

Updated in accordance with guidance provided by Dorset Safeguarding and Standards, in line with new guidance and legislation.



# Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

To be approved by the Council of Management & Wellbeing Committee  
June 2023

Next Review Date: June 2023

Whole school policy including EYFS.

Our Nominated Governor for Safeguarding is  
[Sophie O'Keefe](#).

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead is  
[Henry Marshall](#).

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead for EYFS is  
[Rebecca Eves](#).

Our Deputy Safeguarding Leads are  
[Ian Mitchell-Innes](#), [Victoria Ford](#), [Becky Venner](#), [Jane Haak](#),  
[Sue Power](#), [Nikki Nathan](#), [Sophie Weir](#), [Richard Egerton](#) and  
[Dale Woolmer](#).

**Port Regis is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. We expect all staff to share this commitment and to become familiar with our Child Protection Policy.**

**Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership**

**01305 221196; [pan-dorsetscp@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:pan-dorsetscp@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)**

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## **Child Protection Policy**

The Child Protection Policy for Port Regis School is based on guidance provided by the Dorset Safeguarding and Standards Team; it reflects the Pan-Dorset Inter-Agency Safeguarding Procedures and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' [2022](#).

This policy consists of three main documents:

- A. The overarching safeguarding policy (statement of principles)
- B. Detailed child protection procedures and
- C. Child protection summary sheet. The latter is printed separately and provided routinely for those adults who will not have the opportunity to read this policy in its entirety but will have unsupervised contact, even as a 'one-off', with pupils on a temporary or intermittent basis such as supply, peripatetic or visiting professionals.

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## **Key Points**

**If you are worried that a child is being abused, neglected, or is in need of further support:**

1. Speak to Henry Marshall (Deputy Head / 07531818848 / [hjnm@portregis.com](mailto:hjnm@portregis.com)) who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
2. Speak to one of his Deputies: Ian Mitchell Innes (English teacher) (07879642963) [imi2@portregis.com](mailto:imi2@portregis.com); Becky Venner (LSU / Asst. Head of Middle School / 07791655641 / [bxv@portregis.com](mailto:bxv@portregis.com)); Jane Haak (Director of Music / [jpkh@portregis.com](mailto:jpkh@portregis.com)); Sue Power (Nurse and Health Centre Manager / [scp@portregis.com](mailto:scp@portregis.com)); Nikki Nathan (SENDCo. / [nn@portregis.com](mailto:nn@portregis.com)); Sophie Weir (Head of Lower School / [siw@portregis.com](mailto:siw@portregis.com)); Richard Egerton (Head of Middle School / [rie@portregis.com](mailto:rie@portregis.com)); Dale Woolmer (Head of Boarding / [drw@portregis.com](mailto:drw@portregis.com)).
3. In EYFS, speak to Rebecca Eves (Head of Lower School / 07837227124 / [rre@portregis.com](mailto:rre@portregis.com)) who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead for EYFS. In her absence, speak to Victoria Ford (Pre-prep / 07977159463 / [vmf@portregis.com](mailto:vmf@portregis.com)), who is the Deputy DSL for EYFS.
4. Governor Responsible for Safeguarding, Sophie O'Keefe: [sokeefe@portregis.com](mailto:sokeefe@portregis.com).
5. Speak to the Dorset LADO (01305 221 122) [lado@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:lado@dorsetcc.gov.uk): Martha Sharpe.
6. Speak to the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership (01305 221 196) [pan-dorsetscp@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:pan-dorsetscp@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk).
7. Staff can speak to the Dorset Children's Advice and Duty Service: 01305 228 558. (There is a separate line for members of the public, such as parents, who can speak with the Dorset Children's Advice and Duty Service (CHAD): 01202 228 866).
8. Speak to Dorset Children's Services Sturminster Newton Offices (01258 472652. Out of hours: 01202 657279).
9. Speak with the Safeguarding and Standards Advisor – Schools: Lynne Bowman (01305 221 122).

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10. Police (999) or (101 for non-emergency)

**If you are concerned that a member of staff may be abusing a child you should straight away:**

1. Speak to the Head, Titus Mills (01747 857 800) [head@portregis.com](mailto:head@portregis.com);
2. Speak to the DSL, [Henry Marshall \(07531818848\)](tel:07531818848)  
[hjnm@portregis.com](mailto:hjnm@portregis.com);
3. Or speak to the Chair of Governors, James Hussey (07860 386 514)  
[jhussey@portregis.com](mailto:jhussey@portregis.com).

**If you are concerned about extremism or radicalisation:**

1. Call the Dorset Children's Advice and Duty Service: 01305 228 558.  
They will direct as appropriate;
2. Or phone the police on 101 (non-emergency), or 999;
3. Or go to [counter-extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:counter-extremism@education.gsi.gov.uk), or phone 02073407264.

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## **A. Safeguarding Policy**

Port Regis School recognises that the welfare of the child is paramount: the needs and wishes of each child will be put first. Throughout this document, 'child' refers to a young person under the age of 18.

We take seriously our duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children and young people in our care.

Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2018, HM Government statutory guidance, defines safeguarding as follows:

- 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; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

The Board of Governors will act in accordance with Section 175 / Section 157 of the Education Act 2002 and the supporting statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2022 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in this school. This policy is in line with statutory guidance for schools and colleges: Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2022; Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018; and the Independent schools standards Regulations, 2019. It is available to parents on request and via the school website.

The overlap between safeguarding and RSHE is significant, and this policy should be read alongside statutory guidance RSHE 2019 and the Port Regis RSHE and Health Education Policy.

The Board of Governors is accountable for ensuring that the school meets its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding and that all policies, procedures, training and teaching are in place and effective.

It is a Dorset Safeguarding Standard that governors receive an annual report from the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Nominated Governor to help monitor compliance with statutory responsibilities. This happens in November of the academic year in line with Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership requirements.

The Dorset Standards also include that each school and college completes and submits to the Safeguarding Children Board an annual audit of its safeguarding

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and child protection arrangements, including an action plan. This happens during the Autumn Term of the academic year.

All children have the right to be safeguarded from harm or exploitation whatever their age; health or disability; gender or sexual orientation; race, religion, belief or first language; political or immigration status.

Governors, staff and regular volunteers in this school understand the importance of taking appropriate action and working in partnership with children, their parents / carers and other agencies to safeguard children and promote their welfare. Everyone at Port Regis who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. School staff are particularly important in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as we are in a position to identify concerns early and provide help for children. School staff form part of the wider safeguarding system for children to prevent concerns from escalating. We work with Children's Social Care, the Police, Health Services and other relevant agencies to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- afford protection for all pupils;
- enable staff and volunteers to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
- promote a culture which makes this school a safe place to learn and in which children feel safe.

This policy applies to the Headmaster, all staff, including supply and peripatetic staff, regular volunteers (i.e. those who come into school once a week or more, or 4 times in a 30-day period), governors or anyone working on behalf of the school.

We will endeavour to safeguard children and young people by:

- always acting in their best interests;
- valuing them, listening to and respecting them;
- involving them in decisions which affect them;
- ensuring that staff demonstrate professional curiosity and always consult with the DSL about their concerns;
- Being aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone they are being abused, exploited or neglected and / or recognise their experiences as harmful;



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- never tolerating bullying, homophobic behaviour, racism, sexism or any other forms of discrimination, including through the use of technology;
- promoting a whole school / college approach to preventing child on child violence and sexual harassment, including ‘upskirting’;
- ensuring the provision of a broad, balanced curriculum, which affords a range of opportunities to learn about keeping themselves safe, including Relationships Education, Sex Education and online safety. This is in line with points 128, 129, 130, 131, 132 and 133 of KCSiE 2022, below.

### **“Opportunities to teach Safeguarding”**

*128. Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure that children are taught about how to keep themselves and others safe, including online. It should be recognised that effective education will be tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children, including children who are victims of abuse, and children with special educational needs or disabilities.*

*129. In schools, relevant topics will be included within Relationships Education (for all primary pupils), and Relationships and Sex Education (for all secondary pupils) and Health Education (for all primary and secondary pupils). In teaching these subjects schools must have regard to the statutory guidance,<sup>36</sup> which can be found here. Colleges may cover relevant issues through tutorials.*

*130. Schools and colleges play a crucial role in preventative education. Preventative education is most effective in the context of a whole-school or college approach that prepares pupils and students for life in modern Britain and creates a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobic and sexual violence/harassment. The school/college will have a clear set of values and standards, upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school/college life. These will be underpinned by the school/college’s behaviour policy and pastoral support system, as well as by a planned programme of evidence-based RSHE delivered in regularly timetabled lessons and reinforced throughout the whole curriculum. Such a programme should be fully inclusive and developed to be age and stage of development appropriate (especially when considering the needs of children with SEND and other vulnerabilities). This program will tackle at an age-appropriate stages issues such as:*

- *stereotyping, prejudice and equality*
- *body confidence and self-esteem*
- *how to recognise an abusive relationship, including coercive and controlling behaviour*
- *boundaries and consent*
- *healthy and respectful relationships*
- *the concepts of, and laws relating to- sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic*

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- abuse, so called honour-based violence such as forced marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and how to access support, and*
- what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable.*

*131. The Department has produced a one-stop hub for teachers which can be accessed here: [Teaching about relationships sex and health \(Gov.uk\)](#). This includes teacher training modules on the RSHE topics and non-statutory implementation guidance. Further guidance focused on teaching relationships education specifically to prevent sexual harassment and sexual violence will be published in Spring 2022.*

*132. The following resources, plus many more listed in Annex B, may also help schools and colleges understand and teach about safeguarding:*

- DfE advice for schools: teaching online safety in schools*
- UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS)<sup>37</sup> guidance: Education for a connected world*
- UKCIS guidance: Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people*
- The UKCIS external visitors guidance will help schools and colleges to ensure the maximum impact of any online safety sessions delivered by external visitors*
- National Crime Agency's CEOP education programme: Thinkuknow*
- Public Health England: Every Mind Matters*
- Harmful online challenges and online hoaxes - this includes advice on preparing for any online challenges and hoaxes, sharing information with parents and carers and where to get help and support.*

*133. Whilst it is essential that governing bodies and proprietors ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place, they should be careful that “over blocking” does not lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what children can be taught with regard to online teaching and safeguarding.*

- exercising our duties under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 by ensuring all staff attend ‘Prevent’ training in respect of radicalisation and extremist behaviour and by assessing the risk of our pupils being drawn into terrorism;*
- supporting attendance, and acting if a child is missing school regularly;*
- appointing a senior member of staff from our Leadership Team as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and ensuring this person has the time, funding, training, resources and support to perform the role effectively;*
- appointing at least one Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure there is always someone available during school hours for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns;*

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- ensuring that where a child is suffering or is likely to suffer from harm that a referral to Children's Social Care will be made;
- appointing a Designated Teacher to promote the educational achievement of children who are Looked-After (in care) - this responsibility defaults to the DSL - and to work closely with the virtual school head to discuss how pupil premium, plus additional funding, can support the progress of these children;
- ensuring that staff working with Looked-After Children have information appropriate to their role regarding, for example, the child's care arrangements, legal status and contact with birth parents, should this become necessary;
- assuming the responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of children who have left care, if and when this becomes necessary;
- making sure all staff and volunteers are aware of, and committed to, the safeguarding policy and child protection procedures, understanding their individual responsibility to take action;
- ensuring that all those named above (i.e. DSLs and Deputy DSLs; Designated Teacher for Looked-After children; Headmaster; all staff and regular volunteers) have training appropriate to their roles as set out in statutory guidance or recommended by the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership;
- identifying any concerns early, and providing appropriate help to prevent them from escalating, including working with parents / carers and other agencies as appropriate.

Port Regis recognises that early help can provide support for children experiencing problems, such that risks are minimised, harm is avoided and the need for intervention from statutory and specialist agencies is reduced. It recognises, further, that providing early help can be more effective in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children than reacting later, once a crisis point has been reached.

Preventative services can do more to reduce abuse and neglect than reactive services. Many services and professions help children and families, so coordinating their work is important to reduce inefficiencies and omissions. Preventative measures at Port Regis include support through the following channels: [RSE/Life Skills](#), Learning Support, Health Centre, School Doctor, School Counsellor, the Tutor System, Jigsaw and Girls on Board.

***Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges, at any point in a child's life, from the foundation years through to the teenage years.***

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Port Regis will follow the guidance provided by the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership in identifying, assessing and acting to support children who may benefit from early help. This guidance can be found at:

<https://www.pdscp.co.uk/working-with-children/early-help/>;

- sharing information about child safeguarding concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving children and their parents / carers appropriately;
- acknowledging and actively promoting the understanding that multi-agency working is the best way to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm;
- taking the right action, in accordance with the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership inter-agency safeguarding procedures, if a child discloses or there are indicators of abuse;
- keeping clear, accurate and contemporaneous safeguarding and child protection records;
- recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made, in accordance with statutory guidance and legal requirements, and making sure that at least one appointment panel member has undertaken safer recruitment training - the headmaster has done this;
- ensuring that the Safer Recruitment and Interview Policy is followed and is robust, including ensuring that shortlisted candidates will be subject to an online search.
- providing effective management for staff through induction, support and regular update training appropriate their role(s);
- adopting a code of conduct for all staff and volunteers which includes acceptable use of technologies, staff / pupil relationships and communications, including the use of social media;
- ensuring our online safety process includes appropriate filters and monitoring systems, and that there is a robust, clear policy for pupils' use of social media (Pupils' Safe and Acceptable ICT Usage Policy);
- enforcing the rule that mobile phones are not permitted for pupils in school;
- ensuring staff and volunteers understand about 'whistle blowing';
- ensuring staff know how to escalate concerns about pupils or staff if they think the right action has not been taken to safeguard children;

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- promoting a culture in which staff feel able to report to senior leaders that which they consider to be unacceptable behaviour or breaches of the school Code of Conduct by their colleagues, having faith that they will be listened to and that appropriate action will be taken;
- dealing appropriately with any allegations / concerns about the behaviour of staff or volunteers, in accordance with the process set out in statutory guidance.
- ensuring that appropriate and effective safeguarding measures are in place when our pupils attend off-site activities, including day and residential visits and/or other activities, and acting in accordance with the school's Risk Assessment Policy.

This Child Protection Policy forms part of a suite of policies and other documents which relate to the wider safeguarding responsibilities of the school. It should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Staff Code of Conduct Policy;
- Mobile Phone and Social Media Policy;
- Safer Recruitment and Interview Policy;
- Policy for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Teachers and Other Staff;
- Whistleblowing Policy;
- Missing Child Procedure;
- Anti-bullying Policy, including Cyber-bullying Policy;
- Policy on Physical Restraint of Pupils.
- RSHE Policy.
- Promoting Good Behaviour Policy

These policies and procedures are available to view internally in the following location: [Central Documents\Handbook\Policies](#). They are also available from the school office, on request, and from the school website.

## **B. Child Protection Procedures**

These procedures should be read in conjunction with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education, Part One: Information for all School and College Staff' [2022](#), plus Annex A.

### **1. What is Child Protection?**

1.1 Child protection is one very important aspect of safeguarding. It refers to the activity which is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

### **2. What is significant harm?**

2.1 The Children Act 1989 introduced the concept of 'significant harm' as the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention by statutory agencies in family life, in the best interests of children. There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes 'significant harm'. Sometimes, it might be a single traumatic event, but more often it is a compilation of significant events which damage the child's physical and psychological development. Decisions about significant harm are complex and, in each case, require discussion with the statutory agencies: Children's Social Care and Police.

### **3. Purpose of these procedures**

3.1 These procedures explain what action should be taken if there are concerns that a child is or might be suffering harm. A 'child' is a person under 18 years.

### **4. Responsibilities and roles**

4.1 All adults in the school have an individual responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children by taking appropriate action. This includes taking action where there are child protection concerns.

4.2 The Governing Body is accountable for ensuring the school has an effective child protection policy. This is reviewed annually, and is publicly available on the school website, and by request. The Governing Body will ensure that the mechanisms are in place to support all staff in understanding and discharging their role and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding all pupils in our school.

4.3 The statutory safeguarding guidance for schools, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', [2022](#), states that all schools and colleges should have 'a senior board level (or equivalent) lead to take leadership responsibility' for safeguarding. This person is Mrs Sophie O'Keefe.

4.4 The Senior Leadership Team, DSLs and Governors will sign to confirm that they have read the full guidance of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education, [2022](#)'. All other staff and volunteers will sign to confirm that they have read Part One and Annex A of KCSIE, [2022](#).

4.5 This school has a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The DSL, along with the deputies, is most likely to have a complete safeguarding picture. This is the person who takes lead responsibility for safeguarding.

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Any concerns about children should be discussed with / reported to the DSL, who will decide what action to take, including referring to Children's Social Care or Police, as appropriate. [More information about the DSL role can be found in Part Two \(page 28\) and in Annex C of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022.](#)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead in this school is [Henry Marshall](#). The school also has Deputy Safeguarding Leads: [Ian Mitchell-Innes](#), [Becky Venner](#), [Jane Haak](#), [Sue Power](#), [Nikki Nathan](#), [Sophie Weir](#), [Richard Egerton](#) and [Dale Woolmer](#).

The Designated Safeguarding Lead for EYFS is [Rebecca Eves](#), and Victoria Ford is her deputy.

4.6 The school will make parents aware of all relevant legislation, and the Port Regis Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, alerting them to the fact that referrals may be made by the DSL or a member of the school staff under relevant circumstances.

4.7 In addition, Dorset Children's Social Care can provide advice and guidance on safeguarding and child protection matters. See Appendix 1 for contact details.

4.8 All action is taken in line with the relevant guidance documents, and with appropriate consultation with the relevant organisations – listed below:

- DfE guidance ([2022](#)) – Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) – published by HM Government.
- BCP and Dorset Inter-Agency Safeguarding Procedures & Guidance, accessed through the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership website [www.pdscp.co.uk](http://www.pdscp.co.uk).
- Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership': [www.pdscp.co.uk](http://www.pdscp.co.uk)
  - This was formed pursuant to the Children and Social Work Act 2017, and replaced the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and Dorset Safeguarding Children Board (SCB), effective from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2019.
  - The 'Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership' is led by the following four organisations: Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council; Dorset Council; NHS Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG); and Dorset Police.
  - The method of access to support and advice to assist in the safeguarding of children is via the Dorset Children's Advice and Duty Service: 01305 228 558.



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- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused – Government Guidance (2015).
- Independent Schools Standards Regulations 2015 (and the non-statutory supplementary guidance: The Independent School Standards, Guidance for Independent Schools, April 2019).

4.9 The school has a Designated Teacher: [Henry Marshall](#) (DCSB Level 3).

4.10 The Designated Teacher, pursuant to sections 4 to 6 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, has the responsibility to promote the educational achievement of children who are looked after (as above) and those children who have left care through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders or who were adopted from state care outside England and Wales.

4.11 A previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable and all staff should have skills knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe. When dealing with previously looked after children, Port Regis will work closely and appropriately with relevant agencies.

4.12 The Designated Teacher will be given appropriate training, including the relevant qualifications and experience, when the need arises.

Statutory guidance contains further information: [The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher](#).

## **5. What is child abuse?**

5.1 It is generally accepted that there are four main forms of abuse. The following definitions are from Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018).

### **i) Physical abuse**

This is a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

### **ii) Emotional abuse**

This is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying



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(including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

iii) **Sexual abuse**

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

iv) **Neglect**

This is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and / or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy because of maternal substance use. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers);
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

5.2 It is accepted that in all forms of abuse there are elements of emotional abuse, and that some children are subjected to more than one form of abuse at any one time. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

## **6. Recognising child abuse – signs and symptoms**

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6.1 Keeping Children Safe in Education is clear: 'All school and college staff members should be aware of the signs of abuse and neglect so that they are able to identify cases of children who may need help or protection'.

6.2 Recognising child abuse is not always easy, and it is not the responsibility of school staff to decide whether child abuse has taken place or if a child is at significant risk. However, they do have a clear individual responsibility to act if they have a concern about a child's welfare or safety, or if a child talks about (discloses) abuse. They should maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here', and always act in the best interests of the child.

6.3 Knowing what to look for is vital to the early identification of abuse and neglect. If staff are unsure, they should **always** speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a Deputy). Any concerns about a child's welfare should be acted upon, immediately.

6.4 All school and college staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

6.5 All staff should be aware of the process for making referrals to children's social care and for statutory assessments under the Children Act 1989, especially sections 17 (children in need) and 47 (a child suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm) that may follow a referral, along with the role they might be expected to play in such assessments.

Appendix 2 details examples of possible indicators of each of the four kinds of abuse.

## **7. Child on Child abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment**

7.1 All staff should recognise that children can abuse their peers (often referred to as peer on peer abuse) and it can take many forms. It can happen both inside and outside of school, and online. It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of child on child abuse and know how to respond to reports. This can include, but is not limited to, the following: bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying); abuse within intimate partner relationships; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexual violence and sexual harassment; consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos; causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party; up-skirting and initiation / hazing type violence and rituals. Addressing inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be relatively innocuous) can be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future.

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7.2 Sexual violence and harassment can occur between two children of any age or sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

7.3 Port Regis recognises that even if there are no reported cases of child on child abuse, such abuse may still be taking place, yet not being reported. The school recognises that all child on child abuse is unacceptable, and appreciates that girls will more likely be the victims and boys the perpetrators of it. Port Regis has a zero-tolerance approach to abuse, acknowledging that it should never be passed off as 'just banter'.

The 'Everyone's Invited: OFSTED' report, June 2021, found that a lack of reporting was seen as normal, and that teachers underestimate the prevalence of sexual abuse. Moreover, it found that some staff are unable to identify problematic behaviour. Pupils are often reluctant to talk to teachers, and schools are having to navigate the area with little guidance. There is often a lack of communication between schools and safeguarding partners, in addition to which the RSHE curriculum can be insufficient to meet pupils' educational needs. Recommendations arising from these findings: a school culture must be created in which it is assumed it is happening; all kinds of sexual harassment are recognised, addressed and sanctioned; high quality training is available for those delivering RSHE; there is staff and governor training to understand and identify all sorts of abuse; record keeping must be strong, and DSLs must have time to engage with local partners.

Port Regis is mindful of these findings and recommendations, and will work to support the government's 'Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy, 2021', which promotes the following strategic pillars: pursue, prepare, protect, prevent.

7.4 The Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019, which is commonly known as the Up-skirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019. 'Up-skirting' is where someone takes a picture under a person's clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any sex, can be a victim. We will ensure that all staff act immediately should an incident of Up-skirting arise in our school and report this to the police / social care immediately.

7.5 The school's initial response to a report from a child is important. It is essential that **all** victims are reassured, and that they are being taken seriously, and that they will be supported and kept safe. At Port Regis, any victims are treated with the utmost care. At all times, victims will be taken extremely seriously.

7.6 Ultimately, any decisions are for the school to make on a case-by-case basis, with the DSL or Deputy taking a lead role and using their professional judgement, supported by other agencies, such as children's social care and the police, as required.

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7.7 Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are likely to be complex and require difficult decisions to be made, often quickly and under pressure. Pre-planning and effective policies provide the school with the foundation for a calm, considered and appropriate response to any reports.

7.8 Following a report of sexual violence, the DSL (or Deputy) should make an immediate risk and needs assessment, considering the following:

- The victim,
- The alleged perpetrator,
- All the other children (and staff, if appropriate).

7.9 Following assessment of a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment, the school will act appropriately. Appropriate action might include one or more of the following:

- Internal management,
- Early Help,
- Referral to Children's Social Care,
- Reporting to the Police, in parallel to children's social care.

7.10 If children require safeguarding, and a referral to Children's Social Care is made, the process for managing sexually harmful behaviour can be found in the inter-agency safeguarding procedures on the DSCB website. In brief, a multi-agency meeting should be convened by Children's Social Care, following a referral, and an action plan agreed.

7.11 A school risk assessment will be put in place, by way of a meeting, which will consider the following:

- The wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed,
- The nature of the alleged incident,
- The ages of the children involved,
- The developmental stages of the children involved,
- Any power imbalance between the children,
- If the incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse?
- If there are ongoing risks to the victim, other children, or school staff?
- Contextual safeguarding.

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All staff should act in the best interests of the child.

7.12 All staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyber bullying);
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment;
- Sexting (also known as ‘youth produced sexual imagery’);
- Initiation/hazing type violent rituals.

**All** staff should be clear on the school’s policy and procedures with regards to peer on peer abuse. Below is further detail on Port Regis’s procedures.

### **7.13 Prevention**

In the broadest sense, it is hoped that the School’s Aims create and sustain an environment that helps to minimise the risk and occurrence of child-on-child abuse. Port Regis also looks to take a proactive, preventive and educative approach to safeguarding issues with its staff and pupils. We aim to embed RSHE in the Port Regis culture. Opportunities are sought to give relevant teaching and learning opportunities to our pupils, especially within RSE/Life Skills. However, relevant lessons occur throughout the school, in areas such as, yet not limited to, those below:

- Whole school assemblies;
- Middle and Lower School and Pre-prep assemblies;
- Sunday Prayers;
- Pastoral discussion between pupils and Teachers, Tutors, Houseparents and SLT members;
- Engagement between pupils and the wider pastoral team, including Medical Centre staff, Independent Listener, Counsellors etc.;
- Boarding House meetings;
- Life Skills discussions;
- External speakers.

Port Regis recognises the challenge that young people face in talking about such issues. Therefore, learning opportunities aim to develop confidence in our pupils so that they feel they can communicate about safeguarding issues, including asking questions and disclosing concerns. Port Regis believes that other underpinning preventive learning about issues such as healthy relationships, online safety, recognising abusive and coercive behaviour,

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covered in the avenues outlined above, may help to support learning about abuse.

KCSIE 2022 states:

*'94. Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure they facilitate a whole school or college approach to safeguarding. This means involving everyone in the school or college, and ensuring that safeguarding, and child protection are at the forefront and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development. Ultimately, all systems, processes and policies should operate with the best interests of the child at their heart.*

*95. Where there is a safeguarding concern, governing bodies, proprietors and school or college leaders should ensure the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide.*

*96. The school's or college's safeguarding policies and procedures (some of which are listed below) should be transparent, clear, and easy to understand for staff, pupils, students, parents, and carers. Systems should be in place, and they should be well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for children to confidently report, any form of abuse or neglect, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously, and knowing they can safely express their views and give feedback.'*

Pupils should be aware that there are a variety of ways in which they can express their views and feelings on any pastoral matter, access support in order to prevent abuse from occurring, report abuse that is happening, and to find ongoing support after abuse has been identified. Listed below are options for pupils to find help and support if they feel they are being abused or that one of their peers is at risk from abuse or Child-on-Child abuse. These are listed in more detail in the Bullying Policy and in a more visual way on notice boards in classroom, boarding houses and the Health Centre.

- Deputy Head
- Houseparents
- GAPs
- Other Residential Staff
- Tutors/Form teachers – in daily meetings
- Parents/Siblings
- Dorm Captains
- Independent Listeners
- School Nurses
- External agencies such as Childline (0800 1111), Samaritans and [www.childnet-int.org](http://www.childnet-int.org)

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#### **7.14 Procedures Adopted when a Disclosure of Child on Child Abuse is made.**

The following general principles and guidelines should be followed:

##### **Initial response**

- Any direct disclosure by a pupil of an incident of abuse should be taken very seriously and managed sensitively. Basic principles of listening sensitively, providing reassurance, not asking leading questions and not guaranteeing confidentiality should be remembered.
- All incidents should be responded to in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- Any incident should be referred to the DSL without delay.
- The DSL should meet with the staff involved and there should be subsequent interviews with the pupils involved if appropriate.

##### **Investigation**

- The DSL will decide if further information is required to decide on the best response.
- The pastoral team provide relevant facts about the circumstances of the pupil/pupils involved which could influence the decisions of the DSL.
- In incidents that may involve young people not at Port Regis, the DSL/Headmaster will decide if there is a need to contact another school, college, setting or individual.
- A pupil against whom an allegation of abuse has been made such that there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm' may be suspended from Port Regis during the investigation in accordance with the School's Behaviour and Bullying policies. In the case of a pupil whose parents are abroad, the pupil's Guardian will be requested to provide support to the pupil and to accommodate him/her if it is necessary to suspend him/her during the investigation.
- When necessary, the DSL will take advice from Children's Social Care on the investigation of such allegations and will take all appropriate action to ensure the safety and welfare of all pupils involved including the pupil or pupils accused of abuse.
- If a pupil against whom an allegation of abuse has been made is required to be interviewed by the police, then the pupil will be supported during the interview by an appropriate adult.

##### **7.15 Risk Assessment and Referral**

- The DSL will assess the risk presented by the incident to the pupil/pupils involved and in conjunction with the Headmaster decide whether a referral to the police or Children's Social Care is required or whether to proceed using the School's pastoral support and disciplinary system or, if required, Early Help from our local network of supporting services as outlined in this policy.
- The DSL should inform parents at an early stage and involve them in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put the young person at risk of harm.

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- At any point in the process, if there is a concern that a young person has been harmed or is at risk of serious harm a referral should be made to Children's Social Care. Any staff member can make such a referral but should inform the DSL as soon as possible that a referral has been made.

### **7.16 Recording Process and Outcomes**

- Notes should be made of all conversations and meetings to do with any incident of Child on Child abuse. Formal written records should be completed immediately or within 24 hours. Records should include date, time, place, persons involved, nature of disclosure and any relevant details. These should be emailed to the DSL immediately. Records of all safeguarding concerns are kept by the DSL.
- The DSL and the Pastoral Team will offer ongoing support in the best interests of the pupils in our care and action may need to be co-ordinated where there is a wider investigation involving Children's Social Care and/or the Police.

7.17 Staff should not dismiss abusive behaviour as 'normal' between young people and should not develop high thresholds before acting. The Deputy Head manages a Peer on Peer log, where staff log incidents between pupils focusing on: Sexual, Physical, Emotional and Racial abuse. This is reviewed weekly in the Pastoral meeting and the Deputy Head circulates trends to all staff half termly. The Governor responsible for Safeguarding also reviews the log alongside SLT members.

7.18 There may be delays to a criminal process. However, the school should not wait for the outcome before protecting the victim, alleged perpetrator, and other children in the school.

7.19 The school needs to manage the balance between supporting the victim and ensuring that the alleged perpetrator has an education, and safeguarding support, themselves. Appropriate ongoing support should be provided to the victim.

7.20 Sexting will be investigated in accordance with the school's 'Anti-Bullying Policy, including Cyber-Bullying Policy', which pays heed to guidance from the UK Council for Child Internet Safety: 'Sexting in schools and colleges: responding to incidents and safeguarding young people', August 2016.

The school governing body should ensure that the Child Protection Policy includes all that is set out in 'Part two: The Management of Safeguarding', pages 23 - 48, of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', 2022. **For ease of reference, see the following:**

- **J:\Handbook\Policies\10a Bullying - Preventing and Tackling.doc**
- **J:\Handbook\Policies\Mobile Phone and Social Media Policy Staff.doc**



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- [J:\Handbook\Policies\9a Behaviour – Rewards and Sanctions Policy.doc](#)
- [J:\Handbook\Policies\2d PSHE Handbook \(Life Skills\) doc](#)

## **8. Pupils engaging in under-age sexual activity**

8.1 Sexual activity where one of the partners is under the age of 16 is illegal, although prosecution of young people who are *consenting partners of a similar age* is not usual. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will exercise professional judgement when deciding whether to refer or take advice from social workers, **considering** such things as any imbalance of power, wide difference in ages or developmental stages etc.

8.2 Where a child is under the age of 13, penetrative sex is classified as rape under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, so must be reported to social workers in every case.

8.3 The inter-agency safeguarding procedures, on the DSCB website, have more information about under-age sexual activity.

## **9. Child sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)**

Staff have regular training to ensure they recognise and understand that both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse. This abuse can occur when an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CSE and CCE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation.

### **9.1. Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)**

Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting, or pickpocketing. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others.

Both girls and boys are victims CCE however the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys (pg. 140 Annex B KCSiE 2022)

### **9.2 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-

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penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge for example through others sharing videos or images of them on social media. CSE can affect any child who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16- and 17-year-olds who can legally consent to have sex. Some children may not realise they are being exploited for example they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.

We will ensure that we work with children's social care, the police, and any other professionals, following local processes and procedures to ensure we are meeting the needs of the child.

## **10. Child abduction and community safety incidents**

10.1 Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a minor from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. Child abduction can be committed by parents or other family members; by people known but not related to the victim (such as neighbours, friends and acquaintances); and by strangers.

10.2 Other community safety incidents in the vicinity of a school can raise concerns amongst children and parents - for example, people loitering nearby or unknown adults engaging children in conversation.

10.3 As children get older and are granted more independence (for example, as they start walking to school on their own) it is important they are given practical advice on how to keep themselves safe.

10.4 It is important that lessons focus on building children's confidence and abilities rather than simply warning them about all strangers. Further information is available at: [www.actionagainstabduction.org](http://www.actionagainstabduction.org) and [www.clevernevergoes.org](http://www.clevernevergoes.org).

## **11. Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism**

11.1 Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms, including: sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs.

11.2 Further information on the signs that someone may be a victim of modern slavery, the support available to victims and how to refer them to the NRM is available in the Modern Slavery Statutory Guidance. Modern slavery: How to Identify and Support Victims - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)).

## 12. Cybercrime

12.1 Cybercrime is criminal activity committed using computers and/or the internet. It is broadly categorised as either 'cyber-enabled' (crimes that can happen off-line but are enabled at scale and at speed on-line) or 'cyber dependent' (crimes that can be committed only by using a computer). Cyber-dependent crimes include:

- unauthorised access to computers (illegal 'hacking'), for example accessing a school's computer network to look for test paper answers or change grades awarded;
- denial of Service (Dos or DDoS) attacks or 'booting'. These are attempts to make a computer, network or website unavailable by overwhelming it with internet traffic from multiple sources; and,
- making, supplying or obtaining malware (malicious software) such as viruses, spyware, ransomware, botnets and Remote Access Trojans with the intent to commit further offence, including those above.

12.2 Children with particular skill and interest in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into cyber-dependent crime.

12.3 If there are concerns about a child in this area, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a Deputy), should consider referring into the Cyber Choices programme. This is a nationwide police programme supported by the Home Office and led by the National Crime Agency, working with regional and local policing. It aims to intervene where young people are at risk of committing, or being drawn into, low level cyber-dependent offences and divert them to a more positive use of their skills and interests.

12.4 Note that Cyber Choices does not currently cover 'cyber-enabled' crime such as fraud, purchasing of illegal drugs on-line and child sexual abuse and exploitation, nor other areas of concern such as on-line bullying or general on-line safety.

12.5 Additional advice can be found at:

- Cyber Choices: <http://www.cyberchoices.uk/>;

- 'NPCC - When to call the Police':

<https://www.npcc.police.uk/documents/Children%20and%20Young%20people/When%20to%20call%20the%20police%20guidance%20for%20schools%20and%20colleges.pdf>;

- National Cyber Security Centre: <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/>.

## 13. Domestic Abuse

Staff at Port Regis understand the importance of being aware of domestic abuse as a safeguarding issue.

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13.1 Domestic abuse represents one quarter of all violent crime. It is actual or threatened physical, emotional, psychological or sexual abuse. It involves the use of power and control by one person over another. It occurs regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, age, and religion, mental or physical ability. Domestic abuse can also involve other types of abuse.

13.2 We use the term domestic abuse to reflect that a number of abusive and controlling behaviours are involved beyond violence.

13.3 Slapping, punching, kicking, bruising, rape, ridicule, constant criticism, threats, manipulation, sleep deprivation, social isolation, and other controlling behaviours all count as abuse.

13.4 Living in a home where domestic abuse takes place is harmful to children and can have a serious impact on their behaviour, wellbeing and understanding of healthy, positive relationships. Children who witness domestic abuse are at risk of significant harm and staff are alert to the signs and symptoms of a child suffering or witnessing domestic abuse.

13.5 How does it affect children?

Children can be traumatised by seeing and hearing violence and abuse. They may also be directly targeted by the abuser or take on a protective role and get caught in the middle. In the long term, this can lead to serious long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, children may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

13.6 What are the signs to look out for?

Children affected by domestic abuse reflect their distress in a variety of ways. They may change their usual behaviour and become withdrawn, tired, start to wet the bed and have behavioural difficulties. They may not want to leave their house or may become reluctant to return. Others will excel, using their time in your care as a way to escape from their home life. None of these signs are exclusive to domestic abuse so when you are considering changes in behaviours and concerns about a child, think about whether domestic abuse may be a factor.

## **14. County Lines**

'County Lines' is a form of abuse that involves drug gangs from big cities expanding operations to smaller towns, exploiting children and vulnerable people to sell drugs. Dealers will use dedicated mobile phone lines, known as 'deal lines', to take orders from drug users. The majority of those groomed are teenagers, although on occasion pre-teens have been exploited. Victims are often groomed over social media, enticed by material 'reward'. Children exploited in this way might be exposed to physical, mental and sexual abuse.

Young people will go missing for extended periods of time, missing education and moving away from their friendship groups.

## **15. Serious Violence**

15.1 Children could be at risk of becoming involved in serious violent crime or with individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs. Indicators that may signal this are as follows:

- increased absence from school,
- change in friendships,
- change in relationships with older individuals or groups,
- significant decline in performance,
- signs of self-harm,
- significant change in well-being,
- signs of assault,
- unexplained injuries, gifts or new possessions.

15.2 Any concerns about this will be discussed with the DSL who will take appropriate action, which might include sharing 'soft intelligence' with Dorset Police and / or Children Services.

15.3 Any concerns about child sexual exploitation / criminal exploitation, county lines or serious violence will be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will take appropriate action, which might include completing a risk assessment form. The form and more detailed local procedures are in the inter-agency safeguarding procedures on the [Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Board](#) website.

## **16. Forms of abuse linked to culture, faith or belief**

All staff in this school will promote mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Some forms of abuse are linked to these and staff should strive to suspend professional disbelief (i.e. that they 'could not happen here') and to report promptly any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will seek further advice from statutory agencies, prior to contacting parents / carers.

**16.1 Female Genital Mutilation** is illegal and involves intentionally altering or injuring female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It can have serious and long-lasting implications for physical health and emotional well-being. Possible indicators include taking a girl out of school / country for a prolonged period or talk of a 'special procedure' or celebration. In addition to reporting any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, teachers (along with regulated health and social care professionals) have a statutory duty to report personally to the Police if they discover that female genital mutilation has or appears to have

been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases will face disciplinary sanctions.

**16.2 Forced Marriage** is illegal and occurs where one or both people do not or, in cases of people with learning disabilities, cannot consent to the marriage, and pressure or abuse is used. It is not the same as arranged marriage. Young people at risk of forced marriage might have their freedom unreasonably restricted or 'monitored' by siblings. There might be a request for extended absence from school, or the child might not return from a holiday abroad. We recognise that school staff can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage.

**16.3 So called 'honour-based' violence** is a crime or incident which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and / or community. It can exist in all communities and cultures, and occurs when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and / or community by breaking their honour code. Females are predominantly, but not exclusively, the victims, and the violence is often committed with some degree of approval and / or collusion from family or community members. All forms of so-called honour-based violence are abuse, regardless of the motivation, and should be referred accordingly. However, there are some significant differences in the immediate response required as involving families in cases of forced marriage is dangerous:

- It may increase the risk of serious harm to the victim. Experience shows that the family may punish them for seeking help;
- Relatives, friends, community leaders and neighbours should not be used as interpreters – despite any reassurances from this known person.

#### **16.4 Radicalisation and extremism**

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

Extremism is defined by HM Government as '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; and / or calls for the death of members of our armed forces, whether in this country or overseas'.

At Port Regis, we recognise that safeguarding against radicalisation and extremism is no different from safeguarding against any other vulnerability.

Our curriculum promotes respect, tolerance and diversity. Children are encouraged to share their views and to understand that they are entitled to have their own different beliefs which should not be used to influence others.

We recognise that children with low aspirations are more vulnerable to radicalisation. Therefore, we strive to equip our pupils with confidence, self-

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belief, respect and tolerance, as well as to set high standards and expectations for themselves.

Children are taught about how to stay safe when using the Internet, and are encouraged to recognise that people are not always who they say they are online. They are taught to seek adult help if they are upset or concerned about anything they read or see on the Internet.

Any concerns about pupils becoming radicalised or being drawn into extremism will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will *not* speak to parents / carers or other family members at this stage, but will take prompt advice from the Police.

### **16.5 Prevent**

Prevent is about safeguarding people and communities from the threat of terrorism and violent extremism. Prevent is part of CONTEST, the Government's counter-terrorism strategy. It aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

The Prevent strategy responds to the ideological challenge we face from terrorism and aspects of extremism, and the threat we face from those who promote these views. It seeks to do the following.

- Provide practical help to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. It ensures they are given appropriate advice and support.
- Work with a wide range of sectors (including education, criminal justice, faith groups, charities, online sectors and health sectors) where there are risks of radicalisation that we need to deal with.
- Prevent covers all forms of terrorism and extremism, and some aspects of non-violent extremism.

The Home Office works with local authorities, a wide range of government departments, and community organisations, to deliver the Prevent strategy. The police play a significant role in Prevent, in much the same way as they do when taking a preventative approach to other crimes.

- The main aim of Prevent is to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremism.

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- At the heart of Prevent is safeguarding children and adults. Providing early intervention to protect and divert people away from being drawn into terrorist activity is crucial.
- Prevent addresses all forms of extremism but continues to ensure resources and efforts are allocated based on threats to our national security.

Any individuals who are identified as being vulnerable to radicalisation are referred to a multi-agency Channel Panel. This ensures the appropriate interventions are put in place to protect the individual. Like child protection, Channel is a multi-agency safeguarding programme run in every local authority in England and Wales. It works to support vulnerable people with the intention of preventing them from being drawn into terrorism. It provides a range of support such as mentoring, counselling, assistance with employment etc. Where pupils at this school are being discussed, the DSL or Headmaster will attend the Panel meetings.

Staff and governors in this school have either attended a WRAP (Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent) session or have completed on-line Prevent training.

Please see the Port Regis Prevent Policy and Risk Assessment.

**To referrer:** email [MASH@dorset.pnn.police.uk](mailto:MASH@dorset.pnn.police.uk)

## **17. Children missing from care, home and education**

### **Emergency contacts**

Where reasonably possible the school should hold three emergency contact numbers for each pupil. This goes beyond the legal minimum and is good practice to give the school additional options to contact a responsible adult when a child missing education is also identified as a welfare and / or safeguarding concern.

17.1 All staff recognise that a child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including the specific types of abuse detailed above, and including child criminal exploitation / or travelling to conflict zones.

17.2 All staff will follow the school's procedure for dealing with unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify vulnerable pupils and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future. More information on this can be found in the Port Regis Attendance Registration Policy.

17.3 Actions could include involving other professionals and, if any of the criteria are met, informing the local authority where a pupil's name has been removed from the school roll.



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Staff should be aware of the school's 'Missing Child Procedure'.

**There is more information about specific safeguarding issues including links to websites in Part One and Annex A of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2022'.**

### **18. Children with family members in prison**

These children are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. The DSL will be aware of such pupils in school and will advise, guide and support staff, using the 'NICCO' website: [www.nicco.org.uk](http://www.nicco.org.uk). This provides resources for school staff to support children in such circumstances.

### **19. Responding to the child who discloses (talks about) abuse**

All staff and volunteers will do the following:

- Listen carefully to what is said;
- Avoid showing shock or disbelief;
- Observe the child's demeanour;
- Find an appropriate opportunity to explain that the information will need to be shared with others. They will not promise to keep the information confidential or a 'secret';
- Allow the child to continue at her / his own pace and not interrupt if the child is freely recalling events. They will not stop him / her to find a 'witness' as this could inhibit the child from saying more;
- Avoid asking questions or pressing for more information. Ask for clarification only. If questions are necessary, they should be framed an open manner and not 'lead' the child in any way: Tell me... Explain... Describe...
- Reassure the child, if necessary, that she / he has done the right thing by talking about it;
- Explain what will happen next, and with whom the information will be shared;
- Not ask the child to repeat the disclosure to anyone else in school – including the DSL - or ask him / her, or any other children who were present, to write a written account or 'statement'.
- **The school recognises that those who disclose such information may do so with difficulty, having chosen carefully to whom they will speak Accordingly, all staff will manage disclosures with sensitivity.**

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## **20. Taking action**

20.1 If, in exceptional circumstances, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or Deputy) is not available, this should not delay appropriate action being taken.

20.2 Where physical injuries have been observed, these will be carefully noted but not photographed. The staff member will not ask to see injuries that are said to be on an intimate part of the child's body.

20.3 Any disclosure or indicators of abuse will be reported verbally to the DSL or Deputy straightaway or, where they are not available, and concerns are immediate, ensure a referral is made without delay to Children's Social Care.

20.4 Staff at schools with boarding provision can seek advice in the first instance from the Dorset Children's Advice and Duty Service: 01305 228 558 (See Appendix 1 for contact details).

20.5 Where the child already has an allocated social worker, that person, or a manager or duty worker in the same team, must be contacted promptly.

20.6 A written record will then be made, using the 'Concerns Form', of what was said, including the child's own words, as soon as possible and given to the DSL.

20.7 If the child can understand the significance and consequences of making a referral to social workers, they will be asked for their views. It will be explained that whilst their views will be considered, the school has a responsibility to take whatever action is required to ensure the child's safety and that of other children.

20.8 The DSL will decide whether to contact parents at this stage. When judging whether to do so, it is necessary to consider if contacting the parent(s) / carer(s) is / are likely to place the child at risk of harm from their parent / carer's actions or reactions - for example, in circumstances where there are concerns that a serious crime such as sexual abuse, domestic violence or induced illness has taken place. If in any doubt, the DSL or staff member will call the Children Social Care first, and agree when parents / carers should be contacted and by whom. The reason for the decision not to contact parents first will be recorded in the child's school child protection file.

20.9 A Child Protection Referral from a professional cannot be treated as anonymous.

20.10 Where there is no disclosure by a child, but concerns are accumulating, such as in relation to neglect or emotional abuse, the DSL will ensure that all information is brought together and that he makes a professional judgement about whether to refer to outside agencies.

20.11 The Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership's 'Threshold Document' should be used to help clarify the pathway required for a child: whether concerns will be managed within the school; or with the help of other

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agencies as part of early help; or whether they require specialised support such as a social work assessment or referral to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

20.12 A member of staff who reports concerns to the DSL should expect some feedback, although confidentiality might mean in some cases that this is not detailed. If the member of staff is not happy with the outcome, she / he can press for reconsideration. Following this, if she / he still believes the correct action has not been taken, she / he will refer the concerns directly to Children Social Care.

## **21. Responding to concerns reported by parents or others in the community**

21.1 Occasionally, parents or other people in the local community, tell school staff about an incident, or accumulation of concerns, about which they have worries regarding the family life of a child who is also a pupil at the school.

21.2 If the incident or concern relates to *child protection*, the information cannot be ignored, even if there are suspicions about the motives of the person making the report. Members of staff will therefore pass the information to the DSL in the usual way.

21.3 It is preferable if the parent / community member who witnessed or knows about the concerns or incident makes a call to Children's Social Care themselves, as they will be better able to answer any questions. They can ask for their name not to be divulged if a visit is made to the family.

21.4 If the parent / community member refuses to make the referral, the DSL will clarify that he has a responsibility to do so and will also need to pass on to social workers how he is aware of the information.

21.5 This process applies to parents / community members who are also school staff. As professionals who work with children, they cannot be anonymous when making the referral, but can ask for the situation to be managed sensitively and, if necessary, for their identity to be withheld from the family if it will cause difficulties in their private life.

## **22. Remember**

22.1 Any suspicion or concern that a child or young person may be suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm, MUST be acted on. Doing nothing is not an option. Any suspicion or concerns should be reported without delay to the DSL or a Deputy. During term time, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and / or a Deputy should always be available, during school hours, for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. However, if for whatever reason they are not available, the staff member will discuss their concerns as soon as possible with either

- another senior member of staff or,

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- Children's Advice and Duty Service.

Anyone can make a referral, not just the DSLs.

22.2 It is important that everyone in the school is aware that the person who first encounters a case of alleged or suspected abuse is not responsible for making a judgement about whether abuse has occurred, and should not conduct an 'investigation' to establish whether the child is telling the truth. That is a task for social workers and the Police following a referral to them of concern about a child. The role of school staff is to act promptly on the information received.

22.3 This applies regardless of the alleged 'perpetrator': whether the child raises concerns about a family member or someone outside school, a member of staff or another child / pupil.

22.4 A careful record will be made of what has been seen / heard that has led to the concerns, including the date, time, location and the people who were present. As far as possible, staff should record, verbatim, what was said and by whom. The record will be passed to the DSL.

22.5 The DSL will keep a record of the conversation with the duty worker and other social workers, noting what actions will be taken and by whom, giving the date and time of the referral. The referral will be confirmed in writing on the inter-agency referral form (available on the DSCB website) as soon as possible and at least within 48 hours. Any pre-existing assessments such as through the Common Assessment Framework should be attached.

22.6 A school child protection file will be started in the child's name, where the child is not already known to social workers. If a file already exists, the new information will be added to the chronology.

**See Appendix 3 below for detailed record keeping guidance.**

### **23. Response from Children's Social Care to a school referral**

#### Referral

Once a referral is received by the team, a manager will decide on the next course of action within one working day. When there is concern that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer significant harm, this will be decided more quickly, and a strategy discussion will be held between the Police and Health professionals, and other agencies as appropriate (section 47 Children Act 1989).

The Designated Safeguarding Lead should be told within three working days of the outcome of the referral. If this does not happen he will contact the duty worker again.

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### Assessment

All assessments should be planned and co-ordinated by a qualified social worker. They should be holistic, involving other professionals, parents / carers, and the children themselves as far as practicable. Assessments should show analysis, be focused on outcomes, and usually take no longer than 45 working days from the point of referral. School staff have a responsibility to contribute fully to the assessment.

### S47 Enquiries (regarding significant harm)

The process of the investigation is determined by the needs of the case, but the child / young person will always be part of that process and sometimes without parents' knowledge or permission. On occasions, this will mean the child / young person is jointly interviewed by the Police and social workers, sometimes at a special suite where a video-recording of the interview is made.

### The Child Protection Conference

If, following the S47 enquiries, the concerns are substantiated, and the child is judged to be at risk of significant harm, a Child Protection Conference (CPC) will normally be convened. The CPC must be held within 15 days of the first strategy discussion and school staff will be invited to attend - normally the DSL or Headmaster. This person will produce a written report in the correct format (a proforma is available on the DSCB website). This will be shared with the child / young person and his / her family before the conference is held. A copy will also be sent to the person chairing the initial CPC at least 24 hours in advance.

More information is in the inter-agency safeguarding procedures ('Child Protection Conferences') on the DSCB website.

If the DSL disagrees with the decisions made by social workers regarding the outcome of the referral, the conclusions of the assessment or any actions taken, the matter should be discussed and, if necessary, escalated to more senior managers (under the escalation policy available on the DSCB website), *particularly* if the child's situation does not appear to be improving.

## **24. Responding to allegations or concerns about staff or volunteers**

24.1 Rigorous recruitment and selection procedures, and adherence to the school's Code of Conduct and safer practice guidance, will hopefully mean that there are relatively few allegations against or concerns about staff or volunteers. However, if a member of staff, or any other person, has any reason to believe that another adult has acted inappropriately, or abused a child or young person, they will act by reporting to the Headmaster (not the DSL if this is a different person). Even though it may seem difficult to believe that a colleague may be unsuitable to work with children, the risk is far too serious for any member of staff to dismiss such a suspicion without acting.

24.2 If the allegation / concern is about the Headmaster, the person with concerns will contact the Chair of Governors or the Local Authority Designated

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Officer (also known as the LADO) in the Local Authority Safeguarding and Standards Team. See Appendix 1 below for contact details.

24.3 In all cases of allegations against staff or volunteers, the Headmaster and Chair of Governors will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) without delay and follow the correct procedures as set out in the separate school policies:

- Whistleblowing Policy;
- Policy for Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Made Against Teachers and Other Staff;
- These must comply with Part Four of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' [2022](#).

## **25. Low-level concerns**

25.1 As part of Port Regis's approach to safeguarding, we promote an open and transparent culture in which all concerns about staff and volunteers are dealt with promptly, appropriately and are accurately recorded. Such concerns that are substantiated will be held on employees' personnel files. This includes those concerns that are categorised as 'low-level', not meeting the harms threshold as set out in Part Four of Keeping Children Safe in Education, [2022](#). The term 'low-level' does not suggest that the concern is insignificant, simply that it does not meet the harms threshold – in other words, to have:

- *behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child and/or;*
- *possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child and/or;*
- *behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; and/or*
- *behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.*

Therefore, a 'low-level concern' is any concern, no matter how seemingly small, that a member of staff, or a volunteer, might have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the Staff Code of Conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, yet that does not meet the aforementioned harms threshold for an allegation or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO. Examples of such behaviour could include being over-friendly with children; having favourites; taking photographs of children on personal mobile phones; engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or using inappropriate sexualised, intimidating or offensive language.

Reports of low-level concerns about supply staff and contractors will be notified to their employers so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

Raising low-level concerns is important to creating a culture of openness, trust and transparency at Port Regis. It can also help and support staff by allowing inappropriate behaviour, which can be unintentional, to be addressed at an

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early stage. If a staff member has found themselves in a situation that might be misinterpreted or in which they feel that, on reflection, they have behaved in a less than professional manner, they are encouraged to self-refer.

Low-level concerns about staff should be reported, using the Port Regis Staff Low-level Concerns Form, to the DSL, [Henry Marshall](#), who will immediately share all information with the Head, Titus Mills. Details of the concern will be recorded, including the context in which the concern arose, the action taken, and the name of the individual raising the concern (although should that individual wish to remain anonymous, their wish will be respected where at all possible). The Head will oversee investigation of the concern, with assistance from the DSL and HR Manager where appropriate, collecting as much evidence as possible by speaking where possible with the person who raised the concern, to the individual involved and to any witnesses.

A record of the low-level concern and related actions will be retained by the DSL, in a place accessible to the Head and HR Manager. If the low-level concern is substantiated, the DSL will inform relevant senior staff, including the Head, and a copy of the report will be provided to the HR Manager, Geraldine White, who will save the concern on the relevant personnel file kept in accordance with the School's Retention of Records Policy. Note that whilst substantiated safeguarding allegations will be provided in references, low-level concerns will not, unless they relate to issues that would normally be included in a reference, such as misconduct or poor performance.

Low-level concerns are reviewed, at least termly, by the Head, DSL, [DSL for EYFS](#) and HR Manager so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified and responded to. Where a pattern of behaviour is identified, the school should decide on a course of action. This might be internal disciplinary procedures, or referral to the LADO if the harms threshold is met ([and if clarification or advice is required](#)). Port Regis will consider if there are any wider cultural issues in school that enabled the behaviour to occur and, if appropriate, policies could be revised or extra training delivered to minimise the risk of recurrence.

## **26. Children with special educational needs and who are disabled**

26.1 Port Regis undertakes to use its best endeavours to identify and support pupils with SEN and meet their educational needs. Research shows that children with special educational needs and who are disabled are especially vulnerable to abuse, and adults who work with them need to be vigilant and take extra care when interpreting apparent signs of abuse or neglect.

26.2 Additional barriers can exist for adults who work with such children, in respect of recognising abuse and neglect. These can include the following:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse, such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration;
- Being more prone to peer group isolation than other children;

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- Children with SEN and who are disabled can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying – without outwardly showing any signs;
- Communication barriers, and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

26.3 The stated child protection procedures will be followed if a child with special educational needs or who is disabled discloses abuse or there are indicators of abuse or neglect. There are no different or separate procedures for such children. Port Regis considers extra pastoral support for children with SEN and disabilities in order to meet their needs.

26.4 Further information can be found in the Department for Education's '*SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years*' and '*Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions*'.

### **27. Children who are lesbian, gay, bi, or trans (LGBT)**

Whilst staff at Port Regis know that a child or young person may be LGBT, it is not itself an inherent risk factor. However, we recognise that LGBT children (and children who may be perceived to be LGBT even if they are not) may be targeted by other children. We will ensure that we respond immediately to any reported concerns and will ensure the child has a trusted member of staff they can go to if they are worried. The school seeks to educate proactively around this area through the RSE curriculum.

### **28. Mental Health**

All of the staff at Port Regis have an awareness that mental health problems can in some cases be an indicator that a child is suffering or has suffered abuse, neglect or exploitation. Staff are in a good position to observe children on a daily basis and, therefore, identify those whose behaviour indicates they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. When children have suffered Adverse Childhood Experiences, this may impact on them throughout their lives, impacting on their behaviour, their ability to learn, and their mental health.

If staff have a concern about the mental health of a child, they will follow school policy and report their concerns to the DSL.

### **29. Safer Working Practice**

29.1 All adults who come into contact with children at this school will always behave in a professional manner which secures the best outcomes for children and prevents allegations being made. Detailed advice on safer working practice can be found in the school's Code of Conduct, which reflects the guidance set out in '*Guidance for Safer Working Practice for those working with children and young people in education settings, 2022*'.



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29.2 We promote a culture whereby members of the school community should feel able to raise with the Headmaster, or any member of the leadership team, any concerns about staff conduct. If the reporter feels that the issue has not been addressed, they should contact someone outside of the school, such as the Chair of Governors or the LADO. (See Appendix 1 below for contact details.)

### **30. The use of 'Reasonable Force'**

We do not routinely use any form of physical contact to manage the children. However, there may be occasions when the school staff have to physically restrain pupils using 'reasonable force' solely to prevent them from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder. This may include guiding a child to safety by the arm or breaking up a fight to prevent violence or injury and this action should be taken using no more force than is needed (Page 41 KCSiE 2022). Physical restraint is used a last resort. If a child has additional needs, a care plan will be put in place to address actions to be taken prior to using any form of positive handling - for example the use of distraction techniques, removing any objects which could cause harm to the child, or using de-escalation strategies. School staff will familiarise themselves with the Department for Education's guidance regarding use of reasonable force in school: 'Use of Reasonable force, Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies' July 2013 and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 pg.41. School staff will follow the school's 'Policy on Physical Restraint of Pupils'.

### **31. Training**

31.1 Child protection will be part of induction for all staff and regular volunteers new to the school. They will be given a copy of this policy, the Code of Conduct, details about the role of the DSL, and Part One of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education: information for all school and college staff', plus Annex A if they work directly with children.

31.2 This will be followed up by basic child protection training that equips individuals to recognise and respond appropriately to concerns about pupils.

31.3 A proportional risk-based approach will be taken regarding the level of information provided to all temporary staff and volunteers. As a minimum, they will be provided with, and will be expected to follow the Child Protection Summary Sheet, which forms part of this policy.

31.4 Staff who do not have designated responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including the Headmaster, will undertake suitable refresher training at appropriate intervals. The Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership recommends this is at least every three years.

31.5 All staff will have training in preventing radicalisation and extremism ('Prevent') – either by attending a Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent

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(WRAP) or completing an on-line course, followed by a discussion with the DSL. The DSL is the Prevent Lead and will attend WRAP.

31.6 All staff members will receive regular safeguarding and child protection updates from the DSL as required, and at least annually. This will include learning from local and national serious cases when the learning becomes available.

31.7 When DSLs and Deputies take up the role they will attend enhanced (Level 3) training provided through the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership multi-agency course. They must be updated at two-yearly intervals after that.

31.8 In addition, their knowledge and skills will be updated regularly - at least annually. These individuals are expected to take responsibility for their own learning about safeguarding and child protection by, for example, taking time to read and digest newsletters and relevant research articles; attending training offered by the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership on matters such as domestic abuse, attachment, and child sexual and criminal exploitation; completing on-line training on FGM; attending local DSL forums, etc.

31.9 Designated Teachers for Looked-After Children (mandatory for maintained schools and academies; good practice in independent schools which have or are likely to have Looked-After Children) will undertake appropriate training. In Dorset, this is provided by the Virtual School for Children in Care.

See Appendix 1 for contact details.

31.10 The Headmaster, and at least one governor, will complete safer recruitment training (mandatory in maintained schools; best practice in others) either through a multi-agency taught session or by completing the NSPCC on-line course.

31.11 Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure that **all** governors and trustees receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction. This training should equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in schools and colleges are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. Their training should be regularly updated, and the governing body is responsible for this. This is mandatory as of Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2022, and at Port Regis the governing body understands this, and that the training should include the topic of online safety. Governor training records are kept by HR on the relevant personnel files. Attendance includes those who also work with children and have attended child protection training in that role.

It is mandatory that governing bodies recommended by the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership that all governors attend training, briefings, or other input which equips them to understand fully and comply with their legal

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safeguarding duties *as governors*, set out in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' [2022](#).

## **32. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **32.1 Governing Body**

All members of The Governing Body understand and fulfil their responsibilities, ensuring that:

- There is a Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy together with a Staff Code of Conduct;
- Child protection and safeguarding, recruitment and managing allegations policies and procedures, including the Staff Code of Conduct, are consistent with Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership and statutory requirements, are reviewed annually, and that the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is available on the Port Regis website;
- All staff including temporary staff and volunteers are provided with the Port Regis Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and staff Code of Conduct;
- All staff have read Keeping Children Safe in Education ([2022](#)) Part 1 and Annex A and that mechanisms are in place to assist staff in understanding and discharging their roles and responsibilities as set out in the guidance;
- The school operates a safer recruitment procedure that includes statutory checks on staff suitability to work with children and disqualification by association regulations, and by ensuring that there is at least one person on every recruitment panel who has completed safer recruitment training;
- The school has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff (including the Head), supply staff, volunteers and against other children and that a referral is made to the DBS if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns, or would have had they not resigned;
- A member of the Governing Body/Board, usually the Chair, is nominated to liaise with the LADO on Child Protection issues and in the event of an allegation of abuse made against the Headteacher;
- A member of the SLT has been appointed as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) by the Governing Body who will take lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection and that the role is explicit in the role holder's job description;
- On appointment, the DSL and deputies undertake appropriate Level 3 identified training offered by the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership or other provider every two years;
- All other staff have safeguarding training updated as appropriate, and at least annually;

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- At least one member of the governing body has completed safer recruitment training to be repeated every five years;
- Children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum covering relevant issues through PSHE and RSHE;
- Appropriate safeguarding responses are in place for children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect including sexual abuse or exploitation and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future;
- Appropriate online filtering and monitoring systems are in place;
- Enhanced DBS checks (without barred list checks, unless the governor is also a volunteer at the school) are in place for all Governors;
- Any weaknesses in Child Protection are remedied immediately.

### **32.2 The Headteacher will ensure that:**

- The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and procedures are implemented and followed by all staff;
- Sufficient time, training, support, resources, including cover arrangements where necessary, are allocated to the DSL and Deputy DSLs to carry out their roles effectively, including the assessment of pupils and attendance at strategy discussions and other necessary meetings;
- Where there is a safeguarding concern that the child's wishes and feelings are considered when determining what action to take and what services to provide;
- Systems are in place for children to express their views and give feedback which operate with the best interest of the child at heart;
- All staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with the Port Regis whistleblowing procedures;
- That pupils are provided with opportunities throughout the curriculum to learn about safeguarding, including keeping themselves safe online;
- They liaise with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), before taking any action and on an ongoing basis, where an allegation is made against a member of staff, supply staff or volunteer; and
- Anyone who has harmed or may pose a risk to a child is referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

### **32.3 The Designated Safeguarding Lead:**

- Holds ultimate responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) in the school and is a member of the Senior Leadership Team;
- Acts as a source of support and expertise in carrying out safeguarding duties for the whole school community;

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- Will have the necessary knowledge and understanding to recognise possible children at risk of contextual and/or familial abuse or exploitation;
- Encourages a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings;
- Refreshes every two years their knowledge and skills to enable them to carry out the role and at regular intervals but at least annually accesses updates to keep up with any developments relevant to their role;
- Will refer a child if there are concerns about possible abuse, to the Dorset Children's Advice and Duty Service, and act as a focal point for staff to discuss concerns.
- Will keep detailed, accurate records, either written or using appropriate online software, of all concerns about a child even if there is no need to make an immediate referral;
- Will ensure that all such records are kept confidential, stored securely and are separate from pupil records, until the child's 25th birthday;
- Will ensure that when a pupil leaves the school, relevant child protection information is passed to the new school (separately from the main pupil file) as soon as possible, ensuring secure transit and that confirmation of receipt is obtained;
- In addition to the child protection file, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the DSL of the new school or college in advance of a child leaving; for example, information that would allow the new school or college to continue supporting victims of abuse and have that support in place for when the child arrives. All transfers should be made securely;
- Will liaise with the Local Authority, its safeguarding partners and work with other agencies and professionals in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children;
- Has a working knowledge of Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures;
- Will ensure that either they, or another staff member, attend case conferences, core groups, or other multi-agency planning meetings, contribute to assessments, and provide a report where required which has been shared with the parents;
- Will ensure that any pupil currently with a child protection plan who is absent in the educational setting without explanation for two days is referred to their social worker;
- Will ensure that all staff sign to say they have read, understood and agree to work within the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy, Staff Code of Conduct and Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 1 and Annex A and ensure that the policies are used appropriately;
- Will organise child protection and safeguarding induction, regularly updated training, and a minimum of annual updates (including online safety) for all school staff, keep a record of attendance and address any absences;

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- Will complete, along with the Safeguarding Governor, the Annual Safeguarding Self-assessment, as required by the Dorset Council Safeguarding and Standards Team.
- Has an understanding of locally agreed processes for providing early help and intervention and will support members of staff where Early Help is appropriate; and
- Will ensure that the name of the designated members of staff for Child Protection, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputies, are clearly advertised in the school, with a statement explaining the school's role in referring and monitoring cases of suspected abuse.

#### **32.4 The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads:**

- are trained to the same standard as the Designated Safeguarding Lead and, in the absence of the DSL, carry out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of pupils.
- In the event of the long-term absence of the DSL, [Henry Marshall](#), one of the deputies, [Ian Mitchell-Innes](#), will assume all of the functions above.

#### **32.5 All School Staff:**

- Understand that it is everyone's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and that they have a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action;
- Consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child;
- Will be aware of the indicators of abuse and neglect both familial and contextual; and recognise that contextual harm can take a variety of different forms;
- Know how to respond to a pupil who discloses abuse;
- Will refer any safeguarding or child protection concerns to the DSL or if necessary where the child is at immediate risk to the police or Dorset Children's Advice and Duty Service;
- Will be aware of the duty to report concerns if the DSL fails to do so without reasonable cause;
- Are aware of the Early Help process, more information about which can be found in Chapter One of Working Together to Safeguard Children, and understand their role within it including identifying emerging problems for children who may benefit from an offer of Early Help, liaising with the DSL in the first instance and supporting other agencies and professionals in an early help assessment through information sharing. In some cases, staff may act as the Lead Professional in Early Help cases;
- Will provide a safe environment in which children can learn; and
- Will be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously.

### **33. Online Safety**

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33.1 Our pupils increasingly use electronic equipment on a daily basis to access the internet and share content and images via social media sites such as Facebook, twitter, Instagram and Snapchat.

33.2 Unfortunately, some adults and other children use these technologies to harm children. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts or emails, to grooming and enticing children to engage in sexual behaviour such as webcam photography or face-to-face meetings. Pupils may also be distressed or harmed by accessing inappropriate material such as pornographic websites or those which promote extremist behaviour, criminal activity, suicide or eating disorders.

33.3 Port Regis School has an online safety policy (Pupils' Safe and Acceptable ICT Usage Policy) which explains how we try to keep pupils safe in school and how we respond to online safety incidents.

33.4 School will also provide advice to parents when pupils are being asked to learn online at home and consider how best to safeguard both pupils and staff.

33.5 Please refer to the following policies for further information:

<M:\Staff Handbook\7h ICT - Staff Usage Agreement.doc>

<M:\Staff Handbook\7h Mobile Phone Mobile Device and Social Media Policy Staff.doc>

<M:\Staff Handbook\7h ICT - Pupil Safe Usage.doc>

<M:\Staff Handbook\Not Required for Inspection Port Regis Policies\ICT - Remote Working Mobile Device Policy.docx.doc>

<M:\Staff Handbook\Not Required for Inspection Port Regis Policies\ICT - Working from home policy.doc>

#### **34. Raising concerns about safeguarding practice in our school**

34.1 In this school, we promote a culture where any staff or volunteers feel able to raise with the Headmaster any concerns about safeguarding or child protection practice.

34.2 Any issues which they have not been able to resolve with the Headmaster should be reported to the governors in the first instance. If they are still not satisfied, they should approach the Director for Children's Services or, if the issue relates to the conduct of, or an allegation against, a member of staff, should contact the Local Authority designated officer (also known as the LADO).

34.3 Staff should refer to the school's Whistleblowing Policy for more information, or can use the NSPCC whistle blowing helpline: 0800 0280285.

#### **35. Information for parents and carers**



Updated in accordance with guidance provided by Dorset Safeguarding and Standards, in line with new guidance and legislation.

35.1 At this school we are committed to keeping our pupils safe. Our priority is your child's welfare and we will usually discuss with you any concerns we have about your child. There might be rare occasions, however, when we must provide information to, or consult with, other agencies such as Children's Social Care before we contact you. This will include situations where we judge that to tell you first would or might put your child at risk of significant harm.

35.2 Our responsibilities are set out in this policy. It reflects statutory guidance and the Inter-Agency Safeguarding Procedures, which can be found on the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership website.

35.3 If you have any questions about this please speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, [Henry Marshall](#).

### **36. Contextual Safeguarding / Assessment of risk outside the home**

#### **36.1 What is contextual safeguarding?**

Safeguarding incidents and / or behaviours can be associated with factors outside of school or college and / or can occur between children outside of school or college. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including, but not limited to, sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and serious youth violence. Assessment of risk outside the home, therefore, expands the objectives of child protection systems in recognition that young people are vulnerable to abuse in a range of contexts. All staff, especially the DSL or Deputies, should consider the context within which such incidents and or behaviour occur. This is contextual safeguarding, and means assessments should consider such factors, so it is important that schools and colleges provide as much information as possible as part of the referral process. This will allow any assessment to consider all the available evidence and the context of the abuse.

### **37. Operation Encompass**

Port Regis is an Operation Encompass school.

Operation Encompass operates in all police forces across the UK. It assists the police and schools to work together to provide emotional and practical help to children who are victims of Domestic abuse. The system ensures that when police are called to an incident of domestic abuse, where there are children in the household who have experienced the domestic incident, the police will inform our Key Adults, Ian Mitchell-Innes and Henry Marshall, before the child or children arrive at school the following day. This ensures that the school has up to date relevant information about the child's circumstances and can enable immediate support to be put in place, according to the child's needs.



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*This Child Protection Summary should be printed separately and given to all supply / peripatetic / temporary staff who will be working unsupervised with children, even if just for part of a day.*

## **C. Child Protection Summary for all Visiting Professionals**

### **Port Regis School**

As an adult working directly with children in this school, you have a duty of care towards all pupils. This means you must always act in a way that is consistent with their safety and welfare.

It is your responsibility to keep your child protection training up to date; you might be asked for evidence of this.

You must follow the principles of Safer Working Practice, which include the use of technology – on no account should you contact or take images of pupils on personal equipment, including your mobile telephone.

If the behaviour of another adult in the school gives rise to concern, you must report it to the Headmaster.

If you have a concern about a child, particularly if you think she / he may be suffering or at risk of suffering harm, it is your responsibility to share the information promptly with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

[Henry Marshall \(Deputy Head / 07531818848 / hjnm@portregis.com\)](mailto:hjnm@portregis.com).

You can also contact one of the Deputy Safeguarding Leads:

Speak to one of his Deputies: Ian Mitchell Innes (English teacher) (07879642963) [imi2@portregis.com](mailto:imi2@portregis.com); Becky Venner (LSU / Asst. Head of Middle School / 07791655641 / [bxv@portregis.com](mailto:bxv@portregis.com)); Jane Haak (Director of Music / [jpkh@portregis.com](mailto:jpkh@portregis.com)); Sue Power (Nurse and Health Centre Manager / [scp@portregis.com](mailto:scp@portregis.com)); Nikki Nathan (SEND Co. / [nn@portregis.com](mailto:nn@portregis.com)); Sophie Weir (Head of Lower School / [siw@portregis.com](mailto:siw@portregis.com)); Richard Egerton (Head of Middle School / [rje@portregis.com](mailto:rje@portregis.com)); Dale Woolmer (Head of Boarding / [drw@portregis.com](mailto:drw@portregis.com)).

If your concern relates to a child in the Pre-prep, you can contact Designated Safeguarding Lead for EYFS:

[Rebecca Eves \(Head of Lower School / 07837227124 / re@portregis.com\)](mailto:re@portregis.com); or the Deputy DSL for EYFS, [Victoria Ford / 07977159463 / vmf@portregis.com](mailto:vmf@portregis.com).

The following is not an exhaustive list, but you might become concerned because of the following:

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- Seeing a physical injury which you believe to be non-accidental;
- Observing something in the appearance of a pupil which leads you to think his / her needs are being neglected;
- A pupil telling you that she / he has been subjected to some form of abuse.

In any of these circumstances you must write down what you observed or heard, date and sign the account, and give it to the DSL or a Deputy.

If a pupil talks to you about (discloses) sexual or physical abuse you should do the following:

- Listen carefully without interruption, particularly if s/he is freely recalling significant events;
- Only ask enough questions to clarify what you have heard. You might not need to ask anything but, if you do, you must not 'lead' the pupil in any way, and so should only ask 'open' questions;
- Make it clear you are obliged to pass the information on, but only to those who need to know;
- Tell the DSL or Deputy without delay;
- Write an account of the disclosure as soon as you are able (the same day), date and sign it, and give it to the DSL.

Do not ask the pupil to repeat the disclosure to anyone else in school, ask him / her or any other pupil to write a 'statement', or inform parents. You are not expected to make a judgement about whether the child is telling the truth.

**Remember** – share any concerns; don't keep them to yourself.

## **Useful Contacts**

- 1) For all referrals (concerns about children, which require a social work assessment)...**
- 2) Call Dorset's Children's Advice and Duty Service: 01305 228 558**
- 3) Out of Hours Service: 01202 657279**
- 4) Dorset Safeguarding and Standards Team: 01305 221 122**

The team comprises Children's Services managers and advisors, including:

- The Education Safeguarding Standards Advisor(s) who offers advice and support to schools in relation to safeguarding and child protection issues;
- The Local Authority Designated Officer (the LADO) to whom allegations against adults who work with children in education establishments must be reported.

### **5) Dorset Virtual School for Children in Care:**

01305 228350

### **6) Dorset Governor Services (for governor safeguarding training):**

01305 224382

## Possible Indicators of Abuse

The following information is not designed to turn school staff into experts, but it will help them to be more alert to the signs of possible abuse. The examples below are not meant to form an exhaustive list. Designated Safeguarding Leads and other staff will find it helpful to refer to the Government advice 'What to do if you are worried about a child being abused' (2015) and the inter-agency safeguarding procedures on the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership website.

### i) Physical Abuse

Most children will collect cuts and bruises in their daily lives. These are likely to be in places where there are bony parts of the body, like elbows, knees and shins. However, some children will have bruising which is less likely to have been caused accidentally. An important indicator of physical abuse is where bruises or injuries are unexplained, or the explanation does not fit the injury, or if there are differing explanations. A delay in seeking medical treatment for a child, when it is obviously necessary, is also a cause for concern. Bruising may be difficult to interpret on children with different skin tones, or who are from different ethnic groups, and specialist advice may need to be taken.

Patterns of bruising that are suggestive of physical child abuse can include the following:

- bruising in children who are not independently mobile;
- bruises that are seen away from bony prominences;
- bruises to the face, back, stomach, arms, buttocks, ears and hands;
- multiple bruises in clusters;
- multiple bruises of uniform shape;
- bruises that carry the imprint of an implement used, hand marks, fingertips or a belt buckle.

Although bruising is the most common injury in physical abuse, fatal non-accidental head injury and non-accidental fractures can occur without bruising. Any child who has unexplained signs of pain or illness must be seen promptly by a doctor.

Other physical signs of abuse can include the following:

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- cigarette burns,
- adult bite marks,
- broken bones,
- scalds.

Changes in behaviour 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 wearing long sleeves in hot weather;
- missing school;
- running away from home.

## ii) Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse can be difficult to measure, and often children who appear otherwise well cared-for may 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. *Children who live in households where there is domestic violence often suffer emotional abuse.* Emotional abuse can also take the form of children not being allowed to mix / play with other children.

The physical signs of emotional abuse might include:

- a failure to thrive or grow, particularly if the child puts on weight in other circumstances - e.g. in hospital or away from parents' care;
- sudden speech disorders;
- developmental delay, either in terms of physical or emotional progress.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate emotional abuse include:

- neurotic behaviour, e.g. sulking, hair twisting, rocking;
- being unable to play;

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- fear of making mistakes;
- self-harm;
- fear of parents being approached.

### **iii) Sexual Abuse**

Adults who use children to meet their own sexual needs abuse both girls and boys of all ages, including infants and toddlers. It is important to remember that children can also be sexually abused by other children (i.e. those under 18).

Usually, in cases of sexual abuse it is the child's behaviour which may cause concern, although physical signs can also be present. In all cases, children who talk about sexual abuse do so because they want it to stop. Therefore, it is important that they are listened to, taken seriously, and that appropriate action is taken promptly.

The physical signs of sexual abuse can include:

- pain or itching in the genital/anal areas;
- bruising or bleeding near genital/anal areas;
- 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 can 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;
- missing school;

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- 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;
- alcohol / substance / drug use;
- suddenly having unexplained sources of money;
- not being allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence);
- acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults or other children.

#### **iv) Neglect**

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

The physical signs of neglect can include:

- constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children;
- being constantly dirty or smelly;
- loss of weight, or being constantly underweight;
- inappropriate dress for the conditions.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect can include:

- complaining of being tired all the time;
- not requesting medical assistance and / or failing to attend appointments;
- having few friends;

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- mentioning being left alone or unsupervised.

It is important that adults in school recognise that providing compensatory care might address the immediate and presenting issue, but could cover up or inhibit the recognition of neglect in all aspects of a child's life. Compensatory care is defined as *'providing a child or young person, on a regular basis, help or assistance with basic needs with the aim of redressing deficits in parental care'*. This might involve, for example, providing each day a substitute set of clothing because those from home are dirty, or showering a child whose personal hygiene or presentation is such that it is affecting his / her interaction with peers. It does not include isolated or irregular support such as giving lunch money or washing a child who has had an 'accident'. If any adult in school finds she / he is regularly attending to one or more aspects of a child's basic needs, then this will prompt a discussion with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

The general rule: the younger the child, the higher the risk in terms of their immediate health. However, serious neglect of older children and adolescents is often overlooked, on the assumption that they can care for themselves and have made a 'choice' to neglect themselves. A lack of engagement with services should be a potential indicator of neglect.

School staff should be mindful of the above and discuss any concerns with the DSL, who will take the appropriate action in accordance with the inter-agency neglect guidance on the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership website.



## **Record Keeping: Best Practice** **To be read and followed by all DSLs and Deputies**

### **1. Introduction**

1.1 The importance of good, clear child welfare and child protection record keeping has been highlighted repeatedly in national and local Serious Case Reviews.

1.2 It is the Designated Safeguarding Lead's responsibility to ensure that child protection files, access, storage and transfer meet the required professional standards as detailed in this document.

1.3 The common law of confidentiality, Data Protection, GDPR and Human Rights principles must be adhered to when obtaining, processing or sharing personal or sensitive information or records. In summary, the Data Protection Act requires that records should be securely kept, accurate, relevant, up-to-date and kept for no longer than is necessary for the purpose for which they were made.

1.4 Any electronic record keeping system should comply with the general standards set out below.

### **2. Record to be made by an adult receiving a disclosure of abuse (when a child talks about abuse)**

2.1 This record should be made as soon as possible **after** the individual hearing the disclosure has reported it verbally to the DSL. The facts, not opinions (unless of relevance), should be accurately recorded in a non-judgemental way. It is important to remember that expressing an opinion as to whether the child is telling the truth is not helpful and can prejudice how a case proceeds.

2.2 The record should ideally be on a standard 'concerns' form and should include:

- The child's name, gender and date of birth;
- Date and time of the conversation;
- What was the context and who was present during the disclosure;
- What the child said – verbatim if possible;
- The questions that were asked – verbatim;

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- Responses to questions –verbatim;
- Any observations concerning the child’s demeanour and any injuries;
- The name of the person to whom the disclosure was reported;
- The printed name and job title of the author, followed by signature and date.

2.3 The record about a disclosure of abuse should be passed to the DSL and retained in the pupil’s child protection file in its original and contemporaneous form (as it could be used as evidence in court proceedings), even if later typed or if the information is incorporated into a report.

2.4 Schools should never ask pupils, regardless of their involvement in a child protection matter (i.e. the subject of an allegation, a witness or the alleged ‘perpetrator’), to write out their ‘statements’ of what has happened. In some cases, this could have the unintended consequence of jeopardising a child protection investigation. This applies regardless of whether the incident(s) took place within or outside of school.

### **3. Records kept by the Designated Safeguarding Lead**

3.1 As stated at 2.2 above, it is useful and recommended practice for school staff to have one standard pro-forma for recording all ‘welfare’ and child protection concerns.

3.2 The concern form should be passed to the DSL who will make a judgement about what action needs to be taken, in accordance with local inter-agency safeguarding procedures, using the Threshold Tool, if necessary. The decision about any action, whether or not a referral is made to Social Care, will be recorded clearly by the DSL.

3.3 Concerns which initially seem trivial may turn out to be vital pieces of information later, so it is important to give as much detail as possible. A concern raised may not progress further than a conversation between the DSL and the parent, or, at the other end of the scale, could lead to matters being heard in a court.

3.4 All ‘lower level’ / pastoral concerns about a child’s welfare, which will generally have been discussed with parents / carers, are kept in the child’s main file. Alternatively, some schools have adopted their own systems of collating such welfare concerns. Whichever system is in place, these records should not be labelled ‘child protection’.

3.5 It is never good practice to keep pupil welfare records in a diary or day-book system. Often it is only when several seemingly minor issues relating to an individual pupil, over a period of time, are seen as a whole, that a pattern can be identified indicating a child protection concern.

#### **4. Starting a school child protection file**

4.1 A school child protection file does not necessarily mean that the pupil is or has been the subject of a child protection conference or plan. 'Child protection file' denotes a high level of school concern which has warranted referral to / involvement of, and in most cases, assessment by, child care social workers.

4.2 It is the responsibility of the DSL to start a school child protection file when a social worker is or was involved - e.g.:

- a) A formal referral is made by the school to Children's Social Care on an inter-agency referral form; or
- b) Social Care inform the school they have commenced an assessment in relation to a pupil resulting from information from another source; or
- c) A child protection file is forwarded to the school by a previous school, or pre-school, attended by the pupil; or
- d) A child who is in care / looked after transfers into the school; or
- e) A pupil is privately fostered.

4.3 It is not good practice to make 'family files'; each child should have his / her own record, which includes information specific to him / her and which will be sent to the next school at the time of transfer. The names of siblings and / or other children who live in the household who also attend the school should be clearly noted on individual files.

4.4 If two (or more) pupils at the school are referred to Social Care for the same concern (for example, an allegation of sexually harmful behaviour), then child protection files will be started on both / all pupils.

4.5 'Document wallet'-type files are not ideal as the papers therein can easily fall out or get 'out of order'.

4.6 School child protection files are never 'closed' or de-categorised. Once a school has started a child protection file, the chronology is maintained so that any future concerns can be considered in the context of past events, even if Social Care ceases involvement.

4.7 Note: if there is an allocated social worker because a child is disabled or a young carer, and there are no child protection concerns, then a child protection file should not be started.

## **5. Adopted children**

5.1 When a pupil is admitted to a school in Reception class and parents provide the information that she / he was adopted prior to commencing education, this should be recorded with their permission on the main school file in order that appropriate support can be provided in future if necessary. In these situations, it is not necessary to start a child protection file **unless** the criteria described above (at 4.2a and 4.2b) also apply.

5.2 Some older adopted children will have school child protection files because they were initially in care / looked after and were subsequently adopted. During the period when the child is 'placed for adoption' (prior to an adoption order being made), any file that contains information that identifies both the birth family and the adoptive family must be classed as highly sensitive and this information should only be shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis.

5.3 Once the adoption order has been made, the DSL in the school that holds the child protection file must overhaul the file. The principle is that there must be nothing that identifies the child's birth name or the birth family. In sifting the file, it is acceptable to destroy documents that will continue to be held by other agencies: for example, child protection conference minutes and LAC review minutes which will be in Social Care records.

5.4 A chronology should be prepared that gives an overview of the information previously held in the file, **but without giving the child's birth name or any details which would identify the birth family.**

5.5 The overhauled file should only contain the new chronology and any information that has originated from within school (for example concern forms). This file should now be in the child's new name, contain no information which identifies the birth name or birth family, and should be held in the school as long as the child remains, or sent onto a new school as described (at 9) below.

5.6 Once a child is adopted, all school records, not just CP files, must be amended so that there is nothing which gives the birth name or identifies the birth family.

## **6. The format of child protection files**

6.1 It is helpful if individual files have a front sheet with key information about the pupil and contact details of parents / carers, social worker and any other relevant professionals.

6.2 If the child is Looked-After, the front sheet should include important information about legal status, parental responsibility, arrangements for contact with birth parents and extended family, levels of authority delegated to carers and the name of the virtual school head in the authority that looks after the child.

6.3 If a pupil is or was the subject of a child protection plan, or in care / looked after, this should be highlighted in some way to make it immediately obvious to anyone accessing the record.

6.4 It is a multi-agency standard that children's child protection files must have at the front an up to date chronology of *significant* incidents or events *and* subsequent actions / outcomes. Maintaining the chronology is an important part of the DSL role: it aids the DSL, Deputy and others to see the central issues 'at a glance' and helps to identify patterns of events and behaviours.

6.5 It should make sense as a 'stand-alone' document: anyone else reading the chronology should be able to follow easily what the concerns are / have been, whether the concerns have escalated and why, plus the actions taken by the school to support and protect the child. This will be particularly useful for DSLs in receiving schools when pupils transfer, for professionals involved in collating information for Serious Case Reviews, and for parents / pupils / ex-pupils if they view the record.

6.6 Once a chronology is started, it should be updated as appropriate even if Social Care later ceases involvement (see 4.6 above).

6.7 The file should be well organised and include, as appropriate, school 'concern forms', copies of correspondence, school reports to - and minutes of - child protection conferences, documents relating to children in care / looked after. The DSL will decide which relevant information that pre-dates the starting of the child protection file, such as CAF or other pastoral care documentation, will also be included.

## **7. Storage**

7.1 All records relating to child protection concerns are sensitive and confidential, so they will always be kept in a secure (i.e. locked) filing cabinet, separate from other school files, and accessible through the DSL and deputies.

7.2 The pupil's general school file should be marked in some way (e.g. a yellow star) to indicate that a child protection file exists. All staff who may need to consult a child's school file should be made aware of what the symbol means and to speak to the DSL, as necessary, if they see this symbol and have concerns. For example, a member of the office staff who is looking in the main file for a parent's contact details because of unexplained absence might decide to report this to the DSL if they see the indicator, in case the absence is significant.

## **8. Sharing of and access to child protection records**

8.1 It is highly unlikely that all members of staff need to know the details of a child's situation, or that there should be widespread access to the records. Access to, and sharing of, information should be on a need-to-know basis, decided case by case. The DSL is the best person to decide this. Consideration must also be given to *what* needs to be shared. In general, the closer the day-to-day contact with the child, the more likely the need to have some information.

8.2 The child who is the subject of a child protection record has the right to access the file, *unless* to do so would affect his / her health or well-being or that

of another person, or would be likely to prejudice a criminal investigation or a Section 47 assessment (which relates to significant harm) under the Children Act 1989.

8.3 Parents (i.e. those with parental responsibility in law) are entitled to see their child's child protection file, with the same exemptions as apply to the child's right to access the record. Note that an older pupil may be entitled to refuse access to the record by his / her parents. As a guide, this applies to pupils who are 12 years of age or above, if they are of normal development or maturity.

8.4 References by name to children other than the pupil who is the subject of the file should be removed when disclosing records, unless consent is obtained from the individual(s) concerned (or their parents / carer on their behalf). Care must be taken to ensure all identifying information is removed from the copy of the record to be shared.

8.5 Always seek advice from your legal advisor or Dorset Data Protection Officer (01305 225175) if there are any concerns or doubt about a child or parents reading records. However, it is generally good practice to share all information held unless there is a valid reason to withhold it - e.g. to do so would place the child or any other person at risk of harm. Any requests to see the child's record should be made in writing to give time for confidential information, such as any details of other pupils, to be removed.

8.6 In respect of requests from pupils or parents for information which wholly or partly consists of an educational record, access should be granted within 15 school days. This might be relevant to 'welfare' concerns in a main school file, for example. Viewing-only access to these records is free, but it is reasonable to charge for copies on a sliding scale from £1 - £50 (maximum) depending on the number of pages.

8.7 However, should the request only seek access to a child protection file (which is not classed as an educational record), access should be granted within 40 calendar days. A discretionary maximum fee of £10 can be charged for viewing access to, or a copy of, a child protection record.

8.8 If the record to be disclosed contains information about an adult professional, that information can be disclosed if it relates to the performance by that person of their job or other official duties - e.g. a reference to a teacher in their teaching role, or a school nurse in their nursing role. However, if the reference refers to that individual's private life, it should be removed (unless this relates to a child protection matter which is relevant to the record to be disclosed).

8.9 Child protection information should not normally be shared with professionals other than those from Social Care, the Police, Health or the Local Authority. Ofsted and other school inspectors can view individual child protection files. Information should not be released to parents' solicitors on request; advice should be sought from the school's legal advisor in such cases.

8.10 Governors, including the Nominated Governor, should not access the records.

## **9. Transfer of child protection records**

9.1 When a pupil transfers to another school (including to a Learning Centre because of permanent exclusion) the DSL should inform the receiving school as soon as possible in person or by telephone that child protection records exist. The original records must be passed on either by hand or sent by recorded delivery, separate from the child's main school file. Care must be taken to ensure confidentiality is maintained and the transfer process is as safe as possible.

9.2 If the records are to be posted, they should be copied, and these copies retained until there has been confirmation in writing that the originals have arrived at the new school. They can then be shredded.

9.3 Whether child protection files are passed on by hand or posted, there should be written evidence of the transfer (such as a form or slip of paper signed and dated by a member of staff at the receiving school.) This receipt should be retained by the originating school for 6 years (in line with guidance from the Records Management Society).

9.4 If the pupil is removed from the roll to be home educated, the school should pass the child protection file to the LA EHE Administrator and a receipt obtained as described above.

9.5 If a pupil with a child protection record leaves the school without a forwarding address and no contact is received from a new school the DSL should follow the school's Child Missing Education (CME) procedures. If there is reason to suspect the pupil is suffering harm, then the DSL will refer to Social Care in the usual way.

9.6 If a child arrives in the school in an unplanned way and / or there are concerns about them from the outset, it is worth contacting the previous school for a discussion with the DSL. There might be a child protection file which has not been passed on.

9.7 School 'welfare' or pastoral records (i.e. where concerns or issues have been raised but there has been **no** referral to or involvement by a social worker) should also be passed on to the next school for their information and can be included in the main school file, for example. In respect of data protection, parents / carers should be made aware (either individually or through newsletters, for example) that information is transferred in this way to enable the next school to properly support their child. Most parents will understand the reason for this but if, for whatever reason, a parent disagrees with you passing on non-child protection documents, you should not do so.

## **10. 'Dual registered' pupils**

10.1 Where a pupil is on roll at the school and starts to attend a Learning Centre (LC), the chronology and other relevant information in the child protection file should be copied and passed to the DSL at the LC at the earliest opportunity. Because of the nature of such 'bespoke' arrangements for individual pupils, the two DSLs should agree on which one of them will keep the chronology updated and how best to communicate to each other significant events and issues in relation to that pupil.

## **11. Retention of records**

11.1 The school should retain the record for as long as the pupil remains in school and then transfer as described above.

11.2 Guidance from the Records Management Society is that when a pupil with a child protection record reaches statutory school leaving age (or where the pupil completed 6<sup>th</sup> Form studies), the last school attended should keep the child protection file until the pupil's 25<sup>th</sup> birthday. It should then be shredded (and a record kept of this having been done, date, and why).

11.3 The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse has instructed relevant organisations, including schools and colleges, that they should NOT destroy, for the foreseeable future, any of their records that could potentially come within the scope of the inquiry (i.e. any records relating to sexual abuse).

## **12. Electronic child protection records**

12.1 Electronic records must be password protected with access strictly controlled in the same way as paper records.

12.2 They should be in the same format as paper records (i.e. with well-maintained chronologies, etc.) so that they are up to date if / when printed, if necessary.

12.3 Electronic files must not be transferred electronically to other schools unless there is a secure system in place, but should be printed in their entirety, linked with paper documentation such as conference minutes, and transferred as described in Section 9, above. When the receipt has been returned to confirm that the file has been received at the new school, the computer record should be deleted.

## **13. Sharing information with Further Education (FE) Colleges**

13.1 A protocol is in place with DSLs at FE colleges: at the start of each academic year they will send to secondary school DSLs a list of newly enrolled students who have previously attended the school, requesting any relevant information. Secondary school DSLs will use their professional judgement, but should always disclose if a young person is in care / looked after, is or has been the subject of a child protection plan, or is assessed as posing a risk to themselves or other students.



Updated in accordance with guidance provided by Dorset Safeguarding and Standards, in line with new guidance and legislation.

13.2 Note this applies only to Dorset schools and FE Colleges with whom the protocol has been agreed.