

St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Child Protection Policy



“Doing our best for God”

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Important contacts

ROLE/ORGANISATION	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)	Denise Duke	denise.duke@st-bernadette.blackpool.sch.uk 01253 353687- direct line 01253 353641
Deputy DSL	Alexis Satterthwaite Karen Pearson Jill Greenhalgh	01253 353641
Local authority designated officer (LADO)	Angela Parkinson	lado@blackpool.gov.uk 01253 477558
Looked After Children Designated Teacher	Karen Pearson	01253 353641
Chair of governors	John Ismay	Chair of Governors c/o St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School Devonshire Road Bispham FY2 0AJ 01253 353641
Channel helpline		020 7340 7264

School Mission Statement:

To offer opportunities and experiences which will enable the individual (adult or pupil) to grow towards the realisation of his/her full potential.

To foster sound personal relationships among its members - staff, pupils, parents and governors - in a Christian environment.

To affirm the place of worship, prayer and liturgy in the educational experience.

To recruit parental help to sustain the development of good relationships.

To initiate projects to broaden the school's role in the parish and wider community.

The school is a key front-line service, working in partnership with other children services, and staff should always be mindful of local policies and procedures, that must be followed, and which are under the direction of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

Everyone employed at our school has a responsibility in relation to Child Protection and Safeguarding of children. In most cases, this will be the referral of concerns to Denise Duke – Family Support Worker. In day-to-day contact with children at risk, we are able to note concerns and to meet with parents and other associated adults, where this is appropriate.

Increasingly, schools are expected to work with, and support, different agencies to enable the most appropriate form of intervention to take place. This policy aims to outline the role that school will have, the procedures that staff should follow and guidance on issues related to child protection generally. It is not exhaustive. All staff should ensure the needs and safety of the child are the prime concern and the child should be placed at the centre of any decisions they may need to take.

Safeguarding and child protection is **everyone's** responsibility. This policy applies to all staff, volunteers and governors in the school and is consistent with the procedures of our safeguarding partners. Our policy and procedures also apply to extended school and off-site activities

Aims

- To raise awareness of individual responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.
- To provide a systematic means of monitoring, recording and reporting of concerns and cases.
- To provide guidance on recognising and reporting suspected child abuse and neglect.
- To review and ensure the continuing professional development of all staff annually and when new guidelines emerge.

Legislation and statutory guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's statutory guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2021\)](#) and [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2018\)](#), and the [Governance Handbook](#). We comply with this guidance and the arrangements agreed and published by our 3 local safeguarding partners.

This policy is also based on the following legislation:

- Section 175 of the [Education Act 2002](#), which places a duty on schools and local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils
- [The School Staffing \(England\) Regulations 2009](#), which set out what must be recorded on the single central record and the requirement for at least one person conducting an interview to be trained in safer recruitment techniques
- [The Children Act 1989](#) (and [2004 amendment](#)), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children
- Section 5B(11) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the [Serious Crime Act 2015](#), which places a statutory duty on teachers to report to the police where they discover that female genital mutilation (FGM) appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18
- [Statutory guidance on FGM](#), which sets out responsibilities with regards to safeguarding and supporting girls affected by FGM
- [The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974](#), which outlines when people with criminal convictions can work with children
- Schedule 4 of the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#), which defines what 'regulated activity' is in relation to children
- [Statutory guidance on the Prevent duty](#), which explains schools' duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 with respect to protecting people from the risk of radicalisation and extremism
- The [Childcare \(Disqualification\) and Childcare \(Early Years Provision Free of Charge\) \(Extended Entitlement\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2018](#) (referred to in this policy as the "2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations") and [Childcare Act 2006](#), which set out who is disqualified from working with children

Responsibilities

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL is a member of the senior leadership team. Our DSL is Denise Duke - Family Support Worker. The DSL takes lead responsibility for child protection and wider safeguarding.

During term time, the DSL will be available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. The DSL can also be contacted out of school hours if necessary on her school email or on her personal mobile number, which relevant staff and outside agencies have.

When the DSL is absent, Head Teacher – Alexis Satterthwaite or Assistant Heads – Karen Pearson, Jill Greenhalgh will act as cover.

The DSL will be given the time, funding, training, resources and support to:

- Provide advice and support to other staff on child welfare and child protection matters
- Take part in strategy discussions and inter-agency meetings and/or support other staff to do so
- Contribute to the assessment of children
- Refer suspected cases, as appropriate, to the relevant body (local authority children's social care, Channel programme, Disclosure and Barring Service, and/or police), and support staff who make such referrals directly.
- The DSL will also keep the Head Teacher informed of any issues, and liaise with local authority case managers and designated officers for child protection concerns as appropriate.
- The full responsibilities of the DSL and deputies are set out in their job description.
- Coordinating action within the school and liaising with Children Services. The Pupil Welfare Team, and other agencies over cases of abuse and suspected abuse/neglect.
- Acting as a source of advice within the school.
- Ensuring that staff are familiar with the policy and procedures.
- Referral of individual cases of suspected abuse.
- Organising training on child protection within the school (all paid staff should attend the safeguarding awareness training (previously known as level one)) every three years.
- Ensuring volunteers and Governors are aware of this policy and are invited to attend all relevant training with paid school staff.

The Governing Board

- The governing board will approve this policy at each review, ensure it complies with the law and hold the Head Teacher to account for its implementation.
- The governing board will appoint a lead governor to monitor the effectiveness of this policy in conjunction with the full governing board. This is always a different person from the DSL.
- The Chair of Governors will act as the 'case manager' in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the Head Teacher, where appropriate (see appendix 6).
- All governors will read Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- Section 15 of this policy has information on how governors are supported to fulfil their role.

The Head Teacher

The head teacher is responsible for the implementation of this policy, including:

- Ensuring that staff (including temporary staff) and volunteers are informed of our systems which support safeguarding, including this policy, as part of their induction.
- Communicating this policy to parents when their child joins the school and via the school website.
- Ensuring that the DSL has appropriate time, funding, training and resources, and that there is always adequate cover if the DSL is absent.
- Ensuring that all staff undertake appropriate safeguarding and child protection training and update this regularly.
- Acting as the 'case manager' in the event of an allegation of abuse made against another member of staff or volunteer, where appropriate (see appendix 6).
- Ensuring the relevant staffing ratios are met, where applicable.

All Staff

All staff will read and understand part 1 and Annex A of the Department for Education's statutory safeguarding guidance, [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), and review this guidance at least annually. (All staff have received a paper copy of the 2021 part 1 at the September 2021 inset)

All staff will be aware of:

- Our systems which support safeguarding, including this child protection and safeguarding policy, the staff code of conduct, the role and identity of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputies, the behaviour policy, and the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education.
- The early help process known as the Early Help Assessment (EHA) and their role in it, including identifying emerging problems, liaising with the DSL, and sharing information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment.
- The process for making referrals to local authority children's social care and for statutory assessments that may follow a referral, including the role they might be expected to play.
- What to do if they identify a safeguarding issue or a child tells them they are being abused or neglected, including specific issues such as FGM, and how to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality while liaising with relevant professionals.
- New members of school staff and supply staff are informed of the main points of this child protection policy and advised to read it as soon as possible as well as KCSIE (2020) part one.

Training

All Staff

- All staff members will undertake safeguarding and child protection training at induction, including on whistle-blowing procedures, to ensure they understand the school's safeguarding systems and their responsibilities, and can identify signs of possible abuse or neglect. This training will be regularly updated and will be in line with advice from our safeguarding partners.
- All staff will have training on the government's anti-radicalisation strategy, Prevent, to enable them to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas.
- Staff will also receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates (for example, through emails, e-bulletins and staff meetings) as required, but at least annually.

- Volunteers will receive appropriate training, if applicable.

The DSL and Deputies

The DSL and deputies will undertake child protection and safeguarding training at least every 2 years.

In addition, they will update their knowledge and skills at regular intervals and at least annually (for example, webinars, through e-bulletins, meeting other DSLs, or taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments). They will also undertake Prevent awareness training.

Governors

All governors receive training about safeguarding, to make sure they have the knowledge and information needed to perform their functions and understand their responsibilities.

As the Chair of Governors may be required to act as the 'case manager' in the event that an allegation of abuse is made against the Head Teacher, they receive training in managing allegations for this purpose.

Recruitment – interview panels

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

CONFIDENTIALITY

Where children are on a Child Protection Plan and leave one school for another, the designated teacher must inform the receiving school department. If the child leaves the school with no receiving school, details should be passed to the Pupil Welfare Officer.

Education staff have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with the investigative agencies.

- Members of staff should not promise confidentiality but can let the child know that only those who need to know will be informed and that will be for the child's own sake.
- Time should be taken to reassure the child and confirm that information given will be treated sensitively.
- Reassurance should be given and the adult involved should listen sympathetically and nonjudgmentally.
- Staff should be careful and ensure that information is only given to the appropriate person.
- All staff should be kept aware of issues relating to confidentiality and the status of information they may hold.
- Members of staff, other than the designated member and those involved closely, should only have enough details in order to help them to act sensitively and appropriately to a pupil.
- Sensitive information regarding pastoral issues and for children on a child protection plan is kept separately in a folder in the locked filing cabinet in the office of the FSW.
- Discretion should be used when talking about the personal and changing circumstances of children e.g. when a child goes into care.
- Care is particularly necessary after attending child protection meetings. Information received should be treated sensitively and discretion will be needed as issues emerge on a formal and informal basis.
- Timely information sharing is essential to effective safeguarding.

- Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety, of children.
- The Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe.
- If staff need to share 'special category personal data', the DPA 2018 contains 'safeguarding of children and individuals at risk' as a processing condition that allows practitioners to share information without consent if it is not possible to gain consent, it cannot be reasonably expected that a practitioner gains consent, or if to gain consent would place a child at risk.
- Staff should never promise a child that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may not be in the child's best interests.
- The government's [information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners](#) includes 7 'golden rules' for sharing information, and will support staff who have to make decisions about sharing information.
- If staff are in any doubt about sharing information, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).
- Confidentiality is also addressed in this policy with respect to record-keeping (see page 16) and allegations of abuse against staff in appendix 6.
- Where verbal referrals are made to Children Services duty and the assessment team, the referral should be confirmed in writing within 24 hours, using the Early Help Assessment form/MARF.
- Where there is uncertainty about making a full referral, advice can be sought from the Pupil Welfare Officer (476462) or Duty and Assessment team (477299) without giving the child's details.

Guidance If a child makes a disclosure to you :

You should refer concerns to the DSL or deputy as soon as possible. In the meantime, remember you should:

- **Not promise confidentiality or keep secrets.**
- **It is important to stay calm and reassuring.**
- **Do not show that you are shocked or upset.**
- **Listen and believe them.**
- **Allow them time to talk freely and do not ask leading questions. Use questions such as, "Is there anything else you'd like to tell me?"**
- **Tell the child that they have done the right thing in telling you. Do not tell them they should have told you sooner.**
- **Don't lay blame or criticise either the child or the perpetrator.**
- **Explain what will happen next and that you will have to pass this information on. Do not promise to keep it a secret.**
- **Observe bruises/injuries but you should not ask a child to remove or adjust their clothing to observe them. Do not take photographs.**
- **Write up the conversation as soon as possible, in the child's own words. Stick to the facts, do not put your own judgement on it. Using the school's online reporting system – Myconcern, where possible.**
- **If you do not have access to a computer, please complete the form *Concerns raised by parents/staff or Safeguarding record concern form* (see appendix 2) ensuring that you sign and date it before passing it on to the DSL.**
- **You may be asked to discuss your concerns.**
- **Information should only be shared with those who need to know**
- **The needs and safety of the child must always come first**
- **When in doubt – ask.**

Definitions

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children means:

- Protecting children from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical 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.
- Child abuse is a term used to describe ways in which children are harmed by someone, often a in a position of power.
- It is not our responsibility to decide whether child abuse is occurring but we are require to act on any concerns and report it to the appropriate party.
- **Children** includes everyone under the age of 18
- **The health, safety and protection of a child is paramount.**

Equality Statement

Some children have an increased risk of abuse, and additional barriers can exist for some children with respect to recognising or disclosing it. We are committed to anti-discriminatory practice and recognise children's diverse circumstances. We ensure that all children have the same protection, regardless of any barriers they may face.

We give special consideration to children who:

- Have special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities (see page 14).
- Are young carers.
- May experience discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender identification or sexuality.
- Have English as an additional language.
- Are known to be living in difficult situations – for example, temporary accommodation or where there are issues such as substance abuse or domestic violence.
- Are at risk of FGM, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, or radicalisation.
- Are asylum seekers.
- Are at risk due to either their own or a family member's mental health needs.
- Are looked after or previously looked after children (see page 15).

Guidance on Recognising Suspected Abuse

PHYSICAL ABUSE

This can include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, suffocating or causing any form of physical harm to a child.

Possible signs include:

- **Unexplained injuries or bumps**
- **Refusal to discuss injuries**
- **Implausible explanations of injuries**
- **Untreated injuries or lingering illness**
- **Admission of punishment, which appears excessive**
- **Shrinking from physical contact**
- **Fear of returning home or parents being contacted**

- Fear of undressing
- Fear of medical help
- Aggression/bullying
- Over compliant behaviour
- Running away/unexplained pattern of absences
- Significant changes in behaviour
- Deterioration in school work

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

This is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.

It can include:

- Conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved.
- Placing inappropriate age-related expectations on children
- Making children feel frightened or in danger on a frequent basis

Possible signs of emotional abuse include:

- Continual self-deprecation
- Fear of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- Self-harm or mutilation
- Compulsive stealing/scrounging
- Drug/solvent abuse
- Neurotic behaviour – obsessive rocking, thumb-sucking
- Air of detachment ‘don’t care’ attitude
- Social isolation
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Eating problems
- Depression, withdrawal

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. They can include non-contact activities such as involving children looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. This includes encouraging the child to use their electronic devices e.g. mobile phones/iPad to send pictures of themselves or parts of their body.

Possible signs include:

- Bruises, scratches, bumps or bite marks
- Scratches abrasions or persistent infection in the anal or genital regions
- Pregnancy
- Sexual awareness inappropriate to the child’s age
- Frequent public masturbation
- Attempts to teach other children about sexual activity
- Hiding their mobile telephones
- Refusing to stay with certain people or go to certain places
- Aggressiveness, anger, anxiety, tearfulness

- **Withdrawal from friends**

SEXTING

Sexting is when people share a sexual message and/or a naked or semi-naked image, video or text message with another person. It's also known as nude image sharing. Perpetrators of **abuse** may circulate a nude image more widely and use this to blackmail a **child** and/or groom them for further sexual **abuse**.

NEGLECT

Neglect is also a form of abuse. It is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/ or psychological needs and can affect the child's health and development. It might include failure to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failure to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failure to ensure appropriate access to medical care and treatment.

Possible signs include:

- **Constant hunger**
- **Poor personal hygiene**
- **Inappropriate clothing**
- **Frequent lateness or non-attendance**
- **Untreated medical problems**
- **Low self-esteem**
- **Poor social relationships**
- **Compulsive stealing or scrounging**
- **Constant Tiredness**

BULLYING

Bullying can be defined as using deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves.

The four main types of bullying are:

- **1. Physical 2. Verbal 3. Emotional 4. Cyber bullying**

All incidents of bullying should be dealt in the first instance, by the class teacher, followed by the appropriate Assistant Head and/or Senior Family Support Worker and/or Head Teacher as appropriate. A more detailed guide can be found in the school's anti-bullying and the On-line safety policies.

SELF HARM

If it comes to the attention of a teacher/ member of staff that a child is self-harming, they should alert the DSL. Actions by the DSL might include:

- Contacting parents
- Contacting Children services if the child meets the referral criteria.

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

- Staff are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.
- If staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, take immediate action by speaking to the DSL and recording concerns on Myconcern.

COUNTY LINES (NSPCC, 2020)

County lines is a form of criminal exploitation where urban gangs persuade, coerce or force children and young people to store drugs and money and/or transport them to suburban areas, market towns and coastal towns (Home Office, 2018). It can happen in any part of the UK and is against the law and a form of child abuse.

- Children and young people may be criminally exploited in multiple ways. Other forms of criminal exploitation include child sexual exploitation, trafficking, gang and knife crime.
- County lines gangs are highly organised criminal networks that use sophisticated, frequently evolving techniques to groom young people and evade capture by the police.
- Perpetrators use children and young people to maximise profits and distance themselves from the criminal act of physically dealing drugs (National Crime agency, 2018). Young people do the majority of the work and take the most risk.
- Dedicated mobile phone lines or “deal lines” are used to help facilitate county lines drug deals. Phones are usually cheap, disposable and old fashioned, because they are changed frequently to avoid detection by the police.
- Gangs use the phones to receive orders and contact young people to instruct them where to deliver drugs. This may be to a local dealer or drug user, or a dealer or drug user in another county.

HONOUR BASED VIOLENCE (HBV)

A crime or incident, which has or may have been committed, to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community'. (ACPO Working Definition 2008) ALL staff and volunteers will have a general understanding of how to identify a child who may be at risk of Honour Based Violence.

FORCED MARRIAGE

This is where one or both parties do not consent to marriage but are forced to do so through violence, threats or any form of coercion. Schools play an important role in safeguarding children from being forced to marry.

FEMALE GENTIAL MULTILATION

This is encompassed within the term Honour Based Violence.

The age at which girls undergo FGM varies enormously according to the community. The procedure may be carried out when the girl is newborn, during childhood or adolescence, at marriage or during the first pregnancy. However, the majority of cases of FGM are thought to take place between the ages of 5 and 8 and therefore girls within that age bracket are at a higher risk. (*Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines – Female Genital Mutilation pg16*)

- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs.
- It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.
- Staff, need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM.
- Indicators There is a range of potential indicators that a girl may be at risk of FGM.

- ALL staff and volunteers are aware of the "one chance rule" and will report all cases of suspected Honour Based Violence to the DSL immediately
- Staff **must** personally report to the police, cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. (*Keeping Children Safe in Education Sept 2016 pg. 55*)
- DSLs must report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM, Forced Marriage or other HBV appears to have taken place

MODERN SLAVERY

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 places a new statutory duty on public authorities, including schools, to notify the National Crime Agency (NCA) (section 52 of the Act) on observing signs or receiving intelligence relating to modern slavery. The public authority (including schools) bears this obligation where it has 'reasonable grounds to believe that a person may be a victim of slavery or human trafficking'.

- Staff must be aware of the above and contact the DSL should they suspect or receive information that either parents or their children may be victims of modern slavery. The DSL should then contact the NCA

REFUGEE & ASYLUM SEEKERS

Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) recognises the right of the child to an education. In England, education is compulsory and it can be provided at school "or otherwise" (as set out in the 1996 Education Act, section 7). The Local Authority also have a statutory duty under the Race Relations Act (Amendment) 2000 to promote race equality and eliminate racial harassment.

- Asylum seeker and refugee pupils aged 5-16 have exactly the same entitlement to full-time education as other UK pupils and economic migrants. This rule applies equally across Local Authority schools, academies and free schools.
- An asylum seeker is a person who has fled from their home country in search of safety and who has applied for political asylum in another country.
- Some asylum seeking children arrive in the UK with one or both parents, an older sibling or with a relative/family friend or customary care giver. There are also cases where children are passed off as children of a family when they are not related, but are with the carers under an agreement.
- A refugee is a person whose claim for asylum has been accepted and who has been granted refugee status in the UK. Refugees have often fled their home country and are unable to return there owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.
- Refugees are different from economic migrants: migrants have chosen to leave their country and have not necessarily had the traumatic experiences that most refugees have faced.
- Some children may say they are unaccompanied when claiming asylum - a trafficker may have told the child that in doing so they will be granted permission to stay in the UK and be entitled to claim welfare benefits.
- A significant number of children who are referred to local authority care as trafficked children or unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC), often then go missing and many go missing within one week. It is thought that they are then trafficked internally, within the UK, or out of the UK to other European countries.
- Whenever an unaccompanied child presents in a local authority area, all agencies dealing with the child should be alert to the possibility that the child may have been a victim of modern slavery, including the possibility that the child has been trafficked, and ensure that all relevant information about the child's circumstances is communicated to Children's Social Care. Information should be shared with consent where appropriate and where

possible, but information can be shared without consent if the professional judgement is that there is good reason to do so, such as where their safety may be at risk

- If there are concerns that a child is a victim of trafficking, the practitioners will need to inform the National Referral Mechanism, which is a framework for identifying victims of human trafficking or modern slavery and ensuring that they receive the appropriate support. The child's details should be provided using the forms available on the NCA [National Referral Mechanism website](#)

PEER ON PEER ABUSE

Occurs when a young person is exploited, bullied and / or harmed by their peers who are the same or similar age; everyone directly involved in peer on peer abuse is under the age of 18.

- ALL staff and volunteers understand that children can abuse other children
- ALL staff and volunteers will inform the DSL of suspected peer abuse
- Peer on peer abuse will be taken as seriously as any other form of abuse
- Physical abuse between peers will be managed under the school's Behaviour Policy
- Emotional abuse between peers will be managed under the school's Anti-Bullying Policy
- Harmful sexual behaviour will be identified and managed using the Brook Traffic Light Tool and Harmful Sexual behaviour – Hackett (2010) with support and guidance from Blackpool Schools Safeguarding Officer
- **Sexting** will be managed on a case by case basis using national and local guidance and advice from Blackpool Schools Safeguarding Officer
- In cases of suspected or actual peer on peer abuse a risk assessment will be undertaken and appropriate and proportionate control measures put in place to manage and reduce risk. Seek advice from Blackpool Schools Safeguarding Officer
- Referrals to Children's Social Care, Police and/or other appropriate agencies will be made where thresholds are met

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (for example food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts, money or in some cases simply affection) as a result of engaging in sexual activities.

- Sexual exploitation can take many forms ranging from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for affection or 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.
- Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying including cyberbullying and grooming
- However, it also important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse. (*Keeping Children Safe in Education – Statutory guidance for school and colleges September 2020- part 1- pg. 9*)
- Staff should follow school procedures for reporting any concerns they have about a child to the DSL and record their concerns on MyConcern.

RADICALISTION – PREVENT DUTY

On 1 July 2015 the Prevent duty (section 26) of The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 came into force. This duty places the responsibility on local authorities and schools to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all its pupils. As a school, we recognise that safeguarding against radicalisation is as important as safeguarding against any other vulnerability. All staff are expected to uphold and promote the fundamental principles of British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. We believe that children should be given the opportunity to explore diversity and understand Britain as a multi-cultural society; everyone should be treated with respect whatever their race, gender, sexuality, religious belief, special need, or disability.

As part of our commitment to safeguarding and child protection we fully support the government's Prevent Strategy.

The statutory guidance makes clear that schools and childcare providers 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 an "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.

The definition of extremism includes calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas. Terrorist groups very often draw on extremist ideas developed by extremist organisations.

- The general risks affecting children and young people may vary from area to area, and according to their age.
- Schools are in an important position to identify risks within a given local context.
- It is important that we as a school understand the risks so that we can respond in an appropriate and proportionate way.
- Terrorist organisations, which can include religious groups, animal rights groups and right wing groups

Risk factors:

- There is an increased risk of online radicalisation, as terrorist organisations seek to radicalise young people through the use of social media and the internet.
- There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to a terrorist ideology.
- Staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection.
- Children at risk of radicalisation may display different signs or seek to hide their views.
- Staff should use their professional judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately.
- Even very young children may be vulnerable to radicalisation by others, whether in the family or outside, and display concerning behaviour.
- The Prevent duty does not require teachers or staff to carry out unnecessary intrusion into family life but as with any other safeguarding risk, they must take action when they observe behaviour of concern.
- If there are concerns re: a child and /or family are at risk- contact DSL immediately and complete a report on MyConcern.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

We recognise that pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. Additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group, including:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration
- Pupils being more prone to peer group isolation than other pupils
- The potential for pupils 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.
- The school offers extra pastoral support for pupils with SEN and disabilities. This includes: SENDCO support, small groups and 1:1 support with FSW and/or with delegated staff.

Pupils with a social worker

Pupils may need a social worker due to safeguarding or welfare needs. We recognise that a child's experiences of adversity and trauma can leave them vulnerable to further harm as well as potentially creating barriers to attendance, learning, behaviour and mental health.

The DSL and all members of staff will work with and support social workers to help protect vulnerable children. Where we are aware that a pupil has a social worker, the DSL will always consider this fact to ensure any decisions are made in the best interests of the pupil's safety, welfare and educational outcomes. For example, it will inform decisions about:

- Responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks
- The provision of pastoral and/or academic support

Looked-after and previously looked-after children

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

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

We have an appointed designated teacher, Mrs. Karen Pearson Assistant Head/Year Five class teacher, who is responsible for promoting the educational achievement of looked-after children and previously looked-after children in line with [statutory guidance](#).

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

As part of their role, the designated teacher will:

- Work closely with the DSL to ensure that any safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children are quickly and effectively responded to.
- Work with virtual school heads to promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, including discussing how pupil premium plus funding can be best used to support looked-after children and meet the needs identified in their personal education plans.
- Work with outside agencies eg. Social workers, CAFCASS as part of the review process.

Absences from school

If a pupil is absent for 10 days without been seen by professional agencies. The Pupil Welfare Officer (PWO) and/or School will undertake a welfare safeguarding visit to the child's family home to see the child in person. (St Bernadette's Attendance policy 2020)

Mobile phones and cameras

- **Children who walk home in Year Five and Year Six can bring their mobiles to school but must give the mobiles to the class teacher for safeguarding during school hours. The mobiles will be returned at the end of the school day. Any child found to have a mobile phone in their possession during the school day will have it confiscated and parents will be contacted.**
- Staff are allowed to bring their personal phones to school for their own use, but will limit such use to non-contact time when pupils are not present. Staff members' personal phones will remain in their bags or cupboards, on silent, during contact time with pupils.
- Staff will not take pictures or recordings of pupils on their personal phones or cameras.
- We will follow the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018 when taking and storing photos and recordings for use in the school.
- We recognise that for some staff they use their mobiles as a diary but care should be exercised when setting up support meetings with the pupils and parents using personal mobiles.
- If staff are expecting important calls, their mobile can be left in the school office and answered by the office staff. Alternatively, the school telephone can be given to the expected caller.

PROCEDURES FOR MONITORING, RECORDING & REPORTING

At all times, staff should maintain confidentiality, ensuring that no information is left where it can be seen by other people, only informing the relevant staff members i.e. DSL/Head Teacher

At the time

Brief notes at the time or immediately after will help staff to complete the on-line reporting system - **Myconcern**, which will be automatically sent to the DSLs.

If staff are unable to access the online system, they should complete the **Concerns raised by parents/staff or Safe guarding record concern form as soon as possible.**

They should include:

- Date and time of disclosure/incident observed.
- Place and context of disclosure or concern.
- Remember to keep to factual information and not assumption or interpretation.
- Use the child's own language to quote rather than translating into your own terms.
- Be aware that the concerns either entered on MyConcern or on paper copy may be used at a later date to support a referral to an external agency

If the Concerns raised by parents/staff form is completed, it should then be passed to the DSL or deputy immediately. In the case of there being bruises or observed injuries, the Body Map on the **Safeguarding Record Concern Form**, should be completed. (All staff on the school email system have had a copy emailed to them). Appendix 3

The DSL or the Head will:

- Follow-up the referral using the completed **Myconcern** on line system or **Concerns raised by parents/staff or safeguarding record concern form** as a basis for consideration before action.
- Make additional records of discussions and any investigation that takes place.
- Make a decision whether to continue to monitor the situation or take the referral further and communicate this to the individual making the initial referral.
- Where a child is referred to social care the form should be completed a.s.a.p.
- Recorded information from meetings and other reports are stored in a file kept in secure cabinet in the FSW office. Any documents for inclusion in this folder should be given directly to the FSW or Head Teacher.

Notifying parents

- Where appropriate, we will discuss any concerns about a child with the child's parents. The DSL will normally do this in the event of a suspicion or disclosure.
- Other staff will only talk to parents about any such concerns following consultation with the DSL.
- If we believe that notifying the parents would increase the risk to the child, we will discuss this with the local authority children's social care team before doing so.
- In the case of allegations of abuse made against other children, we will normally notify the parents of all the children involved.

INTER-AGENCY LIAISON

At times, school staff may be called to participate in meetings organised and chaired by children services. These might be:

- Strategy discussions
- Child protection conference or review
- Family group conferences - for children in need, in a range of circumstances where a plan is required for the child's future welfare
- Professionals' meetings - in which representative professionals from different agencies are asked to meet to discuss children and their families with a view to providing support or making recommendations in terms of next stages of involvement
- Core group meetings - meeting in which a 'core' group of professionals associated with the family are asked to meet to review the progress of actions decided at case conferences and register reviews

At these meetings, representatives (usually the DSL) from the school should be ready to report providing information about:

- Attendance and punctuality.
- Academic achievement.
- The child's behaviour and attitude.
- Relationships with peer group and social skills generally.
- Child's appearance and readiness for school.
- Contact with parents/ carers.
- Any specific incidents that need reporting prior to the meeting, class teachers and other adults working closely with the child should be asked for their comments.
- Following the meeting feedback should be given and staff brought up-to-date with any actions that are needed.

CHILD PROTECTION PLANS

Children who are subject to Child Protection Plans will require additional support and monitoring. Children Services Department will inform a school receiving a child that have a Child Protection Plan and accompanying records should follow from the child's previous school.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN AT RISK

For children at risk, school may be the one stable place from which they can expect security and reassurance. It is not only being alert to potential abuse, but providing the support to help children through difficult times providing them with the coping skills that can help avoid situations arising and deal with the emotional difficulties afterwards if they do.

SUPPORT IN SCHOOL

All class teachers and senior leaders are responsible, in conjunction with other school staff, for the pastoral needs of the children in their care. This includes maintaining an opportunity for children to share their concerns and following the guidance in this document. Our curriculum includes 'circle time' during which children may be presented with issues included in our PSHCE scheme of work. In addition, circle time can be used to raise issues spontaneously that are particularly relevant to the class at that time.

Care should always be taken in regard to the discussion of sensitive issues and advice should be sought where there are concerns. The PSHCE coordinator has available a variety of resources (including SEAL) to support circle time and the discussion of issues.

THE CURRICULUM

Within our curriculum, there will also be opportunities to discuss issues, which some children might find sensitive and disturbing. Care should be taken particularly in relation to discussion about families and their make up. Assumptions about members of families and the presence of both parents should be avoided both in discussion and the presentation of materials. During PSHE discussions, staff should be alert to the fact that some children will have very different experiences and may find content 'sensitive' within their own histories. Staff should make themselves familiar with the background of the children in their care in order to avoid children becoming distressed.

PHYSICAL CONTACT WITH PUPILS

Some form of physical contact with pupils by teachers is inevitable. In some cases, it is necessary for reassurance. However, all teachers should be aware of issues related to touching and the way in which this might be misconstrued. This relates particularly to any sensitive areas of the body. In the event of physical restraint being used, it is important that only the minimum amount is used in order to prevent the pupil from causing injury to themselves, others or property. Following such an intervention, the teacher should complete a concerns form.

The Department of Education Use of Reasonable Force - Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies July 2013 pg. 5 says:

Schools can use reasonable force to:

- remove disruptive children from the classroom where they have refused to follow an instruction to do so
- prevent a pupil behaving in a way that disrupts a school event or a school trip or visit
- prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety or lead to behaviour that disrupts the behaviour of others

- prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil, or to stop a fight in the playground; and
- restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.

Schools cannot:

- use force as a punishment – it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.

Power to search pupils without consent

In addition to the general power to use reasonable force described above, head teachers and authorised staff can use such force as is reasonable given the circumstances to conduct a search for the following “prohibited items”:

- Knives and weapons
- Alcohol
- Illegal drugs
- Stolen items
- Tobacco and cigarette papers
- Fireworks
- Pornographic images
- Any article that has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence, cause personal injury or damage to property.

Force cannot be used to search for items banned under the school rules.

WORKING WITH PARENTS

It is important that school has an established approach to working with parents.

Parents' and children's need for privacy should be respected. Attitudes to and contact with parents should be non judgemental in order to obtain the most conducive working relationship. The priority is the needs of the child and effective liaison is crucial for this. It should be recognised that families from different backgrounds and cultures will have different approaches to child-rearing. These differences should be acknowledged and respected provided they do not place the child at risk as defined earlier in the document. We do have access to support for parents where it is felt that this would be useful. This includes:

Pupil Welfare

School Nursing Team

CAMHS

Young Persons Wellbeing Support Team

PSHE Parent, Carer Information site- <https://sites.google.com/headstart.blackpool.org.uk/pshe-parentcarer-site/home>

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF

This is an extremely difficult and sensitive area to address. These should be reported in the first instance to designated staff member and/or the Head teacher, who will take advice from the Local authority –LADO – lado@blackpool.gov.uk

WHISTLE BLOWING

Whistleblowing is when a worker reports suspected wrongdoing at work. Wrong-doing covered by this ‘public interest disclosure’ includes:

- someone’s health and safety is in danger;
- damage to the environment;

- a criminal offence;
- not obeying the law;
- covering up wrongdoing;
- misusing public funds; (and in schools)
- actions that negatively affect the welfare of children

Where staff have concerns they should aim to report it internally first before using an external 'prescribed person or body'. Making a report to an external person may only be undertaken where the staff member thinks the school will cover it up, would treat them unfairly if they complained or have raised the matter before, but the concern hasn't been dealt with.

Schools should identify a member of staff and a governor to receive concerns of this kind; they should also identify the local authority contact person.

Staff members with concerns should follow these steps:

- Line Manger
- Specified person (or governor) in school
- Local Authority
- Union or Professional Association
- Prescribed Person or Body (e.g. Ofsted, Education Funding Agency, Children's Commissioner or NSPCC)
- alternatively contact the whistleblowing charity, 'Public Concern At Work' www.pcaw.org.uk
- St Bernadette's have adopted Blackpool Council Whistle Blowing Policy

REVIEW AND MONITORING OF THE POLICY

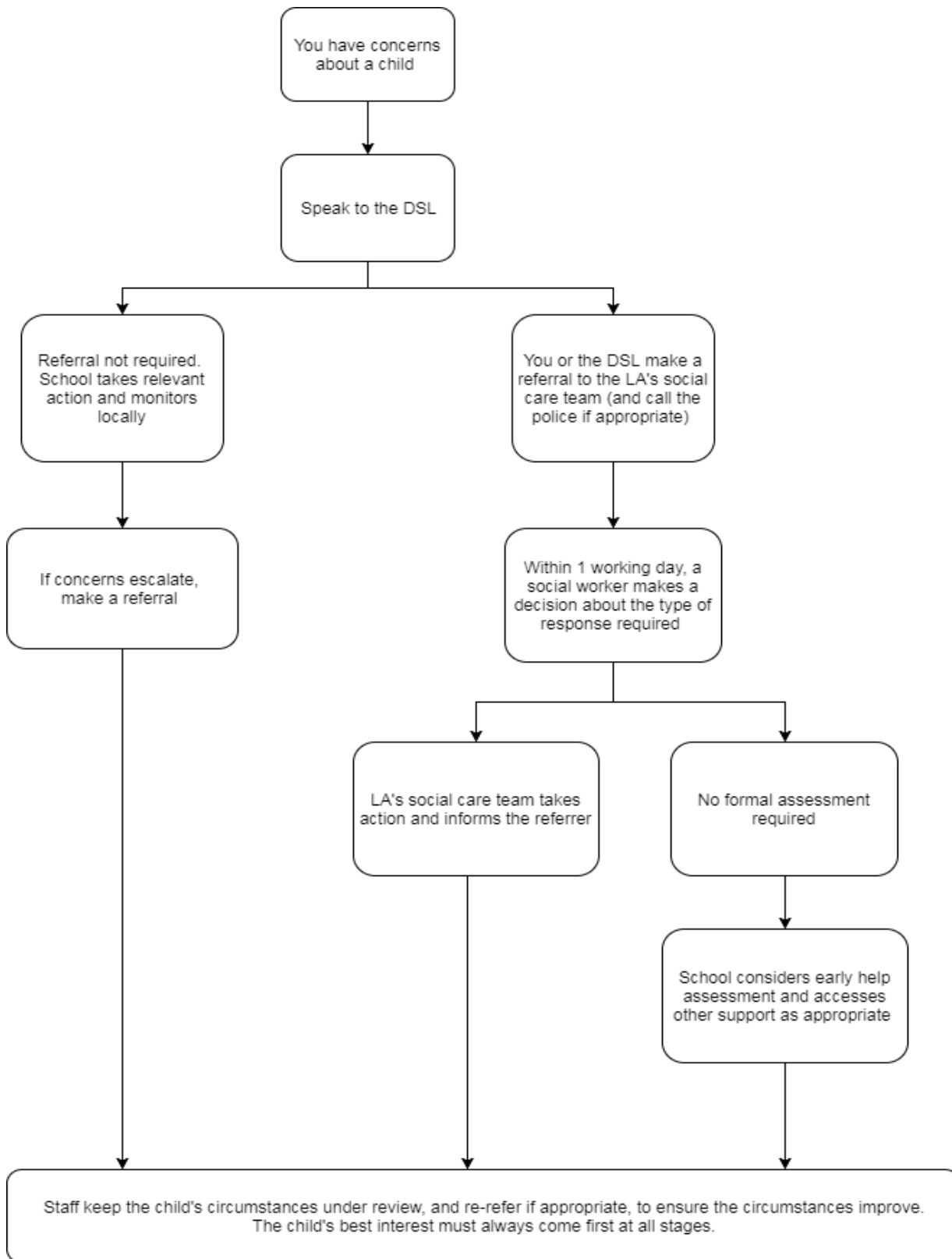
This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis or earlier if legislation should change.

Next date of review – September 2022

Appendix 1

Figure 1: procedure if you have concerns about a child's welfare (as opposed to believing a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or in immediate danger)

(Note – if the DSL is unavailable, this should not delay action..)



Appendix 2

DEALING WITH DISCLOSURE – CHECK LIST

- Listen to the child.
- Try not to show any shock you might feel.
- Take what they say seriously.
- Stay calm and reassure them that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Don't make promises about what might or might not happen next.
- You cannot promise confidentiality.
- You might consider using phrases such as 'you've done the right thing' or 'you're not to blame' or 'I understand'.
- Allow the child to talk but do not interrogate or ask leading questions - use questions such as 'Do you have anything else to tell me?'
- Do not make judgements about the people children refer to - they may be people they love
- Explain what will happen next and who you will need to talk to.
- Make brief notes at the time and write them up afterwards - keep both sets just in case.
- Use diagrams on safeguarding form to record the position of any bruising or marks.
- Be objective in your recording.
- After the disclosure, appropriate support should be given to both the child and the members of staff receiving and dealing with the disclosure.
- If not sure "ask Senior Management".

Appendix 3

**St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School
Safeguarding Record Concern Form**

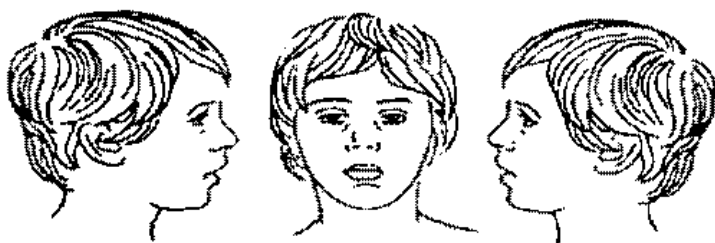
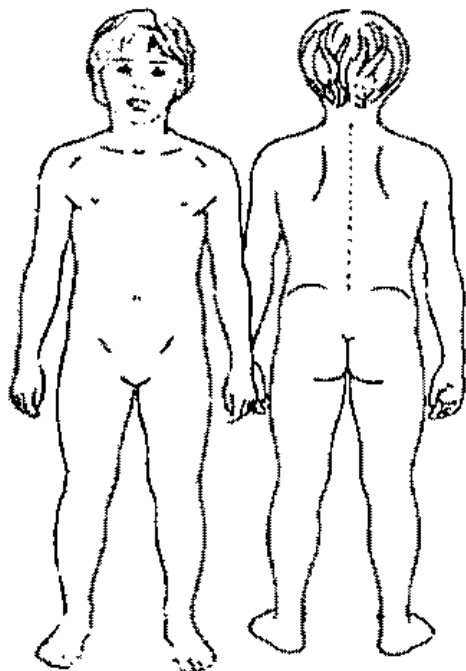
Child's Name: Male/Female: Date of Birth: Class:	Your Name: Date: Time:
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My Concern/s (please indicate as many as are appropriate)

- Is because an adult has reported concerns to me
- Is because a child has disclosed information to me
- Is a result of something I have seen, heard or believe
- Is because I suspect child abuse

Indicate any injury on the appropriate section of the diagrams below – DO NOT PHOTOGRAPH IT

Description of injury:



If the child has given an account of this injury give details:

Please indicate the attitude of the child regarding the injury:

If the parent has volunteered an account of this injury give details:

Please indicate the attitude of the parent regarding this injury:

Any additional information:

Action taken by Senior Designated Officer for safeguarding:

Signed:

Date:

Time:

Notes of any further action (please include dates and persons involved in actions):

Date completed..... Date received by FSW/HT.....

Appendix 4

St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Concerns raised by *parent/staff *please circle

Name of child

Class

Please write a brief report of conversation and any actions agreed or advice given

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Signed.....

Date.....

Actions

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Signed.....

Date.....

Appendix 5

Safer recruitment and DBS checks – policy and procedures

We will record all information on the checks carried out in the school's single central record (SCR). Copies of these checks, where appropriate, will be held in individuals' personnel files. We follow requirements and best practice in retaining copies of these checks, as set out below.

New staff

When appointing new staff, we will:

- Verify their identity
- Obtain (via the applicant) an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate, including barred list information for those who will be engaging in regulated activity (see definition below). We will not keep a copy of this for longer than 6 months
- Obtain a separate barred list check if they will start work in regulated activity before the DBS certificate is available
- Verify their mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities
- Verify their right to work in the UK
- Verify their professional qualifications, as appropriate
- Ensure they are not subject to a prohibition order if they are employed to be a teacher
- Carry out further additional checks, as appropriate, on candidates who have lived or worked outside of the UK, including (where relevant) any teacher sanctions or restrictions imposed by a European Economic Area professional regulating authority, and criminal records checks or their equivalent.
- Ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where we take a decision that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment on the individual's personnel file. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.
- Ask for written information about previous employment history and check that information is not contradictory or incomplete.
- Seek references on all short-listed candidates, including internal candidates, before interview. We will scrutinise these and resolve any concerns before confirming appointments. The references requested will ask specific questions about the suitability of the applicant to work with children.

Regulated activity means a person who will be:

- Responsible, on a regular basis in a school or college, for teaching, training, instructing, caring for or supervising children; or
- Carrying out paid, or unsupervised unpaid, work regularly in a school or college where that work provides an opportunity for contact with children; or
- Engaging in intimate or personal care or overnight activity, even if this happens only once and regardless of whether they are supervised or not

Existing staff

If we have concerns about an existing member of staff's suitability to work with children, we will carry out all the relevant checks as if the individual was a new member of staff. We will also do this if an individual moves from a post that is not regulated activity to one that is.

We will refer to the DBS anyone who has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child or vulnerable adult where:

- We believe the individual has engaged in [relevant conduct](#); or

- The individual has received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence, or there is reason to believe the individual has committed a listed relevant offence, under the [Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 \(Prescribed Criteria and Miscellaneous Provisions\) Regulations 2009](#); or
- The 'harm test' is satisfied in respect of the individual (i.e. they may harm a child or vulnerable adult or put them at risk of harm); and
- The individual has been removed from working in regulated activity (paid or unpaid) or would have been removed if they had not left

Agency and third-party staff

We will obtain written notification from any agency or third-party organisation that it has carried out the necessary safer recruitment checks that we would otherwise perform. We will also check that the person presenting themselves for work is the same person on whom the checks have been made.

Contractors

We will ensure that any contractor, or any employee of the contractor, who is to work at the school has had the appropriate level of DBS check (this includes contractors who are provided through a PFI or similar contract). This will be:

- An enhanced DBS check with barred list information for contractors engaging in regulated activity
- An enhanced DBS check, not including barred list information, for all other contractors who are not in regulated activity but whose work provides them with an opportunity for regular contact with children
- We will obtain the DBS check for self-employed contractors.
- We will not keep copies of such checks for longer than 6 months.
- Contractors who have not had any checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or engage in regulated activity under any circumstances.
- We will check the identity of all contractors and their staff on arrival at the school.

For self-employed contractors such as music teachers or sports coaches, we will ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where we decide that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought.

Trainee/student teachers

Where applicants for initial teacher training are salaried by us, we will ensure that all necessary checks are carried out.

Where trainee teachers are fee-funded, we will obtain written confirmation from the training provider that necessary checks have been carried out and that the trainee has been judged by the provider to be suitable to work with children.

In both cases, this includes checks to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006.

Volunteers

We will:

- Never leave an unchecked volunteer unsupervised or allow them to work in regulated activity

- Obtain an enhanced DBS check with barred list information for all volunteers who are new to working in regulated activity
- Carry out a risk assessment when deciding whether to seek an enhanced DBS check without barred list information for any volunteers not engaging in regulated activity. We will retain a record of this risk assessment
- Ensure that appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that individuals are not disqualified under the 2018 Childcare Disqualification Regulations and Childcare Act 2006. Where we decide that an individual falls outside of the scope of these regulations and we do not carry out such checks, we will retain a record of our assessment. This will include our evaluation of any risks and control measures put in place, and any advice sought

Governors

All governors will have an enhanced DBS check without barred list information.

They will have an enhanced DBS check with barred list information if working in regulated activity.

Appendix 6

Allegations of abuse made against staff

This section of this policy applies to all cases in which it is alleged that a current member of staff, including a supply teacher or volunteer, has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, or
- 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 may pose a risk of harm to children, or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

It applies regardless of whether the alleged abuse took place in the school. Allegations against a teacher who is no longer teaching and historical allegations of abuse will be referred to the police. We will deal with any allegation of abuse against a member of staff or volunteer very quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

Suspension of the accused until the case is resolved

Suspension will not be the default position, and will only be considered in cases where there is reason to suspect that a child or other children is/are at risk of harm, or the case is so serious that it might be grounds for dismissal. In such cases, we will only suspend an individual if we have considered all other options available and there is no reasonable alternative.

Based on an assessment of risk, we will consider alternatives such as:

- Redeployment within the school so that the individual does not have direct contact with the child or children concerned
- Providing an assistant to be present when the individual has contact with children
- Redeploying the individual to alternative work in the school so that they do not have unsupervised access to children
- Moving the child or children to classes where they will not come into contact with the individual, making it clear that this is not a punishment and parents have been consulted
- Temporarily redeploying the individual to another role in a different location, for example to an alternative school or other work for the Local Authority.

Definitions for outcomes of allegation investigations

- **Substantiated:** there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation
- **Malicious:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive
- **False:** there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation
- **Unsubstantiated:** there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation (this does not imply guilt or innocence)
- **Unfounded:** to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made

Procedure for dealing with allegations

In the event of an allegation that meets the criteria above, the Head Teacher (or Chair of Governors where the Head Teacher is the subject of the allegation) – the ‘case manager’ – will take the following steps:

- Immediately discuss the allegation with the designated officer at the local authority. This is to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action, including whether further enquiries are necessary to enable a decision on how to proceed, and whether it is necessary to involve the police and/or children’s social care services. (The case manager may, on occasion, consider it necessary to involve the police *before* consulting the designated officer – for example, if the accused individual is deemed to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence. In such cases, the case manager will notify the designated officer as soon as practicably possible after contacting the police)
- Inform the accused individual of the concerns or allegations and likely course of action as soon as possible after speaking to the designated officer (and the police or children’s social care services, where necessary). Where the police and/or children’s social care services are involved, the case manager will only share such information with the individual as has been agreed with those agencies
- Where appropriate (in the circumstances described above), carefully consider whether suspension of the individual from contact with children at the school is justified or whether alternative arrangements such as those outlined above can be put in place. Advice will be sought from the designated officer, police and/or children’s social care services, as appropriate
- **If immediate suspension is considered necessary**, agree and record the rationale for this with the designated officer. The record will include information about the alternatives to suspension that have been considered, and why they were rejected. Written confirmation of the suspension will be provided to the individual facing the allegation or concern within 1 working day, and the individual will be given a named contact at the school and their contact details
- **If it is decided that no further action is to be taken** in regard to the subject of the allegation or concern, record this decision and the justification for it and agree with the designated officer what information should be put in writing to the individual and by whom, as well as what action should follow both in respect of the individual and those who made the initial allegation
- **If it is decided that further action is needed**, take steps as agreed with the designated officer to initiate the appropriate action in school and/or liaise with the police and/or children’s social care services as appropriate
- Provide effective support for the individual facing the allegation or concern, including appointing a named representative to keep them informed of the progress of the case and considering what other support is appropriate.
- Trade union if a member, Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), named colleague who is not involved in the investigation, Blackpool Occupational Health.

- Inform the parents or carers of the child/children involved about the allegation as soon as possible if they do not already know (following agreement with children's social care services and/or the police, if applicable). The case manager will also inform the parents or carers of the requirement to maintain confidentiality about any allegations made against teachers (where this applies) while investigations are ongoing. Any parent or carer who wishes to have the confidentiality restrictions removed in respect of a teacher will be advised to seek legal advice
- Keep the parents or carers of the child/children involved informed of the progress of the case and the outcome, where there is not a criminal prosecution, including the outcome of any disciplinary process (in confidence)
- Make a referral to the DBS where it is thought that the individual facing the allegation or concern has engaged in conduct that harmed or is likely to harm a child, or if the individual otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child
- If the school is made aware that the secretary of state has made an interim prohibition order in respect of an individual, we will immediately suspend that individual from teaching, pending the findings of the investigation by the Teaching Regulation Agency.
- Where the police are involved, wherever possible the governing board and local authority will ask the police at the start of the investigation to obtain consent from the individuals involved to share their statements and evidence for use in the school's disciplinary process, should this be required at a later point.

Additional considerations for supply staff

If there are concerns or an allegation is made against someone not directly employed by the school, such as supply staff provided by an agency, we will take the actions below in addition to our standard procedures.

- We will not decide to stop using a supply teacher due to safeguarding concerns without finding out the facts and liaising with our local authority designated officer to determine a suitable outcome
- The governing board will discuss with the agency whether it is appropriate to suspend the supply teacher, or redeploy them to another part of the school, while the school carries out the investigation
- We will involve the agency fully, but the school will take the lead in collecting the necessary information and providing it to the local authority designated officer as required
- We will address issues such as information sharing, to ensure any previous concerns or allegations known to the agency are taken into account (we will do this, for example, as part of the allegations management meeting or by liaising directly with the agency where necessary)

When using an agency, we will inform them of our process for managing allegations, and keep them updated about our policies as necessary, and will invite the agency's HR manager or equivalent to meetings as appropriate.

Timescales

- Any cases where it is clear immediately that the allegation is unsubstantiated or malicious will be resolved within 1 week
- If the nature of an allegation does not require formal disciplinary action, we will institute appropriate action within 3 working days
- If a disciplinary hearing is required and can be held without further investigation, we will hold this within 15 working days

Specific actions

Action following a criminal investigation or prosecution

The case manager will discuss with the local authority's designated officer whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and, if so, how to proceed, taking into account information provided by the police and/or children's social care services.

Conclusion of a case where the allegation is substantiated

If the allegation is substantiated and the individual is dismissed or the school ceases to use their services, or the individual resigns or otherwise ceases to provide their services, the case manager and the school's personnel adviser will discuss with the designated officer whether to make a referral to the DBS for consideration of whether inclusion on the barred lists is required. If they think that the individual has engaged in conduct that has harmed (or is likely to harm) a child, or if they think the person otherwise poses a risk of harm to a child, they must make a referral to the DBS.

If the individual concerned is a member of teaching staff, the case manager and personnel adviser will discuss with the designated officer whether to refer the matter to the Teaching Regulation Agency to consider prohibiting the individual from teaching.

Individuals returning to work after suspension

If it is decided on the conclusion of a case that an individual who has been suspended can return to work, the case manager will consider how best to facilitate this.

The case manager will also consider how best to manage the individual's contact with the child or children who made the allegation, if they are still attending the school.

Unsubstantiated or malicious allegations

If an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, the head teacher, or other appropriate person in the case of an allegation against the head teacher, will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the pupil(s) who made it, or whether the police should be asked to consider whether action against those who made the allegation might be appropriate, even if they are not a pupil.

Confidentiality

The school will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

The case manager will take advice from the local authority's designated officer, police and children's social care services, as appropriate, to agree:

- Who needs to know about the allegation and what information can be shared
- How to manage speculation, leaks and gossip, including how to make parents or carers of a child/children involved aware of their obligations with respect to confidentiality
- What, if any, information can be reasonably given to the wider community to reduce speculation
- How to manage press interest if, and when, it arises

Record-keeping

The case manager will maintain clear records about any case where the allegation or concern meets the criteria above and store them on the individual's confidential personnel file for the duration of the case. Such records will include:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation
- Details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved
- Notes of any action taken and decisions reached (and justification for these, as stated above)

If an allegation or concern is not found to have been malicious, the school will retain the records of the case on the individual's confidential personnel file, and provide a copy to the individual.

Where records contain information about allegations of sexual abuse, we will preserve these for the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), for the term of the inquiry. We will retain all other records at least until the individual has reached normal pension age, or for 10 years from the date of the allegation if that is longer.

The records of any allegation that is found to be malicious will be deleted from the individual's personnel file.

References

When providing employer references, we will not refer to any allegation that has been proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious, or any history of allegations where all such allegations have been proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious.

Learning lessons

After any cases where the allegations are *substantiated*, we will review the circumstances of the case with the local authority's designated officer to determine whether there are any improvements that we can make to the school's procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future.

This will include consideration of (as applicable):

- Issues arising from the decision to suspend the member of staff
- The duration of the suspension
- Whether or not the suspension was justified
- The use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated. We will consider how future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual.

Appendix 7

Additional reading and references:

Blackpool safeguarding procedures – if you are would like to find out further information – <http://panlancashirescb.proceduresonline.com/>

www.blackpoolsafeguarding.org.uk

Information Sharing-Advice for Practitioners providing services to children, young people, parents and carers. www.gov.uk/government/publications

What to do if you're worried a child is being abused –

www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused--2

Use of Reasonable Force – Advice for Headteachers, staff and governor. Department of Education July 2013

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444051/Use_of_reasonable_force_advice_Reviewed_July_2015.pdf

Brooks Traffic Light tool

<https://www.brook.org.uk/our-work/the-sexual-behaviours-traffic-light-tool>

Excerpted from Harmful Sexual Behaviour Framework,

<https://www.icmec.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Hackett-Continuum-of-Harmful-Behavior-Excerpted.pdf>

NSPCC –information on line

www.nspcc.org.uk

This policy also links with other school policies:

- **Online safety policy**
- **Anti-bullying policy**
- **Behaviour policy**
- **Attendance policy**
- **Whistle Blowing policy**

Signed: *Denise Duke* (Family Support Worker/DSL)

Date: November 2021

Review date: October 2022