

Horserenity Community Interest Company Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy



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Ratification by: Sarah Vivian

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Key Roles:

Role	Name	Contact details:	Date
Chair of Directors	Samantha Turner		
Safeguarding Director	Sarah Vivian		
Founder Director	Sarah Vivian		
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)*	Sarah Vivian		
PREVENT Lead	Sarah Vivian		
Deputy DSL (s)*	Dan Vivian		
Designated director for Looked After Children*	Sarah Vivian		
Senior Mental Health Lead* (non-mandatory)	Sarah Vivian		
Health, Safety and Security Lead (non-mandatory)	Dan Vivian		
The key safeguarding responsibilities within each of the roles above are set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025			

**Any changes to key personnel/holiday/emergency contacts will be shared with the appropriate agencies.*

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PART 1: Policy

1.1 Definitions

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023** as:

- providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge.
- protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online.
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development.
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child Protection is part of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and is defined in the Children Act 1989 (s.47) as when a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm. Under statutory guidance and legislation action must be taken to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.

Effective safeguarding means practitioners should understand and be sensitive to factors, including economic and social circumstances and ethnicity, which can impact on children and families' lives.

1.2 Introduction

At Horserenity CIC

- Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone's** responsibility. **Everyone** who encounters children, their families, and carers, has a role to play.
- In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should always consider what is in the **best interests** of the child.
- We take an '**it can happen here**' approach where safeguarding is concerned.
- **Everyone** who encounters children has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information, and taking prompt action.
- Victims of harm should **never** be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence, or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Horserenity CIC is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children by:

- The provision of a safe environment in which children and young people can learn.
- Acting on concerns about a child's welfare immediately.
- Fulfilling our legal responsibilities to identify children who may need early help or who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm.

All action taken by **Horserenity CIC** will be in accordance with current legislation and guidance. The following safeguarding legislation and guidance has been considered when drafting this policy:

- [Education Act 2002 Section 175 \(maintained schools only\)](#)
- [Education Act 2002 Section 157 \(Independent schools incl Academies and CTC's\)](#)
- [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) \(England\) Regulations 2003](#)
- [The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006](#)
- [Teachers' Standards \(Guidance for school leaders, school staff and governing bodies\)](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Information Sharing 2024](#)
- [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#)
- [Filtering and monitoring standards in schools and colleges \(DfE\)](#)
- [Generative AI: product safety expectations - GOV.UK](#)
- Local Guidance from the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (Pan -Dorset/ BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership)

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies.

This includes and is not limited to:

- Safer recruitment policy, recruitment and selection policy
- Reporting Low Level Concerns
- Whistleblowing and Public Interest Disclosure
- Code of Conduct for Staff, 'Professional Boundaries' Policy
- Behaviour policy
- E-Safety
- Self-Harm
- Policy on Supporting Children in Care
- Attendance policy
- Health and Safety policy and Site Security

Through regular monitoring, the Founder Director will ensure that the above policies and procedures, adopted by governing bodies and proprietors, are accessible, understood and followed by all staff.

1.3 **Equalities Statement**

With regards to safeguarding we will always consider our duties under the [Equality Act 2010](#) and our general and specific duties under the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#). This includes the Government guidance on **gender questioning children** **XXXX (signposting to be published)** and the considerations explained by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (April 2024). [An interim update on the practical implications of the UK Supreme Court judgment | EHRC](#)

Our general duties include:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

3. Foster good relations across all protected characteristics between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Details of our specific duties are published under **Horserenity's** equality statement and measurable objectives. [These are available on our website.](#)

Staff are aware of the additional barriers to recognising abuse and neglect in children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). This will be in line with our [Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy](#).

Horserenity CIC also adheres to the principals of and promotes anti-oppressive practice in line of the [United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child](#) and the [Human Rights Act 1998](#).

1.4 Overall Aims

This policy will contribute to the safeguarding of children **at Horserenity CIC** by:

- Clarifying safeguarding expectations for members of the equine facilitated learning setting's community, staff, board of directors, children, and their families.
- Contributing to the establishment of a safe, resilient, and robust safeguarding culture in the setting built on shared values; and that our children are treated with respect and dignity, taught to treat each other and staff with respect, feel safe, have a voice, and are listened to.
- Supporting contextual safeguarding practice recognising that the setting's site can be a location where harm can occur.
- Setting expectations for developing knowledge and skills within the setting's community (staff, children, parents/carers) to the signs and indicators of safeguarding issues and how to respond to them.
- Early identification of need for vulnerable children and provision of proportionate interventions to promote their welfare and safety.
- Working in partnership with children, parents, and other agencies in the Local Safeguarding Partnership including Early Help.

Horserenity CIC named as a relevant agency in the Local Safeguarding Partnership ([Pan Dorset / BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)).

This policy sets out its statutory duty to co-operate, follow and comply with published arrangements as set out by the Pan Dorset/BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership's professional expectations, roles, and responsibilities. [Welcome to the BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership and...](#)

1.5 Professional expectations, roles and responsibilities.

1.5.1 Role of all staff

- All staff will read and understand Part 1 of statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2025). Those working directly with children will also read Annex B.

- In addition to this all staff will be aware of the systems in place which support safeguarding including reading this Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy; the Behaviour Policy; the code of conduct; safeguarding response to children who go missing or are absent from education; and the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Know who and how to contact the DSL and any deputies and the Chair of board of directors.
- All staff will be able to identify vulnerable children and take action to keep them safe. Information or concerns about children will be shared with the DSL where it includes those:
 - who may need a social worker and may be experiencing abuse or neglect.
 - requiring mental health support.
 - may benefit from early help.
 - where there is a radicalisation concern.
 - where a crime may have been committed.
- Be clear as to the setting's policy and procedures about child on child abuse, children missing or absent from education and those requiring mental health support, and the impact of technology in relation to online safety including online filtering and monitoring processes.
- Be involved where appropriate, in the implementation of individual plans to further safeguard vulnerable children and understand their academic progress and attainment and maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort.
- Record concerns appropriately and in a timely manner by using the setting's safeguarding systems.
- To be aware of the need to raise to the senior leadership team any concerns they have about safeguarding practices within the school.

1.5.2 - Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputies (DDSL)

Duties are further outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2025, Annex C)

Details of our DSL and Deputy DSL and how to contact them are available on **Horserenity** website, on the notice board in stables and cabin and on posters by signing in book.

- The DSL is a senior member of staff who undertakes lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection within the setting.
- The DSL works with relevant strategic leads, taking lead responsibility for promoting educational outcomes by knowing the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues that children in need are experiencing or have experienced, and identifying the impact that these issues might be having on a child's attendance, engagement and achievement at school or college.
- Oversee and manage the work undertaken by any Deputy DSLs.
- Manages early identification of vulnerability of children and their families from staff through cause for concerns or notifications. This will ensure detailed, accurate, secure written records of concerns and referrals.

- Manages referrals to local safeguarding partners where children with additional needs have been identified. These can include those –
 - who need a social worker and may be experiencing abuse or neglect.
 - requiring mental health support.
 - who may benefit from early help.
 - where there is a radicalisation concern.
 - where a crime may have been committed.

The DSL will also:

- Work with others – acting as a point of contact for outside agencies about safeguarding.
- Support and advise other staff in making referrals to other agencies.
- When required, liaise with the case manager and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in relation to child protection cases which concern a staff member.
- Coordinate regular safeguarding training and raise awareness and understanding to the provision community around policies and practice in relation to safeguarding.
- Help promote educational outcomes by sharing information about vulnerable children with relevant staff. This includes ensuring that staff:
 - Know and can identify who these children are
 - Understand their progress and attainment and maintain a culture of high aspirations for this cohort.
 - Are supported to identify the challenges that children in this group might face.
 - Provide additional support or make reasonable adjustments to help children who have **or have had** a social worker to reach their potential.
 - Support the work of the designated mentor and all professionals working with these children
- Ensure the secure transfer of the Child Protection File when a child moves to a new setting-within 5 days for in year transfer or the first 5 days of the start of a new term.
- Arrange adequate and appropriate cover arrangements for any out of hours/out of term activities, e.g. attendance at Strategy and Initial Child Protection Conferences.
- Take lead responsibility for understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place.
- Support the role and duties of the named lead for health, safety and site security.

1.5.3 - Role of the Board of Directors – Duties are further outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2025, Part 2)

Given the size of **Horserenity CIC** senior board level lead who takes responsibility for the setting's safeguarding responsibility and ensures that safeguarding and child protection practice, process, and policy (including online safety) are effective and compliant with

legislation, statutory guidance, and Local Safeguarding Partnership arrangements is the same as the DSL and Founder Director.

- The appointed Safeguarding Director produce an annual report for governors and to complete the annual S175/157 safeguarding audit from BCP Council.
 - Ensure that the school remedies any actions brought to its attention without delay.
 - Ensure that this document is updated annually (or when there are significant updates)
- Ensure that the DSL has adequate time, funding, training, resources, and support to carry out their role effectively.
- Ensure that they attend appropriate training as described by the P-DSCP / BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership pathway and that the learning from this training for staff and the whole school community is robust and effective.
- Ensure that children are taught about safeguarding within their sessions including online safety in compliance with statutory guidance [Relationships and sex education \(RSE\) and health education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education) (to be introduced September 2026)
- Ensure that staff, volunteers, and contractors have appropriate checks carried out in line with statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2025, Part 3).
- Ensure that there are procedures in place to manage safeguarding concerns or allegations against staff, volunteers, and contractors who may not be suitable to work with or pose a risk to children.
- Ensure that systems are in place for children to effectively share a concern about a safeguarding issue they are experiencing, express their views and give feedback.
- Ensure that the setting has systems in place to prevent, identify and respond to child-on-child harm (including sexual abuse and sexual harassment) and mental health concerns, and review the effectiveness of the setting's online safety practices, and filtering and monitoring.
- Ensure the provision has appropriate filtering and monitoring systems in place and regularly review their effectiveness.
- Ensuring that the staff have an awareness and understanding of the provisions in place and manage them effectively and know how to escalate concerns when identified.
- Board of directors will consider the age range of their children, the number of children, how often they access the IT system and the proportionality of costs verses safeguarding risks.

1.6 Safeguarding training for staff

Governing bodies will ensure that all staff members undergo training in line with the P-DSCP / BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership requirements and safeguarding and child protection training at induction that includes online safety.

1.6.1 - All staff:

At **Horserenity CIC** our staff

- Will receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online safety) refresher training at least annually (via formal training, email e-bulletins and staff meetings).
- Must complete FGM awareness training and will understand their legal duty under the Mandatory Reporting Duty. (Appendix F)
- Must complete PREVENT awareness training annually. This is to ensure that they can comply with the legal expectations under the PREVENT duty. (Appendix F)
- Will receive training that includes clear reference to staff codes of behaviour and professional boundaries, and on the reporting of low-level concerns, internal whistleblowing policy and guidance for escalation.
- All staff should receive training on the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring.

1.6.2 - Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies:

- Will undergo the multi-agency training as described by the P-DSCP/ BCP Safeguarding Children’s Partnership pathway, to provide them with the knowledge, skills and training (including online safety) required to carry out the role. This training will be updated every two years.
- All Deputy DSLs will be trained to the same level as the DSL.
- The DSL and any deputies will liaise with the P-DSCP/BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership and with BCP Education Safeguarding Service. This will ensure that their knowledge and skills are updated via e-bulletins/ newsletters, and by attending DSL forums/ network meetings, and taking time to read and digest all safeguarding information.

1.6.3 - Other training considerations:

- The board of directors will ensure that at least one person on any appointment panel will have undertaken safer recruitment training, in line School Staffing (England) Regulations 2009 and the requirements of the P-DSCP/BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- Members of the senior leadership team will make themselves aware of and understand their role within the local safeguarding arrangements. This will ensure that those who have responsibility for the management of behaviour, inclusion, Special Educational Needs, attendance, and suspensions/exclusions will carry out their duties with a safeguarding consideration.
- The Designated lead for Children in Care will undergo appropriate training to fulfil their role in promoting the educational achievement of registered learners who are in care.
- The mental health lead will be appropriately trained and able to access updates.
- The Health, Safety and Site Security leads will be appropriately trained and receive regular updates.
- Training around safeguarding issues as in Annex B (including online safety and filtering and monitoring) will be integrated, aligned, and considered as part of a whole school safeguarding approach.
- Directors receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training at induction, and this is updated regularly.

1.7 Safeguarding in the curriculum

Horserenity CIC is dedicated to ensuring that all children are taught how to keep themselves and others safe, including online.

We recognise that effective education should be tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individual children, including children who are victims of abuse, and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

This is part of a broad and balanced curriculum, that includes:

- Working within statutory guidance in respect of [Relationships and sex education \(RSE\) and health education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education) (to be introduced September 2026)
- Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education, to explore key issues at an age-appropriate stage such as:
 - o Supporting children to develop the skills that form the building blocks of all positive relationships
 - o healthy and respectful relationships
 - o Boundaries, consent and kindness in relationships
 - o stereotyping, prejudice and equality
 - o Violence against women and girls
 - o body confidence and self-esteem
 - o how to recognise and report concerns about an abusive relationship, including coercive and controlling behaviour
 - o the concepts of, and laws relating to - sexual harassment and abuse e.g. consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, so-called 'honour'-based violence such as forced marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and how to access support and
 - o What constitutes sexual harassments and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable, emphasising that it is never the fault of the person experiencing it
 - o How to recognise misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories
- A whole-provision preventative education approach that prepares children for life in modern Britain and creates a culture of zero tolerance for sexism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia and sexual violence/harassment.
- Appropriate filtering and monitoring systems are in place to ensure that 'over-blocking' does not lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what children can be taught about online teaching and safeguarding. [Filtering and monitoring standards in schools and colleges \(DfE\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/filtering-and-monitoring-standards-in-schools-and-colleges) [Generative AI: product safety expectations - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/generative-ai-product-safety-expectations) (Further information can be found in KCSIE 2025)
- The curriculum will be shaped to respond to safeguarding incident patterns in the setting identified by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and safeguarding team (e.g. to respond to an increase in bullying incidents).
- Providing engagement opportunities with parents and carers to consult on key aspects of the learning.
- Learner voice is valued, and children and young adults can inform the curriculum via discussions with their mentors and the facilitation team.

1.8 Safer recruitment and safer working practice

1.8.1 - Safer recruitment

Horserenity CIC pays full regard to the safer recruitment practices as detailed in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education, Part Three' (DfE 2025), ensuring that we maintain an accurate Single Central Record.

- This includes scrutinising applicants, by verifying identity and academic or vocational qualifications, obtaining professional and character references, checking previous employment history and identifying any gaps within this, and ensuring that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job.
- References are always obtained, scrutinised and concerns resolved satisfactorily before appointment is confirmed.
- It also includes undertaking appropriate checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), the barred list checks and prohibition checks (and overseas checks if appropriate), dependent on the role and duties performed, including regulated and non-regulated activity.
- Applicants must complete an application form. Curriculum Vitae will not be accepted as a stand-alone.
- In line with government guidance, we will conduct online searches as part of our due diligence checks on short listed candidates and will inform them of this.
- All recruitment materials will include reference to **Horserenity CIC's** commitment to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of children.
- Assurances are sought for all contractors/ organisations who are required to work on site, including identification checks on arrival.

1.8.3 – Visitors

All visitors complete a secure signing in/out process and be provided with key safeguarding information that includes: contact details of safeguarding personnel in school, key procedures for reporting a concern and for health and safety.

Careful consideration is given to the suitability of any external organisations.

Scheduled visitors in a professional role (e.g. fire officer, police, LA staff) are asked to provide evidence of their role and employment details (usually an identity badge) upon arrival at the setting.

If the visit is unscheduled and the visitor is unknown to the setting, we will contact the relevant organisation to verify the individual's identity and confirm the reason for the visit.

1.8.4 – Site Safety

At **Horserenity CIC** we ensure that our site is as safe and as secure as possible.

We carry out regular checks and have the necessary plans and measures in place that are both sensible and proportionate to deal with any possible safety and/or security threats. This includes the risks associated with working with horses and out of doors.

Risk assessments are undertaken and maintained in accordance with the setting's health and safety policy.

The provision ensures that when our premises are hired or rented by other organisations (e.g. after school, evening/ weekend clubs etc) including any shared site providers who work with children, that those organisations adhere to the guidance for out-of-school settings.

[After-school clubs, community activities and tuition: safeguarding guidance for providers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/after-school-clubs-community-activities-and-tuition-safeguarding-guidance-for-providers). They must also abide by our lettings policy and contractual agreements. Any breach of these policies may lead to a contract being terminated.

1.8.5 – Off site visits and exchange visits

We carry out detailed risk assessments prior to any off-site visit and designate the specific roles and responsibilities of each adult, whether employed or volunteers.

1.8.6 - Use of reasonable force

‘Reasonable force’ refers to the physical contact to restrain and control children using no more force than is needed.’

At **Horserenity CIC** we never engage in reasonable force or physical restraint

- positive and proactive behaviour support and de-escalation is identified and applied.

If a response is not considered appropriate the concerns can be investigated Ref: [2.8 Allegations of abuse made against professionals.](#)

1.8.7 - Whistleblowing procedures

All staff are aware of the following whistleblowing channels for situations where they feel unable to raise an issue with the senior leadership team, or feel that their genuine concerns are not being addressed:

- [Whistleblowing policy and procedures](#)
- [Reporting low – level concerns policy and procedures](#)
- General guidance can be found at: Advice on whistleblowing <https://www.gov.uk/whistleblowing>.
- The NSPCC whistleblowing helpline is available [here](#) for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally. Staff can call: 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and Email: help@nspcc.org.uk.
- The above channels are clearly accessible to all staff (in the staff handbook, code of conduct and on staff notice boards).

1.9 Key safeguarding areas

These topics listed below, are themes that can impact on both children and families.

They are specific areas of safeguarding that every school/ setting has a statutory responsibility to address. Some of these are described in the appendices:

- Children in the court system
- Children affected by parental offending/imprisonment.
- [Children who are absent from education](#) – including persistent absence.
- [Child Exploitation](#) (including both Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation and county lines, modern day slavery and trafficking)

- Cybercrime
- Domestic Abuse
- Homelessness
- So-called Honour based Abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage),
- Online Safety
- Mental health
- Child on child abuse:
 - Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying).
 - Abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers.
 - Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse).
 - Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault;(this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence).
 - Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.
 - 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.
 - Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery).
 - Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm; and
 - Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).
- Preventing Radicalisation (The Prevent Duty)
- Serious Youth Violence
- Substance Misuse
- Private Fostering
- Young Carers

Additional information about key safeguarding areas can also be found in Keeping Children Safe in Education Annex B (DfE 2025); the [NSPCC website - Types of Abuse](#).

Localised resources for education settings can be accessed through Pan Dorset and BCP Safeguarding Children's Partnership.

PART 2: Procedures

2.1 Reporting concerns

At **Horserenity CIC** we ensure that all staff are well trained and are very clear about recording and reporting concerns to the DSL/Deputy DSL in a timely way.

In the case of a child being in immediate danger, staff know that they should phone the police.

All staff understand and follow the procedures that are in place for responding to a concern about a child (as detailed in [Appendix A](#)). This includes responding to child-on-child harm and those who present with a mental health need ([Appendix B](#)).

At Horserenity all children and parents know that they can raise their concerns via face to face communications with facilitators and other staff, via WhatsApp, email or text and know that all concerns will be treated seriously. They are promoted at induction and on consent forms when individuals start and on notice boards in cabin and stables.

2.2 Information Sharing

Horserenity CIC is committed to having due regard to relevant data protection principles which allow for sharing (and withholding) personal information as set out in the Data protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulations. This includes how to store and share information for safeguarding purposes, including information which is sensitive and personal and that it should be treated as 'special category personal data'.

Staff are aware that:

- 'Safeguarding' and 'individuals at risk' is a processing condition that allows practitioners to share special category personal data.
- Practitioners will seek consent to share data where possible, in line with [Information Sharing for Safeguarding Practitioners 2024](#).

There may be times when it is necessary to share information without consent such as:

- To gain consent would place the child at risk,
- By doing so will compromise a criminal investigation,

There are also times when **Horserenity CIC** will not provide a learner's personal data where the serious harm test under legislation is met, (i.e. that by sharing the information the child may be at further risk). When in doubt **Horserenity CIC** will always seek legal advice.

The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

2.3 Identifying and monitoring the needs of vulnerable children.

The DSL and Deputy DSL will regularly review and monitor any child who have been identified as vulnerable. This can include reviewing attendance data, behaviour data, attainment data and safeguarding records. This is to ensure that:

- Proportionate and early interventions can be taken to promote the safety and welfare of the child and prevent escalation of harm.

- Information about vulnerable children is shared with teachers and school/ college leadership staff to promote their educational outcomes.
- Children who have, or have had, a social worker, including those in kinship care, will have their academic progress and attainment reviewed regularly and additional academic support will be provided to help them reach their full potential. This will be shared with the Virtual Head as necessary.
- Reasonable adjustments are made in relation to setting-based interventions – for example responding to behaviour.

2.4 Multi-agency working

Horserenity CIC will work together with appropriate agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, including identifying and responding to their needs. This follows statutory guidance [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2025](#).

Occasions that warrant a statutory assessment under the Children Act 1989:

- If the child is in need under s.17 of the Children Act 1989 (including when a child is a young carer and or subject to a private fostering arrangement).
- Or if the child needs protection under s.47 of the Children Act 1989 where they are experiencing significant harm, or likely to experience significant harm.

Referrals in these cases should be made by the DSL (or Deputy DSL) to Children's Social Care in the Local Authority in which that child resides.

Where the child already has a social worker, the request for service should go immediately to the social worker involved or, in their absence, to their team manager.

If the child is a child in care, notification should also be made to BCP Council's Virtual School.

Horserenity CIC will co-operate with any statutory safeguarding assessments conducted by children's social care: this includes providing written reports and ensuring representation at inter-agency meetings such as integrated support plan meetings, initial and review child protection conferences and core group meetings.

2.4.1 Additional considerations:

- Where a child and/or their family is subject to an inter-agency child protection plan or a multiagency risk assessment conference (MARAC) meeting, we will contribute to the preparation, implementation, and review of the plan as appropriate.
- In situations where a child in care may be put on to part time timetable, we will consult with relevant agencies and the Virtual School.
- If a crime has been suspected or committed that involved the bringing of an offensive weapon on to the school site, then we will liaise with the Police who will consider a proportionate response.
- If there is a risk of harm, the police will be called via 999.

- For other concerns, or if we become aware of, or see something that doesn't seem right or causes us concern, we will report this intelligence (or information) to the Dorset police via the link below. [What is police intelligence? | Dorset Police](#)
- We will always refer to the non-statutory guidance [when-to-call-the-police--guidance-for-schools-and-colleges.pdf \(npcc.police.uk\)](#) if unsure and will contact the local PCSO/ BCP or DC Neighbourhood Team (Safer Schools Community Team).
- In the rare event that a child death occurs, or a child is seriously harmed, **Horserenity CIC** will notify the P-DSCP/ BCP or DC Safeguarding Children's Partnership as soon as is reasonably possible.

2.5 Suspensions and Exclusions,

This section is to be read in conjunction with our [Behaviour Policy, Attendance, Suspension and Exclusion policies](#).

At **Horserenity CIC** the use of a suspension and/ or exclusion will always be seen as the very last option. This is in line with our behaviour policy.

Where an additional vulnerability is identified, the child's welfare is always of paramount consideration. The Founder Director will consider their legal duty of care when sending a child home and if other interventions may be appropriate.

Horserenity CIC will exercise their legal duties in relation to any interventions. This includes:

- whether a statutory assessment should be considered in line with the principles of [Children Act 1989](#),
- that decisions are made in an anti-discriminatory manner in line with the [Equality Act 2010](#) (including having regard to the [SEND Code of Practice](#))
- and takes into consideration the learner's rights under the [Human Rights Act 1998](#).
- Interventions will be consistent with statutory guidance [School suspensions and permanent exclusions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

2.5.1 - Actions that will be taken

- An assessment of need may be undertaken with multi-agency partners with a view to mitigate any identified risk of harm. This is in line with [2.3 Identifying and monitoring the needs of vulnerable children](#) .
- If the child is subject to a child protection plan or where there is an existing child protection file, we will call a multiagency risk-assessment meeting prior to making any decision to exclude.
- In the event of a one-off serious incident resulting in an immediate decision to exclude, we will complete a risk assessment prior to convening a meeting of the governing body.

2.6 Children Who are Absent from Education

To be read in conjunction with the [Attendance Policy](#).

At Horserenity CIC we recognise that being absent from education for any length of time is a potential indicator of neglect/ abuse, or it may be an indicator for the need for early help support.

All staff will act in accordance with our school attendance procedures for unauthorised absence and for those frequently absent from education. These children will be reported to the DSL and reviewed in line with [2.3 Identifying and monitoring the needs of vulnerable children](#).

We will follow the statutory guidance detailed in [Children Missing Education - Guidance for Local authorities](#) and [Working together to improve school attendance 2024](#) and will comply with submitting attendance returns to the Local Authority within the agreed timescales.

This will include notifying the local authority in which the child lives:

- of any pupil who fails to attend regularly,
- or has been absent without permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more,
- or who has been recorded with code 1 (illness) and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness.
- and work with Children's Services where school absence indicates safeguarding concerns

2.7 Respond to incidents of Child-on-Child Harm

2.7.1 Child-on-child abuse

All children have a right to attend school and to learn in a safe environment.

At Horserenity CIC child-on-child abuse is not tolerated. It is not passed off as "banter" or seen as "part of growing up".

We have a zero-tolerance approach and take any disclosure very seriously.

We will respond to all reports and concerns of child-on-child abuse and child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment. This included those that have happened outside of the school, and/or online.

Child-on-child abuse is likely to include, but is not limited to:

- bullying (including cyber bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers
- physical abuse which can include hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or otherwise causing physical harm
- 'upskirting' or any picture taken under a person's clothing without their permission or them knowing to obtain sexual gratification or cause humiliation, distress or alarm.
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and/or videos (also known as sexting)
- sexual violence and sexual harassment between children, as defined by Sexual Offences Act 2003 which considers rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault, all types of sexual violence. Sexual violence and sexual harassment can be between two children, or a group of children and can occur online and offline.

Consequently, child-on-child abuse is dealt with as a safeguarding issue and recorded as such. It will not be managed through the systems set out in our behaviour policy.

- Any child who may have been victimised and/or displayed such harmful behaviours, along with any other child affected by child-on-child abuse, will be supported through the school's safeguarding team and pastoral system and the support will be regularly monitored and reviewed.
- We will address inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be relatively innocuous) as this can be an important intervention that may help prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future.
- We acknowledge that even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse, such abuse may still be taking place and is simply not being reported. Staff maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned.

We minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse by providing:

- a relevant, effective curriculum, that helps children to develop their understanding of acceptable behaviours, healthy relationships and keeping themselves safe. The curriculum is updated to reflect changes in legislation, and the mandatory teaching of Relationship Education, Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education, [Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance](#) (to be introduced September 2026)
- established/publicised systems for children to raise concerns with staff, knowing they will be listened to, supported and valued, and that the issues they raise will be taken seriously,
- training to all staff so they understand that child-on-child abuse can and does happen and are trained to be alert to any behaviours that could cause concern,
- a clear procedure for all staff to report all incidents as a safeguarding concern to the school DSL/ Deputy DSL.
-

2.7.2 Child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment

The DSL will follow both local and national guidance when there has been a report of sexual violence and harassment between children.

This will include liaising with other professionals to develop robust risk and needs assessments, and multi-agency safety planning with appropriate specialist targeted work for children who are identified as posing a potential risk to other children.

The Hackett Continuum [Understanding sexualised behaviour in children | NSPCC Learning](#), or: [The Brook - Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Assessment Tool](#)), should be utilised to inform assessment of risk and what actions to subsequently take. Any assessments need to

take a Contextual Safeguarding approach to consider risks posed by any wider environmental factors present in a child's life.

The DSL will record specifically the time and location of the incident, and any action required to make the location safer.

- The NSPCC has a dedicated helpline 0800 136 663 to provide children who are victims of sexual abuse in schools with appropriate support and advice. The helpline also provides support to parents and professionals.
- Lucy Faithfull Foundations 'Shore Space' offers confidential chat service for young people [Home - Shore](#)
- Where the report includes an online element, the setting will follow [Searching, screening and confiscation at school - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) and [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#). The key consideration is for staff not to view or forward illegal images of a child. The highlighted advice provides more details on what to do when viewing an image is unavoidable.
- It is important that schools consider sexual harassment in broad terms. Sexual harassment creates a culture that, if not challenged, can normalise inappropriate behaviours and provide an environment that may lead to sexual violence.
- When an incident involves an act of **sexual violence** (rape, assault by penetration, or sexual assault) the starting point is that this should be passed on to police **regardless** of the age of criminal responsibility (10 years old). This must be reported directly via 101 for recording purposes and accountability. A concurrent referral to social care must also be made.

2.7.3 Serious violence

At **Horserenity CIC** we recognise that success in learning is one of the most powerful indicators in the prevention of youth crime.

All staff are aware of the indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime.

These may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in educational performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

2.7.4 - Contextual safeguarding approach to child-on-child abuse:

Horserenity CIC will minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse by taking a contextual approach to safeguarding by increasing safety in the contexts of which harm can occur – this can include the provision's environment itself, peer groups and the neighbourhood.

Following any incidents of child-on-child abuse, the DSL will review and consider whether any practice or environmental changes can be made in relation to any lessons learned.

This can include making changes to policy and procedures, staffing and supervision, making changes to the physical environment and considering the utilisation and delivery of bespoke safeguarding topics in the curriculum.

2.8 Responding to allegations of abuse or transferable risks made against adults working in a position of trust.

At Horserenity CIC staff must follow our [Managing Allegation Policy](#) and report any concerns or allegations about a professional's behaviour (including supply staff, volunteers, and contractors and those from organisations or individuals using the school premises) where they may have:

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

2.8.1 - Immediate action must be taken:

- Do not speak to the individual it concerns.
- Allegations or concerns about colleagues and visitors must be reported directly to the Head Teacher who will follow guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2025, Part four: Allegations of abuse made against teachers and other staff).
- If the concern relates to Founder Director it should be reported to the Chair of the board of directors, who will liaise with the [Local Authority Designated Officer \(LADO\)](#) and they will decide on any action required.
- If there is a conflict of interest which inhibits this process of reporting, staff can report directly to the LADO.
- If allegations are regarding a member of supply staff, the school will take the lead and progress enquiries with the LADO, whilst continuing to engage and work with the employment agency.
- Allegations regarding foster carers or anyone in a position of trust working or volunteering with children should be referred to the LADO on the day that the allegation is reported. The allocated social worker should also be informed on the day. The school should not undertake any investigation unless the LADO advises this.

2.8.2 - Low Level Concerns

This should be read in conjunction with [Horserenity's Low level Concern Policy](#), the staff code of conduct, The Information Commissioner Employment Practices Code (KCSiE, pg.106, paragraph 422) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2025).

A low-level concern is never insignificant, and all concerns will be taken very seriously.

At Horserenity CIC we create an environment where staff are encouraged and feel confident to self-refer where they have found themselves in a difficult situation or have noticed something that they feel uncomfortable about.

In the event where a concern about professional conduct does not meet the threshold set out above, all staff must follow our [Low Level Concerns Policy](#). This provides a clear procedure for sharing low level concerns.

- Reports should be made to DSL (or the DDSL if it is regarding the DSL).
- The DSL will challenge unprofessional behaviour. They will support the individual to correct it at an early stage by providing a responsive, sensitive, and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised to all involved.
- We will also review and correct any deficits in our safeguarding and other affiliated systems (e.g. staff code of conduct, staff training)

2.9 Mental health and wellbeing.

(A flow diagram is available in [Appendix B](#) to illustrate this section)

All education settings have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our children. It is the central mission of Horserenity to support those who are struggling with social and emotional wellbeing.

Mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation, and /or may require early help support.

Horserenity CIC will commit to undertake the following.

- Early identification of vulnerability to mental health problems by reviewing attendance, behaviour, attainment, and safeguarding records at least on a termly basis.
- Ensure that children can report and share concerns in line with section [2.1 Reporting a concern](#) of this policy.
- Staff will follow a safeguarding process in terms of reporting concerns outlined in [Appendix B](#) so the DSL (and wider members of the safeguarding team) can assess whether any other vulnerabilities can be identified so proportionate support can be considered.
- Staff will ensure the immediate health and safety of the child who is displaying acute mental health distress. This may require support from emergency services via 999 if the child is at risk of immediate harm.
- Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem – DSL's and the senior leadership team should be able to access specialist advice through targeted services.
- The DSL will consider whether a case can be managed internally, through Early Help, support or should involve other agencies (as required in line with section [2.4 - Multi-Agency Working](#)).
- The school will communicate and work with the child and their parents/carers to ensure that any interventions are in the best interests of the child.
- The DSL will liaise with staff to ensure reasonable adjustments are made and will develop ways to support the child in achieving positive educational outcomes.
- Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem – DSLs and the senior leadership team should be able to access specialist advice through targeted services.

2.9.1 - Contextual safeguarding approach to mental health

Horserenity CIC will ensure that preventative measures, in terms of providing safeguarding within the delivery of the provision, will provide opportunities for children to identify when they may need help, and how they can develop resilience.

At **Horserenity CIC** we will take a 'whole setting approach' that will:

- deliver high quality teaching around mental health and wellbeing on the curriculum.
- Have a culture that promotes mental health and wellbeing;
- Have an environment that promotes mental health and wellbeing;
- Make sure children and staff are aware of and able to access a range of mental health services;
- Supporting staff wellbeing
- Be committed to child and parent participation

2.10 Online Safety

This section is to be read in conjunction with our [On-line Safety Policy, Acceptable Usage and E-safety policies](#)

Online safety is an integrated and interwoven theme with all safeguarding considerations.

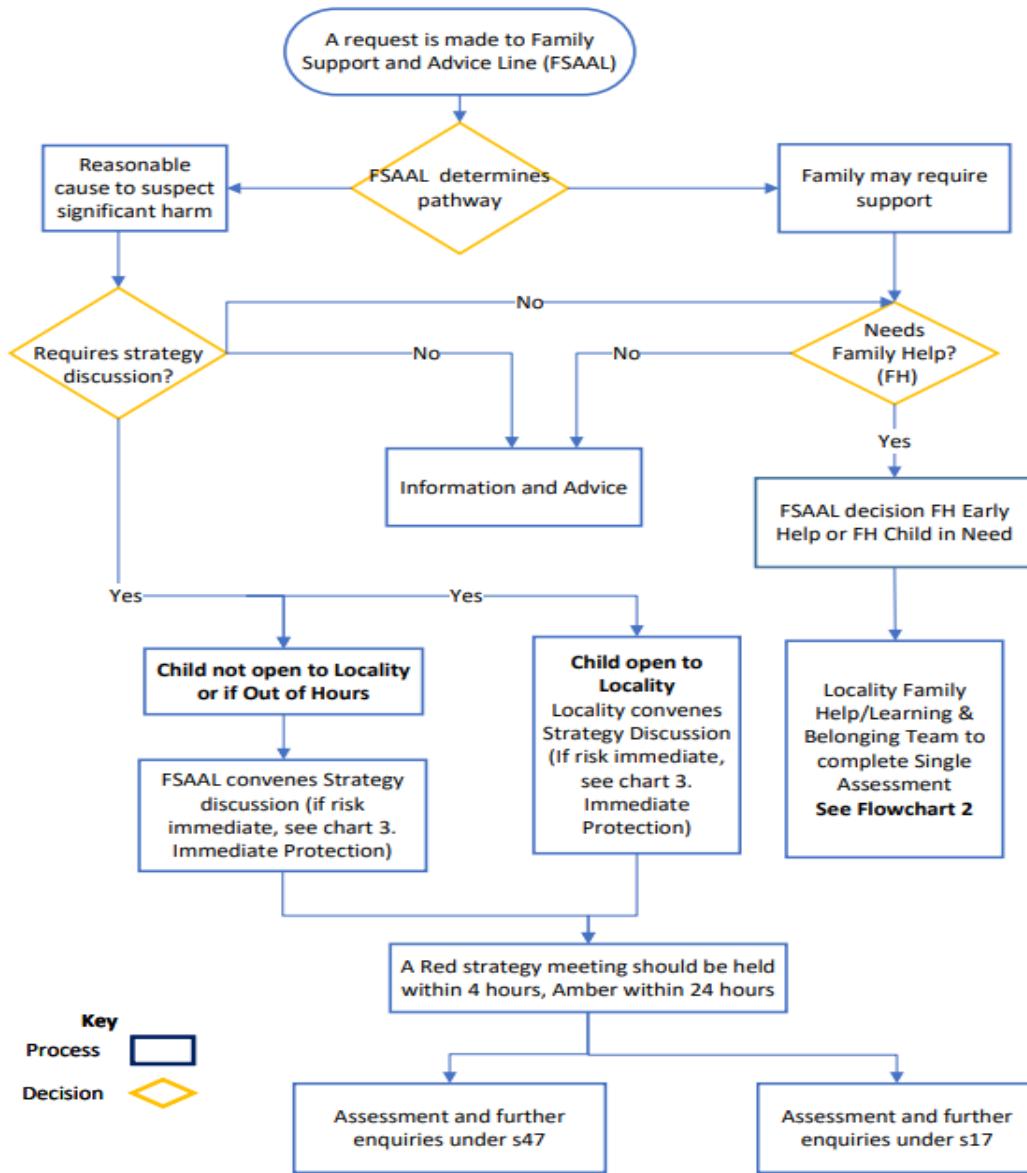
Horserenity CIC is committed to addressing online safety issues around Content, Contact, Conduct and Commerce. This includes:

- Ensuring that online safety is included in relevant policies and procedures.
- Online safety is interwoven in safeguarding training for staff and safeguarding on the curriculum for children.
- Acknowledging that child on child abuse can happen via mobile and smart technology between individuals and groups. This should be approached in the same process outlined in section [2.7 Responding to incidents of child on child harm and read in conjunction](#) with our policy on the use of [mobile smart technology](#).
- Provision of education via any remote learning will comply with all governmental advice [Safeguarding and remote education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- The effectiveness of our ability to safeguarding children in respect to filtering and monitoring, information security and access management alongside the above will be reviewed annually.
- Preparing children with information for any online challenges, misinformation, disinformation (including 'Fake News') and conspiracy theories sharing information with parents and where to get help. Support can be found from [Educate Against Hate - Prevent Radicalisation & Extremism](#) and the Pears Foundation report [Commission into Countering Online Conspiracies in Schools-1.pdf](#)
- Take appropriate action to meet the cyber security standards [Cyber Security Standards | IT Governance UK](#) and improve their cyber resilience
- Ensure systems and features are in place to meet the DfE guidance on Generative AI [Generative artificial intelligence \(AI\) in education - GOV.UK](#)

Action taken when a child is referred to Dorset Children's Services

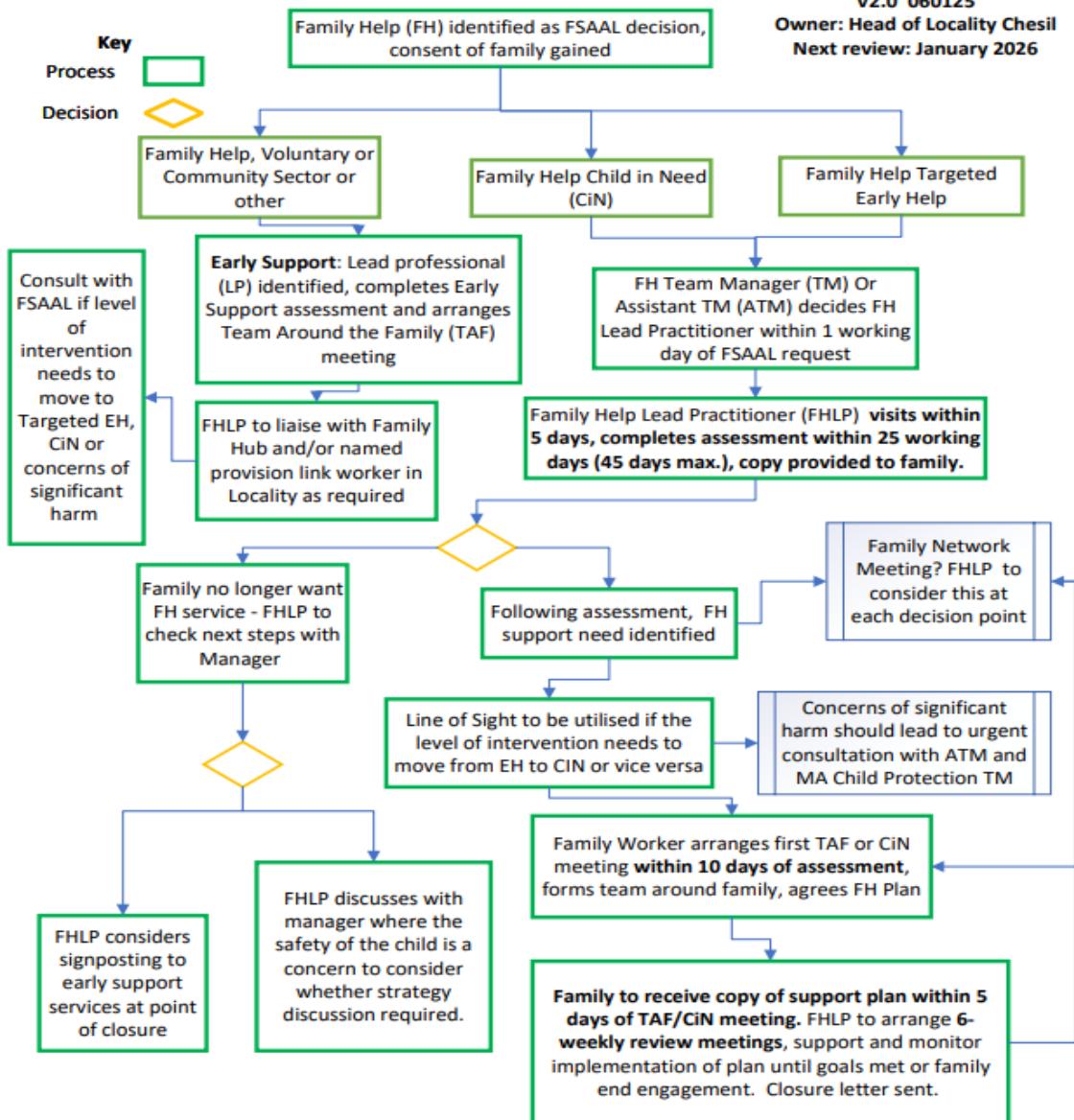


How we do things in Dorset 1. When a request for support is made to Dorset Council



Appendix 2.

Family Help Pathway



Appendix 3.

The Seven R's

Receive

Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief. Accept what is said and take it seriously. Make a note of what has been said as soon as practicable.

Reassure

Reassure the pupil /student, but only as far as is honest and reliable. Do not make promises you may not be able to keep, e.g.: “I'll stay with you”, or “everything will be alright now” or “I'll keep this confidential”. Do reassure, e.g. you could say “I believe you”, “I am glad you came to me”, “I am sorry this has happened”, “we are going to do something together to get help”.

Respond

Respond to the pupil/student only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer this matter, but do not interrogate for full details. Do not ask ‘leading’ questions, i.e. “did he touch your private parts?” or “did she hurt you?”. Such questions may invalidate your evidence (and the child's) in any later court proceedings.

Instead, make use of open-ended questions which offers the child the opportunity to provide more information about an event in a way that is not leading, suggestive or putting them under pressure. Open questions may use: How? When? Who? Where?

Questions beginning with the phrases “tell me”, “describe” or “explain” are useful:

- Tell me what happened, tell me who was there....
- Explain what you mean when you say....
- Describe the place to me....
- Do not criticise the alleged perpetrator (noting that some may also be vulnerable); the pupil may care about him/her, and reconciliation may be possible.
- Do not ask the pupil to repeat it all for another member of staff. Explain what you have to do next and whom you have to talk to. Reassure the pupil that it will be the designated lead for safeguarding or Headteacher.

Report

Share concerns with the DSL as soon as possible. If you are unable to contact your DSL, deputy DSL, or most senior member of staff, if the child is at risk of immediate harm, you MUST contact Achieving for Children SPA service or Police.

If you are dissatisfied with the response from the DSL or children's social work, you should ask for the decision to be reconsidered, giving your reasons for this.

A formal referral or any urgent medical treatment must not be delayed by the unavailability of designated staff.

Record

If possible, make some very brief notes at the time and write them up as soon as possible. Keep your original notes on file.

Any member of staff receiving a disclosure of abuse from a child or young person or noticing signs or symptoms of possible abuse in a child or young person, will make a written record as soon as practical, recording the disclosure using the child's own words, what was said or seen and the location both of the abuse and the disclosure.

Record the date, time, place, person's present and noticeable non-verbal behaviour, and the words used by the child. If the child uses sexual 'pet' words, record the actual words used, rather than translating them into proper words.

A record of a concern, suspicion or allegation should be made at the time of or as soon as possible after the event. Dates and times of events should be recorded as accurately as possible, together with a note of when the record was made.

Record facts and observable things, rather than your 'interpretations' or 'assumptions'.

A record should be made of any visible marks, bruising or injuries to a child that give cause for concern. This may be completed on a body map. The child should not be examined intimately, or pictures taken of any injuries / marks.

All records must be signed and dated clearly with the name of the signatory clearly printed. Children MUST NOT be asked to make a written statement themselves or to sign any records. All records of a child protection nature (handwritten or typed) are passed to the DSL.

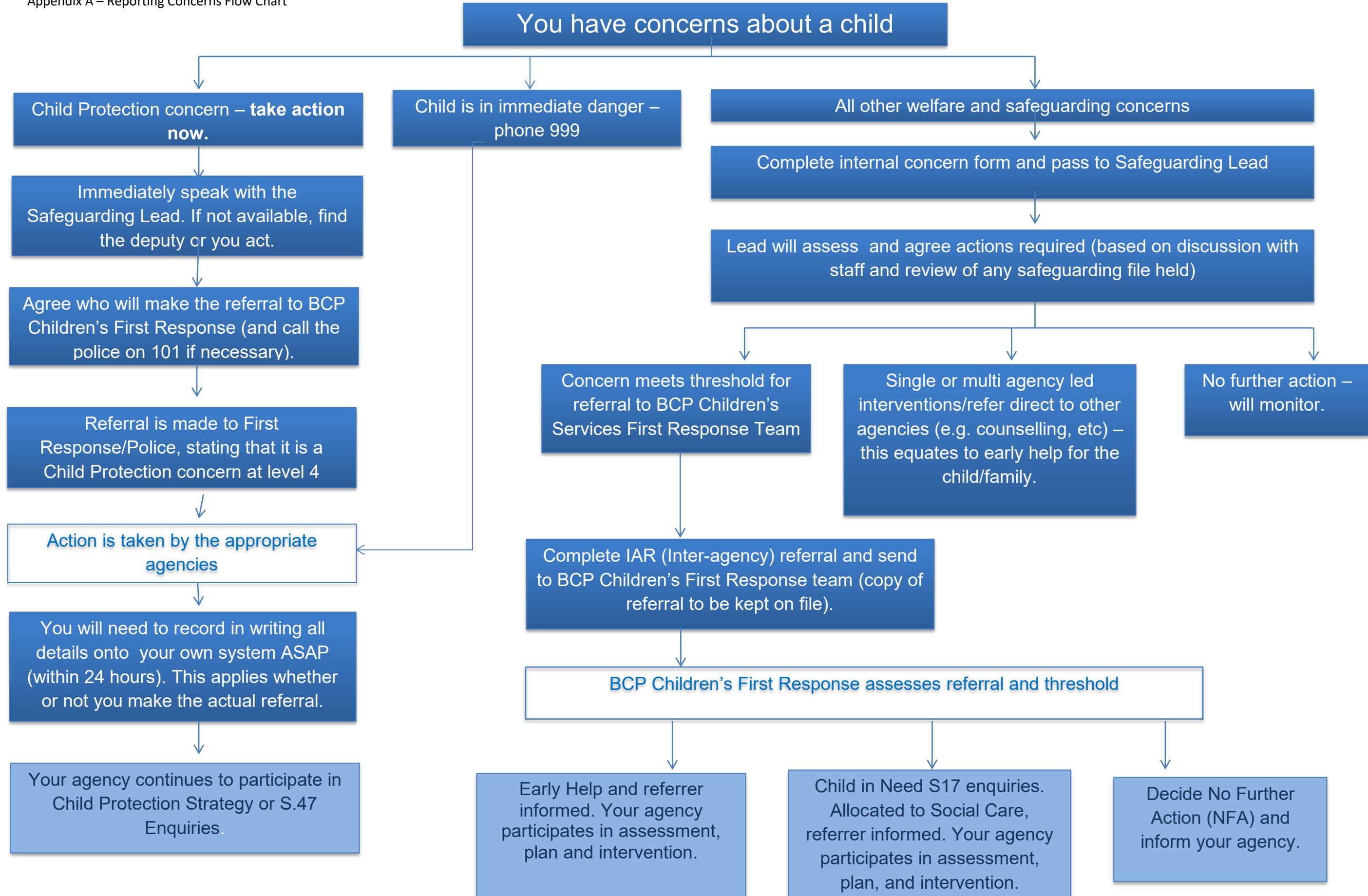
Remember

Support the child: listen, reassure, and be available. Complete confidentiality is essential. Share your knowledge only with appropriate professional colleagues.

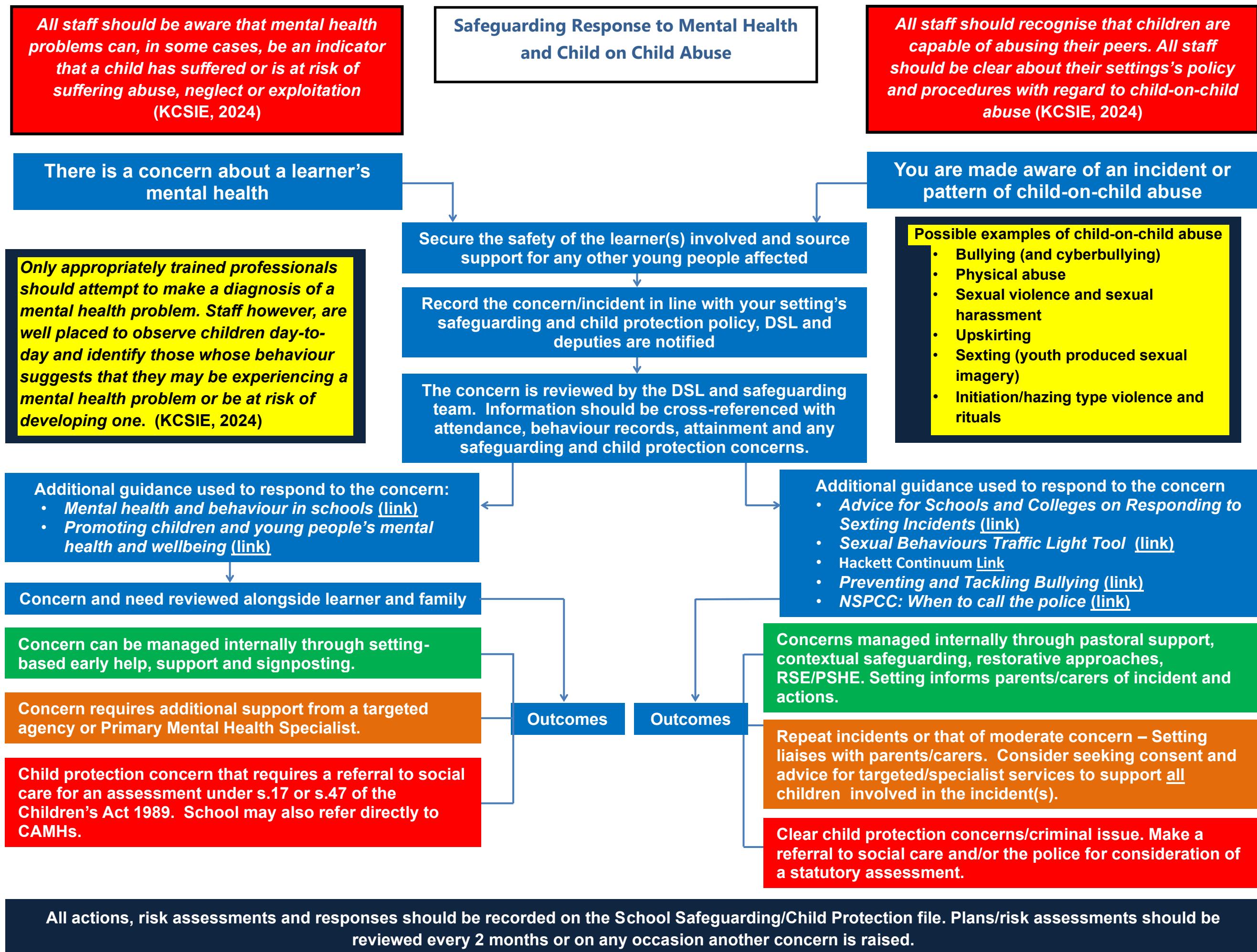
Try to get some support for yourself if you need it.

Review

- Has the action taken provided good outcomes for the child?



No matter what the outcome, keep monitoring, re-refer or escalate as appropriate. Participate in all assessments and plans. Chase referrals if not kept informed – this is our responsibility.



BCP and Dorset Council Multi-Agency Contacts for

If you have concerns about a child/young person in the BCP area:

If a child is at immediate risk call the POLICE	POLICE 999
To report non-urgent information, call 101 or add information through the partnership intelligence sharing link	The sharing of information is crucial in helping to reduce the risk of harm and keep people safe. <u>Do you have any information or intelligence that you wish to share with Police?</u> All partner agencies can submit intelligence directly to Dorset Police via the following link: <u>Community partnership intelligence Dorset Police</u>
To make an URGENT referral to Children's Social Care	BCP Children's First Response Team: Tel: 01202 123334 Out of hours - 01202 738256 <u>childrensfirstresponse@bcp council.gov.uk</u>
To make a NON-URGENT referral to Children's Social Care.	BCP Children's First Response Team: Tel: 01202 123334 Out of hours Tel: 01202 738256 <u>childrensfirstresponse@bcp council.gov.uk</u>
To raise concerns and ask for advice about radicalisation	Police Prevent Team - <u>PreventReferrals@Dorset.pnn.police.uk</u> Local Authority Prevent Lead -
To liaise with the specialist Safeguarding Police Unit	Local Safer Schools Community Team (SSCT) - <u>ssct@dorset.pnn.police.uk</u>
Dorset's Family Support and Advice Line	01305 228558
Dorset Council Children's Social Care Out of Hours Service	01305 228558

If you have concerns about a professional working with a child:

To raise concerns or seek guidance in relation to the conduct of someone who works with children.	Local Authority Designated Officer - (LADO) <u>LADO@bcp council.gov.uk</u>
Dorset Council Safeguarding in Education Service	Laura Tulk (part time) and Annabel Mitchell (full time), 01305 221122, <u>safeguardingandstandardsadvisors@dorsetcou ncil.gov.uk</u>

Dorset Council LADO	Martha Sharp (full time), Lynne Bowman (full time) and Laura Tulk (part time), 01305 221122, lado@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
Whistleblowing professional policy	NSPCC Whistleblowing hotline 0800 028 0285 help@nspcc.org.uk

For information, advice, and guidance in relation to safeguarding policy and procedures:
Education Safeguarding Leads: safeguardingineducation@bcp council.gov.uk

BCP MASH Education Link: childrensfirstresponse@bcp council.gov.uk	BCP MASH Consultation Link: childrensfirstresponse@bcp council.gov.uk	BCP Critical Incident Support Link: Schools Continuity schools.continuity@bcp council.gov.uk
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For advice and support in relation to attendance, provision and inclusion:

School Inclusion: schoolinclusion@bcp council.gov.uk

Young Carers - Advice and support.	BCP Council Young Carers Offer
The Virtual School – for Children Looked After / Previously Looked After	virtual.school@bcp council.gov.uk
Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) & Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)	Preventing Child Sexual Exploitation The Children's Society Protecting children from child criminal exploitation NSPCC Learning
Advice around harmful sexualised behaviour. (HSB)	Harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) or peer-on-peer sexual abuse NSPCC Learning
Children affected by Forced Marriage	Forced Marriage Unit 020 7008 0151 fmu@fco.gov.uk
Online Safety Advice	Professional Online Safeguarding Helpline T: 0344 381 4772 E: helpline@saferinternet.org.uk
Reporting online sexual abuse and grooming	Child Exploitation and Online Protection command https://www.ceop.police.uk/ceop-reporting/
FGM advice	NSPCC FGM Helpline 0800 028 3550 fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk
Domestic Abuse Helpline	Help with domestic abuse BCP Help with domestic abuse BCP

CAMHS	<u>CAMHS (Child and adolescent mental health services) :: Dorset HealthCare University NHS Foundation Trust</u>
Whistleblowing - professional policy & helpline	NSPCC Whistleblowing hotline 0800 028 0285 <u>help@nspcc.org.uk</u>

Appendix D: Dealing with a disclosure of abuse.

When a child tells me about the abuse they have suffered, what must I remember?

- Stay calm.
- Do not communicate shock, anger or embarrassment.
- Reassure the child. Tell them you are pleased that they are speaking to you.
- Never promise confidentiality. Assure them that you will try to help but let the child know that you may have to tell other people in order to do this. State who this will be and why.
- Encourage the child to talk but do not ask "leading questions" or press for information. Use 'Tell Me, Explain to me, Describe to me' (TED) questioning.
- Listen and remember.
- Check that you have understood correctly what the child is trying to tell you.
- Praise the child for telling you. Communicate that they have a right to be safe and protected.
- It is inappropriate to make any comments about the alleged offender.
- Be aware that the child may retract what they have told you. It is essential to record all you have heard.
- At the end of the conversation, tell the child again who you are going to tell and why that person or those people need to know.
- As soon as you can afterwards, make a detailed record of the conversation using the child's own language. Include any questions you may have asked. Do not add any opinions or interpretations.

NB It is not education staff's role to seek disclosures. Their role is to observe that something may be wrong, ask about it, listen, be available and try to make time to talk.

- "The 5 R's" are helpful in understanding what professional's duties are in relation to responding to an incident.

Recognise – Respond – Reassure – Refer – Record

Appendix E: Types of abuse and neglect

The Department for Education's Tackle Child Abuse campaign has accessible videos to watch
<https://tacklechildabuse.campaign.gov.uk/>

Abuse and neglect are defined as the maltreatment of a child or young person whereby someone may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to prevent harm. They may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children.

All school staff should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases multiple issues will overlap with one another. For children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) additional barriers can exist when identifying abuse and neglect, these include:

- 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.
- the potential for children with SEN and disabilities being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

To address these additional challenges, schools and colleges should consider extra pastoral support for children with SEND (KCSIE, 2025).

The following are the definition of abuse and neglect as set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) however, the ultimate responsibility to assess and define the type of abuse a child or young person may be subject to is that of the Police and Children's Services – our responsibility is to understand what each category of abuse is and how this can impact on the welfare and development of our children and where we have concerns that a child or young person may be at risk of abuse and neglect (one or more categories can apply) to take appropriate action as early as possible.

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

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

Emotional abuse: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

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

sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Appendix F: Specific actions to take on topical safeguarding issues.

General or national guidance will not be included here. A summary of specific duties are in KCSiE 25, Annex B and a flowchart 'If you have concerns about a child' can be found in Appendix A of this document.

In recognition that the threshold of child protection is 'likely to suffer' significant harm, Horserenity CIC may need to make a referral to children's social care. Where possible, this will involve notifying the parent/carer if it does not place the learner at further risk of harm. In all other circumstances information will be shared in line with section Information s

It is also important to recognise the importance of liaising with other education settings who may have siblings attending. It is likely that they may hold additional information which will support early identification of harm and in turn develop your assessment of need.

Child Exploitation – both Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Horserenity CIC will ensure that early help intervention is provided as soon as a concern of exploitation is identified. Discussion and advice will be sought from targeted services to consider what support may be available. The learner and their families will be part of any planning and interventions.

- If the learner is at risk of CSE or there is intelligence which indicates that the learner or peer group are at risk of CSE, Horserenity CIC will share information with Operation Topaz (the police). This information will support proactive activity to disrupt criminal activity in relation to sexual exploitation.
- If the learner is at risk of CCE information should be shared with Children's Services and a CERAf [BCP Child Exploitation Toolkit - BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership](#) (Criminal Exploitation Referral Assessment Framework) should be completed. The child may be referred to the multi-agency High Risk of Harm Panel and managed through the Missing, Exploited and Trafficked Panel, who can advise and support settings to manage risk. Targeted support maybe available to disrupt children from getting involved with criminality.
- Agencies will share 'Missing persons' notifications (which a learner is reported missing from home or care) with education settings with a view to support them to take proactive action and reasonable adjustments in relation to behaviour management and achieving positive educational outcomes. These should be stored securely on the learner's Safeguarding/Child Protection file.

Domestic Abuse

Operation Encompass is a national operation where local police forces notify when the police are called to an incident of domestic abuse. Horserenity CIC has signed up to the Operation Encompass agree and has received training about it. This means that whenever the police have responded to a domestic abuse incident, we are informed about it. This enables the education setting to take proactive action and reasonable adjustments in relation to behaviour management and achieving positive educational outcomes.

When a setting is concerned about the amount of police notifications they receive or disclosures of domestic abuse they should consider seeking further advice by completing an Early Help Assessment or DASH to support the family.

Female Genital Mutilation

Mandatory reporting duty: [Click here for government guidance](#)

There is a legal duty for all professionals undertaking teaching work to report known cases of FGM to the police via 101. This is when they:

1. are informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her; or
2. observe physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on.

These cases must be referred to the DSL who will support them to carry out their duty. It is also advised any referrals made to the police under the mandatory reporting duty is followed up with children's social care, so an assessment of need and support is concurrently considered.

Online Safety

- **Paragraph 134 to 139 of Keeping Children Safe in Education highlights additional actions schools should take to keep children safe online.**
- For concerns around individual cases where a child has been harmed through online mediums, advice and guidance can be made through the **Professional Online Safeguarding Helpline**, T: 0344 381 4772, E: helpline@saferinternet.org.uk
- Where there have been established cases of online abuse or grooming, the school settings should alert - **Child Exploitation and Online Protection command (CEOPS)**
<https://www.ceop.police.uk/ceop-reporting/>

Mental health – [linked to section within main body of this policy](#)

Child on Child Abuse - [linked to section within main body of this policy.](#)

Serious Youth Violence

To be read in conjunction with the above section around Child Criminal Exploitation

It is important to note that should a weapon be used or there is threat of use, the police should be called immediately.

- The same day a weapon is found the school should call for a multi-disciplinary assessment of risk.
- Whilst it is acknowledged that the decision to exclude remains with the Head Teacher it is recommended that consultation with other agencies to ensure there is no further risks
- Alternatives to exclusions should be considered first in recognition that by doing so a learner it may be at further risk of harm out in the community.
- Police must be notified

Preventing Radicalisation - The Prevent Duty.

All schools and colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), in the exercise of their functions, to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism”. This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

The Prevent duty should be seen as part of schools' and colleges' wider safeguarding obligations. Designated safeguarding leads and other senior leaders should familiarise themselves with the revised [Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales](#), especially paragraphs 57-76, which are specifically concerned with schools (and also covers childcare).

The guidance is set out in terms of four general themes:

- risk assessment,
- working in partnership,
- staff training,
- IT policies.

Private Fostering

A private fostering arrangement is one that is made privately (without the involvement of a local authority) for the care of a child:

- under the age of 16 years (under 18, if disabled)
- by someone other than a parent or close relative (*Close family relative is defined as a 'grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt' and includes half-siblings and step-parents; it does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents or cousins.)
- with the intention that it should last for 28 days or more.

Cases of private fostering arrangements must be reported to children's social care to ensure that needs are adequately made.

Statutory guidance states that this should be done at least 6 weeks before the arrangement is due to start or as soon as you are made aware of the arrangements. Not to do so is a criminal offence.

Further support and reasonable adjustments should be made by the education setting to promote achievement of positive educational outcomes.

Young Carers

A young carer is a person under 18 who regularly provides emotional and/or practical support and assistance for a family member who is disabled, physically or mentally unwell or who misuses substances. Support for Young Carers can be accessed by completing an IRA.