

# **Treetops Learning Community**

## **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**

September 2020



## Treetops Learning Community

# Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Document Detail	
<b>Policy Reference Number:</b>	CP September 2020
<b>Category:</b>	Mandatory policies
<b>Authorised By:</b>	
<b>Status:</b>	
<b>Date Approved:</b>	July 2020
<b>Next Review Date:</b>	July 2021

## Contents

Section Number	Section Title	Page No.
<b>1</b>	Policy statement aims and principles	3
<b>2</b>	Context and The Education Act 2002	4
<b>3</b>	Roles and responsibilities	4
<b>4</b>	Good practice guidelines	6
<b>5</b>	Abuse of trust	6
<b>6</b>	Children who may be particularly vulnerable	6
<b>7</b>	Support for those involved in a child protection issue	7
<b>8</b>	Complaints procedure	7
<b>9</b>	If you have concerns about a colleague	8
<b>10</b>	Allegations against staff	8
<b>10.1</b>	Allegations against supply teachers	8
<b>11</b>	Staff training	8
<b>12</b>	Safer recruitment	8
<b>13</b>	Extended school and off-site arrangements	9
<b>14</b>	Photography and images	9
<b>15</b>	E-safety	9
<b>16</b>	Prevent – Counter-terrorism	10
<b>17</b>	Genital mutilation reporting	10
<b>18</b>	Looked after children	10
<b>19</b>	Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation	10
<b>19.1</b>	Serious Violence and County Lines	11
<b>20</b>	Mental health	11
<b>21</b>	Child Protection Procedures	11
<b>21.1</b>	Recognising abuse	11
<b>21.2</b>	Bullying (including peer on peer abuse)	12
<b>21.3</b>	Indicators of abuse	13
<b>21.4</b>	Impact of abuse	13
<b>21.5</b>	Taking action	14
<b>21.6</b>	If you suspect a pupil is at risk	14
<b>21.7</b>	If a child discloses abuse	15
<b>21.8</b>	Notifying parents	15
<b>21.9</b>	Referral to children’s social care	15
<b>21.10</b>	Children with sexually harmful behaviour	16
<b>21.11</b>	Confidentiality and information-sharing	16
<b>21.12</b>	Operation Encompass	17
<b>21.13</b>	Reporting directly to the child protection agencies	17
<b>21.14</b>	Information sharing and GDPR	17

<b>Appendices</b>		
<b>1</b>	Code of ethical practice for school staff	18
<b>2</b>	Whistle blowing code	19
<b>3</b>	Visiting staff child protection information leaflet	22
<b>4</b>	Confirmation of receipt form	23
<b>5</b>	Information sharing form (GDPR)	24
<b>6</b>	Reporting a concern flowchart	27
<b>7</b>	School incident form with body map	29

## **1. Policy Statement Aims and Principles**

### **Introduction**

This policy is based on our core safeguarding principles. These are as follows:

- The school's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is of paramount importance.
- Safer children make more successful learners.
- Representatives of the whole-school community of pupils, parents, staff and governors will be involved in policy development and review.
- Policies will be reviewed annually, unless an incident or new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim review.

### **Child Protection Statement**

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.

The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff and governors and are consistent with those of the Thurrock Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP.)

### **Policy principles**

- Welfare of the child is paramount
- All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection.
- All staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm.
- Pupils and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support.

### **Policy aims**

- To provide all staff with the necessary information to enable them to meet their child protection responsibilities.
- To ensure consistent good practice.
- To demonstrate the school's commitment with regard to child protection to pupils, parents and other partners.

### **Terminology**

**Safeguarding** and promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of protecting children from abuse or neglect, preventing the impairment of health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and

effective care and undertaking that role so as to enable those children to have optimum life chances and to enter adulthood successfully.

**Child protection** refers to the processes undertaken to protect children who have been identified as suffering, or being at risk of suffering significant harm.

**Staff** refers to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full time or part time, in either paid or voluntary capacity.

**Child** refers to all young people who have not yet reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**Young adult** refers to all those who have reached their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and are still attending the school.

**Parent** refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers and adoptive parents.

## **2**      **Context**

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 requires local education authorities and the governors of maintained school and further education (FE) colleges to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

Section 157 of the same act and the Education (Independent Schools Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 require proprietors of independent schools (including academies and city technology colleges) to have arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.

This policy follows the most up-to-date guidance from Keeping Children Safe in Education (June 2020)

Research suggests that more than 10% of children will suffer some form of abuse. Due to their day-to-day contact with pupils, school staff are uniquely placed to observe changes in children's behaviour and the outward signs of abuse. Children may also turn to a trusted adult in school when they are in distress or at risk. It is vital that school staff are alert to the signs of abuse and understand the procedures for reporting concerns.

### **Key Personnel**

The Named Designated Safeguarding Lead for child protection is **Mrs Terri Carroll (Senior Office Manager)**

The Designated Safeguarding Leads by area are Mr. Tom Smith (Deputy Headteacher & DSL KS4), **Mrs Becky Fry (Assistant Headteacher & DSL KS1&2)**, **Mr. Ryan Jones (Assistant Headteacher & DSL KS3)**, **Mrs Lucy Meek (Assistant Headteacher & DSL KS5)**, **Mrs Jane Flatt (VB Manager & DSL VB)**

The nominated governor is **Mr Neil Woodbridge**

The Headteacher is **Mr Jon Brewer**.

## **3**      **Roles and Responsibilities**

All schools must nominate a senior member of staff to coordinate child protection arrangements. The local authority maintains a list of all Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) for child protection.

The DSL:

- Is appropriately trained.
- Acts as a source of support and expertise to the school community.
- Has an understanding of LSCP (Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership) procedures.
- Keeps electronic records of all concerns, ensuring that such records are stored securely and flagged on, but kept separate from the pupil's general file. In Treetops School this is kept using MyConcern cloud based software.
- Refers cases of suspected abuse to children's social care or police as appropriate.
- Notifies children's social care if a child with a child protection plan is absent for more than 2 days without explanation – as flagged by the attendance officer.
- Ensures that when a pupil with a child protection plan leaves the school, their information is passed to their new school and the pupil's social worker is informed.
- Attends and/or contributes to child protection conferences.
- Coordinates the school's contribution to child protection plans.
- Develops effective links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies.
- Ensures that all staff sign and indicate that they have read and understood the child protection policy. (In Treetops School this is completed as part of the staff induction.)
- Ensures that the child protection policy is updated annually.
- Liaises with the nominated governor and headteacher as appropriate.
- Keeps a record of staff attendance at child protection training.
- Makes the child protection policy available to parents. (This is done via the School Website.)

The designated safeguarding leads by area are appropriately trained and, in the absence of the designated person, carries out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of pupils. In the event of the long-term absence of the designated persons by area, the deputy will assume all of the functions above.

The governing body ensures that the school has:

- A DSL for child protection who is a member of the senior leadership team and who has undertaken training in inter-agency working, in addition to basic child protection training.
- A child protection policy and procedures that are consistent with LCSP requirements, reviewed annually and made available to parents on request.
- Procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against members of staff including allegations made against the headteacher.
- Safer recruitment procedures that include the requirement for appropriate checks.
- A training strategy that ensures all staff, including the headteacher, receive child protection training, with refresher training at yearly intervals. The DSL should receive refresher training at two-yearly intervals, as well as an annual update.
- Arrangements to ensure that all temporary staff, supply teachers and volunteers are made aware of the school's arrangements for child protection.

The governing body nominates a member (in our school this is the Chair, Mr Alan Peaford) to be responsible for liaising with the local authority and other agencies in the event of an allegation being made against the headteacher.

The headteacher:

- Ensures that the child protection policy and procedures are implemented and

followed by staff.

- Allocates sufficient time and resources to enable the DSL and deputies to carry out their roles effectively, including the assessment of pupils and attendance at strategy discussions and other necessary meetings.
- Ensures that all staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with the whistleblowing procedures.
- Ensures that pupils' safety and welfare is addressed through the curriculum.

#### **4 Good Practice Guidelines**

To meet and maintain our responsibilities towards pupils we need to agree standards of good practice.

Good practice includes:

- Treating all pupils with respect.
- Setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately.
- Involving pupils in decisions that affect them.
- Encouraging positive and safe behaviour among pupils.
- Being a good listener.
- Being alert to changes in pupils' behaviour.
- Recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse.
- Reading and understanding the school's child protection policy and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues, for example bullying, physical contact and information sharing.
- Asking the pupil's permission before doing anything for them of a physical nature, such as assisting with dressing, physical support, during PE or administering first aid.
- Maintaining appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between pupils and avoiding the use of sexualised or derogatory language.
- Being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some pupils lead to an increased risk of abuse.
- Informing the DSL if pupils are asking questions or writing things in lessons, which could be a cause for concern, for example are highly sexualised or racist in their content.

#### **5 Abuse of Trust**

All school staff, including volunteers and supply teachers are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards pupils is unacceptable and that their conduct towards pupils must be beyond reproach.

In addition, staff should understand that, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual. This means that any sexual activity between a member of the school staff and a pupil under 18 may be a criminal offence, even if that pupil is over the age of consent.

The school's Code of Ethical Practice sets out our expectations of staff. (See Appendix 1.)

#### **6 Children who may be particularly vulnerable**

Some children may have an increased risk of abuse. It is important to understand that this increase in risk is due more to societal attitudes and assumptions, and child protection procedures that fail to acknowledge children's diverse circumstances, rather than in an individual child's personality, impairment or circumstances. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and a reluctance on the part of the adults to accept that abuse can occur.

We need to give special consideration to our children, as they all have special educational needs and/or a disability. This means that statistically they are more likely to be abused or neglected. To ensure that all of pupils receive equal protection, we also need to give special consideration to children who also are:

- Living in a domestic abuse situation.
- Affected by parental substance misuse.
- Asylum seekers.
- Living away from home.
- Vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying.
- Living in temporary accommodation.
- Live transient lifestyles.
- Living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations.
- Vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion or sexuality.
- Involved directly or indirectly in prostitution or child trafficking.
- Do not have English as a first language.
- At risk of being drawn into terrorism
- At risk of being drawn into radicalisation
- At risk of Female Genital Mutilation
- At risk of Forced Marriage

## **7 Support for those involved in a Child Protection Issue**

Child abuse is devastating for the child and can also result in distress and anxiety for staff who become involved. We will support pupils and their families and staff by:

- Taking all suspicions and disclosures seriously.
- Nominating a link person who will keep all parties informed and be the central point of contact. This will usually be the DSL (Mrs Terri Carroll.) Where a member of staff is the subject of an allegation made by a pupil, separate link people will be nominated to avoid any conflict of interest.
- Responding sympathetically to any request from pupils or staff for time out to deal with stress or anxiety.
- Maintaining confidentiality and sharing information on a need-to-know basis only with relevant individuals and agencies.
- Storing records securely.
- Offering details of helplines, counselling or other avenues of external support.
- Following the procedures laid down in our whistle blowing, complaints and disciplinary procedures.

## **8 Complaints procedure**

Our complaints procedure will be followed where a pupil or parent raises concern about poor practice towards a pupil that initially does not reach the threshold for child protection action. Poor practice examples include unfair singling out a pupil, using sarcasm or humiliation as a form of control, bullying or belittling a pupil or discriminating against them in some way.

Complaints are managed by senior staff, the Headteacher and the governors. Complaints from staff are dealt with under the school's complaints and disciplinary and grievance procedures.

## **9 If you have concerns about a colleague**

Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague towards a pupil are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. They may worry that they have misunderstood the situation and they will wonder whether a report could jeopardise their colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount. The school's whistle blowing code (Appendix 2) enables staff to raise concerns or allegations in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place. All concerns of poor practice or possible child abuse by colleagues should be reported to the Headteacher. Complaints about the Headteacher should be reported to the Chair of Governors.

## **10 Staff who are the subject of an allegation**

When an allegation is made against a member of staff, set procedures must be followed. It is rare for a child to make an entirely false or malicious allegation, although misunderstandings and misinterpretations of events can and do happen.

A child may also make an allegation against an innocent party because they are too afraid to name the real perpetrator. Even so, we must accept that some professionals do pose a serious risk to pupils and we must act on every allegation. Staff who are the subject of an allegation have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress.

Suspension is not mandatory, nor is it automatic but, in some cases staff may be suspended where this is deemed to be the best way to ensure that children are protected.

Allegations against staff should be reported to the Headteacher. Allegations against the Headteacher should be reported to the Chair of Governors.

The full procedures for dealing with allegations against staff can be found in *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education* (pp57-67) Further information is contained in the school's disciplinary procedures.

### **10.1 Allegations against supply teachers**

If safeguarding concerns or an allegation are raised against a supply teacher these should also be dealt with under the school's procedures and the LADO must be informed. Although the school are not the employer of the supply teacher a full investigation must be undertaken in liaison with the supply agency. Under no circumstances should the school simply stop using a supply teacher because of concerns and take no further action.

## **11 Staff training**

It is important that all staff have training to enable them to recognise the possible signs of abuse and neglect and to know what to do if they have a concern. New staff and governors will receive initial training during their induction. All staff, including the Headteacher and governors will receive training that is updated every year and the DSL will receive training updated at least every two years, including inter-agency procedures. Supply staff and other visiting staff will be given the school's

Visiting Staff Leaflet. (See Appendix 3.)

## **12 Safer recruitment**

Our school endeavours to ensure that we do our utmost to employ 'safe' staff by following the guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education (June 2020)* together with the Local Authority and the school's individual procedures.

Safer recruitment means that all applicants will:

- Complete an application form.
- Provide two referees, including at least one who can comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children.
- Provide evidence of identity and qualifications.
- Be checked through the Criminal Records Bureau as appropriate to their role and be registered with the Independent Safeguarding Authority.
- Be interviewed.

All new members of staff will undergo an induction that includes familiarisation with the school's Child Protection Policy and identification of their Child Protection training needs.

## **13 Extended school and off-site arrangements**

Where extended school activities are provided by and managed by the school, our own Child Protection Policy and procedures apply. If other organisations provide services or activities on our site (for example, 'SBOS') we will check that they have appropriate procedures in place, including safer recruitment procedures.

When our pupils attend off-site activities, we will check that effective Child Protection arrangements are in place.

Staff will sometimes transport pupils in their own cars. When this is the case there will be another adult in the car with them. In exceptional cases a member of staff may need to transport a pupil in a car on their own. This will always be cleared with a senior member of staff and parents will be informed.

## **14 Photography and Images**

The vast majority of people who take or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely innocent, understandable and acceptable reasons. Sadly, some people abuse children through taking or using images, so we must ensure that we have some safeguards in place. To protect pupils we will:

- Seek parental consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications.)
- Use only the pupil's first name with an image.
- Ensure pupils are appropriately dressed.
- Encourage pupils to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them.
- Seek pupil consent, where appropriate.
- (See information sharing consent form. Appendix 5)

Staff will not take photographs of injuries on pupils, unless visible when fully clothed (for example on

face or hands) and then only if asked by social care. If any clothing needs to be moved to take the photograph then staff will inform the relevant organisation, that we are unable to take the photograph.

## **15 e-safety**

Most of our pupils will use mobile phones and computers at some time. They are a source of fun, entertainment, communication and education. However, we know that some men, women and young people will use these technologies to harm children. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails, to enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, webcam photography or face-to-face meetings. The school's e-safety policy explains how we try to keep pupils safe in school. Cyber-bullying by pupils, via texts and emails, will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures.

## **16 Counter-Terrorism**

Schools have a legal duty to prevent young people from being drawn into terrorism, in line with the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015. School will assess whether any pupils are at risk of being drawn into terrorism based on the culture of the local environment, the likelihood of being exposed to terrorist ideology, including extremist ideas. We train staff in line with the guidance from the Home Office **Prevent** Scheme.

## **17 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, honour based abuse and reporting**

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM.

Where a teacher discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl who is aged under 18, there will be a statutory duty upon that individual to report it to the police. This should be done in conjunction with the designated safeguarding lead.

If there is any suspicion that a child or young person may be at risk of forced marriage, or honour based abuse, then these issues should be discussed with the DSL, as soon as possible, who will then liaise with the family and local authority as appropriate.

## **18 Looked After Children**

Looked after children are a particularly vulnerable group. The designated teacher for LAC is Claire Harland. She will liaise with the headteachers of the virtual schools and look at the allocation and spending of Pupil Premium and Pupil Premium plus.

## **19 Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation (CSE and CCE)**

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse that occur when an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power, to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual or criminal activity. In some cases the abuse will be in exchange for something the victim wants or needs. Victims can be exploited even when activity appears consensual and it should be noted that exploitation as well as being physical can be facilitated and take place online. More information including definitions and indicators can be found in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020)' Annex A.

### **19.1 Serious Violence and County Lines**

As well as CCE children and young people are at risk of from, or can be involved with serious violent crime, including crime that comes under the umbrella of County Lines. Signs may include increased absence from school, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or group, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involve with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs.

Advice is available from the Home Office's 'Preventing youth violence and gang involvement' and its 'Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines' guidance.

## **20 Mental Health**

All staff should be aware that 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.

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff however are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those whose behavior suggests they may be experiencing a mental health problem or are at risk of developing one.

Where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood adolescence and into adulthood. It is key that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behavior and education.

If staff have a mental health concern about a child, that is also a safeguarding concern and should be reported using MyConcern.

## **21 Child protection procedures**

### **21.1 Recognising abuse**

To ensure that our pupils are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse and neglect.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, for example by hitting them, or by failing to act to prevent harm, for example, leaving a small child home alone, or leaving knives or matches within reach of an unattended toddler.

There are four categories of abuse: physical abuse, emotional abuse (including witnessing domestic violence), sexual abuse and neglect.

### **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse 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 (this used to be called Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy, but is now more usually referred to as fabricated or induced illness.)

### **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse 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 children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only for meeting the needs of another person. 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 (Witnessing domestic violence). It may involve serious bullying, 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**

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.

### **Neglect**

Neglect 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 as a result of maternal substance misuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing or shelter, including exclusion from home or abandonment; failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; failure to ensure adequate supervision, including the use of inadequate care-takers; or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Definitions taken from *Keeping Children Safe in Education (June 2020)*

## **21.2 Bullying and Peer on Peer abuse**

While bullying between children is not a separate category of abuse and neglect, it is a very serious issue that can cause considerable anxiety and distress. At its most serious level, bullying is thought to result in up to 12 child suicides each year.

As a school we will not tolerate any form of bullying or other peer on peer abuse.

Any incidence of bullying or peer on peer abuse, should be reported and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures. All pupils and parents can access the anti-bullying procedures via the school website, and the subject of bullying is addressed at regular intervals in the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. If the bullying is particularly serious, or the anti-bullying procedures are deemed to be ineffective, the Headteacher and the Designated Safeguarding Officer will consider implementing child protection procedures.

### **21.3 Indicators of Abuse**

Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example, bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has been inadequately supervised. The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they 'tell.' It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty. For these reasons it is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the designated person.

**Remember, it is your responsibility to report your concerns. It is not your responsibility to investigate, or decide whether a child has been abused.**

A child who is being abused or neglected may:

- Have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries.
- Show signs of pain or discomfort.
- Keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather.
- Be concerned about changing for PE or swimming.
- Look unkempt or uncared for.
- Change their eating habits.
- Have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships.
- Appear fearful.
- Be reckless with regard to their own or other's safety.
- Self-harm.
- Frequently miss school or arrive late.
- Show signs of not wanting to go home.
- Display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn.
- Challenge authority.
- Become disinterested in their school work.
- Be constantly tired or preoccupied.
- Be wary of physical contact.
- Be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol.
- Display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age.

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw, and each small piece of information will help the DSL to decide how to proceed. It is very important that you report your concerns – you do not need 'absolute proof' that

the child is at risk.

#### **21.4 Impact of Abuse**

The impact of child abuse should not be underestimated. Many children do recover well and go on to lead healthy, happy and productive lives, although most adult survivors agree that the emotional scars remain, however well buried. For some children, full recovery is beyond their reach, and the rest of their childhood and their adulthood may be characterised by anxiety and depression, self-harm, eating disorders, alcohol and substance misuse, unequal and destructive relationships and long-term medical or psychiatric difficulties.

#### **21.5 Taking Action**

Key points to remember for taking action are:

- In an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, for example, call for a first aider and if needed an ambulance.
- Report your concern to the DSL as soon as possible, definitely before the end of the school day.
- Do not start your own investigation.
- Share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family.
- Create a new concern on MyConcern.
- Seek support for yourself if you are distressed.

#### **21.6 If you suspect a pupil is at risk of harm**

There will be occasions when you suspect that a pupil may be at risk, but you have no 'real' evidence. The pupil's behaviour may have changed, their artwork could be bizarre, they may write stories or poetry that reveal confusion or distress, or you may have noticed physical but inconclusive signs. In these circumstances, you should try to give the pupil the opportunity to talk. The signs you have noticed may be due to a variety of factors, for example, a parent has moved out, a pet has died, a grandparent is very ill. It is fine to ask the pupil if they are OK or if you can help in any way.

Use MyConcern to record these early concerns. If the pupil does begin to reveal that they are being harmed you should follow the advice in the section 'If a pupil discloses to you.'

If following your conversation, you remain concerned; you should discuss your concerns with the DSL.

### **21.7 If a pupil discloses to you**

It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose that they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual, their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell, they may have lost all trust in adults, or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault.

If a pupil talks to you about any risks to their safety or wellbeing you will need to let them know that you must pass the information on – you are not allowed to keep secrets. The point at which you do this is a matter for professional judgement. If you jump in immediately the pupil may think that you do not want to listen, if you leave it till the very end of the conversation, the pupil may feel that you have misled them into revealing more than they would have otherwise.

During your conversation with the pupil:

- Allow them to speak freely.
- Remain calm and do not over react – the pupil may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting you.
- Give reassuring nods or words of comfort – “I’m so sorry this has happened”, “I want to help”, “This isn’t your fault”, “You are doing the right thing in talking to me.”
- Do not be afraid of silences – remember how hard this must be for the pupil.
- Under no circumstances ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings too, or what the pupil’s mother thinks about all of this.
- At an appropriate time, tell the pupil that in order to help them you must pass the information on.
- Do not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort. It may be anything but comforting to a child who has been abused.
- Avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing earlier. Saying ‘I do wish you had told me about this when it started’ or ‘I can’t believe what I’m hearing’ may be your way of being supportive but the child may interpret it that they have done something wrong.
- Tell the pupil what will happen next. The pupil may agree to go with you to see the DSL. Otherwise let them know that someone will come to see them before the end of the day.
- Report verbally to the DSL.
- Write up your conversation as soon as possible on MyConcern and tell the DSL.
- Seek support if you feel distressed.

### **21.8 Notifying parents**

The school will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a pupil with their parents. This must be handled sensitively and the DSL will make contact with the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure.

However, if the school believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, then advice will first be sought from children’s social care.

### **21.9 Referral to children’s social care**

The DSL will make a referral to children’s social care if it is believed that a pupil is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm. The pupil (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that a referral is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child.

### **21.10 Children with sexually harmful behaviour**

Children may be harmed by other children or young people. Staff will be aware of the harm caused by bullying and will use the school's anti-bullying procedures where necessary. However, there will be occasions when a pupil's behaviour warrants a response under child protection rather than anti-bullying procedures. In particular, research suggests that up to 30% of child sexual abuse is committed by someone under the age of 18.

The management of children and young people with sexually harmful behaviour is complex and the school will work with other relevant agencies to maintain the safety of the whole school community. Young people who display such behaviour may be the victims of abuse themselves and the Child Protection Procedures will be followed for both the victim and perpetrator.

### **21.11 Confidentiality and sharing information**

All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the pupil and staff involved but also to ensure that being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

Staff should only discuss concerns with the DSL, Headteacher or Chair of Governors (depending on who is the subject of the concern.) That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

Child Protection information will be stored and handled in line with GDPR guidelines. Information is:

- Processed for limited purposes.
- Adequate, relevant and not excessive.
- Accurate.
- Kept no longer than necessary.
- Processed in accordance with the data subject's rights.
- Secure.

Incident sheets and other written information will be scanned and stored electronically on MyConcern, which is password protected and only made available to relevant individuals.

Every effort should be made to prevent unauthorised access and sensitive information should not be stored on laptop computers, which, by the nature of their portability, could be lost or stolen. If it is necessary to store Child Protection Information on portable media, such as a CD or flash drive, these items should also be kept in locked storage. Child Protection Information will be stored separately from the pupil's school file and the school file will be 'tagged' to indicate that separate information is held.

Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. If any member of staff receives a request from a pupil or parent to see Child Protection Records, they should refer the request to the Headteacher.

The GDPR guidance does not prevent school staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child.

The school's policy on confidentiality and information –sharing is available to parents and pupils on request.

### **21.12 Operation Encompass**

At Treetops School we are working in partnership with Essex Police and Thurrock Children's Services to

identify and provide appropriate support to pupils who have experienced domestic abuse in their household, this scheme is called Operation Encompass.

In order to achieve this, Essex Police will share information of all medium/high risk domestic violence incidents where one of our pupils have been present, with the DSL.

On receipt of any information, the DSL will decide on the appropriate support the pupil requires, this could be silent or overt. All information sharing and resulting actions will be undertaken in accordance with safeguarding and child protection regulations.

We will record this information and store this information in accordance with safeguarding and child protection regulations.

We will record this information and store this information in accordance with the record keeping procedures outlined in this policy.

### **21.13 Reporting directly to Child Protection Agencies**

Staff should follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy.

However, they may also share information directly with children's social care, police or NSPCC if:

- The situation is an emergency and the DSL, the Deputy DSL, the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors are all unavailable.
- They are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the pupil's safety.

Related safeguarding portfolio policies:

- Physical Intervention and the use of reasonable force
- Personal and Intimate Care
- Complaints Procedure
- Anti-bullying
- Appropriate physical contact
- Whistleblowing
- Behaviour
- Missing children
- Safer recruitment
- Managing allegations
- Grievance and disciplinary

The latest version of the SET (Southend, Essex and Thurrock) Child Protection Procedures are available on the Thurrock LSCP webpage.

### **Local Information Contact Numbers**

Thurrock Social Care (MASH) 01375 652 802

Team for Disabled Children 01375 659637

Out of hours Emergency Duty Team 01375 372468 Local

Area Designated Officer 01375 652535

Safeguarding and Child Protection Co-ordinator 01375 652535

Workforce Planning and Development 01375 652674

### **21.14 Information sharing and GDPR**

The data protection act and 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 safety of children.

**Appendix 1**  
**Code of Ethical practice for School Staff.**

All school staff are valued members of the school community. Everyone is expected to set and maintain the highest standards for their own performance, to work as part of a team and to be an excellent role model to our pupils.

All school staff should:

- Place the safety and welfare of pupils above all other considerations.
- Treat all members of the school community, including pupils, parents, colleagues and governors with consideration and respect.
- Adhere to the principles and procedures contained in the policies in our safeguarding portfolio and in the teaching and learning policies.
- Treat each pupil as an individual and make adjustments to meet individual need.
- Demonstrate a clear understanding of and commitment to non-discriminatory practice.
- Recognise the power imbalances between pupils and staff, and different levels of seniority of staff and ensure that power and authority are never misused.
- Understand that school staff are in a position of trust and that sexual relationships with a pupil, even over the age of 16, may be an offence.
- Be alert to, and report appropriately, any behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is at risk of harm.
- Encourage all pupils to reach their full potential.
- Never condone inappropriate behaviour by pupils or staff.
- Take responsibility for their own continuing professional development.
- Refrain from any action that would bring the school into disrepute.
- Value themselves and seek appropriate support for any issue that may have an adverse effect on their professional practice.

Staff name\_\_\_\_\_

Signature\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 2**

### **Whistle blowing code for issues relating to children and young people.**

#### **Purpose of the code**

The school adheres to the Local Authority whistle blowing policy and procedures that enable staff to raise concerns relating to:

- Crime
- A miscarriage of justice.
- Illegality.
- Health and Safety.
- Environmental or property damage.
- Unauthorised use of public funds.
- Concealing or attempting to cover up any of the above.

This code provides additional information to help staff to understand the role of whistleblowing in the context of poor practice and unacceptable conduct and attitudes towards children.

#### **When to use this code.**

The whistle blowing procedures and this code may be used by anyone employed by the school in a paid or voluntary capacity who believes they have reason to suspect that the conduct of an employee towards a pupil is inappropriate.

Inappropriate conduct includes, but is not confined to:

- Bullying or humiliation.
- Contravening health and safety guidelines.
- Serious breaches of the school's code of ethical practice.
- Professional practice that falls short of normally accepted standards.
- Compromising pupils' welfare but in a way that does not meet the threshold for Child Protection Intervention.

#### **Reasons for blowing the whistle**

Staff will naturally be reticent to report a concern about the conduct of a colleague. However, each individual must take responsibility for ensuring that pupils are fairly treated. If poor practice is allowed to continue unchecked, it could escalate with serious consequences.

Your action not only protects pupils, but also deters any suggestion that you have colluded with poor practice that you knew was occurring but chose to ignore.

Whistleblowing can also support the member of staff who is the subject of the concern. Their conduct may result from inexperience or lack of training that can be addressed by the school, or they may be under stress and be relieved when their conduct is questioned.

Staff who deliberately fail pupils and show no remorse or desire to improve are unlikely to welcome being exposed, but their conduct has to be confronted for the sake of the pupils and the reputation of the whole school.

### **Barriers to whistle blowing**

You may worry that you have insufficient evidence to raise a concern, that you will set in train an unstoppable chain of events, that there will be adverse repercussions for your career, that you may suffer harassment or victimisation, or that your suspicion or concern might be totally misplaced.

These concerns are entirely understandable but you can be reassured that whistleblowing procedures address these issues.

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 protects employees from reprisals for public interest whistleblowing. Your union, a solicitor or the local authority legal services can provide you with information about your legal position.

### **Confidentiality and anonymity**

All concerns are treated in confidence and, as far as possible, your identity will not be revealed if that is your wish. However, absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed if, as a result of an investigation, you are required to provide a witness statement or attend a court hearing.

You can, if you prefer, raise your concern anonymously. The school would need to decide whether the levity and credibility of the concern warrants investigation if the source of the concern, and the key evidence, is not readily available.

The school will fully support you and do all it can to protect you from any harassment or adverse repercussions that may arise from whistle blowing.

Allegations that prove to be deliberately fabricated and malicious will be dealt with through the staff disciplinary procedures. However, no action will be taken against any member of staff who raises a genuine concern that proves to be unfounded.

### **Reporting procedure**

- It may help if you write down, for your own benefit, what you have observed or heard that is causing alarm. One useful way to decide whether your concern should be reported, is to consider whether you would want the conduct of this staff member to continue unchecked if your own child or another young family member was involved.
- You may raise concern verbally or in writing. You should report your concern directly to the Headteacher.
- If the Headteacher is the subject of your concern, speak to the Chair of Governors.
- A friend, colleague or union representative may accompany you to the meeting if you wish.
- Ensure the head or chair informs you of their proposed action and sets a date for a second meeting.
- Timescales will depend on the complexity of the initial inquiry but the case should not be allowed to stall and you should receive initial feedback within 10 working days. The timescale for subsequent feedback should then be agreed.
- Ask for clarification about confidentiality and ensure you have your wishes regarding the protection of your identity recorded.

### **Process and outcome**

- The headteacher or chair will make enquiries to establish the facts of the matter and whether poor practice or inappropriate conduct has occurred.

- Members of the school community, including governors, may be asked to provide information or advice.
- External advice, for example, from legal or human resources or children's services may be sought.
- A written record of the conduct, established facts and outcome of the inquiry will be kept.
- The whistleblower will be kept informed of the process of enquiry.

The outcome of the inquiry will be one of the following:

- No poor practice or wrongdoing is established and the case is closed.
- The concern has some substance and the subject of the concern will receive advice and support from the Headteacher to improve practice.
- Poor practice or wrongdoing is established and disciplinary proceedings are initiated.
- The concern is more serious and an investigation is initiated. This investigation may involve the Local Authority's legal team, children's social care or the police.

If, at any stage in the process, there is reason to believe that a child is at risk of significant harm, children's social care will be immediately involved.

#### **Further action**

If you raise a concern and you are dissatisfied with the way it is managed, or the outcome, you may contact the governing body or Local Authority for advice.

Alternatively you can seek advice from your union or professional association, a solicitor, the police, children's social care or Public Concern at Work (PCaW), a registered charity that offers free and confidential legal advice on workplace malpractice.

Public Concern at Work Suite  
301  
16 Baldwins Gardens London  
EC1N 7RJ 0207  
404 6609

[whistle@pcaw.co.uk](mailto:whistle@pcaw.co.uk)  
[www.pcaw.co.uk](http://www.pcaw.co.uk)

There is also a whistle blowing line run by Childline if your whistle blowing is specifically about Safeguarding or child protection. The phone number is 0800 028 0285.

**Appendix 3**  
**Visiting staff child protection information leaflet**

WELCOME to Treetops School

**School statement**

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice. While working in our school we expect you to take care of our pupils and follow our procedures.

**Key facts about child abuse**

Abuse and neglect can happen to any child, boy or girl, of any race, culture, ethnicity or sexuality. Disabled children and children with SEN are particularly vulnerable.

Many children are unable to disclose what is happening to them and rely on us to interpret their behaviour and spot signs of abuse.

A pupil may :

- Have a bruise, burn or injury that seems suspicious.
- Show signs of pain or discomfort.
- Be unnaturally passive or withdrawn.
- Be unpredictable and challenging.
- Seem anxious, fearful or distressed.
- Provide an unlikely explanation for their injury or their behaviour.

If you are concerned for a child's health, welfare or safety in any way you must speak to the designated senior person (DSL) Terri Carroll, or another senior member of staff before you leave the school site.

Do not question the pupil or try to secure evidence. Your responsibility is to report your concern, not to investigate.

If a pupil tells you something that suggests they are at risk of harm, allow them to tell you as much as they wish and let them know that you must pass the information on to the DSL.

If you become concerned about a pupil's immediate safety, notify the nearest member of staff and tell them why you are concerned.

You should complete an incident sheet. These can be found in the silver filing cabinet in the staffroom. You should hand it to the DSL or another senior member of staff before you leave the school site. Ask a senior member of staff if you would like help to complete the form.

If you have any questions or wish to see our Child Protection Policy please contact the DSL. Terri Carroll.

**Appendix 4**  
**Confirmation of receipt of Child Protection Policy (2020)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of joining school: \_\_\_\_\_

Post: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of induction: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and designation of staff member responsible for  
induction: \_\_\_\_\_

---

I confirm that I have received and read the most recent Treetops School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

I have been made aware of my duty to safeguard and promote children's welfare. The procedure for reporting concerns about a pupil has been explained to me.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please sign and return this form to Admin for Child Protection: Terri Carroll (in the school's main office.)

**Appendix 5**  
**Information sharing form (GDPR)**

Dear Parent/Carer

At Treetops, we use information about your child in a number of different ways, and we'd like your consent for some of the ways we use this personal data. We set these out in more detail below.

If you're not happy for us to use information in the ways we list below, that's no problem – we will accommodate your preferences.

Similarly, if you change your mind at any time, you can let us know by emailing [admin@treetops.thurrock.sch.uk](mailto:admin@treetops.thurrock.sch.uk), calling the school on 01375 372723, or just popping in to the school office.

If you have any other questions, please get in touch.

**Why are we asking for your consent again?**

You may be aware that there are new data protection rules which came in from 25 May 2018. To ensure we are meeting the new requirements, we need to re-ask your consent for some of the ways we use information about you.

We would appreciate you taking the time to give consent again, as we really value being able to use the information in the ways listed below. Our new Parent's Privacy Notice for processing all other data is available from our website.

## Photos and videos

We sometimes take photographs of pupils. We use these photos to help us to give people an idea of what life at our school is like, for example in the newsletter and on the school website.

Please tick the relevant box (es) below, sign and return this form to school.

Use of photos	Tick (✓)
I am happy for the school to take photos of my child.	
I am happy for photos of my child to be used on the school website.	
I am happy for photos of my child to be used in the school newsletter.	
I am happy for photos of my child to be used in printed school materials, for example, the school prospectus.	
I am happy for photos of my child to be used in internal displays.	
I am happy for photos of my child to be used in the media, for example local newspapers.	
I am happy for photos of my child to be used on social media, for example Twitter.	
I am happy for the school to take videos of my child.	
I am happy for the school to use videos of my child for promotional purposes, such as on the school website.	
I am <b>NOT</b> happy for the school to take or use photos of my child.	

## Medical information

We'd like your consent for some of the ways we store and share medical information about your child.

We'd like to:

- Share information about your child with health professionals coming in to school, for example to do vaccinations and eye tests
- Take information such as height and weight for public health monitoring initiatives

This makes it easier for us all to keep your child healthy.

Use of information for medical purposes	Tick (v)
I am happy for the school to share information such as my child's height and weight with the NHS.	
I am happy for the school to share information such as my child's height and weight with the local authority.	
I am happy for the school to share information about my child (e.g., name) with health professionals doing vaccinations.	
I am happy for the school to share information about my child (e.g., name) with health professionals doing vision checks.	
I am happy for the school to share information about my child (e.g., name) with educational psychologists.	
I am <b>NOT</b> happy for the school to use and share medical information in these ways.	

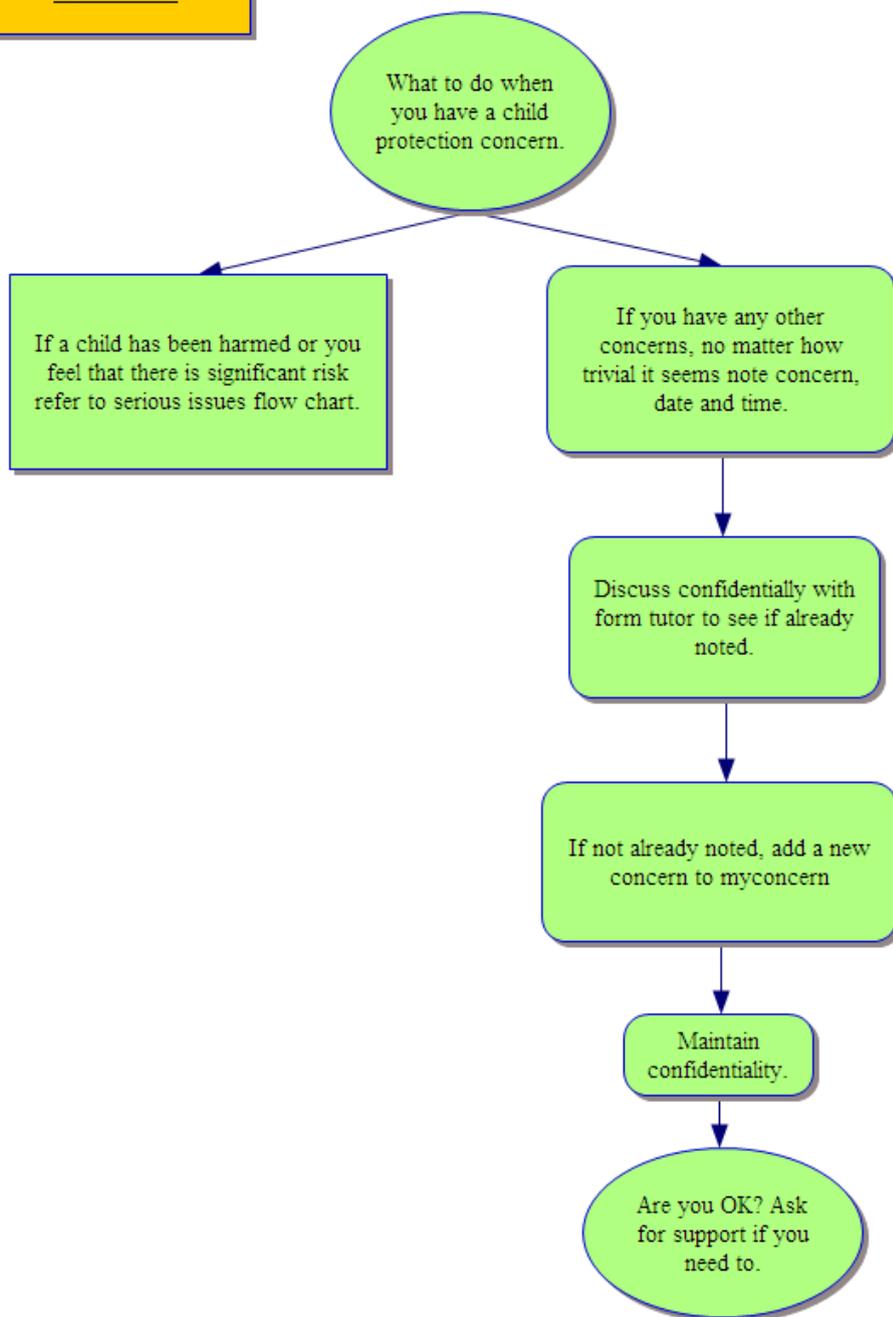
Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Carer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

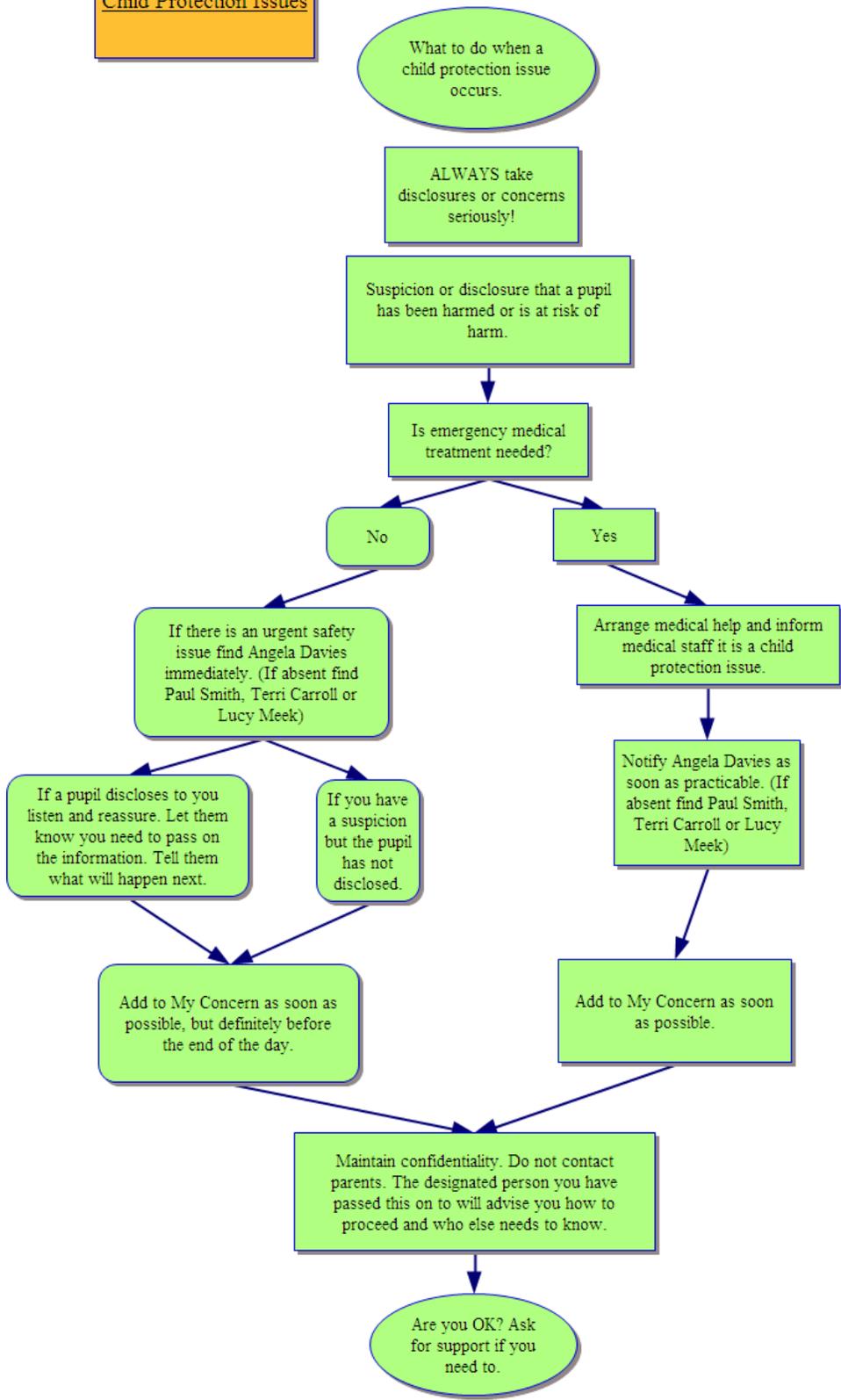
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 6**  
**Concern Flow Charts**

General Child Protection Concerns.



**Child Protection Issues**



**Appendix 7**

**School Incident Form with Body Map**

Incident Sheet with body map.      **Incident Sheet**

Procedure: Record incident and make a copy for the Form Teacher and the Head/Deputy  
Depending on the seriousness of the incident the matter may be referred:  
1. To the Form Teacher  
2. To a Senior Teacher  
3. Deputy Head  
4. Head Teacher  
Any action taken by senior staff will be recorded on their copy and an updated copy returned to the Form Teacher.

Child's Name		Class	
Date & Time:			
What led up to the incident (A = Antecedent)			
Incident (B = Behaviour)			
Action Taken (C = Consequence)			
Staff signature		Senior Staff signature (If referred)	

---

Incident sheet continued

Body map of injuries

