

## Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

**Date of Policy: Autumn 2018**

**Review: Summer 2019**

The STEP Academy Trust Board of Trustees has agreed this Policy and as such, it applies to all Academies within STEP Academy Trust ("the Trust").

<b>DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD:</b>	Karen Harrison
<b>DEPUTY DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEAD:</b>	Nadine Bernard
<b>DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING GOVERNOR:</b>	Donal Daly

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### Introduction

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this

responsibility effectively, all professionals 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. (Keeping Children Safe in Education – DfE, 2018)

This Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is for all staff, parents, governors, volunteers and the wider school community. It forms part of the safeguarding arrangements for our Academies. It should be read in conjunction with the Recruitment Policy, Staff Code of Conduct Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Behaviour Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Off-Site Policy, E-safety Policy, Social Media Policy and Policy for Use of Images of Children. It should also be read in conjunction with Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2018).

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in Keeping Children Safe in Education as:

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

## **2. Statutory framework**

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 (*Section 157 for Independent schools*) places a statutory responsibility on the governing body to have policies and procedures in place that safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils of the school.

The development of appropriate procedures and the monitoring of good practice in each Academy are the responsibilities of STEP Academy Trust.

Our Academy(s) work in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (DfE, 2018)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (revised February 2017)
- [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act \(HMG, 2015\)](#)
- [Serious Crime Act 2015](#) (Home Office, 2015)
- PREVENT Duty Guidance (2015)
- Children Missing in Education (2016)
- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006
- Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners (HMG, 2015)
- Data Protection Act 1998

## **3. Roles and responsibilities**

All adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to protect them and to provide a safe environment in which they can learn and achieve their full potential. However, there are key people within schools and the Local Authority who have specific responsibilities under child protection procedures. The names of those in our Academy with these specific responsibilities (the designated safeguarding lead and deputy designated safeguarding lead) are shown on the cover sheet of this document.

### The Board of Trustees/Strategic Governing Bodies

The Board of Trustees and the Strategic Governing Bodies (SGBs) ensure that the policies, procedures and training in our Academies are effective and comply with the law at all times. They ensure that all required policies relating to safeguarding are in place and that the child protection policy reflects statutory and local guidance and is reviewed at least annually.

The SGBs ensure there is a named designated safeguarding lead and deputy safeguarding lead in place in each Academy.

The Strategic Governing Body (SGB) has the duty to ensure that the Academy(s) meets their statutory responsibilities and ensures that the children and young people attending the Academy(s) are safe.

An individual on the SGB will liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Headteacher to plan strategic and monitoring visits throughout the year.

All members of the SGB need to understand their duties relating to safeguarding, including Prevent Duty.

With regards to Safer Recruitment, the SGB must be clear about the checking and vetting processes, before shortlist, during the interview and afterwards. They need to be assured that there are effective processes in place for arranging checks, including DBS, identity, right to work in the UK and any required overseas police checks. They will also ensure that that any person employed to teach has the required teaching qualifications and has successfully completed any statutory induction required.

The SGB must also ensure that the Academy keeps a single central record, detailing the range of checks it has carried on its staff.

The SGBs ensure the Academies contribute to inter-agency working, in line with statutory and local guidance. It ensures that information is shared and stored appropriately and in accordance with statutory requirements.

The SGBs ensure that all staff members undergo safeguarding and child protection training at induction and that it is then regularly updated. All staff members receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates, at least annually, to provide them with the relevant skills and knowledge to keep our children safe.

The SGBs ensure that children are taught about safeguarding, including online, ensuring that that appropriate filters and monitoring systems for online usage are in place. Our children will be taught how to keep themselves safe through teaching and learning opportunities as part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

The SGBs and Academy leadership teams are responsible for ensuring the Academies follow recruitment procedures that help to deter, reject or identify people who might abuse children. It adheres to statutory responsibilities to check adults working with children and has recruitment and selection procedures in place. It ensures that volunteers are appropriately supervised in school.

### The Designated Safeguarding Lead (and Deputy)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead in the Academy takes lead responsibility for managing child protection referrals, safeguarding training and raising awareness of all child protection policies and procedures. They ensure that everyone in the Academy (including temporary staff, volunteers and

contractors) is aware of these procedures and that they are followed at all times. They act as a source of advice and support for other staff (on child protection matters) and ensure that timely referrals to the Local Authority Children's Social Care are made in accordance with current procedures. They work with the Local Authority and other agencies as required.

If for any reason the designated safeguarding lead is unavailable, the deputy designated safeguarding lead will act in their absence.

The practice of Designated Safeguarding Leads is supervised by the STEP Head of Standards who will also conduct safeguarding audits of each Academy (at least annually).

#### The Headteacher

The Headteacher works in accordance with the requirements upon all Academy staff. In addition, (s)he ensures that all safeguarding policies and procedures adopted by the SGB are followed by all staff.

#### All Academy staff

Everyone in our Academy has a responsibility to provide a safe learning environment in which our children can learn. All staff members are prepared to identify children who may benefit from early help and understand their role within this process. This includes identifying any emerging problems so appropriate support may be provided and liaising with the designated safeguarding lead to report any concerns. All staff members are aware of and follow school processes (as set out in this policy) and are aware of how to make a referral to Social Care if there is a need to do so.

#### STEP Central Team Leads

It is the responsibility of the relevant STEP Central Team Leaders to inform one of the designated STEP Safeguarding Leaders when a new member of the Central Team joins the Trust. The Safeguarding Lead will then work with the Central Team member to ensure the relevant safeguarding checks and training are undertaken.

### **4. Types of abuse / specific safeguarding issues**

Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2018) defines abuse as the maltreatment of a child. *"Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an 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"*

The four main types of abuse referred to in Keeping Children Safe in Education are:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Neglect

Our Academy is aware of the signs of abuse and neglect so we are able to identify children who may be in need of help or protection.

#### Peer on Peer Abuse

Our Academy may be the only stable, secure and safe element in the lives of children at risk of, or who have suffered harm. Nevertheless, whilst at school, their behaviour may be challenging and defiant, or they may instead be withdrawn, or display abusive behaviours towards other children.

Our Academy recognises that some children may abuse their peers and any incidents of peer on peer abuse will be managed in the same way as any other child protection concern and will follow the same procedures.

Peer on peer abuse can manifest itself in many ways. This may include bullying (including cyber bullying), on-line abuse, gender-based abuse, 'sexting' or sexually harmful behaviour. We do not tolerate any harmful behaviour in school and will take swift action to intervene where this occurs. We use lessons and assemblies to help children understand, in an age-appropriate way, what abuse is and we encourage them to tell a trusted adult if someone is behaving in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable. Our Academy understands the different gender issues that can be prevalent when dealing with peer on peer abuse (see STEP Anti-Bullying Policy, Behaviour Policy for further information).

#### Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Our Academy understands that children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. This can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying- without outwardly showing any signs;
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers

#### Children Missing from Education

All children, regardless of their age, ability, aptitude and any special education needs they may have are entitled to a full-time education. Our Academy recognises that a child missing education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and will follow the school procedures for unauthorised absence and for children missing education. Parents should always inform us of the reason for any absence. Where contact is not made, a referral may be made to another appropriate agency (Missing Education and Child Employment Service, Social Care or Police).

Our Academy must inform the Local Authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without school permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more.

#### Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE is a form of abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It is understood that a significant number of children who are victims of CSE go missing from home, care and education at some point. Our school is alert to the signs and indicators of a child becoming at risk of, or subject to, CSE and will take appropriate action to respond to any concerns. The designated safeguarding lead is the named CSE Lead in school on these issues and will work with other agencies as appropriate.

#### Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse.

As of October 2015, the Serious Crime Act 2015 (Home Office, 2015) introduced a duty on teachers (and other professionals) to notify the police of known cases of female genital mutilation where it appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18. Our Academies will

operate in accordance with the statutory requirements relating to this issue, and in line with existing local safeguarding procedures.

### Forced marriage

A forced marriage is one entered into without the full consent of one or both parties. It is where violence, threats or other forms of coercion is used and is a crime. Our staff understand how to report concerns where this may be an issue.

### Prevention of radicalisation

As of July 2015, the [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act \(HMG, 2015\)](#) placed a new duty on schools and other education providers. Under section 26 of the Act, schools are required, 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 requires schools to:

- teach a broad and balanced curriculum which promotes spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and prepares them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life and must promote community cohesion;
- be safe spaces in which children / young people can understand and discuss sensitive topics, including terrorism and the extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology, and learn how to challenge these ideas;
- be mindful of their existing duties to forbid political indoctrination and secure a balanced presentation of political issues.

CHANNEL is a national programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people identified as vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Our staff understand how to identify those who may benefit from this support and how to make a referral.

### Domestic (Family) Abuse and/or sexual violence

Domestic or Family Abuse adversely affects children, whether or not it is significant enough to warrant action under Child Protection Procedures. When a member of staff becomes aware that a child may be living in a household where there is emotional, physical or sexual violence, they should refer the concern to the DSO who will attempt to find out whether the family are receiving help and who will consider contacting the referral or advice lines below.

A designated DASV trained person should be named in each Academy.

## **5. Procedures**

All action is taken in accordance with the following guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2018)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2015)
- PREVENT Duty - Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (HMG, 2015)

When new staff, volunteers or regular visitors join our Academy they are informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place and the name of the designated safeguarding lead (and deputy) and how to share concerns with them.

When an academy has a visitor, they will be given key safeguarding information to read before they are permitted to enter. By signing the visitors' book, the visitor is confirming that they have read, understood and agree to follow the safeguarding protocols they have been provided with.

Each academy operates a strict visitor checking system. Any organisation that has an employee visiting an academy will be expected to provide written confirmation that they have, as the employing body, sought a DBS which proves the employee is safe to work with children. If an individual visits an academy and is not acting on behalf of an organisation, or the employing body has not provided written confirmation that a DBS check has been sought and returned as clear, the visitor will be expected to show a recent copy of their DBS and ID before they are permitted to enter unaccompanied to the Academy. Any visitor that does not have written confirmation from their employing body or cannot provide a recent and clear DBS, with matching ID (for example a driving licence or passport) will not be permitted to enter the academy without a staff member accompanying them at all times.

Each academy operates a strict visitor lanyard system. A visitor that has passed the outlined DBS and ID checks, and is therefore clear to work with children unaccompanied, will be provided with a green lanyard to wear at all times. Any visitor that has not passed the outlined DBS and ID checks, and cannot therefore work with children unaccompanied, will be issued with a red lanyard. Any visitor with a red lanyard will not be left unattended at any time when children are on the premises.

All visitors, at all times, are expected to wear a visitors' lanyard.

Any member of staff, volunteer or visitor to the Academy who receives a disclosure or allegation of abuse, or suspects that abuse may have occurred **must** report it immediately to the designated safeguarding lead (or, in their absence, the deputy designated safeguarding lead).

The designated safeguarding lead or the deputy will immediately refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the Local Authority. Essential information will include the pupil's name, address, date of birth, family composition, the reason for the referral, whether the child's parents are aware of the referral plus any other relevant information or advice given.

The Academy will always undertake to share an intention to refer a child to Children's Social Care with the parents or carers, unless to do so could place the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. On these occasions advice will be taken from the LA and / or Police.

If a member of staff continues to have concerns about a child and feels the situation is not being addressed or does not appear to be improving, the staff member concerned should press for reconsideration of the case with the designated safeguarding lead.

Safeguarding contact details are displayed in the Academy ensure that all staff have unfettered access to safeguarding support.

## **6. Training**

The designated safeguarding lead (and deputy) undertake Level 3 child protection training at least every two years. The Headteacher, all staff members and governors receive appropriate child protection training which is regularly updated and in line with advice from the Local Authority. In addition, all staff members receive safeguarding and child protection updates as required, but at least annually, to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively. Records of any child protection training undertaken is kept for all staff and governors.

It is an expectation that the Safeguarding Lead, Deputy Safeguarding lead, the Headteacher, at least one member of the Strategic Governing Body and one other member of the SLT complete Safer Recruitment Training every three years in every Academy.

The Academy ensures that the designated safeguarding lead (and deputy) also undertakes training in inter-agency working and other matters as appropriate.

## **7. Professional confidentiality**

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. A member of staff must never guarantee confidentiality to a pupil and will not agree with a pupil to keep a secret as, where there is a child protection concern, this must be reported to the designated safeguarding lead and may require further investigation by appropriate authorities.

All staff members are informed of relevant information in respect of individual cases regarding child protection on a 'need to know basis' only. Any information shared with a member of staff in this way is held treated confidentially.

## **8. Records and information sharing**

Where there are concerns about the safety of a child, the sharing of information in a timely and effective manner between organisations can reduce the risk of harm. Whilst the Data Protection Act 1998 places duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully, it is not a barrier to sharing information where the failure to do so would result in a child or vulnerable adult being placed at risk of harm. Similarly, human rights concerns, such as respecting the right to a private and family life would not prevent sharing where there are real safeguarding concerns. Fears about sharing information cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at risk of abuse or neglect.

Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Our Academy is clear about the need to record any concern held about a child or children within our school, the status of such records and when these records should be shared with other agencies.

Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse or noticing signs or indicators of abuse, will make an accurate record as soon as possible noting what was said or seen (if appropriate, using a body map to record), giving the date, time and location. All records will be dated and signed and will include the action taken. This is then presented to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy), who will decide on appropriate action and record this accordingly.

Any records related to child protection are kept in a child protection file (which is separate to the pupil file) in chronological order. All child protection records are stored securely and confidentially and will be retained for 25 years after the pupil's date of birth.

If a pupil transfers from our Academy to another school, their child protection records will be forwarded to the new educational setting. These will be marked 'Confidential' and for the attention of the receiving school's designated safeguarding lead, with a return address on the envelope so it can be returned to us if it goes astray. Copies of this paperwork will be retained by our Academy, should it be required at a future date.

## **9. Interagency working**

It is the responsibility of the designated safeguarding lead to ensure that the Academy is represented at, and that a report is submitted to, any child protection conference called for children on the school roll or previously known to them. Where possible and appropriate, any report will be shared in advance with the parent(s) / carer(s). Whoever attends will be fully briefed on any issues or concerns the school has and be prepared to contribute to the discussions at the conference.

If a child is subject to a Child Protection or a Child in Need plan, the designated safeguarding lead will ensure the child is monitored regarding their school attendance, emotional well-being, academic progress, welfare and presentation. If the Academy is part of the core group, the designated safeguarding lead will ensure the Academy is represented, provides appropriate information and contributes to the plan at these meetings. Any concerns about the Child Protection plan and / or the child's welfare will be discussed and recorded at the core group meeting, unless to do so would place the child at further risk of significant harm. In this case the designated safeguarding lead will inform the child's key worker immediately and then record that they have done so and the actions agreed.

## **10. Allegations about members of the workforce**

All staff members are made aware of the boundaries of appropriate behaviour and conduct. These matters form part of staff induction and are outlined in the Staff Handbook / Code of Conduct.

The Academy works in accordance with statutory guidance and the Local Authority in respect of allegations against an adult working with children (in a paid or voluntary capacity).

The Academy has processes in place for reporting any concerns about a member of staff (or any adult working with children). Any concerns about the conduct of a member of staff will be referred to the Headteacher (or the Deputy Headteacher in their absence). This role is distinct from the designated safeguarding lead as the named person should have sufficient status and authority in the school to manage employment procedures. Staffing matters are confidential and the Academy must operate within statutory guidance around Data Protection.

Where the concern involves the Headteacher, it should be reported direct to the Chair of Governors. STEP Academy Trust procedures require that, where an allegation against a member of staff is received, the Headteacher, senior named person or the Chair of Governors must inform the duty Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in the Children's Workforce Allegations Management Team within one working day. However, wherever possible, contact with the LADO should be made immediately as they will then advise on how to proceed and whether the matter requires Police involvement. This will include advice on speaking to pupils and parents and HR. The Academy does not carry out any investigation before speaking to the LADO.

## **11. Whistleblowing**

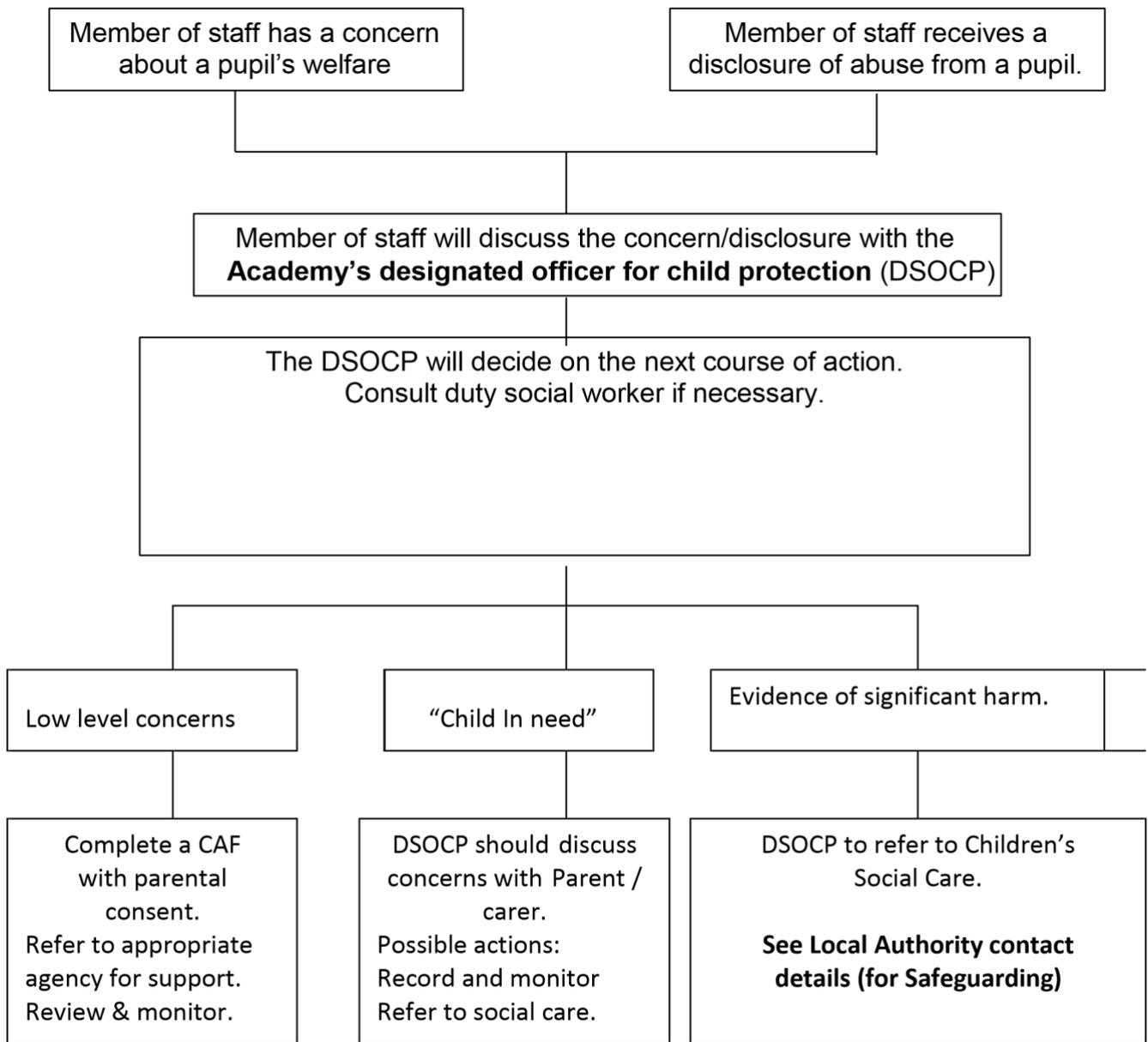
Whistleblowing is 'making a disclosure in the public interest' and occurs when a worker (or member of the wider school community) raises a concern about danger or illegality that affects others, for example pupils in the Academy or members of the public.

All staff are made aware of the duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of staff in line with the Academy's Code of Conduct / Whistleblowing policy.

We want everyone to feel able to report any child protection / safeguarding concerns. However, for members of staff who feel unable to raise these concerns internally, they can call the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline on: 0800 028 0285 (line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday) or email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

Parents or others in the wider school community with concerns can contact the NSPCC general helpline on: 0808 800 5000 (24 hour helpline) or email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).

## **APPENDIX 1 – Procedures to be followed if you have a concern about a child's welfare**



Referrals must be made via the MASH:

**Social care action:**  
*Decide on course of action with one day of receiving the referral.  
 Feed back to referrer.*

## APPENDIX 2 – Academy and Local Authority Contact Details

ACADEMY: Tudor Academy

**The Senior Designated Person for Safeguarding is:**

Karen Harrison

**In her absence the Designated Person is:**

Nadine Bernard

Donal Daly

**CPOMS:** <https://tudor.cpoms.net>

**The Nominated Governor for safeguarding children is:**

Selina Boshorin

**Contact details:** [selina.boshorin@stepacademytrust.org](mailto:selina.boshorin@stepacademytrust.org)

**The Chair of Governors is:**

Mark Riddaway

**Contact details:** [mark.riddaway@stepacademytrust.org](mailto:mark.riddaway@stepacademytrust.org)

### *Local Authority Contacts*

#### Single Point of Contact (SPOC) For Early Help & Children's Social Care

For enquiries and referrals relating to children and young people at risk of harm or where you require support in agreeing an Early Help offer.

**CHILDREFERRALS@CROYDON.GOV.UK**

**🔒 SECURE: CHILDREFERRALS@CROYDON.GCSX.GOV.UK**

**MONDAY TO FRIDAY, 9AM – 5PM**

Urgent child protection matters needing immediate attention

**Tel: 0208 255 2888**

Professionals' consultation line – **Tel: 0208 726 6464**

**OUT OF HOURS**

Our emergency social work service is for urgent child protection matters that cannot wait until the next working day – **Tel: 0208 726 6400**

**If you believe a child is at immediate risk of harm call the police on 999.**

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Croydon LSCB: 0208 726 6400 (ext 63358) [www.croydonlscb.org.uk](http://www.croydonlscb.org.uk)

**Local Authority Designated Officer**

**Telephone: 020 8255 2889    Email: [LADO@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:LADO@croydon.gov.uk)**

# Designated Safeguarding Leads

**Designated  
Safeguarding Lead**

**Deputy Designated  
Safeguarding Leads**



*Karen Harrison  
Assistant Head Teacher*



*Donal Daly  
Deputy Head Teacher*



*Nadine Bernard  
Head of school*

**Governor for Safeguarding**

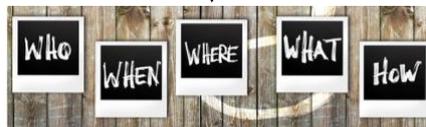


*Selina Boshorin*

# What to do if you have a concern about a child's welfare:

I have a concern about a pupil's welfare

I have received a disclosure of abuse from a



**T** – Tell      **E** – Explain      **D** – Describe

Discuss the concern/disclosure with the Academy's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or one of the Academy's Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL):



Karen Harrison  
DSL



Donal Daly  
DDSL



Nadine Bernard  
DDSL

Record concern/disclosure on CPOMS



<https://wolseyjun.cpoms.net>

Your account of the concern: what was said, observed, reported and by whom  
Additional information: your opinion, context of concern/disclosure  
Your response: what you did /said following the concern, including action taken

The DSL or DDSL will decide on the next course of action.

They may consult MASH if necessary. A referral to MASH may be made.

# What to do if you have a concern or complaint about the conduct of a member of staff, volunteer, governor or visitor to the academy:

I have a concern that a member of staff, volunteer, governor or visitor 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
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates that he or she is unsuitable to work with children.

My concern is about a member of staff, volunteer, governor or visitor

My concern is about the Head Teacher

Discuss the concern with the Academy's Head teacher (or one of the Heads of School in her absence):



Claire Majumdar  
Head Teacher



Isobel Miskelly  
Head of School



Nadine Bernard  
Head of School

Discuss the concern with the Academy's Chair of Governors:

Mark Riddaway  
Chair of Governors

Record concern on CPOMS- if related to a child



<https://wolseyjun.cpoms.net>

Your account of the concern: what was said, observed, reported and by whom

Additional information: your opinion, context of concern

Your response: what you did /said following the concern, including action taken

The Head Teacher or Head of School will seek advice from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

They will advise on the next course of action. No investigation should take place before advice has been sought from the LADO.

**APPENDIX 4 – Record of Concern (Pupil)**

**RECORD OF CONCERN  
(Pupil)  
Please use pen when  
completing this form**

Child's Name :		Date and Time of Concern :		
Male/Female :	Ethnic Origin :	Disability Y/N :	Religion :	Class:
Your Account of the Concern : (what was said, observed, reported and by whom)				
Additional Information : (your opinion, context of concern/disclosure)				
Your Response : (what did you do/say following the concern)				
Your Name :		Your Signature :		
Date and Time of this Recording :				

Action and Response of DSP / HT

Name: .....

Date:.....

## **APPENDIX 5 – Signs and Indicators of Abuse**

### **Signs of Abuse**

Recognising child abuse is not easy. It is not your responsibility to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place or if a child is at significant risk of harm from someone. You do however, have both a responsibility and duty, as set out in your organisation's child protection procedures, to act in order that the appropriate agencies can investigate and take any necessary action to protect a child. The following information should help you to be more alert to the signs of possible abuse.

#### **Physical Abuse**

Most children will collect cuts and bruises as part of the rough-and-tumble of daily life. Injuries should always be interpreted in light of the child's medical and social history, developmental stage and the explanation given. Most accidental bruises are seen over bony parts of the body, e.g. elbows, knees, shins, and are often on the front of the body. Some children, however, will have bruising that is more than likely inflicted rather than accidental.

Important indicators of physical abuse are bruises or injuries that are either unexplained or inconsistent with the explanation given, or visible on the 'soft' parts of the body where accidental injuries are unlikely, e.g. cheeks, abdomen, back and buttocks. A delay in seeking medical treatment when it is obviously necessary is also a cause for concern, although this can be more complicated with burns, as these are often delayed in presentation due to blistering taking place sometime later.

- Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body
- Multiple bruises- in clusters, often on the upper arm, outside of the thigh
- Cigarette burns
- Human bite marks
- Broken bones
- Scalds, with upward splash marks
- Multiple burns with a clearly demarcated edge.

#### **Changes in behaviour that can also indicate physical abuse:**

- Fear of parents being approached for an explanation
- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- Flinching when approached or touched
- Reluctance to get changed, for example in hot weather
- Depression
- Withdrawn behaviour
- Running away from home.

#### **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse can be difficult to measure, as there are often no outward physical signs. There may be a developmental delay due to a failure to thrive and grow, although this will

usually only be evident if the child puts on weight in other circumstances, for example when hospitalised or away from their parents' care. Even so, children who appear well-cared for may nevertheless be emotionally abused by being taunted, put down or belittled. They may receive little or no love, affection or attention from their parents or carers. Emotional abuse can also take the form of children not being allowed to mix or play with other children.

Changes in behaviour which can indicate emotional abuse include:

Neurotic behaviour e.g. sulking, hair twisting, rocking

- Being unable to play
- Fear of making mistakes
- Sudden speech disorders
- Self-harm
- Fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour
- Developmental delay in terms of emotional progress

### Sexual Abuse

Adults who use children to meet their own sexual needs abuse both girls and boys of all ages, including infants and toddlers. Usually, in cases of sexual abuse it is the child's behaviour that may cause you to become concerned, although physical signs can also be present. In all cases, children who tell about sexual abuse do so because they want it to stop. It is important, therefore, that they are listened to and taken seriously.

It is also important to remember that it not just adult men who sexually abuse children – there are increasing numbers of allegations of sexual abuse of children against women and sexual abuse can also be perpetrated by other children or young people.

The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

- Pain or itching in the genital area
- Bruising or bleeding near genital area
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Vaginal discharge or infection
- Stomach pains
- Discomfort when walking or sitting down
- Pregnancy

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse include:

- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- Having nightmares
- Running away from home
- Sexual knowledge which is beyond their age, or developmental level
- Sexual drawings or language
- Bedwetting
- Eating problems such as overeating or anorexia
- Self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts
- Saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about
- Substance or drug abuse

- Suddenly having unexplained sources of money
- Not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
- Acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults

### Neglect

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

The physical signs of neglect may include:

- Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children
- Constantly dirty or 'smelly'
- Loss of weight, or being constantly underweight
- Inappropriate clothing for the conditions.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect may include:

- Complaining of being tired all the time
- Not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments
- Having few friends
- Mentioning being left alone or unsupervised.

### Bullying

Bullying is not always easy to recognise as it can take a number of forms. A child may encounter bullying attacks that are:

- Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching and other forms of violence or threats
- Verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing
- Emotional: excluding (sending to Coventry), tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating.

Persistent bullying can result in:

- Depression
- Low self-esteem
- Shyness
- Poor academic achievement
- Isolation
- Threatened or attempted suicide

Signs that a child may be being bullied can be:

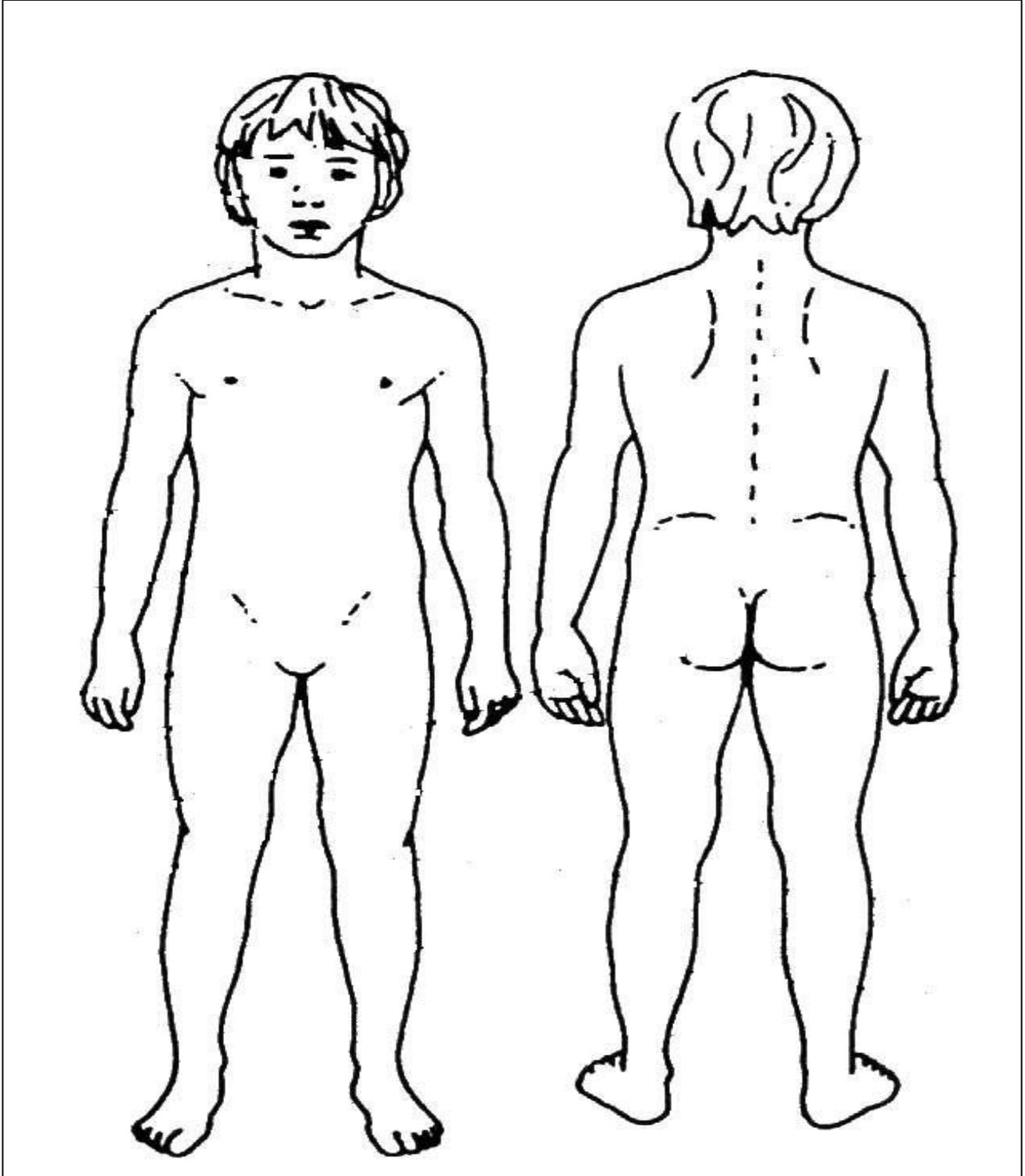
- Coming home with cuts and bruises
- Torn clothes
- Asking for stolen possessions to be replaced
- Losing dinner money
- Falling out with previously good friends
- Being moody and bad tempered
- Wanting to avoid leaving their home
- Aggression with younger brothers and sisters

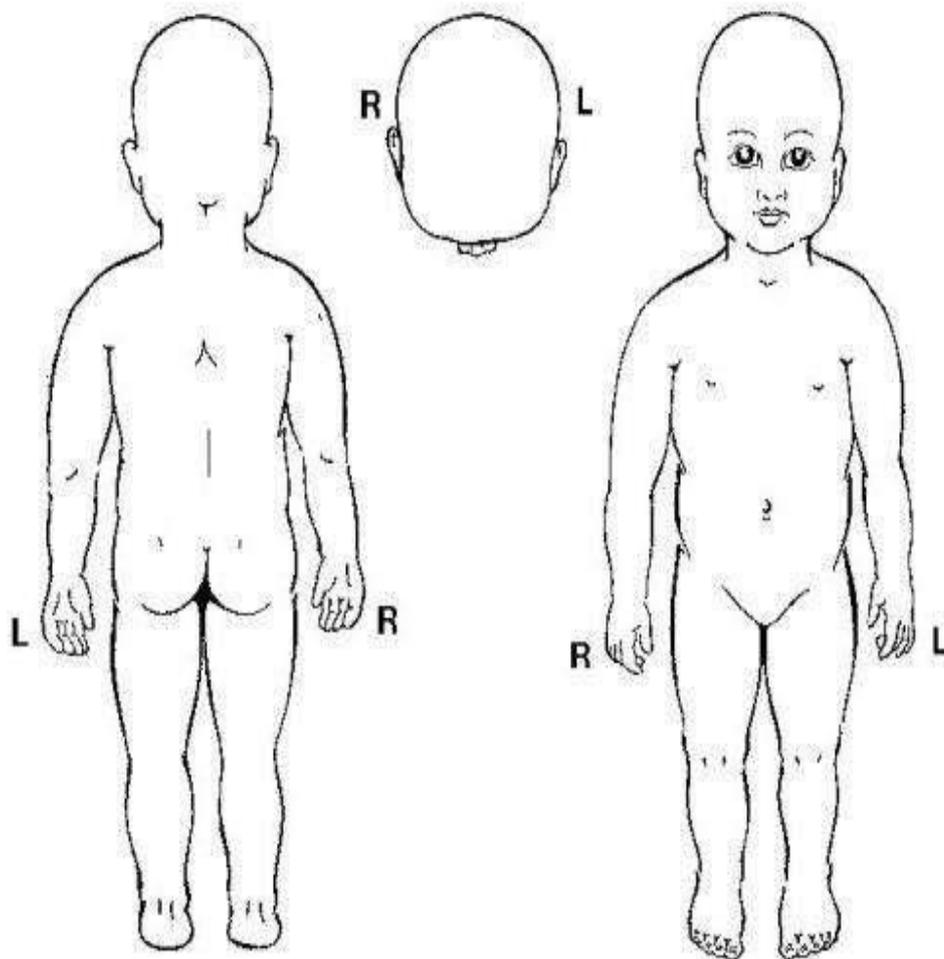
- Doing less well at school
- Sleep problems
- Anxiety
- Becoming quiet and withdrawn

These definitions and indicators are not meant to be definitive, but only serve as a guide to assist you. It is important too, to remember that many children may exhibit some of these indicators at some time, and that the presence of one or more should not be taken as proof that abuse is occurring. There may well be other reasons for changes in behaviour such as a death or the birth of a new baby in the family or relationship problems between parents/carers. In assessing whether indicators are related to abuse or not, the authorities will always want to understand them in relation to the child's development and context.

APPENDIX 6 – Body Maps

Child body map





**Baby/infant Body Map**