



# BLESSED HUGH FARINGDON CATHOLIC SCHOOL

## CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

All that happens in Blessed Hugh Faringdon Catholic School occurs within the context of the school's Mission Statement (in accordance with the Trust Deed for the maintenance and advancement of the Catholic religion).

**Written: January 2014**

**Updated: September 2024**

**Adopted: September 2024**

**Persons Responsible: SLT and Headteacher**

**Committee: Full Governing Body**

**Review Due: Annually – September 2025**

As a Catholic school, founded on, and committed to upholding the teaching of the Church, we believe that Jesus is present in the day to day life of our community and that each member of our community has a divine origin and an eternal destiny. In discharging our responsibilities, we are guided by the principles of Catholic social teaching [CST], in which the following core values are constituted: dignity, solidarity, the common good, the option for the poor, the promotion of peace, care for creation, the dignity of work and the value of participation in society. These principles are demonstrated in our core, and wider, curriculum, in our care of students, in our work with the disadvantaged and in the outward-facing approach to our local community, our nation and to the world. As our moral compass, CST guides us in all our school activities, including the formulation, upholding and reviewing of school policies.

As a Catholic school, we regard the following characteristics as central to the human flourishing of everyone – students, staff and Governors – in our community. Our aspirations for our students are that their experience of teaching develops in them a lived belief, an authentic sense of true happiness, a lived sense of family, an experience of care and a vocation for service.

To achieve these aspirations, teaching and learning will privilege the following core virtues for every member of our community.

**Grateful** for their own gifts, for the gift of other people, and for the blessings of each day; and generous with their gifts, becoming men and women for others.

**Attentive** to their experience and to their vocation; and discerning about the choices they make and the effects of those choices.

**Compassionate** towards others, near and far, especially the less fortunate; and loving by their just actions and forgiving words.

**Faith-filled** in their beliefs and hopeful for the future.

**Eloquent and truthful** in what they say of themselves, the relations between people, and the world.

**Learned**, finding God in all things; and wise in the ways they use their learning for the common good.

**Curious** about everything; and active in their engagement with the world, changing what they can for the better.

**Intentional** in the way they live and use the resources of the earth, guided by conscience; and prophetic in the example they set to others.

### **Named personnel with designated responsibility for Child Protection and Safeguarding**

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Mrs Sue Matthews (Assistant Headteacher, Senior Mental Health Lead)

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs): Miss K Harris (KS3) and Ms S Lunnnon (KS4/5)

Nominated Governor: Lisa Telling

The lead LADO for Brighter Futures for Children is Sue Darby.

If you have concerns regarding someone working with children, these should be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), please see the following contact details;

- [0118 937 2684](tel:01189372684)
- [LADO@brighterfuturesforchildren.org](mailto:LADO@brighterfuturesforchildren.org)

### **Named personnel with designated responsibility for Filtering and Monitoring:**

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

### **LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES/DOCUMENTS**

Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2024 underpins our child protection and safeguarding procedures (See Appendix 7 for key changes)

Working Together to Safeguard Children December 2023

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

E-Safety Policy

Child on Child Abuse Policy

Behaviour For Learning Policy

Anti-bullying Policy

Staff and Student Bereavement Policy

SEND Policy

Whistleblowing Policy

Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy

Allegations Policy

Low Level Concerns Policy

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone**

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2024 defines Safeguarding as:

‘Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online.’

Governors have strategic responsibility for the school’s safeguarding procedures and safeguarding is the responsibility of each and every member of staff. The roles and responsibilities of key adults are outlined below:

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Governing Body, with its strategic responsibility, should ensure that:

- The school has a Safeguarding Policy and procedures in place that are in accordance with local authority, DfE, police and locally agreed inter-agency procedures, and that the policy is made available to parents on request;
- The school operates safe recruitment procedures and makes sure that all appropriate checks are carried out on staff and volunteers who work with children;
- The school has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff and volunteers that comply with current guidance (see point 1 above);
- A senior member of the school’s leadership team is designated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding;
- Staff undertake appropriate safeguarding training;
- They (the Governing Body) remedy, without delay, any deficiencies or weaknesses regarding safeguarding arrangements;
- A governor is nominated to be responsible for liaising with the Local Authority Designated Officer and /or partner agencies in the event of allegations of abuse being made against the Headmaster;
- Where services or activities are provided on the school premises by another body, the body concerned has appropriate policies and procedures in place (see Leasing of Premises to External Organisations, EWS 2009) in regard to safeguarding children and child protection and liaises with the school on these matters where appropriate;
- They review their policies and procedures annually and provide information to the LA about them and about how the above duties have been discharged as required.
- They take part in mandatory safeguarding training to ensure they can ‘assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in school are effective.
- They ensure this training is regularly up-dated. (KCSIE).

- They conduct themselves within the context of safeguarding requirements at all times.

The Headmaster should ensure that:

- The policies and procedures adopted by the Governing Body are fully implemented, and followed by all staff;
- Sufficient resources and time are allocated to enable the DSL and DDSLs to discharge their responsibilities;
- All staff and volunteers feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice regarding children, and such concerns are addressed sensitively and effectively in a timely manner in accordance with the Whistleblowing Policy.

It is the particular responsibility of the DSL, supported by the DDSLs, to:

- Keep abreast of, and action, all national and local up-dates to requirements and procedures
- Ensure referrals from school staff or any others from outside the school are managed promptly and effectively;
- Work with external agencies and professionals on matters of safety and safeguarding directly or via the DDSLs ensuring the due processes are followed.
- Undertake appropriate training, including L3 Child Protection and Prevent and maintain it up to date (every 2 years);
- Raise awareness of safeguarding and child protection amongst the staff and parents; and
- Ensure that child protection information is transferred to the student's new school
- Be aware of students who have a social worker (and ensure liaison with the Virtual School given their responsibility for promoting the education of children who have a social worker)
- Help promote educational outcomes by sharing the information about the welfare, safeguarding and child protection issues with teachers and school and college leadership staff.
- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise within the school;
- Liaise with the Headmaster to inform him of any issues and on-going investigations;
- Ensure detailed accurate written records are kept;
- Ensure the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is updated and reviewed annually and work with the Governing Body regarding this;
- Ensure that all staff have access to and understand the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Ensure that all staff have induction training, regular up-dates and hold a current Introduction to Safeguarding Certificate;
- Ensure the Headmaster, Deputy and DDSLs hold current Level 3 Certificates.

- Ensure the due responsibility for Filtering and Monitoring is fulfilled supported by the DDSLs, Network Manager and the Securus filtering system to which we subscribe.

All staff, visiting professionals and volunteers must:

- Fully comply with the school's policies and procedures;
- Attend and complete appropriate training;
- Inform the DSL/DDSL of any concerns. (In the case of staff, via Safeguard My School. In the case of volunteers and visiting professionals by email or verbally to the DSL/DDSLs).

This policy is in line with all current legislation and the up-dated Keeping Children Safe In Education Document (September 2024). It applies to all adults, including volunteers and visiting professionals, working in or on behalf of the school.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment;
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development;
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and;
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.'

'Children' includes everyone under the age of 18.

## **SCHOOL COMMITMENT**

Blessed Hugh Faringdon Catholic School is committed to Safeguarding, Child Protection, Promoting the Welfare of all its students and protecting them from physical, emotional and sexual abuse and neglect. We expect everyone who works in our school to share this commitment. We recognise that some children may be especially vulnerable to abuse e.g. those with Special Educational Needs and those living in adverse circumstances. We recognise that children who are abused or neglected may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world in a positive way. Whilst at school, in some cases, their behaviour may be challenging. We recognise that some children who have experienced abuse may harm others. We take a considered and sensitive approach in order that we can support all in our community.

We recognise that harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse.

Training will be adapted to individual needs where required. All staff are required to hold a current Child Protection in Education Certificate (Educare, Level 2), Prevent and have completed Cyber Security Training. As new documents are published and existing ones updated, these must be read and the staff member must digitally sign to confirm they have done so. Usually, this is on an annual basis but, should up-dates occur during the academic year, action will be taken to ensure staff read and sign. A Central Record, of training completed, is kept by the Operations Assistant under the

guidance of the Head of Operations and, as part of this process, staff are invited to identify any areas they are unclear about such that additional support, and training are provided. Where new information comes to light this is conveyed to staff, by the DSL, either face-to-face or via the News Post option on the Safeguarding Intranet as appropriate. All staff receive a training update as part of the September INSET Programme with regular updates scheduled throughout the year. (As per the INSET Programme) supported by the Intranet Posts. Safeguarding training is part of our new staff induction programme including for staff joining during the school year.

Adults in our school take all welfare concerns seriously and encourage children and young people to talk to us about anything that worries them. We will always act in the best interests of the child.

### **Wrong Doing**

Should a member of staff, governor or volunteer have good reason to believe that a child protection or safeguarding matter has not been dealt with appropriately in school they should contact:

Children's Single Point of Contact: [cspoa@brighterfuturesforchildren.org](mailto:cspoa@brighterfuturesforchildren.org) or;

LADO Team: [Lado@brighterfuturesforchildren.org](mailto:Lado@brighterfuturesforchildren.org)

as relevant.

### **The Prevent Duty**

As part of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, 'schools have a duty to prevent people being drawn into terrorism'. Blessed Hugh Faringdon Catholic School supports the Home Office '4P' Prevent Duty to combat radicalisation and terrorism. The 4P's are: Protect, Prepare, Pursue, Prevent.

Prevent is a strategy that works to prevent the growth of issues that create a climate which facilitates radicalisation, by creating a climate of mutual trust in which young people grow and develop. This helps minimise circumstances in which young people feel isolated and become vulnerable to exploitation by those who wish to further a radical agenda. The creation of a school that is a secure and safe place based on appreciation and respect for all is fundamental to the ethos of Blessed Hugh Faringdon Catholic School.

Extremism in all its forms has no place at Blessed Hugh Faringdon Catholic School, as exposure to both extremist materials and influences is detrimental to the development of young people. Extremists of all kinds aim to develop destructive relationships between different communities by promoting division, fear and mistrust of others based on ignorance or prejudice. Education is a powerful weapon against this as it equips young people with the knowledge, skills and sound judgement to challenge and debate these issues in a secure environment.

All staff are required to complete the Prevent L2 course, maintain it up-to-date and submit their certificate to the HR Officer.

## **Tackling extremism at Blessed Hugh Faringdon Catholic School**

At Blessed Hugh Faringdon Catholic School, we are aware that people can be exposed to extremist influences or prejudiced views, from an early age, emanating from their background, and a variety of sources and media, including the Internet. At times learners may reflect or display views that may be discriminatory, prejudiced or extremist, including using derogatory language. Any such behaviour, displayed by learners or staff, will always be challenged and dealt with in line with the relevant policies on student behaviour or staff conduct. We subscribe to Securus (an organisation specialising in on-line safety and security) and receive daily reports of inappropriate Internet use which is investigated by the DDSLs and appropriate action taken.

As part of wider safeguarding responsibilities staff are required to be alert to and report, to the safeguarding team, concerns regarding:

- Disclosures by students of their exposure to the extremist actions, views or materials of others outside of school, such as in their homes or community groups;
- Graffiti symbols, writing or artwork promoting extremist messages or images;
- Students accessing or susceptible to extremist material online, including through social networking sites;
- Parental reports of changes in behaviour, friendship or actions and requests for assistance;
- Out of character changes in dress, behaviour and peer relationships identified in school;
- Other local schools, local authority services, and police reports of issues affecting their students;
- Learners voicing/susceptible to opinions drawn from extremist ideologies and narratives;
- Use of extremist or 'hate' terms to exclude others or incite violence;
- Intolerance of difference, whether secular or religious or, in line with our equalities policy, views based on, but not exclusive to, gender, disability, sexuality, race, colour or culture
- Attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others;
- Anti-Western or Anti-British views.

We strive to eradicate the myths and assumptions that can lead to some young people becoming alienated and disempowered, especially where the narrow approaches they may experience elsewhere may make it harder for them to challenge or question such radical influences.

We strive to ensure that our support and approaches will help our students build resilience to extremism and give them a positive sense of identity through the development of critical thinking skills. In line with KCSIE, where we identify the need to report a child to Channel, we gain their consent and that of their parent/guardian before doing so.

Completion of the Prevent L2 Course means that all staff are equipped to recognise extremism and are skilled and confident enough to challenge it.

Our goal is to build mutual respect and understanding and to promote the use of dialogue rather violence as a form of conflict resolution.

We work with local partners, families and communities to ensure Blessed Hugh Faringdon Catholic School students understand and embrace our local context and values in challenging extremist views, and to assist in the broadening of young people's experiences and horizons.

### **Children With Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND)**

SEND students can face additional safeguarding challenges meaning that additional barriers to recognising abuse and neglect in these children can exist.

These can include:

- Assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's condition without further exploration;
- These children being more prone to peer group isolation or bullying, including prejudice-based bullying, than other children;
- The potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions being disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying without outwardly showing any signs; and
- Communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges.

At Blessed Hugh Faringdon Catholic School, we provide additional support for these students from our two specialist SEND areas, our counsellors, ELSAs and Mental Health First Aiders. We maintain particularly close contact with home to help inform any actions taken.

### **Children who are lesbian, gay, bi or trans (LGBTQ+)**

The fact that a child or young person may be LGBTQ+ is not in itself an inherent risk factor. However, such children can be targeted by other children. In some cases, a child who is perceived to be LGBTQ+ (whether this is the case or not) can be just as vulnerable as a child who identifies as LGBTQ+.

Risks can be compounded where children who are LGBTQ+ lack a trusted adult with whom they can be open. At BHFCs, we endeavour to reduce the additional barriers faced by providing a safe space to speak with someone they trust. This may be the DSL, DDSLs, a mental health first aider or counsellor who are trained in providing support. Equally, the child may confide in a trusted adult who will be supported by a trained member of staff if happy to support the child.

### **Extra-Familial Harm**

The school assesses the risks and issues in the wider community when considering the well-being and safety of its students.



Children can be at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple harms including, but not limited to, sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse), criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines and radicalisation.

Through training, support and regular up-dates, we ensure that staff are mindful of these risks, know how to respond and report and all such concerns are promptly investigated and action taken.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation**

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity:

- a. In exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or;
- b. For the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. (Indicators of child sexual exploitation appear in Appendix 1 of this policy).

We are vigilant to the signs and investigate such concerns promptly in liaison with the police and children's social care.

### **Child Criminal Exploitation**

Child criminal exploitation occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity:

- a. In exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or;
- b. For the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or;
- c. Through violence or the threat of violence.

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 (common indicators appear in Appendix 1 of this policy).

We are vigilant to the signs and investigate such concerns promptly in liaison with the police and children's social care.

### **County Lines**

County Lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs (primarily crack cocaine and heroin) into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line'.

Exploitation is an integral part of the county lines offending model with children and vulnerable adults exploited to move and store drugs and money. Offenders will often

use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

We are vigilant to the signs and investigate such concerns promptly in liaison with the police and children's social care.

### **Domestic Abuse**

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 (Part 1) defines domestic abuse as any of the following behaviours, either as a pattern or a single incident, between two people over the age of 16, who are 'personally connected' to each other:

- a. Physical or sexual abuse;
- b. Violent or threatening behaviour;
- c. Controlling or coercive behaviour;
- d. Economic abuse (adverse effect on the victim to acquire, use or maintain money or other property; or obtain goods or services) and;
- e. Psychological, emotional or other abuse.

The definition applies to children if they see, hear or experience the effects of the abuse; and they are related to the abusive person. The school is part of Operation Encompass so our safeguarding team is advised of such incidents affecting our students and support/act, in discussion with the police and children's social care as appropriate to the case.

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

FGM refers to procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The practice is illegal in the UK. FGM typically takes place between birth and around 15 years old. (Risk factors and symptoms appear in Appendix 2 of this policy).

We are vigilant to the signs and investigate such concerns promptly in liaison with the police and children's social care.

The Serious Crime Act 2015 sets out the duty on professionals (including teachers) to notify the police when they discover that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. All staff know that they should speak to the DSL or a DDSL and that there is a legal duty on teachers to report this to the police by calling 101 or, where there is a risk to life or a likelihood of serious immediate harm to dial 999. In most cases, reports under this duty should be made as soon as possible after a case is discovered with best practice indicating a response by the close of the next working day at the latest.

### **Honour-based Abuse**

Honour-based Abuse (HBA) encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community, including FGM, forced marriage and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of such abuse must be

reported to the police. Where a concern that a child might be at risk of HBA arises, the DSL or DDSL must be alerted immediately.

### **Children Absent from or Missing Education**

Our procedures for responding to children absent from and missing education are outlined in our attendance policy.

Being absent from education means that the child's location is known and checked but he/she is not attending school. Children missing from education are those whose location is not known/is unclear and who are not attending school/participating in education.

Being absent or missing from education can be an indicator of abuse, neglect and/or a mental health concern and may indicate other safeguarding issues including any of the above. We monitor attendance carefully with the safeguarding team being alerted to any child with an unauthorised absence of 3 days and proceed in line with the Attendance Policy guidance informing the Attendance Support Worker(ASW), Children's Social Care and/or the police as appropriate. On SIMS, we maintain at least two up to date contact numbers for parents/carers and parents/carers are informed to contact the school should a number change.

We have an established Mental Health Team, led by the Senior Mental Health Lead, and clear, shared procedures for referring Mental Health Concerns. Where these require additional support over and above our in-house Mental Health First Aid, ELSA and Counselling services we refer to the Mental Health Support Team (MHST) for advice/referral to the appropriate external professional. We have a reporting system, accessible to the Mental Health Team (which includes the 2 DDSLs and is managed by the DSL as Senior Mental Health Lead) to record, centrally, support being offered each child such that it is visible to the whole team. This means appropriate follow up is assured where the assigned team member is not available and a need arises.

### **Removing Students from the School Roll**

We follow the expected procedures to inform the LA when we plan to take students off roll when they:

- Leave school to be educated at home.
- Move away from the school's location.
- Remain medically unfit beyond compulsory school age.
- Are in custody for four months or more and will not return to the school.
- Are permanently excluded.

Where students are expected to attend the school, but fail to take up the place/attend we inform the LA.

When a student leaves the school, we record the name of the student's new school and their expected start date.

### **Forced Marriage**

We are aware that, since February 2023, it has been a crime to carry out any conduct, the purpose of which is to cause a child to marry before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, even where

violence, threats or another form of coercion are not used. We know that this applies to non-binding unofficial 'marriages in addition to legal marriages. Such matters should be referred to our safeguarding team who will investigate and take the appropriate action and contact the Forced Marriage Unit for further advice (Tel: 0207008 0151/email [fm@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:fm@fcdo.gov.uk)).

### **Child on Child Abuse**

Our Child on Child Abuse Policy outlines the processes, procedures and systems we have in place to minimise this risk and to deal with it appropriately and promptly when it occurs.

## **E-Safety**

Our E-Safety Policy details our expectations and procedures. In the light of new guidance provided by Thames Valley Police, in June 2019, the following procedures have been adopted with regard to Youth Produced Sexual Imagery in Schools. The school recognises the widespread potential issues related to misuse of technology including the sharing of sexual images and the use of Artificial Intelligence.

### **Handling incidents**

All incidents will be referred, directly, to the appropriate DDSL for action/consultation with the DSL where required. Incidents involving:

- an adult;
- coercion, blackmail, or grooming;
- concerns about capacity to consent, [e.g., SEND];
- images show atypical sexual behaviour for the child's developmental stage;
- images where violent acts are depicted;
- images showing sex acts and including a child under 13;
- a young person at risk of immediate harm as a result of the disclosure (for example, self-harm or suicide).

will be reported to the Police and Children's Social Care (where there is already Social Services involvement). Where there is no social care involvement, to date, the incident may be reported to Social Services following consultation with the Police.

Incidents that do not meet any of the above criteria will be investigated internally and once the DSL/DDSL have enough information a decision will be made regarding whether to deal with the matter in school or refer to the police/children's social care.

Where an incident is dealt with in school, the following procedure, regarding viewing images, will be followed:

- We will aim to avoid viewing youth-produced sexual imagery. Instead, we will respond to what we have been told the image contains.
- Where it is felt necessary to view the images it will be with the agreement of the Headmaster.
- Images will not be copied, printed or shared as this is illegal.
- Images will be viewed with another member of staff present ensuring that the staff are of the same gender. For a female they will be viewed by the DSL/a DDSL or both DDSLs. For a male they will be viewed by the Headmaster/Deputy Headteacher as the DSL and Deputies are female. Where they are of students of both genders a male and a female, from this group, will view them.
- If necessary, another suitable member of staff, of the appropriate gender, will be asked, by the DSL/Headmaster to view the images.
- Records that the images were viewed along with reasons and who was present will be established. These records will be signed and dated by the investigating DDSL/DSL, and the person on whose electronic device the images were seen. This could be the perpetrator or another person who has become aware of them.

Where the incident is dealt with in school a further review will be held to assess risks based on the following:

Assessing the risks once the image(s) has/have been shared:

- Has it been shared with the knowledge of the young person?
- Are adults involved in the sharing?
- Was there pressure to make the image?
- What is the impact on those involved?
- Does the child or children have additional vulnerabilities?
- Has the child taken part in producing sexual imagery before?

Due monitoring will take place.

### **Deleting images (from devices and social media)**

If the school has decided that involving other agencies is not necessary, consideration should be given to deleting the images. We will follow the recommendation that the person showing the images is asked to delete them him/herself and confirm they have done so. This will be recorded, signed and dated.

Any refusal to delete the images will be treated seriously, reminding the student that possession is unlawful, and the police may then be contacted.

### **Filtering and Monitoring Arrangements**

KCSIE requires schools to:

- identify and assign roles and responsibilities to manage filtering and monitoring systems.
- review filtering and monitoring provision at least annually.
- block harmful and inappropriate content without unreasonably impacting teaching and learning.
- have effective monitoring strategies in place that meet their safeguarding needs

At Blessed Hugh Faringdon Catholic School, this requirement is fulfilled via our subscription to Securus who monitor our system constantly and advise us of concerns as they arise. These identify the student, time, location, nature of the concern, screen shot evidence and grade the concern from 1 – 5, five being the most serious. Where a concern is at level 5, in addition to the alert, we are contacted by the Securus Operative to ensure it has been seen and actioned. The DSL, DDSLs, Headmaster and Deputy receive the alerts which are actioned by the DDSLs or, in their absence the DSL, in her absence the Headmaster and in his absence the Deputy. Thus, there is assurance of prompt action. For low level behaviour concerns, the DDSLs pass them to the Year Leader and Pastoral and Achievement Coordinator to address. Any concerns

presenting a safeguarding or potential safeguarding concern are addressed directly by the DDSLs in discussion with the DSL if appropriate.

Our subscription to Securus is complemented by our internal filtering and monitoring system under the leadership of the Network Manager who liaises with the DSL/DDSLs as appropriate and vice versa.

Training is provided, by the DSL, to ensure staff understand the expectations, roles and responsibilities around filtering and monitoring. This is incorporated in the Induction Process for all staff and features in whole staff INSET and the Professional Studies Programme.

## **Sexual Harassment, Abuse and Violence**

Incidents of sexual harassment, abuse and violence are always addressed promptly, in line with the KCSIE guidance and with due consideration for confidentiality and anonymity. Reports of sexual abuse, violence or harassment include the time and location of the incident and subsequent risk assessments include any actions to improve the safety of the location where this is within our control. Where beyond our remit or control we will inform the police and/or children's social care as appropriate. Equally, with reference to intra-familial harms, we will identify any necessary support for siblings following incidents of sexual abuse, violence or harassment in dialogue with the police and/or children's social care as appropriate. This support may come from within the school, may be the responsibility of children's social care or a mixture of the two and, in such cases, we will maintain close contact with any provider.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two or more children of any age and sex. It can occur also through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and face-to-face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. We are aware of the importance of the following and children are educated regarding appropriate behaviours via assemblies and our Ten Ten RSE programme. We:

- Make it clear that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, that it is never acceptable, and it will not be tolerated.
- Recognise, acknowledge and understand the scale of harassment and abuse and that even if there are no reports it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported.
- Challenge physical behaviour (potentially criminal in nature).

Whilst any report of sexual violence or sexual harassment is taken seriously, staff are aware it is more likely that girls will be the victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment and more likely it will be perpetrated by boys. Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are three times more likely to be abused

than their peers. We are aware of this, are vigilant and take this into account ensuring that all victims know that their concern is being taken seriously.

## **Private Fostering**

Private fostering is a private arrangement without the involvement of children's social care, for the care of a child under the age of 16 or under the age of 18 if the child is disabled by someone other than a parent or close relative, in their own home, with the intention that it should last for more than 28 days. Parents and private foster carers both have a legal duty to inform the relevant LA at least 6 weeks prior to the start of the fostering arrangement; not to do so is a criminal offence.

Whilst most privately fostered children are appropriately cared for, they are potential vulnerable and should be monitored by children's social care particularly when the child is from another country. In some cases such children have been affected by abuse and neglect, involved in trafficking, child sexual exploitation or modern-day slavery.

Should we be told of such an arrangement or have reason to believe a child is being privately fostered and the LA are not aware, the DSL or DDSL is to be informed and we will fulfil our mandatory duty to report it.

On admission to the school, we will take steps to verify the relationship of the adults to the child who is being registered.

## **PROVIDING A SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT**

### **1. Safer Recruitment and Selection**

The school pays full regard to KCSIE 2024. Safe recruitment practice includes scrutinising applicants, ensuring we have an application form in addition to a CV, verifying identity and academic or vocational qualifications, obtaining professional and character references, checking previous employment history, conducting on-line searches and ensuring that a candidate has the health and physical capacity for the job. It also includes undertaking interviews and appropriate DBS checks (formerly List 99 and Criminal Records Bureau checks). All recruitment materials include reference to the school's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of its students. Our Headmaster, HR Officer and members of the senior team are trained in Safer Recruitment and required to keep up to date with any changes. The Single Central Record is checked 3 times per year by the DSL and link governor, targets are set where needed, a report produced and filed and progress towards targets monitored, supported and reviewed as required.

In line with KCSIE, candidates are advised that an online search might be conducted as part of our recruitment process due diligence checks.

### **2. Safe Practice**

All staff, including new staff are required to complete an on-line Level 2 Child Protection in Education and Prevent Course. Staff are required to attend training on KCSIE and complete an online assessment each year to demonstrate understanding.



All records are kept centrally by our HR Officer. Safe working practice ensures that students are safe and that all staff:

- are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions;
- work in an open and transparent way;
- discuss and/or take advice from school management over any incident which may give rise to concern;
- record any incidents or decisions made;
- apply the same professional standards regardless of gender or sexuality;
- are aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal or disciplinary action being taken against them.

Our safeguarding referral process is accessible and clear. Staff have been trained, training is part of the Induction Process, and the training PowerPoint is accessible on our Intranet as a point of reference. Our Open Door Policy encourages staff to feel comfortable raising matters including safeguarding concerns that take place in and outside school including online concerns.

### **3. Safeguarding Information for students**

The school is committed to ensuring that students are aware of behaviour, towards them, that is not acceptable and how they can keep themselves safe. Via posters, displays, assemblies, work in tutor groups and individual discussion, we inform students of whom they might talk to, both in and out of school, their right to be listened to and heard and what steps can be taken to protect them from harm. We recognise that sometimes children will not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited or neglected and/or may not recognise their experiences as harmful. For students not ready to talk, we have a Confidential Box in which they may post messages and an electronic reporting system which they may use when lacking the confidence to voice them directly. The box is checked, daily, by our DDSLs and any electronic reports submitted via 'Let Us Know' on the website are directed to the Safeguarding Team. We are vigilant to instances where children are not yet ready to communicate their concerns at all and to circumstances where they may not recognise their experience as harmful. Staff are aware of signs and symptoms to look out for and how to respond/report such concerns.

We promote safe on-line use guidance via assemblies led by the DSL, tutor periods, PSHE, posters and in lessons where technology is being used. We use age-appropriate approaches to educate our students regarding the benefits and dangers of social media and how to avoid the latter. We are sensitive to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of individuals, including students who are victims of abuse and those with a special educational need or disability.

Our Securus subscription means we are immediately aware of any actions taken by students which place them in danger or potential danger and take swift action to address these. Our students know that we are here to listen and how to seek support and advice as needed.

Our School Council meets regularly with members of the leadership team.

#### **4. Partnership with Parents**

The school shares a purpose, with parents, to keep children safe from harm and to have their welfare promoted. Parents may contact the school if they have any safeguarding concerns.

We are committed to working with parents positively, openly and honestly. 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 unless we have permission, or it is necessary to do so in order to protect a child. We will share with parents any concerns we may have about their child unless to do so may place a child at risk of harm.

We encourage parents to discuss any concerns they may have with the form tutor, year leader or a member of the pastoral team initially.

#### **5. Partnerships with others**

The school recognises the importance of positive and effective working relationships with other agencies e.g. Local Authority, Social Care, Police, Health Service professionals, and Education Welfare Service.

#### **6. Training of Key Personnel**

The DSL, Headmaster, Deputy and DDSLs hold current Child Protection Level L3 and the Prevent Level 2 Certificates. The school commits to ensuring that this is up-dated every 2 years in line with DfE Guidance. The DSL is also trained to Level 4.

#### **7. Support, Advice and Guidance for Staff**

All staff can seek support from the safeguarding team or Headmaster. The safeguarding team works closely with Children's Social Care, the Police and other external agencies.

#### **Confidentiality**

Blessed Hugh Faringdon Catholic School follows the guidance on Information Sharing. Personal information about children and families held by agencies should not normally be disclosed without the consent of the subject. However, the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

#### **8. Student Information**

In order to keep children safe and provide appropriate care for them the school requires and maintains accurate and up to date information regarding:

- Names and contact details of persons with whom the child normally lives
- Names and contact details of all persons with parental responsibility (if different from above)
- Emergency contact details (if different from above)

- Details of any persons authorised to collect the child from school (if different from above)
- Any relevant court orders in place including those which affect any person's access to the child (e.g. Residence Order, Contact Order, Care Order, Injunctions etc.)
- If the child is or has been the subject of a Child Protection Plan or other children's social care intervention.
- Name and contact details of the G.P.
- Any other factors which may impact on the safety and welfare of the child

The school collates, stores and agrees access to this information. The school endeavours to check the veracity of the information and to maintain it up to date. In the case of a child subject to a child protection plan or other intervention, files are held securely with restricted access (DSL, Headmaster and DDSLs).

## **IDENTIFYING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO MAY BE SUFFERING SIGNIFICANT HARM**

Teachers and other adults in school are well placed to observe any physical, emotional or behavioural signs which indicate that a child may be suffering significant harm. The relationships between staff, students, parents and the public which foster respect, confidence and trust can lead to disclosures of abuse, and/or school staff being alerted to concerns.

(See Appendices 1 – 7 for detail)

### **Definition**

As in the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, a child is anyone who has not yet reached his/her 18th birthday.

## **TAKING ACTION TO ENSURE THAT CHILDREN ARE SAFE AT SCHOOL AND AT HOME**

It is not the responsibility of school staff to investigate welfare concerns or determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation. All staff, however, have a duty to recognise concerns and maintain an open mind. Accordingly, all concerns regarding the welfare of students will be recorded and discussed with the DSL/DDSLs prior to any discussion with parents.

### **Cultural Differences**

Cultural issues should never be a barrier to Safeguarding. Students at BHFCS come from many cultural backgrounds which may have a different approach to family life.

- Staff should be sensitive to cultural diversity but aware that certain practices may be detrimental to the welfare of students for example forced marriage, female genital mutilation and physical punishment are against the law in this country.
- Staff should be aware that some students may be vulnerable to pressure from groups involved in violent extremism.

## Reporting

Staff are required to report, promptly, any of the following regardless of whether there is already a referral to Children's Social Care in place. They should use the Safeguard My School electronic referral system and include any information they may have about the child's home circumstances as required. Staff are not required to seek such information but should report anything they are aware of. Concerns include:

- any suspicion/evidence that a child is injured, marked, or bruised in a way which is not readily attributable to the normal knocks or scrapes received in play;
- any explanation given which appears inconsistent or suspicious;
- any behaviours which give rise to suspicions that a child may have suffered harm (e.g. worrying drawings or play);
- any concerns that a child may be suffering from inadequate care, ill treatment, or emotional maltreatment;
- any concerns that a child is presenting signs or symptoms of abuse or neglect
- any significant changes in a child's presentation, including nonattendance any hint or disclosure of abuse from any person;
- any concerns regarding person(s) who may pose a risk to children (e.g. living in a household with children present);
- any concern listed in the 'Cultural Differences' section above.
- any concerns that a child may be being/has been criminally and/or sexually exploited, abused or harassed.
- any concerns of abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers.

Staff should note that there may be multiple issues that overlap so a range of concerns may be apparent. Providing full, complete and detailed information aids the safeguarding team in deciding how to proceed.

## 2. Responding to Disclosure

Disclosures or information may be received from students, parents or other members of the public. The school recognises that those who disclose such information may do so with difficulty, having chosen carefully how they will report it and to whom they will speak. Accordingly, all staff must handle disclosures with sensitivity. For students with communication/language difficulties the safeguarding team will liaise with SENDCO, Head of the Autism Resource or EAL teacher.

Staff should reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse of any kind, sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

Disclosures cannot remain confidential and staff will immediately communicate what they have been told to the DSL or DDSL, using the electronic system, and make a contemporaneous record.

## Principles

Staff will not investigate but will, wherever possible, elicit enough information to pass on to the DSL/DDSL making their duty to refer the matter clear at the start of any such discussion with a student.

Staff must:

- listen to and take seriously any disclosure or information that a child may be at risk of harm;
- try to ensure that the person disclosing does not have to repeat this to another member of school staff which may cause them unnecessary distress;
- clarify the information if necessary;
- try to keep questions to a minimum and of an “open” nature e.g. “Can you tell me what happened?” rather than “Did x hit you?”
- try not to show signs of shock, horror or surprise;
- not express feelings or judgements regarding any person alleged to have harmed the child;
- explain sensitively to the person that they have a responsibility to refer the information to the DSL/DDSL;
- reassure and support the person as far as possible;
- explain that only those who ‘need to know’ will be told;
- explain what will happen next and that the person will be involved as appropriate.

## 3. Action by the DSL/DDSL

The DSL/DDSL will consider:

- any urgent medical and emotional needs of the child;
- discussing the matter with other agencies involved with the family;
- consulting with appropriate persons e.g. Attendance Officer, Children’s Services;
- the child’s wishes, as far as possible, with regard for their safety being paramount.

Then decide:

- wherever possible, to talk to parents, unless to do so may place a child at risk of significant harm, impede any police investigation and/or place the member of staff or others at risk ;
- whether to make a child protection referral to Children’s Social Services because a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm and if this needs to be undertaken immediately.

OR

- not to make a referral at this stage;
- if further monitoring is necessary;

- if it would be appropriate to undertake an assessment and/or make a referral for other services.

All information and actions taken, including the reasons for any decisions made, will be fully documented. All referrals to Social Services will follow the due process.

#### **4. Action following a child protection referral**

The DSL/DDSL must:

- maintain regular contact with Children's Social Care;
- wherever possible, contribute to the Strategy Discussion;
- provide a report for, attend and contribute to any subsequent Child Protection Conference;
- contribute to the Child Protection Plan (where in place), attend Core Group Meetings and other relevant meetings/discussions;
- where appropriate, share all Child Protection Conference reports with parents prior to meetings;
- immediately inform the Social Services key worker where a child subject to a child protection plan moves from the school or goes missing.
- Chase external bodies for information where not provided to the deadline.
- Maintain Safeguard My School Records up to date and complete

#### **5. Recording and monitoring**

Accurate records, where it is necessary to supplement the information conveyed on the electronic form, will be made as soon as practicable and will clearly distinguish between observation, fact, opinion and hypothesis. All records will be signed and dated, any information given will be recorded and a note made of the location and description of any injuries seen.

All documents will be retained in a 'Child Protection' file, separate from the child's main file and filed securely with limited access (DSL, Headmaster, Deputy and DDSLs). These records will be copied and transferred to any school or setting the child moves to, clearly marked 'Child Protection, Confidential, for attention of Designated Safeguarding Lead.' Original copies will be retained until the child's 25th birthday.

#### **6. Supporting the Child and Partnership with Parents**

- The school recognises that the child's welfare is paramount however, good safeguarding practice and outcomes rely on a positive, open and honest working partnership with parents.
- Whilst we may, on occasions, need to make referrals without consultation with parents, we will make every effort to maintain a positive working relationship with them whilst fulfilling our duties to protect the child.
- We will provide a secure, caring, supportive and protective relationship for the child.
- Children will be given a proper explanation (appropriate to age and understanding) of what action is being taken on their behalf and why.
- We will always endeavour to preserve the privacy, dignity and right to confidentiality of the child and parents. The DSL, in discussion with the relevant Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures/ FGB / 09/ 2024

DDSL, will determine which members of staff “need to know” personal information and what they “need to know” for the purpose of supporting and protecting the child.

### **Allegations regarding person(s) working in or on behalf of school (including volunteers and contractors)**

Where an allegation is made against any person working in or on behalf of the school that he or she has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child or
- has behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.
- Behaved in a way or may have behaved in a way (where the reported incident took place out of school) that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

The referral threshold has been met and the concern will be reported promptly to the LADO team. Investigations will then continue in dialogue with the team and the appropriate action taken.

Where the concern does not meet the threshold, it may be a low-level concern. This does not mean that it is insignificant but does not meet the threshold for referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer Team (LADO).

Concerns may be graded low level where the adult has acted in a way that is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside school. For example:

- being over-friendly with children;
- having favourites;
- taking photographs of children on their mobile phone;
- engaging with a child on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door; or
- using inappropriate sexualised intimidating language.

And appropriate action will be taken commensurate with the concern.

We acknowledge that any such allegations, (as all others), may be false, malicious or misplaced, we also acknowledge they may be founded. It is, therefore, essential that all allegations are investigated properly and in line with agreed procedures.

Where a teacher is dismissed or released from their contract (or would have been likely to have been) we will consider referring the teacher to the Secretary of State via the Teaching Regulation Agency.

### **External Individuals/Organisations Using our Premises**

In line with KCSIE, should we receive an allegation relating to an incident where an individual or organisation was using the school premises to run an activity for children, our usual safeguarding policies and procedures are followed and the LADO is informed in the same way as any direct safeguarding allegation.

### **Initial Action**

- The person who has received an allegation or witnessed an event will immediately inform the Headmaster or DSL (who will liaise with the Headmaster) and make a record.
- If an allegation is made against the Headmaster the matter will be reported to the Chair of Governors who will follow the process outlined below.
- The Headmaster will take steps, where necessary, to secure the immediate safety of the child/children and any urgent medical needs.
- The member of staff will not be approached at this stage unless it is necessary to address the immediate safety of children.
- The Headmaster may need to clarify any information regarding the allegation; however no person will be interviewed at this stage.
- The Headmaster may request that the DSL consults with the Local Authority Designated Officer in order to determine if it is appropriate for the allegation to be dealt with by the school or if there needs to be a referral to Social Services and/or the police for investigation
- Consideration will be given, throughout, to the support and information needs of students, parents and staff
- The Headmaster will inform the Chair of Governors of any allegation.

### **Renting out of School Premises/Facilities**

The Governing Body, working with the school, will ensure that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place (including inspecting these as needed) and that the presence of such arrangements is a requirement of any agreement between the school / college and the other organisation.



## **Appendix one**

### **Recognising signs of child abuse**

#### **Categories of Abuse:**

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse (including Domestic Abuse)
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect

#### **Signs of Abuse in Children:**

The following non-specific signs may indicate something is wrong:

- Significant change in behaviour
- Extreme anger or sadness
- Aggressive and attention-seeking behaviour
- Suspicious bruises with unsatisfactory explanations
- Lack of self-esteem
- Self-injury
- Depression
- Age inappropriate sexual behaviour
- Child Sexual Exploitation.

#### **Risk Indicators**

The factors described in this section are frequently found in cases of child abuse. Their presence is not proof that abuse has occurred, but:

- Must be regarded as indicators of the possibility of significant harm.
- Justify the need for careful assessment and discussion with designated / named / lead person, manager, (or in the absence of all those individuals, an experienced colleague).
- May require consultation with and / or referral to Children's Services.

The absence of such indicators does not mean that abuse or neglect has not occurred.

In an abusive relationship, the child may:

- Appear frightened of the adult(s)
- Act in a way that is inappropriate to her/his age and development (though full account needs to be taken of different patterns of development and different ethnic groups)

The parent or carer may:

- Persistently avoid child health promotion services and treatment of the child's episodic illnesses.
- Have unrealistic expectations of the child.
- Frequently complain about/to the child and may fail to provide attention or praise (high criticism/low warmth environment) .
- Be absent or misusing substances .

- Persistently refuse to allow access on home visits.
- Be involved in domestic abuse.

Staff should be aware of the potential risk to children when individuals, previously known or suspected to have abused children, move into the household.

## **Recognising Physical Abuse**

The following are often regarded as indicators of concern:

- An explanation which is inconsistent with an injury.
- Several different explanations provided for an injury.
- Unexplained delay in seeking treatment.
- The parents/carers are disinterested or undisturbed by an accident or injury.
- Parents are absent without good reason when their child is presented for treatment.
- Repeated presentation of minor injuries (which may represent a “cry for help” and if ignored could lead to a more serious injury).
- Family use of different doctors and A&E departments.
- Reluctance to give information or mention previous injuries.

## **Bruising**

Children can have accidental bruising, but the following must be considered as non-accidental unless there is evidence, or a plausible explanation provided:

- Two simultaneously bruised eyes, without bruising to the forehead, (rarely accidental, though a single bruised eye can be accidental or abusive) .
- Repeated or multiple bruising on the head or on sites unlikely to be injured accidentally
- Variation in bruise colour possibly indicating injuries caused at different times.
- The outline of an object used e.g. belt marks, handprints or a hairbrush.
- Bruising or tears around, or behind, the earlobe/s indicating injury by pulling or twisting
- Bruising around the face.
- Grasp marks
- Bruising on the arms, buttocks and thighs which may be an indicator of sexual abuse

## **Bite Marks**

Bite marks can leave clear impressions of the teeth. Human bite marks are oval or crescent shaped. Those over 3 cm in diameter are more likely to have been caused by an adult or older child.

Medical opinion should be sought where there is any doubt over the origin of the bite.

## **Burns and Scalds**

It can be difficult to distinguish between accidental and non-accidental burns and scalds and will always require experienced medical opinion. Any burn with a clear outline may be suspicious e.g.:

- Circular burns from cigarettes (but may be friction burns if along the bony protuberance of the spine).
- Linear burns from hot metal rods or electrical fire elements.
- Burns of uniform depth over a large area.
- Scalds that have a line indicating immersion or poured liquid (a child getting into hot water of his/her own accord will struggle to get out and cause splash marks).
- Old scars indicating previous burns/scalds which did not have appropriate treatment or adequate explanation.

Scalds to the buttocks of a small child, particularly in the absence of burns to the feet, are indicative of dipping into a hot liquid or bath.

## **Fractures**

Fractures may cause pain, swelling and discolouration over a bone or joint.

Non-mobile children rarely sustain fractures.

There are grounds for concern if:

- The history provided is vague, non-existent or inconsistent with the fracture type
- There are associated old fractures.
- Medical attention is sought after a period of delay when the fracture has caused symptoms such as swelling, pain or loss of movement.
- There is an unexplained fracture in the first year of life.

## **Scars**

A large number of scars or scars of different sizes or ages, or on different parts of the body, may suggest abuse.

## **Recognising Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse may be difficult to recognise, as the signs are usually behavioural rather than physical. The manifestations of emotional abuse might also indicate the presence of other kinds of abuse.

The following may be indicators of emotional abuse:

- Developmental delay.
- Abnormal attachment between a child and parent/carer e.g. anxious, indiscriminate or not attachment.
- Indiscriminate attachment or failure to attach.
- Aggressive behaviour towards others.
- Scapegoat within the family.

- Frozen watchfulness. (particularly but not exclusively in pre-school children).
- Low self-esteem and lack of confidence.
- Withdrawn or seen as a “loner” – difficulty relating to others

## **Recognising Signs of Sexual Abuse**

Boys and girls of all ages may be sexually abused and are frequently frightened to divulge this due to guilt and/or fear and full account should be taken of the cultural sensitivities of any individual child/family. Recognition can be difficult, unless the child discloses and is believed. There may be no physical signs and indications are likely to be emotional/behavioural.

Some behavioural indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

- Inappropriate sexualised conduct.
- Sexually explicit behaviour play or conversation, inappropriate to the child's age.
- Continual and inappropriate or excessive masturbation.
- Self-harm (including eating disorder), self-mutilation and suicide attempts.
- Involvement in prostitution or indiscriminate choice of sexual partners
- An anxious unwillingness to remove clothes e.g. for sports events (but this may be related to cultural norms or physical difficulties).

Some physical indicators associated with this form of abuse are:

- Pain or itching of genital area.
- Blood on underclothes.
- Pregnancy in a younger girl where the identity of the father is not disclosed..
- Physical symptoms such as injuries to the genital or anal area, bruising to buttocks, abdomen and thighs, sexually transmitted disease, presence of semen on vagina, anus, external genitalia or clothing.

## **Sexual Abuse by Young People**

KCSIE makes clear that all concerns raised regarding sexual harassment, abuse or violence are always taken seriously and never considered as banter or teenage behaviour.

**Developmental Sexual Activity** encompasses those actions that are to be expected from children and young people as they move from infancy through to an adult understanding of their physical, emotional and behavioural relationships with each other. Such sexual activity is essentially information gathering and experience testing. It is characterised by mutuality and the seeking of consent.

## **Assessment**

In order to more fully determine the nature of the incident the following factors should be considered - the presence of exploitation in terms of:

1. **Equality:** Differentials of physical, cognitive and emotional development, power and control and authority, passive and assertive tendencies.
2. **Consent:** Agreement including all the following:
  - Understanding what is proposed based on age, maturity, development level, functioning and experience.
  - Knowledge of society's standards for what is being proposed and awareness of potential consequences and alternatives.
  - Assumption that agreements or disagreements will be respected equally.
  - Voluntary decision on mental competence.
3. **Coercion** - the young perpetrator may use techniques such as bribing, manipulation and emotional threats of secondary gains and losses. E.g. loss of love, friendship, etc. Some may use physical force, brutality or the threat of these regardless of victim resistance.

In evaluating sexual behaviour of children and young people, the above information should be used only as a guide and reported to the safeguarding team for further investigation.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation**

This could be a one-off or a series of incidents over time. It can happen online and in person.

Even if the activity seems to be consensual, it can still be abuse.

Signs to look out for include:

- Unexplained gifts or new possessions
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation
- Changes in emotional wellbeing or school performance
- Signs of assault or unexplained injuries
- Misusing drugs and alcohol
- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late
- Regularly missing school or not taking part in school
- (Child sexual exploitation) Having older boyfriends or girlfriends
- (Child sexual exploitation) Having sexually transmitted infections or getting pregnant
- Underage sexual activity
- Inappropriate sexual or sexualised behaviour
- Sexually risky behaviour, 'swapping' sex
- Having multiple mobile phones and worrying about losing contact via mobile
- Changes in the way they dress
- Going to hotels or other unusual locations to meet friends
- Seen at known places of concern
- Moving around the country, appearing in new towns or cities, not knowing where they are
- Getting in/out of different cars driven by unknown adults
- Contact with known perpetrators

- Involved in abusive relationships, intimidated and fearful of certain people or situations
- Hanging out with groups of older people, or anti-social groups, or with other vulnerable peers
- Associating with other young people involved in sexual exploitation
- Recruiting other young people to exploitative situations
- Truancy, exclusion, disengagement with school, opting out of education altogether
- Unexplained changes in behaviour or personality (chaotic, aggressive, sexual)
- Mood swings, volatile behaviour, emotional distress
- Self-harming, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, overdosing, eating disorders
- Drug or alcohol misuse
- Getting involved in crime
- Police involvement, police records

The following list of indicators of child sexual exploitation is not exhaustive or definitive, but it does highlight common signs which can assist professionals in identifying children or young people who may be victims of sexual exploitation.

Signs include:

- underage sexual activity
- inappropriate sexual or sexualised behaviour
- sexually risky behaviour, 'swapping' sex
- repeat sexually transmitted infections
- in girls, repeat pregnancy, abortions, miscarriage
- receiving unexplained gifts or gifts from unknown sources
- having multiple mobile phones and worrying about losing contact via mobile
- having unaffordable new things (clothes, mobile) or expensive habits (alcohol, drugs)
- changes in the way they dress
- going to hotels or other unusual locations to meet friends
- seen at known places of concern
- moving around the country, appearing in new towns or cities, not knowing where they are
- getting in/out of different cars driven by unknown adults
- having older boyfriends or girlfriends
- contact with known perpetrators
- involved in abusive relationships, intimidated and fearful of certain people or situations
- hanging out with groups of older people, or anti-social groups, or with other vulnerable peers
- associating with other young people involved in sexual exploitation
- recruiting other young people to exploitative situations
- truancy, exclusion, disengagement with school, opting out of education altogether

- unexplained changes in behaviour or personality (chaotic, aggressive, sexual)
- mood swings, volatile behaviour, emotional distress
- self-harming, suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, overdosing, eating disorders
- drug or alcohol misuse
- getting involved in crime
- police involvement, police records
- involved in gangs, gang fights, gang membership
- injuries from physical assault, physical restraint, sexual assault.

### **Recognising Neglect**

Evidence of neglect is built up over a period and can cover different aspects of parenting. Indicators include:

- Failure by parents or carers to meet basic essential needs e.g. adequate food, clothes, warmth, hygiene and medical care
- A child seen to be listless, apathetic and unresponsive with no apparent medical cause.
- Failure of the child to grow within the normal expected pattern, with accompanying weight loss.
- Child thrives away from home environment.
- Child is frequently absent from school.
- Child is left with adults who are intoxicated or violent.
- Child is abandoned or left alone for excessive periods.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation**

Both are illegal in the United Kingdom

#### **Forced Marriage (FM)**

This is entirely separate to arranged marriage. It is a human rights abuse and falls within the Crown Prosecution Service definition of domestic violence. Young men and women can be at risk in affected ethnic groups. Whistleblowing may come from younger siblings. Other indicators may be detected by changes in adolescent behaviours. Never attempt to intervene directly as a school or through a third party. Always call either Thames Valley Police on 101 or Reading Children's Services on 0118 937 3641

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

##### **What is FGM?**

It involves procedures that intentionally alter/injure the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

4 types of procedure:

Type 1 Clitoridectomy - partial/total removal of clitoris

Type 2 Excision - partial/total removal of clitoris and labia minora

Type 3 Infibulation entrance to vagina is narrowed by repositioning the inner/outer labia

Type 4 all other procedures that may include: pricking, piercing, incising, cauterising and scraping the genital area.

Why is it carried out?

Belief that:

- FGM brings status/respect to the girl – social acceptance for marriage
- Preserves a girl's virginity
- Part of being a woman / rite of passage
- Upholds family honour
- Cleanses and purifies the girl
- Gives a sense of belonging to the community
- Fulfils a religious requirement
- Perpetuates a custom/tradition
- Helps girls be clean / hygienic

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- Is cosmetically desirable
- Mistakenly believed to make childbirth easier

**Circumstances and occurrences that may point to FGM happening are:**

- Child talking about getting ready for a special ceremony.
- Family taking a long trip abroad.
- Child's family being from one of the "at risk" communities for FGM (Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Sierra Leon, Egypt, Nigeria, Eritrea as well as non-African communities including Yemeni, Afghani, Kurdistan, Indonesia and Pakistan).
- Knowledge that the child's sibling has undergone FGM.
- Child talks about going abroad to be 'cut' or to prepare for marriage.

**Signs that may indicate a child has undergone FGM:**

- Prolonged absence from school and other activities especially with noticeable behaviour changes (e.g. withdrawal or depression)
- Behaviour change on return from a holiday abroad, such as being withdrawn and appearing subdued.
- Bladder or menstrual problems.
- Finding it difficult to walk, sit still and looking uncomfortable.
- Spending longer than normal in the toilet due to difficulties urinating.
- Frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems.
- Complaining about pain between the legs.
- Mentioning something somebody did to them that they are not allowed to talk about.
- Secretive behaviour, including isolating themselves from the group.
- Reluctance to take part in physical activity.
- Repeated urinal tract infection.
- Disclosure.

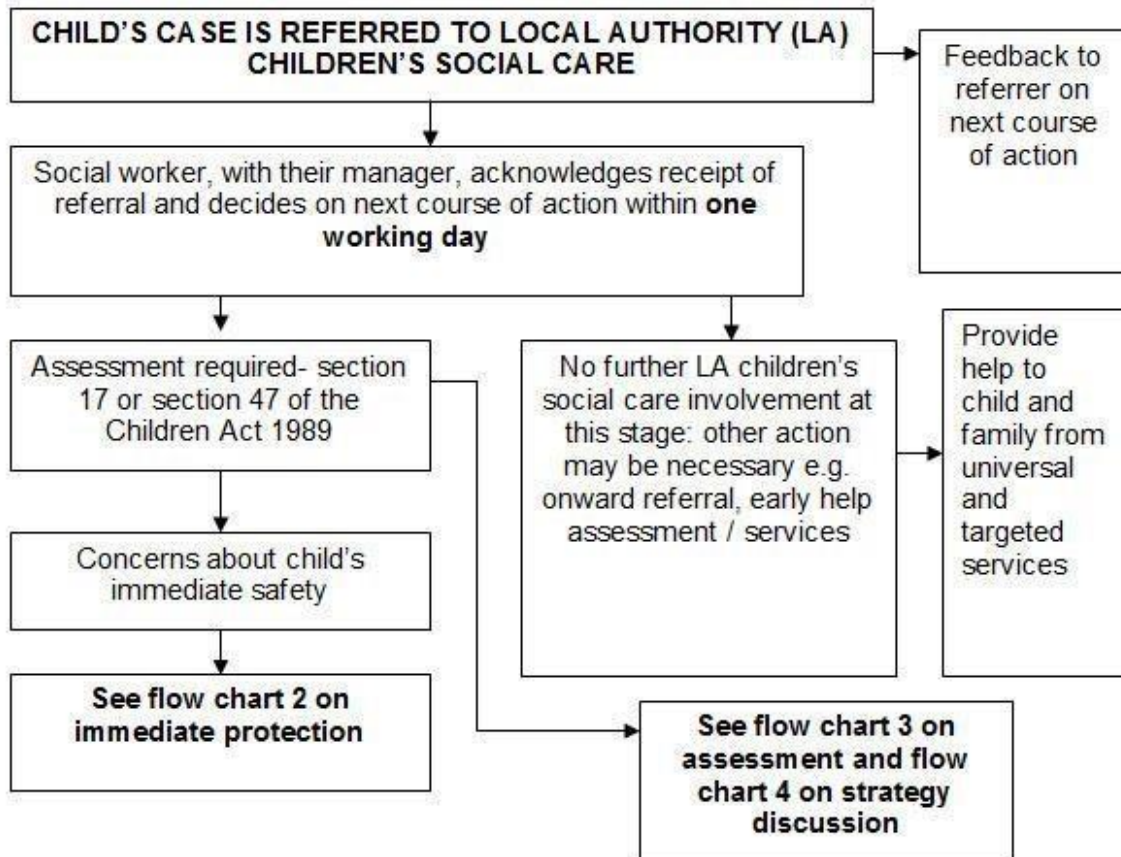
**The "One Chance" rule**

As with Forced Marriage there is the 'One Chance' rule. It is essential that settings (schools/colleges) take action without delay and call the Contact Centre.

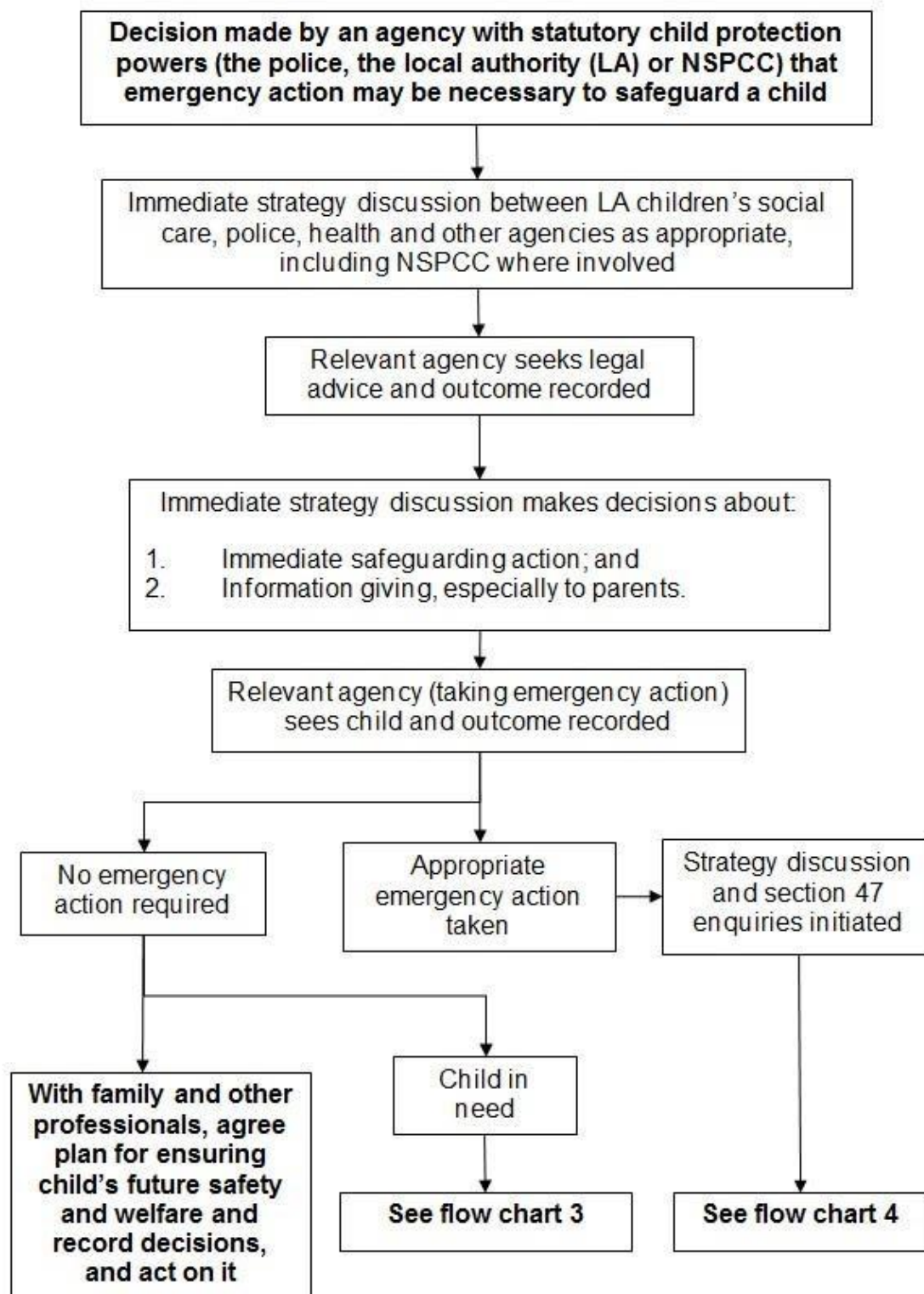
### Appendix 3

#### Referral Process

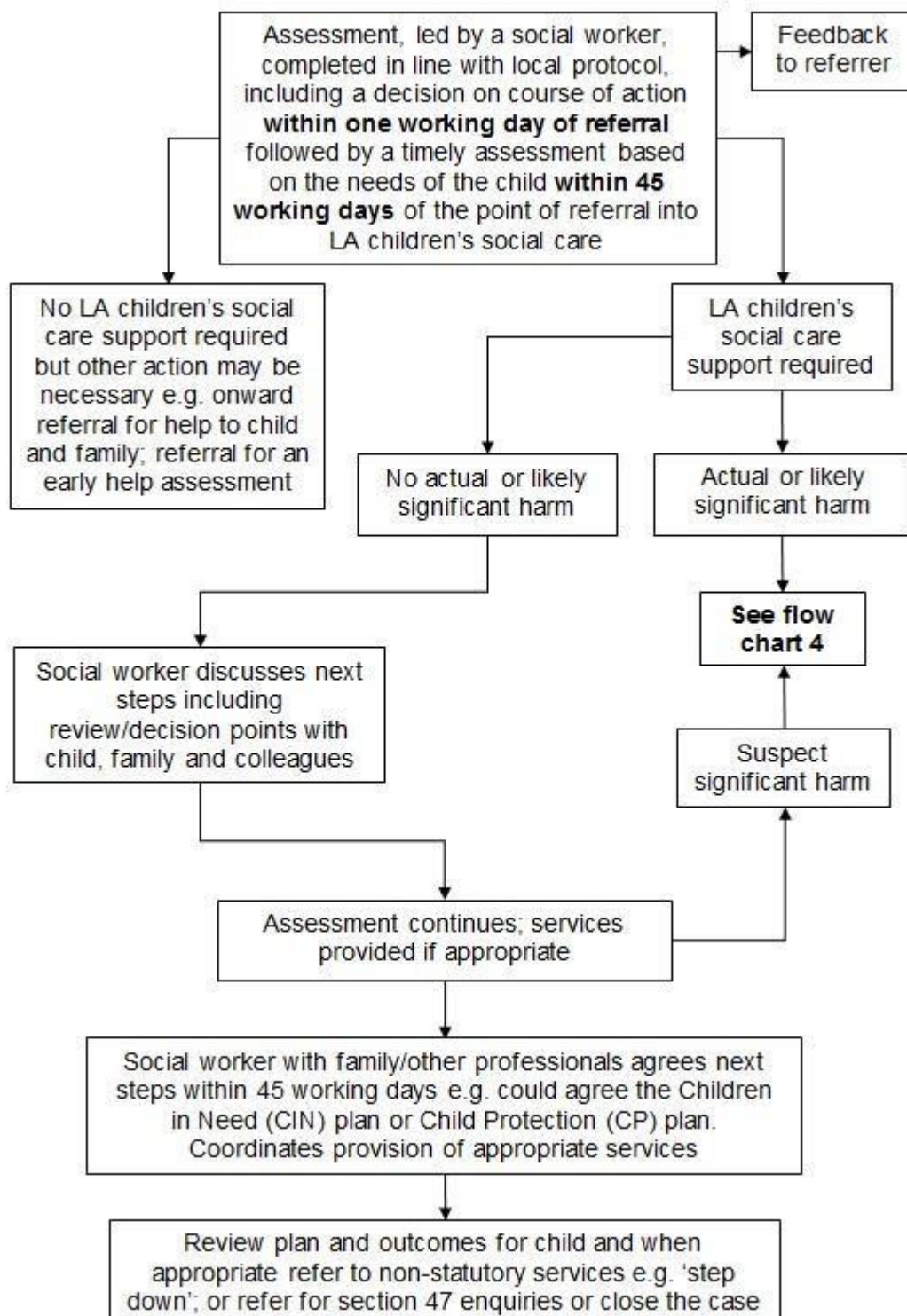
Flow chart 1: Action taken when a child is referred to local authority children's social care services



Flow chart 2: Immediate protection

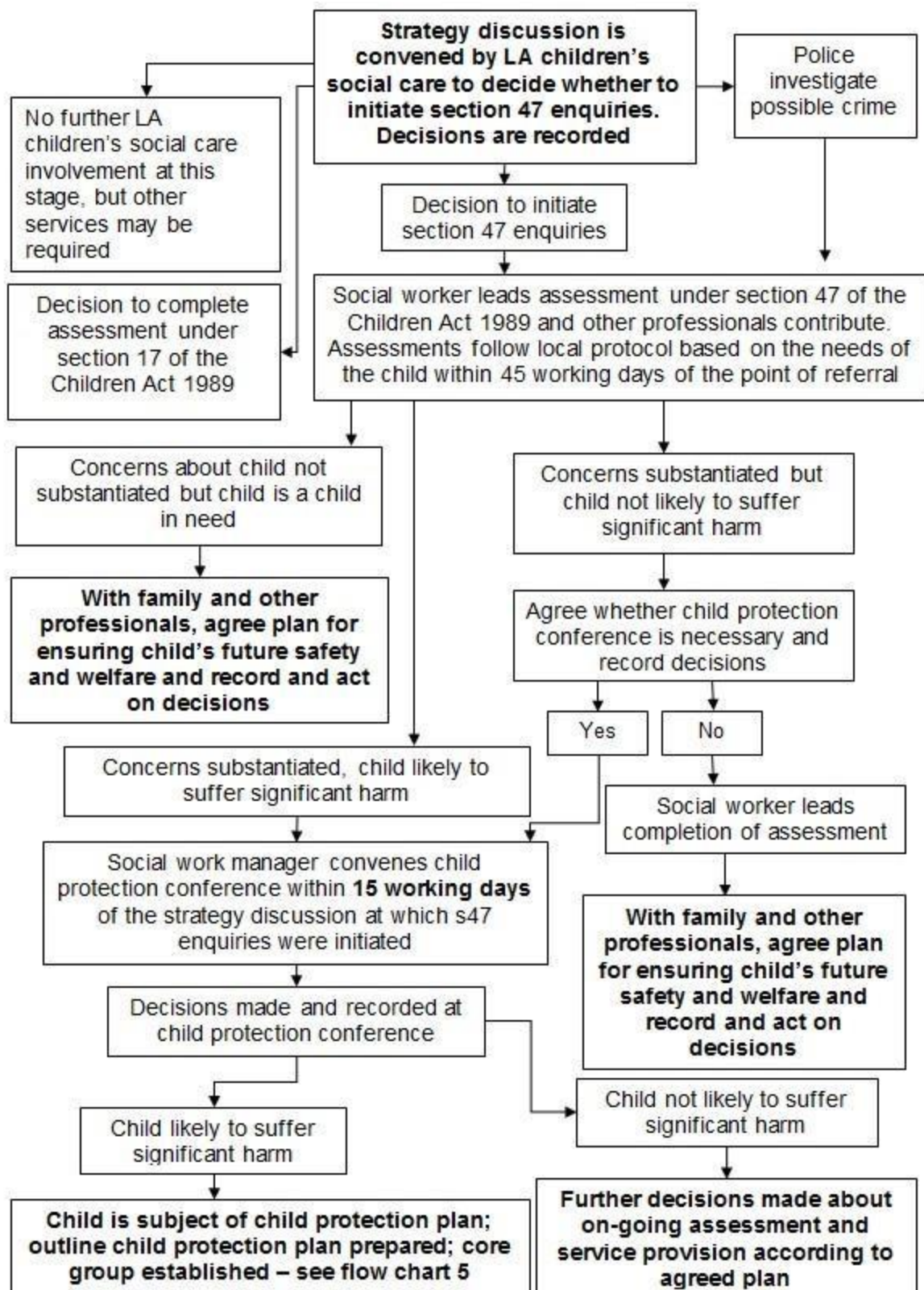


Flow chart 3: Action taken for an assessment of a child under the Children Act 1989

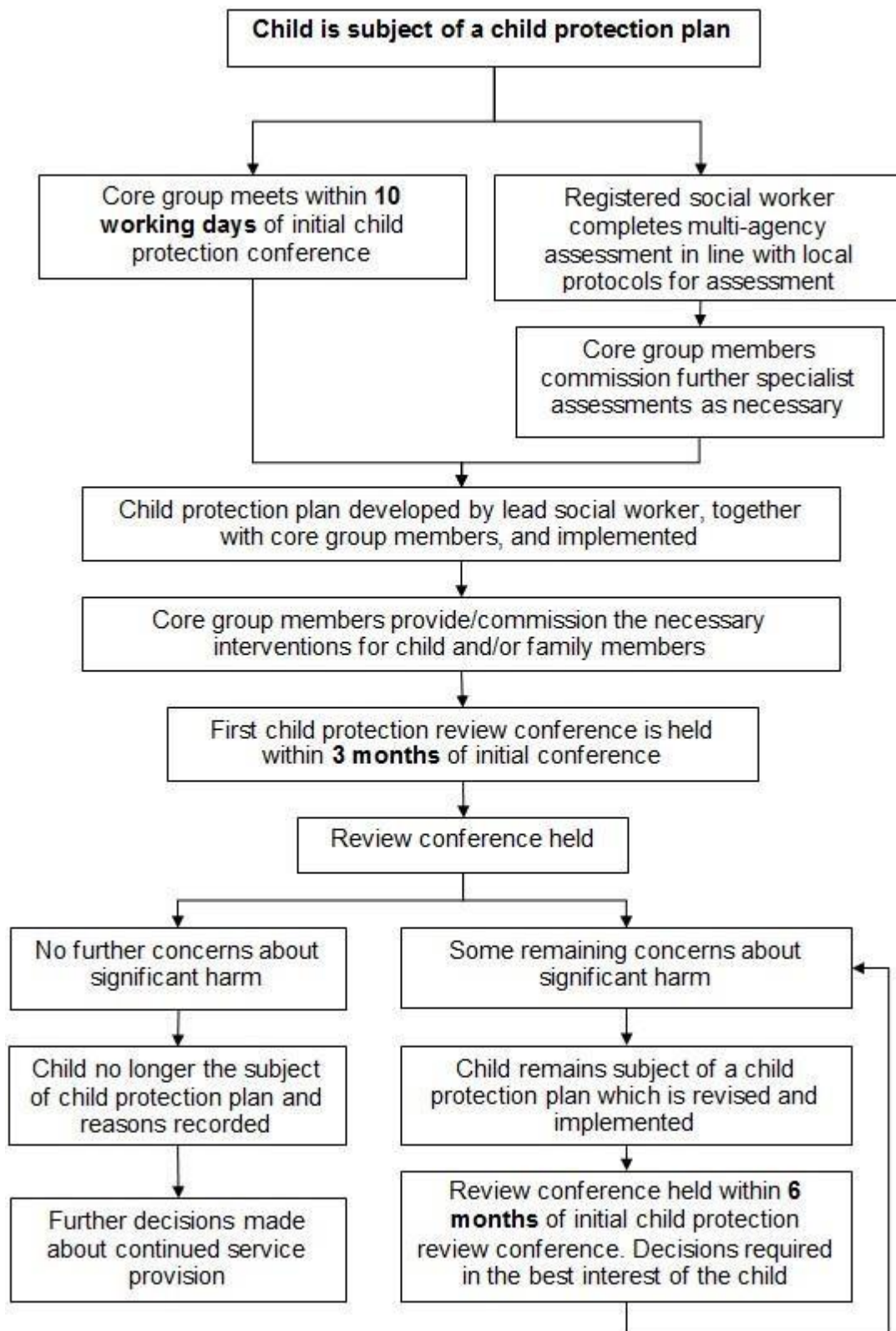




Flow chart 4: Action following a strategy discussion

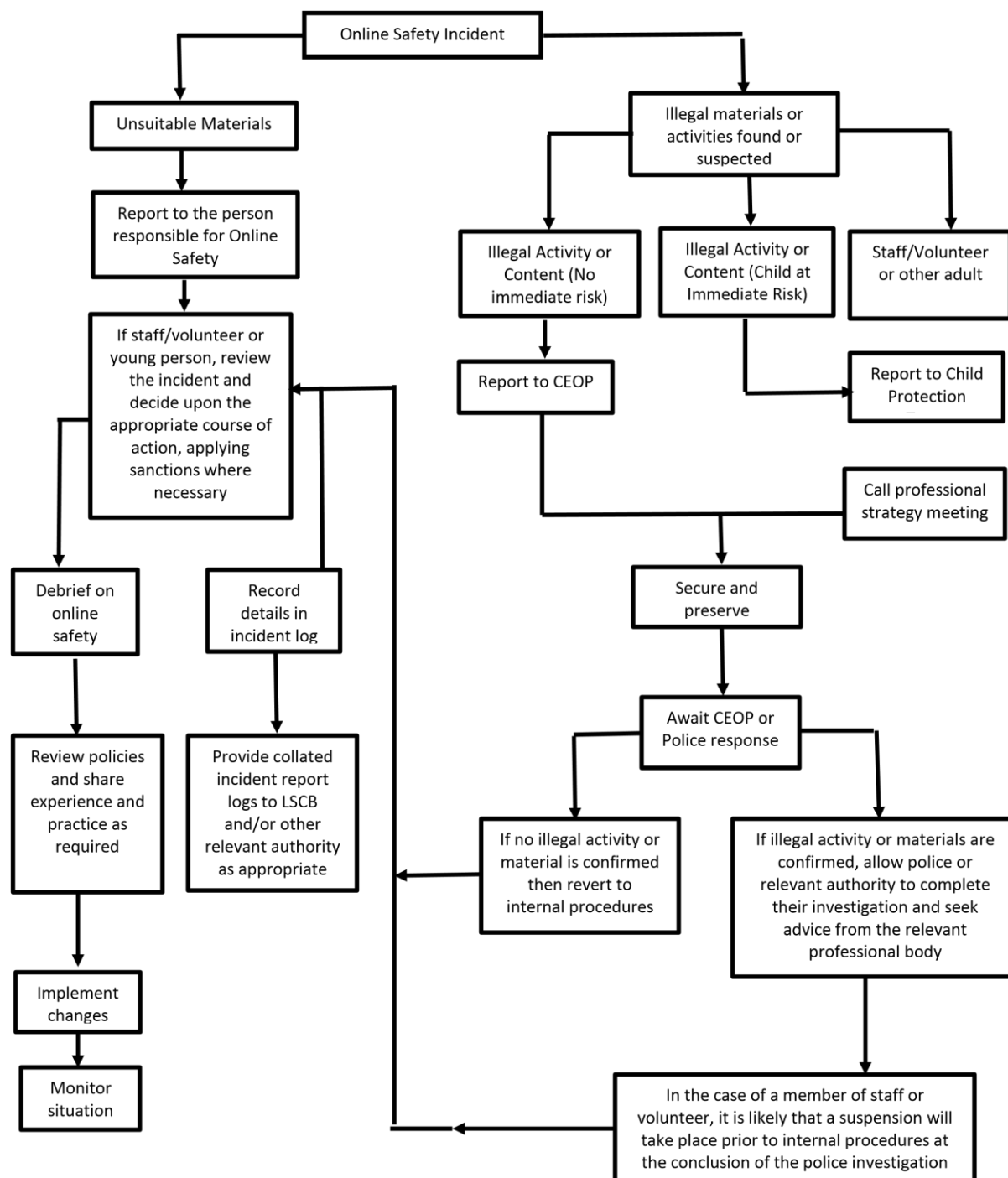


Flow chart 5: What happens after the child protection conference, including the review?



## Appendix 4

### E-Safety - Responding to Incidents of Misuse



NB: at Blessed Hugh Faringdon catholic School, the DSL has responsibility for on-line safety, filtering and monitoring and will address concerns directly or indirectly via the DDSLs.

## **Appendix 5**

### **Key Terminology and Definitions**

**Harm** means ill-treatment or impairment of health and development, including, for example, impairment suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another;

**Development** means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development;

**Health** includes physical and mental health;

**Ill-treatment** includes sexual abuse and other forms of ill-treatment which are not physical.

**Abuse and Neglect** are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them, or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

**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.

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

**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 insofar as they meet 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. 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, though it may occur alone.



**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 abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

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

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

## **Appendix 6**

Reference will be made to the following supplementary guidance where appropriate.

### **Department for Education guidance**

- Safeguarding children who may have been trafficked.
- Safeguarding children and young people who may have been affected by gang activity.
- Safeguarding children from female genital mutilation.
- Forced marriage.
- Safeguarding children from abuse linked to faith or belief.
- Radicalisation - Prevent strategy.
- Radicalisation - Channel guidance.
- Use of reasonable force in schools.
- Safeguarding children and young people from sexual exploitation.
- Safeguarding Children in whom illness is fabricated or induced.
- Preventing and tackling bullying.
- Safeguarding children and safer recruitment in education.
- Information sharing: advice for practitioners.
- Keeping children safe in education.
- Safeguarding Disabled Children: Practice guidance.
- Department of Health / Department for Education: National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services.
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: advice for practitioners.

## Appendix 7

### Key Highlights of the September 2024 Guidance

#### Comprehensive Training for School Staff

One of the recommendations in the draft is the emphasis on thorough and [ongoing training for school staff](#). The guidance mandates that all school personnel should receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training. This training encompasses various facets, including:

- **Online Safety:** Staff must be well-versed in the expectations, roles, and responsibilities related to [filtering and monitoring online activities](#). Understanding these elements is vital for creating a secure online environment for students.
- **Regular Updates:** The guidance stipulates that safeguarding and child protection updates should be delivered frequently through emails, e-bulletins, and staff meetings. At a minimum, these updates should occur annually, ensuring that staff remain equipped with the latest skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

#### Recognition of Technology in Safeguarding

The DfE acknowledges the significant role of technology in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues. The guidance highlights several critical points:

- **Dual Risks:** Children face risks both online and offline, and these risks often occur simultaneously. School staff must be vigilant in recognising and addressing these dual threats.
- **Peer-to-Peer Online Abuse:** The document identifies the growing concern of children abusing other children online. This abuse can manifest in various forms, such as:
  - Abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages.
  - Non-consensual sharing of indecent images, particularly within chat groups.
  - Sharing of abusive images and pornography with individuals who do not wish to receive such content.

#### Addressing Sexual Violence and Harassment Online

The guidance calls attention to the complexities surrounding sexual violence and harassment occurring online. Schools and colleges must be aware of:

- **Complex Factors:** Online sexual violence and harassment can introduce numerous complex issues, including widespread abuse across multiple social media platforms. This can result in repeat victimisation and significant psychological harm to the victims.
- **Integrated Approach:** The guidance stresses the need for an integrated approach to address incidents of sexual violence and harassment, recognising that these incidents often intersect with face-to-face interactions.

## Implications for Schools and Colleges

The 2024 KCSIE guidance underscores the need for educational institutions to adapt their safeguarding strategies to address both traditional and digital threats effectively.

Schools and colleges must:

- Ensure all staff receive comprehensive and ongoing training on safeguarding and child protection, with a strong focus on online safety.
- Develop robust systems for delivering regular updates on safeguarding issues to keep staff informed and prepared.
- Recognise and address the multifaceted nature of technology-related risks, including peer-to-peer abuse and online sexual violence and harassment.