



# CASTLEMAN ACADEMY TRUST

## **POLICY :**

### **Safeguarding Children**

**Author: Chief Executive Officer**

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# CASTLEMAN ACADEMY TRUST

## Safeguarding Children Policy

### 1 Introduction

The health, safety and well-being of all our children are of paramount importance to all the adults who work in our schools. Our children have the right to protection, regardless of age, gender, race, culture or disability. They have a right to be safe in our school.

In our schools we respect our children. The atmosphere within our schools is one that encourages all children to do their best. We provide opportunities that enable our children to take and make decisions for themselves.

The schools teach respect, independence, inclusion and creativity and PSHCE, as part of the National Curriculum. This helps to develop appropriate attitudes in our children and makes them aware of the impact of their decisions on others. We also teach them how to recognise different risks in different situations, and how to behave in response to them. This policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in our schools.

The Trust is committed to ensuring that staff, leaders and governors create a positive culture and ethos where safeguarding is an important part of everyday life, backed up by training at every level. There is a culture of vigilance where children's welfare is promoted and timely and appropriate safeguarding action is taken for children who need extra help or who may be suffering or are likely to suffer significant harm.

The Trust is committed to ensuring that staff and other adults receive regular supervision and support if they are working directly and regularly with children and learners whose safety and welfare are at risk.

### 2 Policy Statement

This policy has been developed to ensure compliance with section 175, Education Act 2002, Section 11 C.A 2004 and Working Together 2018 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018. The school will follow the Local Children's Safeguarding Board's (LCSB) inter-agency procedures, (or those of Safeguarding Partnership Arrangements, when these come into being in 2019).

This policy should be read in conjunction with:-

- Staff Code of Conduct for Safe Working Practices for the Protection of Children and Staff,
- Positive Handling Policy,
- Staff Recruitment Policy,
- E-Safety Policy,
- Anti-bullying policy,
- Health and Safety Policy
- School Behaviour Policies
- Complaints Procedure
- Lettings Policy.

### **3 Aims and objectives**

This policy ensures that all staff in our schools are clear about the actions necessary with regard to a child protection issue. Its aims are:

- to raise the awareness of all staff and identify responsibility in reporting possible cases of abuse;
- to ensure effective communication between all staff when dealing with child protection issues;
- to lay down the correct procedures for those who encounter an issue of child protection. Ref. Poole and Bournemouth Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) Inter Agency Safeguarding Procedures;
- to ensure that all children feel safe to learn.

We are committed to working with children to ensure that they are helped to keep themselves safe from bullying, homophobic behaviour, racism, sexism, criminal exploitation and other forms of discrimination. It is important to note that some of our children are very young and therefore, our responses will be age appropriate and may not always involve the use of these technical terms.

### **4 Procedures**

Systems are in place to ensure that all discriminatory behaviours are challenged and help and support are given to children about how to treat each other with respect. All aspects of safeguarding are included in individual school PSHCE curriculums so that children are taught to keep themselves safe.

We are committed to identifying any risks associated with children and learners offending, misusing drugs or alcohol, self-harming, going missing, being vulnerable to radicalisation or being sexually or criminally exploited are known by the adults who care for them and shared with social care or other relevant agencies. There are plans and help in place that are reducing the risk of harm, or actual harm, and there is evidence that the impact of these risks is being minimised. These risks are kept under regular review and there is regular and effective liaison with other agencies where appropriate.

There is a named person in our school who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). This is normally the Head Teacher, but s/he may delegate this responsibility in some circumstances to the Deputy or Assistant Head Teacher. There are named governors with responsible for Child Protection who can be contacted via the school offices.

Schools within the Trust will nominate one member of staff to be the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and at least two Deputies. They will report to the senior leadership team and governing body regularly and carry out an annual audit of safeguarding which will be shared with the governing body.

The schools DSL is also the Prevent Lead. They will be responsible for assessing the risk of pupils being radicalised or being drawn into terrorism and knowing what to do to support those assessed as being at risk. The Prevent Lead will work in partnership with other agencies to ensure that children are kept safe from extremist material at all times, including whilst accessing the internet.

All trust schools are committed to working with other agencies to identify and reduce the risks of child sexual and criminal exploitation. We aim to raise awareness with parents, staff and pupils and to provide advice or signpost parents to further advice.

The Trust is committed to ensuring that children are supported, protected and informed about the action which is being taken in relation to a safeguarding concern or child protection referral. Staff listen to the views of children at all times in relation to safeguarding concerns both relating to themselves or to other children and act on these concerns.

**Physical abuse** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocation, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or parents feigns the symptoms or, deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as factitious or fictitious illness by proxy.

**Emotional abuse:** is the persistent emotional ill-treatment 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 insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

**Peer on peer abuse:** All staff should recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. There are different forms of peer on peer abuse, such as:

- Sexual violence and sexual harassment. Part five of 'Keeping Children Safe In Education' sets out how schools and colleges should respond to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment;
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- Sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery): the policy should include the school's or college's approach to it. The department provides Searching Screening and Confiscation Advice for schools. The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) Education Group has published Advice for Schools and Colleges on Responding to Sexting Incidents; and
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

**Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

### **Inappropriate sexual behaviour and sexual harassment**

For school staff, identifying inappropriate sexual behaviour can be a complex task. Children and adolescents are normally sexually curious and may behave inappropriately with each other – the boundary between sexual harassment and sexually abusive behaviour can be difficult to define.

Indicators of sexually abusive behaviour include:

- A significant age difference (4+ years) between children involved in sexual behaviour. An adolescent who seems interested in younger children would give rise to concern.
- Sexual behaviour involving bribery, threats or force. Children without the intellectual or physical resources to resist abuse are particularly vulnerable.
- A level of sexual knowledge inconsistent with what would normally be expected.

- Sexually intrusive/aggressive behaviour – poking objects or parts of bodies into their orifices. Defining behaviour as sexual harassment is difficult and a major issue is likely to be whether the sexual contact is consensual or not. A boy groping a girl may be an incident of inept behaviour by an immature adolescent, it may indicate that the person has the potential to become a sexual offender, it may indicate that they themselves are a victim of abuse.

In all cases, it is essential that these incidents are treated seriously. Details must be recorded accurately and passed on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The needs of the victim must be addressed, in addition to ensuring that the perpetrator is dealt with in such a way that they realise the seriousness of their behaviour. Parents of both children should be contacted to give them an opportunity to support their child. It must be remembered that a criminal offence may have been committed and the parents of the victim have the right to pursue a complaint against someone who has assaulted their son/daughter. It must also be remembered that one or both parents/carers or a close relative may be the perpetrators.

**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 and development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, 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.

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

CSE is a type of sexual abuse in which children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. Children or young people may be tricked into believing they are in a loving, consensual relationship. They might be invited to parties and given drugs and alcohol. They may also be groomed online. Some indicators of children being sexually exploited are: going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late, regularly missing school or education or not taking part in education, appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions, associating with other young people involved in exploitation, having older boyfriends or girlfriends, suffering from sexually transmitted infections, mood swings or changes in emotional wellbeing, drug and alcohol misuse and displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour.

A child under the age of 13 is not legally capable of consenting to sex (it is statutory rape) or any other type of sexual touching. Sexual activity with a child under 16 is also an offence. It is an offence for a person to have a sexual relationship with a 16 or 17 year old if that person holds a position of trust or authority in relation to the young person. Non consensual sex is rape whatever the age of the victim. If the victim is incapacitated through drink or drugs, or the victim or his or her family has been subject to violence or the threat of it, they cannot be considered to have given true consent and therefore offences may have been committed.

Child sexual exploitation is therefore potentially a child protection issue for all children under the age of 18. Where it comes to our notice that a child under the age of 13 is, or may be, sexually active, whether or not they are a pupil of this school, this will result in an immediate referral to Social Care. In the case of a young person between the ages of 13 and 16, an individual risk assessment will be conducted in accordance with the Child Protection Procedures. This will determine how and when information will be shared with parents and the investigating agencies.

National Guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-sexual-exploitation-definition-and-guide-for-practitioners>

## **Criminal Exploitation of Children and vulnerable adults : County Lines guidance**

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

Child Criminal Exploitation is common in county lines and occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

Some potential indicators of county lines involvement and exploitation are listed below, with those at the top of particular concern:

- persistently going missing from school or home and/or being found out-of-area;
- unexplained acquisition of money, clothes, or mobile phones
- excessive receipt of texts/phone calls and/or having multiple handsets
- relationships with controlling/older individuals or groups
- leaving home/care without explanation
- suspicion of physical assault/unexplained injuries
- parental concerns
- carrying weapons
- significant decline in school results/performance
- gang association or isolation from peers or social networks
- self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being

Any concerns will be addressed by using the schools Safeguarding process.

### **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

FGM is a procedure where the female genital organs are injured or changed and there is no medical reason for this. It is frequently a very traumatic and violent act for the victim and can cause harm in many ways. The practice can cause severe pain and there may be immediate and/or long-term health consequences, including mental health problems, difficulties in childbirth, causing danger to the child and mother; and/or death.

FGM is a deeply embedded social norm, practised by families for a variety of complex reasons. It is often thought to be essential for a girl to become a proper woman, and to be marriageable. The practice is not required by any religion. FGM is an unacceptable practice for which there is no justification. It is child abuse and a form of violence against women and girls.

FGM is prevalent in 30 countries. These are concentrated in countries around the Atlantic coast to the Horn of Africa, in areas of the Middle East like Iraq and Yemen, it has also been documented in communities in Colombia, Iran, Israel, Oman, The United Arab Emirates, The Occupied Palestinian Territories, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. It has also been identified in parts of Europe, North America and Australia. FGM is illegal in the UK.

It is estimated that approximately 60,000 girls aged 0-14 were born in England and Wales to mothers who had undergone FGM and approximately 103,000 women aged 15-49 and approximately 24,000 women aged 50 and over who have migrated to England and Wales are living with the consequences of FGM. In addition, approximately 10,000 girls aged under 15 who have migrated to England and Wales are likely to have undergone FGM.

We note a new duty that was introduced on 31 October 2015 that requires teachers, which includes qualified teachers or persons who are employed or engaged to carry out teaching work in schools and other institutions to report 'known' cases of FGM in girls aged under 18 to the police. It is now a legal requirement on teachers to report concerns. The duty applies to any teacher who is employed or engaged to carry out 'teaching work', whether or not they have qualified teacher status, in maintained schools, academies, free schools, independent schools, non-maintained special schools, sixth form colleges, 16-19 academies, relevant youth accommodation or children's homes in England. The duty does not apply in relation to suspected cases – it is limited to 'known' cases' (i.e. those which are visually identified or disclosed to a professional by the victim).

The duty does not apply in cases where the woman is over 18 at the time of the disclosure/discovery of FGM (even if she was under 18 when the FGM was carried out). Further information on this duty can be found in the document "Mandatory Reporting of Female Genital Mutilation – procedural information".

Any concerns from staff members or parents will be dealt with by the schools DSL.

National guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mandatory-reporting-of-female-genital-mutilation-procedural-information>

## **Preventing Radicalisation**

Radicalisation is the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism.

Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (June 2015) legally requires schools to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism' (the Prevent Duty).

School staff should use their professional judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation, and general safeguarding principles apply to keeping children safe. It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead, together with the Headteacher, to make an informed decision as to whether to make a referral to the LA. The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on specified authorities, including local authorities and childcare, education and other children's services providers, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism ("the Prevent duty").

Young people can be exposed to extremist influences or prejudiced views, in particular those via the internet and other social media. Schools can help to protect children from extremist and violent views in the same ways that they help to safeguard children from drugs, gang violence or alcohol.

Examples of the ways in which people can be vulnerable to radicalisation and the indicators that might suggest that an individual is engaged with an extremist group, cause or ideology might include, but not limited to:

- spending increasing time in the company of other suspected extremists;
- changing their style of dress or personal appearance to accord with the group;
- their day-to-day behaviour becoming increasingly centred around an extremist ideology, group or cause;
- loss of interest in other friends and activities not associated with the extremist ideology group or cause
- possession of material or symbols associated with an extremist cause (e.g. the swastika for far right groups);
- attempts to recruit others to the group/cause/ideology, or communications with others that suggest identification with a group/cause/ideology.

Example indicators that an individual has an intention to use violence or other illegal means include:

- clearly identifying another group as threatening what they stand for and blaming that group for all social or political ills;
- using insulting or derogatory names or labels for another group, speaking about the imminence of harm from the other group and the importance of action now, expressing attitudes that justify offending on behalf of the group, cause or ideology;
- condoning or supporting violence or harm towards others, or plotting or conspiring with others.

Example indicators that an individual is capable of contributing directly or indirectly to an act of terrorism include:

- having a history of violence, being criminally versatile and using criminal networks to support extremist goals;
- having occupational skills that can enable acts of terrorism (such as civil engineering, pharmacology or construction), or having technical expertise that can be deployed (e.g. IT skills, knowledge of chemicals, military training or survival skills).

The examples above are not exhaustive and vulnerability may manifest itself in other ways. There is no single route to terrorism nor is there a simple profile of those who become involved. For this reason, any attempt to derive a 'profile' can be misleading. It must not be assumed that these characteristics and experiences will necessarily lead to individuals becoming terrorists, or that these indicators are the only source of information required to make an appropriate assessment about vulnerability.

We will refer children at risk of harm as a result of involvement or potential involvement in extremist activity to Social Care and/or the Police. Details of the referral will be shared with the appropriate and relevant authorities who will then process the referral as per the relevant procedures. This could include further referrals to other agencies.

## **Private Fostering**

Private fostering is when a child under the age of 16 (under 18 if disabled) is cared for by someone who is not their parent or a 'close relative'. This is a private arrangement made between a parent and a carer, for 28 days or more. Close relatives are defined as step-parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles or aunts (whether of full blood, half blood or by marriage). Great grandparents, great aunts, great uncles and cousins are not regarded as close relatives.

The law requires that the Borough of Poole should be notified if anyone is looking after someone else's child for 28 days or more. The purpose of the council's involvement is to support the child and private



foster family (and wherever possible the biological parent/s) with any issues arising. These may be practical issues such as benefits, housing, immigration or emotional issues such as keeping contact with biological family, maintaining cultural identity. If we become aware of a child in a private fostering arrangement, we will notify the council's Social Care team. Advice about whether there is a need to notify the council, can be obtained by calling the Borough of Poole's Social Care team.

### **Vulnerable and SEN Pupils**

Particular vigilance will be exercised in respect of pupils who are subject to Child Protection Plan and any incidents or concerns involving these children will be reported immediately to the allocated Social Worker. If the pupil in question is a Looked-After child, this will also be brought to the notice of the Designated Person with responsibility for children in public care.

We acknowledge that children with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can face additional safeguarding challenges. We are aware that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. This can include assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's disability without further exploration; children with SEN and disabilities can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying- without outwardly showing any signs; and communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

If a pupil discloses that they have witnessed domestic abuse or it is suspected that they may be living in a household which is affected by family violence, this will be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead as a safeguarding issue.

### **Reporting a Concern**

If, at any point, there is a risk of immediate serious harm to a child, a referral will be made to children's social care immediately. We have a team of the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy Safeguarding Lead and Headteacher who are fully Safeguarding and CP trained and should be approached in the absence of the Designated Safeguarding Lead before any referral is handled by an individual.

Anybody can make a referral in the absence of all of the above trained staff. All staff have a duty to report his or her concerns as soon as possible to the Designated Safeguarding Lead for Child Protection, or, in his or her absence, to the Deputy Safeguarding Officer, Headteacher or CEO.

Staff should always inform the DSL or deputy if they feel that a child in their care shows:

- different or unusual behaviour (including academic performance)
- has a suspicion that a pupil is marked or bruised in a way that is not readily attributed to 'normal' knocks and scrapes.
- notes behaviours or actions in a pupil which give rise to suspicions that the pupil may have suffered abuse.
- receives hints or a disclosure of any type of abuse from a pupil or from one of his/her friends.
- mood changes – becoming withdrawn, depressed, lack of motivation, unusual emotional outbursts
- changes in the way the child operates in the classroom, especially relationships between peers
- a sharing of puzzling statements or stories
- change to appearance, including inadequate clothing, poor hygiene, uncared for hair or skin especially where these have been previously appropriate
- a sudden need to take other children's food especially 'break'
- any unexplained bruise or injury especially on the head, face or trunk

Staff sometimes have an 'intuitive feeling' that all is not well with a child in their care that they know well. This in itself is not an indicator of any problems but may cause staff to be more aware of changes as they happen. This needs to be recorded and reported to the DSL.

In the first instance, this should be done verbally. However, as in all cases where referral to outside agencies is a possibility, accurate written records are vital. Our Safeguarding reporting processes should be used to follow up any concern.

It is important that members of staff do not investigate or follow up suspicions of child abuse themselves, for instance by speaking with and/or questioning pupils or parents. It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead, together with the Headteacher, to make an informed decision as to whether to refer the case to social services. This may be immediately following the expression of concern or after discussion with the pupil, his/her parents or carers, the member of staff, other staff, and other agencies as appropriate.

While staff must be circumspect about using 'hearsay' evidence, it must not be discounted without thought. Gossip is often, but not always, untrue. Such evidence may, together with other indicators, give us warning of an abusive situation. It is an essential requirement for all members of staff to record any conversation or contact that might be useful as evidence. We require staff to pass on concerns for a pupil's well-being if they hear of issues or are worried about the child. Concerns might include stress/anxiety, self-harming, eating disorder, medical, pregnancy, housing /accommodation issues.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is also our designated specifically trained teacher whose role is to promote the educational achievement of children who are looked after.

It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead, together with the Headteacher, to notify social services if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a pupil with a child protection plan. It is the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Lead, together with the Headteacher to ensure that when a pupil with a child protection plan leaves the school, their information is transferred to the new school immediately and the child's social worker is informed. All records must be kept securely, separate from the main pupil file, and in locked locations.

Concerns should be reported via the Poole/Dorset MASH  
<http://www.bournemouth-poole-lscb.org.uk/report-a-concern/>

### **Staff behaviour**

The highest possible standards of behaviour are expected from staff, governors and volunteers. In particular, staff should be on their guard against:

- treating pupils or students as peers by adopting their mannerisms or slang;
- giving inappropriate details to students of their personal lives;
- seeming to favour particular students;
- using physical contact with students that is secretive or of a nature that could be considered indecent;
- not following school policy on searching or restraining students;
- failing to report concerns;
- using emotional abuse against children by ignoring, ridiculing, humiliating, harassing, intimidating, bullying or intentionally singling out any child for negative attention;
- dressing inappropriately.

The Restraint log is always completed whenever a student is restrained. Searching of students always takes place in the presence of at least two members of staff.

### **Child abuse allegations made against staff**

The school has procedures in place to handle allegations made against members of staff and volunteers. A child protection allegation made against a member of staff (including the Designated Safeguarding Lead) is the responsibility of the Headteacher. All such concerns should be accurately recorded and reported to the Headteacher as soon as possible.

As stated earlier, the member of staff should undertake no further investigative action. Such allegations should be referred to the LADO.

A child protection allegation made against the Headteacher should be accurately and promptly recorded and referred on to the Chief Executive Officer, who will, if necessary, obtain guidance from the DfE. There are also procedures in place to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed due to safeguarding concerns or would have been had they not resigned. Please see Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 4.

### **Safer Recruitment**

The trust board takes every precaution to prevent people who pose a risk of harm from working with children. This is achieved by:

- Adhering to the statutory responsibilities to check staff who work with children. In the case of a new appointment, the school follows the safer recruitment procedure required by government guidance. DBS checks on all staff, both teaching and nonteaching, temporary, supply or salaried trainees are in place and details are held on a single central record;
- Taking proportionate decisions on whether to ask for any checks beyond what is required.
- Ensuring that volunteers are appropriately supervised. The school has written recruitment, selection and appointment policies in place. There is always one person on any appointment panel who has undertaken safer recruitment training.
- At least one member of the panel will have undertaken “Safer Recruitment Training” in line with safeguarding guidelines. Please see Keeping Children Safe in Education part 3.

### **Safety on and off site**

The safety of children inside school, moving around, arriving and leaving the school site are important considerations. Arrangements for this are set out in our Educational Visits and Health and Safety Policies.

Risk Assessments are completed and approved before any trips away from the site are undertaken. Residential, overseas and activity trips are logged and monitored by the Local Authority. Children are offered facilities for changing (and, if needed, for showering) that offer them the level of privacy and safety appropriate to their age.

In case of extreme emergencies, schools have a lockdown procedure and have a whole school practice annually.

## **Internet**

The school has procedures in place to safeguard all learners from unlawful, sexual or otherwise potentially harmful content on the internet. Information on internet safety and the importance of monitoring internet use at home is made available to all parents annually. Information on internet safety and the importance of monitoring internet use will be made available to all parents at least annually. Reference is made to the Use of Internet and E-Safety policy.

## **5 Monitoring and Record Keeping**

Where staff have concerns (see above) it is essential that these concerns are recorded and the child monitored over time using the school's safeguarding monitoring system 'My Concern' and LSCB guidance Ch 7 section 13.

Teachers may also be requested to monitor following a case conference or by another agency. They should not however be expected to manage cases alone.

Schools can play a vital role in helping abused children and those who are suspected of being abused by the effective monitoring and recording of certain aspects of the child's progress and behaviour in school. This is particularly important when there has been no direct disclosure of abuse, or when a child has communication problems or is too young to give much information. Monitoring in school is particularly valuable because staff are in daily contact with children and used to monitoring them. They are uniquely placed to observe the behaviour of large numbers of children and likely to know what is 'normal' or 'usual' for a particular child.

Good records can be the basis of valuable contributions to child protection conferences and court cases, helping to ensure that sound decisions are made on the child's behalf.

Teachers and other school staff can record, as can other Local Authority staff in regular contact with the child e.g. Educational Social Worker or psychologist.

### **All of the following should be recorded as relevant**

- Patterns
- Changes in mood
- Changes in classroom functioning
- Relationships (with peers, adults)
- Behaviour
- Statements, comments, stories, 'news', drawings
- General demeanour and appearance
- Parental interest and comments
- Home/family changes
- Medicals
- Response to PE/sport
- Injuries/marks, past and present

## How should the Information be Recorded

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will make the decision when to start or finish monitoring unless this decision is taken by an outside agency (e.g. after a case conference).
- Information must be recorded on My Concern.
- All notes must record date, time and place, context, adults/others present, any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the actual words used by the child. Please sign them.
- If you are recording bruising or injury, please draw a diagram to indicate the position (pro-formas are available).
- Be objective – include statements and observable facts; not interpretations or assumptions.
- Please make sure all notes are kept in complete confidence and hand them to the DSL as soon as possible.
- Information which bears on a case of child abuse or the risk of it are excluded from reports to parents and it is important that it remains totally confidential.
- Files/records pertaining to a child of an enquiring parent/carer(s) will be made available to that parent/carer(s) should a formal request be made. Requests for information will be dealt with in accordance with the school's policy on the Freedom of Information Act. Working notes are not subject to disclosure but must be eventually summarised on file, then destroyed. Information about concerns is therefore kept by the DSL who will keep them in a secure place to ensure confidentiality at all times. This information may be needed as evidence in the future.
- The DSL will collate the information and may ask other staff (as appropriate) for contributions.
- The DSL will decide on further action which may be to contact the parents/social worker or she may ask staff to contact parents to find out further information e.g. changes of address, changes to child's home circumstances etc.
- If staff feel they need support with recording, please refer to DSL.

Any action that the named person takes when dealing with an issue of child protection must be in line with the procedures outlined in the LSCB recording guidance, available online via the LSCB website. [www.bournemouth-poole-lscb.org.uk](http://www.bournemouth-poole-lscb.org.uk)

## 6. Escalation

### 6.1 Introduction

At no time must practitioner disagreement detract from ensuring that the child is safeguarded. The child's welfare and safety must remain paramount throughout.

This procedure identifies a non-exhaustive list of potential areas of disagreement, guidance on preventing disputes and procedures to be followed when disputes cannot be resolved through discussion and negotiation between practitioners at front line level. It does not include procedures when there is a disagreement regarding the need to convene an Initial Child Protection Conference or the implementation of the Child Protection Plan, these complaints should be resolved with the conference chair and if it is not resolved at this stage should be taken to stage 2 of the Local Authority complaints procedure.

### 6.2 Potential Areas of Disagreement

- i. A referral not considered to meet the threshold for assessment by Children's social care;
- ii. Children's social care conclude that further information should be sought by the referrer before a referral is progressed;

- iii. There is disagreement as to whether child protection procedures should be invoked;
- iv. Children's social care and the Police place different interpretations on the need for significant agency response in relation to a child protection enquiry;
- v. There is a disagreement over the sharing of information and/or provision of services;
- vi. There is disagreement over the outcome of any assessment and whether the appropriate action plan is in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child.

### **6.3 Stage One: Preventing Disputes**

Most disagreements can be resolved through discussion and negotiation. The practitioners involved should attempt to resolve differences through discussion within one working day, but if they are unable to do so, their disagreement must be reported by them to their line managers or equivalent.

With respect to most day-to-day issues, the relevant line managers will be able to resolve the disagreement. This contact should take place within twenty-four hours. The purpose of this contact is to review the available information and to resolve the concern. It may be helpful to consider the involvement of the designated or named practitioner at this stage in preference to use of line management.

Any action agreed should be fed back immediately to the relevant managers involved and the detail of the conflict and agreements reached should be recorded on the child's file.

### **6.4 Stage Two: Informal Dispute Procedure**

Where it is not possible to resolve the matter at front line management level, the matter should be referred without delay to second tier management level, within 24 hours.

The issue will then be considered at second tier management level and/or include Team Around the Family, with direct communication taking place with the designated practitioner or named practitioner for safeguarding within the individual agency or at a second tier management level.

### **6.5 Stage Three: Formal Dispute Procedure**

If despite following the Stage Two process the disagreement remains, the matter will be referred to an appropriate Head of Service within Children's Services, who will consider the matter with their equivalent level of management within the concerned agency who is in dispute. This escalation should be made within 24 hours, in writing by the Team or Service Manager directly to the Head of Service. An email is acceptable provided it is clearly marked as a 'Formal Escalation under the Escalation Policy'.

The purpose of escalating the dispute to this level is to reach a position where differing practitioner opinions have been taken into account and efforts made to explore whether the dispute has arisen through lack of clarity or understanding in the practitioner dialogue. Ultimately a decision will need to be reached where agencies agree a way forward where the interests of the child take precedence over a practitioner stalemate.

### **6.6 Stage Four: Where Disagreements Remain**

In the unlikely event that the practitioner disagreement remains unresolved, the matter must be referred to the Director of Children's Services, who will determine a course of action including reporting the matter

to the Safeguarding Children Board Independent Chair. It is useful in some circumstances to hold a face-to-face meeting.

This escalation should be made within 24 hours, in writing by the Head of Service directly to the Director of Children's Services. An email is acceptable provided it is clearly marked as a 'Formal Escalation under the Escalation Policy'.

The Director for Children's Services should inform the Safeguarding Board Independent Chair within 48 hours in writing.

In all cases where it has not been possible to resolve differences and/or where there may be lessons to be learned for future practice, consideration should be given to holding a multi-agency case review.

At any stage of the process, any action agreed should be fed back immediately to the second tier management staff involved and the detail of the conflict and agreements reached should be recorded on the child's file.

Workers and manager should ensure that their correspondence has been received by following up their written contact with a phone call. Caution should also be taken when using email, not to copy or blind copy in a significant number of people as this can lead to confusion about the stage of the escalation and who is required to respond.

All disputes should be resolved in a timely way so that the welfare of the child remains paramount. In some situations, it may be required to instigate all of the stages within a short period of time or to escalate the process so that the safety of the child is not compromised.

## **7 Partnership With Parents**

The Trust is committed to working with parents positively, openly and honestly. We share a purpose with them to educate, keep children safe from harm and have their welfare promoted. We ensure that all parents are treated with respect, dignity and courtesy. We respect parents' rights to privacy and confidentiality and will not share sensitive information until we have permission or it is necessary to do so to protect a child. Castleman Academy Trust will ensure that staff share with parents any concerns that they may have about their child unless to do so may place a child at risk of harm. The Trust encourages parents to disclose any concerns that they may have with their child's school. All parents are made aware of the Trust's Safeguarding Policy and parents are aware that this is on the schools' websites.

Schools within the Trust will always follow guidelines set down, and instructions given to us, by the Local Safeguarding Board and any advice given by external agencies with regard to sharing information with parents.

The Trust would like to ensure that parents are aware that the schools within the Trust receive information from the Police to alert the DSL in the school when there has been an incident of domestic abuse in a household where a pupil lives. The DSL is not informed of the detail of the incident, only that one has occurred. This allows the school to monitor and support the pupil. If staff have additional concerns, we will discuss the need for further safeguarding actions with social care. This information would only be shared with other staff on a restricted 'need-to-know' basis i.e. those who are immediately responsible for the pupil's welfare e.g. the class teacher. Where a multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) occurs, the school may be asked for information and appropriate school-related information may be shared with the school after the meeting.

If a child is referred or is assessed as Child In Need, parents will continue to be informed of the educational progress of the child.

If a child protection referral is made, a case conference is held within eight working days of the decision. The case conference offers the opportunity to share information and formulate a plan of action. Staff are expected to attend and participate in all case conferences and meetings held under the LA guidelines.

We regard all information relating to individual child protection issues as confidential, and we treat this accordingly. We only pass information on to appropriate persons. We inform the child at all stages of who is involved, and what information we have given them.

We require all adults employed in our schools to have their application vetted through police records in order to ensure that there is no evidence of offences involving children or abuse.

Whilst volunteers would never be expected to work unsupervised with children, we do ask them to complete a "Vetting Procedure" to ensure the safety and well being of all learners before working with us.

There may be times when adults in our school, in the course of their duty, use physical intervention to restrain children. The Head Teacher requires the adult involved in any such incident to report this to him/her immediately, and to record it in the interventions book.

## **8 Training**

All adults in the school receive regular training to raise their awareness of abuse and their knowledge of agreed local child protection procedures. All staff are expected to read and sign updated documents such as Keeping Children Safe in Education, Safeguarding Policy etc.

All newly qualified teachers in the school will be offered some training as part of their induction (as appropriate). The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that any new member of staff, teaching and non-teaching is aware of the school's policy and the requirements of Child Protection Procedures as part of their induction. The designated teacher will attend training as required to enable him/her to carry out his/her duties. Training will be addressed for all staff as part of the SDP.

## **9 Monitoring and review**

The School Standard Boards regularly review any incidents and will link with the Designated Safeguarding Leads. A named governor participates in the school's training with regard to the child protection procedures. This policy is reviewed annually by the School Standards Boards and the Trust.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

This policy has been reviewed with the equality impact considerations as laid down in the trust's Equality Policy.