable standard of health or development, without the provision of services by a local authority;
- (b) His/her health or development is likely to be impaired, or further impaired, without the provision of such services;
- (c) S/he has a disability

(ii) **Is this a Child Protection Matter?**

Under section 47(1) of the Children Act 1989, a local authority has a duty to make enquiries where they are informed that a child who lives or is found in their area:

- (a) is the subject of an Emergency Protection Order;
- (b) is in Police Protection; or where they have
- (c) **there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm.**

Therefore, 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 is likely to suffer significant harm.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will make judgements around 'significant harm', levels of need and when to refer. (Children's Needs and Response Framework)

4. **Making Referrals to the MASS (Guidance for the Designated Safeguarding Lead)**

(i) **Child In Need/Section 17 Referrals**

The DSL should look with other services as part of the Early Help Strategy to complete a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and copy this to: karen.donnelly@rochdale.gov.uk

- This is a request for assessment/support/services and, as such, you **must obtain the consent** of the parent(s) (and child/young person where appropriate), this should be identified on the CAF
- Where a parent/child/young person refuses to consent, you should make clear your ongoing plans and responsibilities in respect of support, monitoring etc, and the possibility of a Child Protection referral at some point in future if things deteriorate or do not improve. (This is not about threats or saying that this is inevitable but about openness and transparency in dealings with parents).

(ii) Child Protection

Use the multi-agency referral form (MARF) (www.rbscb.org) for referrals to the Multi Agency Screening Service where it is considered that a child may be at risk of or suffering significant harm. If a CAF is in place then this information can form part of the CP referral but the school must complete the front sheet of the multi-agency referral form.

- You **do not require the consent** of a parent or child/young person to make a Child Protection referral
- A parent should, **under most circumstances, be informed** by the referrer that a Child Protection referral is to be made. The criteria for not informing parents are:
 - (a) Because this would increase the risk of significant harm to a child(ren), to another member in the family home or to a professional; or
 - (b) Because, in the referrer's professional opinion, to do so might impede a criminal investigation that may need to be undertaken;
 - (c) Because there would be an undue delay caused by seeking consent which would not serve the child's best interests.

See the Rochdale Borough Multi-Agency Safeguarding Children procedures on the RBSCB website for the occasions when parents/carers should not be informed.

5. The MASS Responses to Referrals and Timescales

In response to a referral, the MASS may decide to:

- Provide advice to the referrer and/or child/family;
- Refer to Early help services;
- Undertake an Assessment;
- Convene a Strategy Meeting for referrals under Section 47 of the Children Act;
- Provide support services under Section 17;

- Convene an Initial Child Protection Conference;
- Accommodate the child under Section 20 (with parental consent);
- Make an application to court for an Order;

6. Feedback from the MASS

The MASS has 24 hours within which to make a decision about a course of action in response to a referral. If you do not receive any (same day) verbal feedback following an urgent Child Protection referral, and where this places school / a child(ren) in a vulnerable position, you should ask to speak to the relevant Team Manager at MASS (0300 303 0440) or the Education Safeguarding Officer (01706 925384)

7. Risk Assessment 'Checklist'

- Does/could the suspected harm meet the Rochdale Borough Multi-Agency Safeguarding Children definitions of abuse?
- Are there cultural, linguistic or disability issues?
- I am wrongly attributing something to impairment?
- Does the chronology indicate any possible patterns which could/do impact upon the level of risk?
- Are any injuries or incidents acute, cumulative, episodic?
- Did any injuries result from spontaneous action, neglect, or intent?
- Explanations consistent with injuries/behaviour?
- Severity and duration of any harm?
- Effects upon the child's health/development?
- Immediate/longer term effects?
- Likelihood of recurrence?
- Child's reaction?
- Child's perception of the harm?
- Child's needs, wishes and feelings?
- Parents'/carers' attitudes/response to concerns?
- How willing are they to co-operate?
- What does the child mean to the family?
- What role does the child play?
- Possible effects of intervention?
- Protective factors and strengths of/for child (i.e. resilience/vulnerability)
- Familial strengths and weaknesses?
- Possibilities?
- Probabilities?
- When and how is the child at risk?
- How imminent is any likely risk?
- How grave are the possible consequences?
- How safe is this child?
- What are the risk assessment options?
- What are the risk management options?
- What is the interim plan?

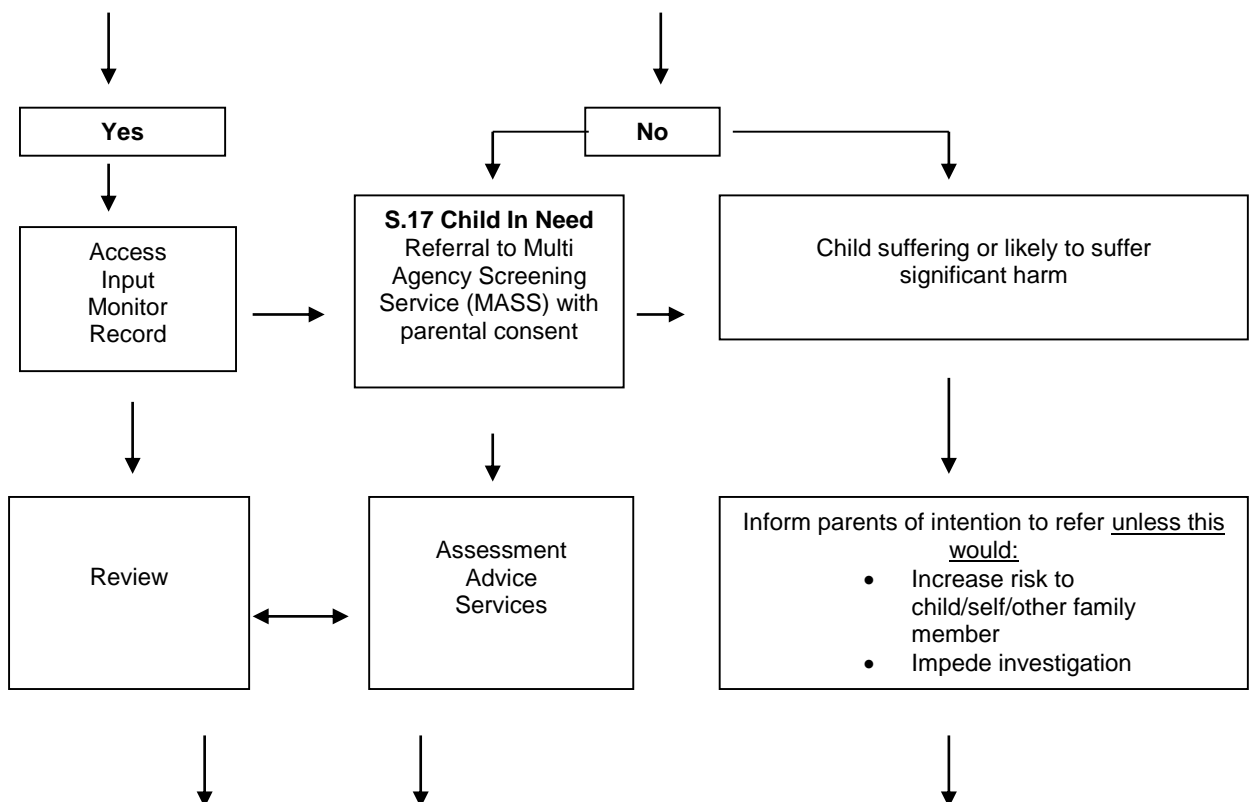
APPENDIX 1: TAKING ACTION ON CHILD WELFARE/PROTECTION CONCERNS IN SCHOOL

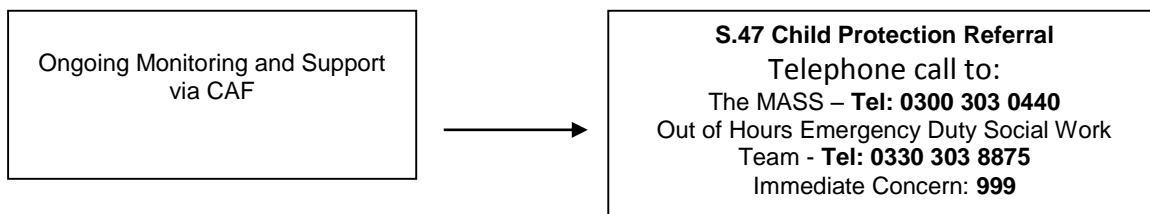
Staff member has concerns about a child's health, development, safety or welfare

Discuss concerns with Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) on the school site as soon as possible (and certainly within 24 hours)
Action agreed and recorded by DSL

- Designated Safeguarding Lead considers
- Context & history/information available/inaccessible
 - Explanations & contemporaneous life events
 - Use Framework for Assessment & CAF (if below the CP threshold)
 - Evidence and nature of risk/need
 - Balance of Probabilities

- A Level of Need Is Identified
- What level of need is identified?
 - What are the parent's/child's views?
 - What services might be accessed:
a) in school; b) via the LA; c) via direct referral to non-statutory agencies d) Completion of a CAF?
 - Can these meet the level of need identified?





The Designated Safeguarding Lead in School is: Mrs Louise Geere

The Deputy DSLs are: Mr David Fenton and Mrs Rosemary Moorhouse

APPENDIX 2: TALKING AND LISTENING TO CHILDREN

If a child wants to confide in you, you **SHOULD**

- Be accessible and receptive;
- Listen carefully and uncritically, at the child's pace;
- Take what is said seriously;
- Reassure children that they are right to tell;
- Tell the child that you must share the information;
- Make sure that the child is ok ;
- Make a careful record of what was said (see *Recording*).

You should **NEVER**

- Investigate or seek to prove or disprove possible abuse;
- Investigate, suggest or probe for information;
- Ask leading questions of children/young people
- Confront another person (adult or child) allegedly involved;
- Speculate or accuse anybody;
- Make promises about confidentiality or keeping 'secrets';
- Assume that someone else will take the necessary action;
- Jump to conclusions, be dismissive or react with shock, anger, horror, etc;
- Offer opinions about what is being said or the persons allegedly involved;
- Forget to record what you have been told;
- Fail to share the information with the correct person (the Designated Safeguarding Lead).

Children with communication difficulties, or who use alternative/augmentative communication systems

- While extra care may be needed to ensure that signs of abuse and neglect are interpreted correctly, any suspicions should be reported in exactly the same manner as for other children;
- opinion and interpretation will be crucial (be prepared to be asked about the basis for it and to possibly have its validity questioned if the matter goes to court).

Recordings should

- State who was present, time, date and place (using full names and full job designations);
- Be written in ink and be signed by the recorder;
- Be passed to the DSL or Head Teacher immediately (certainly within 24 hours);
- Use the child's words wherever possible;
- Be factual/state exactly what was said;
- Differentiate clearly between fact, opinion, interpretation, observation and/or allegation.

What information do you need to obtain?

- Schools have **no investigative role** in Child Protection (Police and Children's Social Care will investigate possible abuse very thoroughly and in great detail, they will gather evidence and test hypotheses);

- Never prompt or probe for information, your job is to listen, record and share information;
- Ideally, you should be clear about what is being said in terms of **who, what, where and when**;
- The question which you should be able to answer at the end of the listening process is 'might this be a Child Protection matter?';
- If the answer is yes, or if you're not sure, record and share immediately with the Designated Safeguarding Lead/Head Teacher/line manager.

If you do need to ask questions, what is and isn't OK?

- **Never** asked closed questions i.e. ones which children can answer yes or no to e.g. Did he touch you?
- **Never** make suggestions about who, how or where someone is alleged to have touched, hit, etc. e.g. Top or bottom, front or back?
- If we must, use only '**minimal prompts**' such as 'go on ... tell me more about that ... tell me everything that you remember about that '
- Timescales are very important: '**When was the last time this happened?**' is an important question.

What else should we think about in relation to disclosure?

- Is there a place in school which is particularly suitable for listening to children e.g. not too isolated, easily supervised, quiet etc;
- We need to think carefully about our own body language – how we present will dictate how comfortable a child feels in telling us about something which may be extremely frightening, difficult and personal;
- Be prepared to answer the 'what happens next' question;
- We should never make face-value judgements or assumptions about individual children. For example, we 'know that [child.....] tells lies';
- Think about how you might react if a child DID approach you in school. We need to be prepared to offer a child in this position exactly what they need in terms of protection, reassurance, calmness and objectivity;

Think about what support you could access if faced with this kind of situation in school.
