

## Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures

### Responsibilities

I understand that I have a professional duty to be alert to signs of child abuse, to take action in the child's best interest by reporting disclosure, suspicion or evidence of abuse to the client school (in accordance with their safeguarding procedures) or to the relevant authorities.

I understand that if a child confides that he or she has been abused in any way, the information must always be taken seriously. Confidentiality should not be promised as child abuse **must** be reported to the relevant authorities, but the child must be reassured that the information will be treated with the greatest sensitivity and that he or she will be consulted and involved at all stages.

The procedures below set out how I will:

- Recognise possible abuse
- Respond appropriately to concerns about safety or welfare
- Report concerns
- Record observations

### Recognising abuse

Child abuse involves inflicting harm or failing to prevent harm to a child (neglect). There are 4 main types. These are listed below, followed by some possible signs to look out for. Note that this is not an exhaustive list and full definitions both of the categories of abuse and signs are found at - <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/> :

1. **Physical abuse** – inflicting physical injury or harm to a child. Signs could include - bruises, burns, unexplained injuries, fractures, black eyes.....
2. **Emotional abuse** – persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection. Signs could include - lack of confidence, being over-affectionate to new people, wariness, anxiety, aggression.....
3. **Neglect** – failing to meet a child's basic physical and emotional needs. Signs could include – poor appearance and hygiene, health and developmental issues (physical/emotional/ educational), housing and family issues...
4. **Sexual abuse** – forcing or tricking a child into sexual activities. Signs could include - avoiding certain people, isolation from parents, low self-esteem, age-inappropriate sexual knowledge/ language/behaviour, physical symptoms of sexual abuse, obsessive cleanliness..

In addition to the above, other forms of harm to children include: bullying (including cyber-bullying), domestic abuse, child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation, child trafficking, grooming , criminal exploitation and gangs and radicalisation. Information on all of these can be found at: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/child-sexual-exploitation/> and <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/radicalisation>

I have familiarised myself with the types and signs of abuse by reading the links above and will continue to keep my knowledge up to date by attending relevant CPD courses and undertaking safeguarding training on an annual basis.

### **Responding appropriately**

If a child or young person discloses abuse to me or I have reasonable grounds to suspect abuse has taken place then I commit to do the following:

- Take a deep breath and remain calm
- Reassure the child that that it is ok to talk and let them talk at their own pace
- Listen carefully to the disclosure and reflect back to check understanding
- Let them know they have done the right thing
- Tell them it is not their fault and they will be taken seriously
- Never question the child or try to investigate the incident
- Tell the child what will happen next
- Explain that confidentiality cannot be promised, as the information has to be reported to relevant authorities, but say that they will be consulted and involved in all stages
- Ensure the child has an appropriate contact (friend, family member or school staff member, if in school) with whom they feel safe and who can support them when they leave the meeting.
- Signpost them to additional support such as the NSPCC helpline – 0808 800 5000, the NSPCC’s Childline – 0800 1111 or the NSPCC’s helpline for those who have been abused in education – 0800 136 663
- Record the disclosure or concerns in detail (see below for what to include)

For situations outside of a school setting (e.g. with a private client), it might be appropriate to seek the child’s permission to involve parents or carers. If consent is refused then I would respect this decision but seek immediate advice from the NSPCC, local child protection services or the police on the appropriate next steps. Where permission is given I would discuss concerns with parents or carers provided this does not place the young person at further risk of harm, interfere with a criminal investigation, put me at risk or cause a delay in reporting the disclosure to the appropriate authorities.

### **Reporting concerns and follow up**

When abuse has been disclosed or where there are concerns about the safety and wellbeing of a child, I will seek advice at the earliest opportunity (within 24 hours) on what action should be taken from the local child protection service or NSPCC helpline or, if immediate intervention is needed, the police or emergency services. If working for a client school or charity, then the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) will be notified (or another nominated person if the DSL is unavailable).

**Contact details:**

- NSPCC helpline – 0808 800 5000 or email – [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)
- KCC local child protection services – 03000 41 11 11 ([text relay 18001 03000 41 11 11](tel:1800103000411111)) or email [social.services@kent.gov.uk](mailto:social.services@kent.gov.uk) (see also <https://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/report-abuse>). Out of office hours call 03000 41 91 91
- Call 999 if a child is in immediate danger

When reporting concerns I will record and pass on the following information:

- the child's details (name, age, address)
- name of person raising the concern or reporting a disclosure
- who else was present
- when (time and date) and where the disclosure took place
- what the child said or did that gave cause for concern or what signs were noticed (if the child made a verbal disclosure, their exact words). Also observations made about the child in the past, if relevant, would be included
- any information the child has given about the alleged abuser or abusers
- when, where and what time any incident of abuse took place and who was present (if relevant)
- what was said to the child by anyone present, including about confidentiality and action to be taken
- who has been informed and what action has been taken so far
- my signature

After reporting a concern to the relevant authorities I will follow up within 3 days to check what action has been taken. I understand that I may be required to contribute to a report for a meeting with the child, attend a meeting or contribute to a child protection plan.

**Recording observations and actions**

The information gathered above will be recorded as soon as possible after responding to the child's immediate needs. In addition to the above, I will also record the following information:

- whether consent was given by the child to share the information above and whether a decision was made to override this
- the date and time concerns were reported to the authorities and when they were recorded by me
- any further decisions and actions taken

I will endeavour to ensure that my records are clear and accurate and record exact words where possible as I understand these may be used as evidence and affect outcomes. These records will only

be shared with those responsible for child protection - the designated safeguarding lead in a school or charity (or nominated contact), child protection services or police and emergency services (as appropriate). Records will be kept securely in line with my Privacy and Data Protection Policies.

I am committed to updating this policy annually, in line with good practice.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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