



**PLATANOS COLLEGE**

An outstanding school for  
pupils of all abilities

## **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

### **Statement of Intent**

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so that they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We believe every pupil should be able to participate in all school activities in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm.

This is the responsibility of every adult employed by, or invited to deliver services at, Platanos College. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.

**2015 – 2016**

# Safeguarding Policy

## Review procedures

This policy is to be reviewed annually or as necessary with notification being given to the Governing Body on the results of any review.

If any amendments to the policy are required as a result of a review, then these will have to be presented to the Governing Body for acceptance of the amendments.

Signature:	Signature:
Chair of Governors	Headteacher
Date of approval:	

# SAFEGUARDING POLICY

## **i KEY CONTACTS**

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### **Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding at Platanos College:**

Ms T. Williams; T: 020 7733 6156; E-mail: [safeguarding@platanoscollege.com](mailto:safeguarding@platanoscollege.com).

### **Deputy Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding at Platanos College:**

Mr L. Boyles; T: 020 7733 6156 (there are several deputies at the college)

## **PART 1: POLICY AND PRINCIPLES**

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### **INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITIONS**

#### **What is Safeguarding?**

- Protecting children and young people from maltreatment.
- Preventing impairment of children and young people's health or development.
- Ensuring that children and young people are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Undertaking that role so as to enable those children and young people to have optimum life chances and outcomes and enter adulthood successfully.

#### **Child Protection**

Child Protection forms part of the broader safeguarding and promotion of children's welfare. Child Protection is the process and procedure of protecting individuals identified as either likely to suffer, or suffering, from significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect. This will be outlined further in this document.

#### **Significant Harm**

Significant harm can be defined as the ill-treatment or impairment of the health and development of a child or young person. Development includes physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural

development. Health includes physical and mental health. This is viewed from the perspective of normal behaviour for a child of a similar age and understanding.

## **GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND AIMS OF SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION**

- We are committed to providing a safe and secure environment for pupils, staff and visitors and to promoting a climate where children and adults will feel confident about sharing any concerns that they may have about their own safety or the well-being of others. This Policy is one element in our whole school arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people to ensure they are protected from harm. This Policy should be read in conjunction with other policies which cover other areas of safeguarding and health and safety practice.
- All children and young people have a right to protection from abuse, violence and exploitation. Every concern, suspicion or complaint of abuse or significant harm from within or outside the school will be handled and taken seriously in all proper circumstances and referred to an external agency.
- Children and young people need protection and safeguarding for many reasons. There are a number of areas that need to be recognised, for example: physical, sexual and emotional abuse, poverty, disadvantage, exclusion and violence. Young people may be at risk from their peers as well as adults.
- Staff working in schools have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under the Children Act 2004 and in turn feel safe themselves from false accusation.
- The establishment should have a written policy on safeguarding/child protection that is implemented in conjunction with staff and is accompanied by full training. All staff should read the policy.
- The establishment should keep good records and be abreast of national guidance, including that of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and current DfE and Ofsted guidance.
- The school aims to protect and promote the welfare of all its pupils regardless of their background and is partly based on the *Every Child Matters* initiative.
- The school will support each pupil as far as possible with the aim of achieving the following five outcomes for its pupils:
  - Stay safe – protected from maltreatment, neglect, violence and sexual exploitation. To have security, stability and to be cared for.
  - Healthy – be physically, mentally, emotionally and sexually healthy.
  - Achieve and enjoy – personal and social development and enjoy recreation.

- Positive contribution – make a positive contribution including developing positive relationships, self-confidence and successfully dealing with significant life changes.
- Economic well-being.

## **THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND GUIDANCE**

- There is no single piece of legislation that covers Safeguarding and Child Protection.
- The statutory responsibilities for safeguarding and child protection only apply in relation to pupils who are under the age of 18.
- The national child protection system was first based on the Children Act 1989. Crucially this determined that the child's welfare is paramount. It also introduced the concept of parental responsibility which sets out the rights, duties, powers and responsibilities of the parent or carer of a child.
- The Children Act 1989 (amended 2004) sets out in detail what local authorities and the courts should do to protect the welfare of children.
- This Policy also draws upon guidance contained in the 'London Child Protection Procedures' and DfE guidance documents: 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education', 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'.
- 'Working Together to Safeguard Children: A Guide to Inter-agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children' (DfE) provides definitions of child abuse and guidance on how professionals can work together.
- One of the recommendations of Lord Laming's report of the Victoria Climbié inquiry was for a simple guide to be compiled, outlining the child protection processes and systems for anyone working with children.
- The school must operate safe recruitment procedures, making sure that all appropriate checks are carried out (refer to the separate **Safer Recruitment Policy**).
- The school must identify a Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding/Child Protection. It is good practice to have a Deputy as well.
- The Ofsted publications on safeguarding best practice and the inspection framework provide excellent guidance to schools in the development of good practice. Safeguarding practices and procedures are therefore also based on the Ofsted criteria and framework.
- The role of the Local Safeguarding Children Board under sections 13-16 of the Children Act 2004.

## **SAFEGUARDING AND PROMOTING THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN**

All staff should understand current safeguarding and child protection issues, policies and guidance. Safeguarding is the responsibility of all staff.

### **The range of areas of general safeguarding in everyday school life**

- Health and safety (please refer to the Health and Safety Policy)
- School security
- First aid provision (please refer to the First Aid Policy)
- Use of physical intervention (reasonable force; see separate policy)
- Meeting the needs of pupils with medical conditions (refer to Policy Statement for Pupils with Medical Needs)
- Special educational needs and disability (SEND; see separate policy)
- Educational visits (refer to the Educational Visits Policy)
- Intimate care (see separate policy)
- Visitors (see separate policy)
- Local issues
- Safe recruitment and vetting (see Safer Recruitment Policy)

### **Types of abuse**

Abuse can be:

- Physical abuse, for example punching.
- Emotional abuse, for example rejection and denial of affection.
- Sexual abuse, for example sexual assault.
- Neglect, for example failure to provide appropriate care including medical attention.

The school recognises that child abuse can occur in a more complex form, such as abuse through social networking websites and female genital mutilation (FGM). For these reasons, such topics of safeguarding and child protection are regularly raised throughout the school during staff/pupil training and school assemblies.

### **Signs of abuse**

Possible signs of abuse include (but are not limited to):

- The pupil says he/she has been abused or asks a question which gives rise to that inference.
- No reasonable explanation for a pupil's injury; the injury is unusual in kind or location; there have been a number of injuries; there is a pattern to the injuries.
- A sudden change in the pupil's behaviour; the pupil's behaviour is either being extreme model behaviour or extremely challenging behaviour.

- The pupil asks to drop subjects with a particular teacher and seems reluctant to discuss the reasons.
- The pupil's development is delayed.
- The pupil appears neglected, e.g. dirty or hungry.
- The pupil is reluctant to go home or has been openly rejected by his/her parents or carers.

### **Physical abuse**

Examples of physical abuse (not an exhaustive list):

- Actual or likely physical injury to a young person or failure to prevent physical injury or suffering.
- Factors may include deliberate poisoning, suffocation and Fabricated Induced Illness (FII).
- Female genital mutilation.

### **Emotional abuse**

Examples of emotional abuse (not an exhaustive list):

- Actual or possible likelihood of severe adverse effects on the emotional and behavioural development of a young person caused by persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection. All abuse involves some emotional ill treatment. This category would be used when emotional abuse is the main sole form of abuse. Because it is invisible, emotional abuse is the most insidious (gradual but harmful) and under recognised form of child abuse.
- Emotional abuse is a *'pattern of a relationship'* rather than an incident of abuse, frequently conveying to the young person that they are worthless, unlovable or inadequate.
- Behaviour from parent(s)/carer(s) might include lack of emotional availability and interest in the child.
- Inappropriate expectations and interactions being placed on the young person in relation to their age and level of development.
- Overprotection that limits exploration and learning.
- Preventing a young person from participating in normal social interaction.
- Corruption or exploitation such as in the case.
- Parental or carers behaviour may include terrorising (over 1/3 cases come into this category). Serious bullying, causing concern and fear of danger for the young person. Seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another person.
- This can occur through various mediums including online social media networks.

## **Sexual abuse**

Examples of sexual abuse (not an exhaustive list):

- Actual or likely sexual exploitation of a young person.
- Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. The activities may or may not involve sexual contact and may occur via the internet).

## **Neglect**

Examples of neglect (not an exhaustive list):

- Persistent, severe and longstanding failure to meet a young person's basic needs or a failure to protect the child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation.
- Extreme failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including non-organic failure to thrive. This can also occur in pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

## **Specific safeguarding issues**

- Physical abuse
- Neglect
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Bullying (including prejudice-based and cyberbullying; see separate policy)
- Internet safety (e-safety; see separate policy)
- Racist abuse
- Faith abuse
- Disability abuse
- Homophobic or transphobic abuse
- Harassment and discrimination
- Child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- Trafficking
- Drug and substance misuse
- Fabricated or induced illness (FII)
- Domestic violence
- Gangs and youth violence
- Gender-based violence/violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- Forced marriage
- Female genital mutilation (FGM)
- Mental health
- Extremism and radicalisation (see separate policy)
- Private fostering
- Sexting
- Teenage relationship abuse

### **Further definitions and information: Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (for example food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts, money or in some cases simply affection) as a result of engaging in sexual activities.

Sexual exploitation can take many forms ranging from the seemingly ‘consensual’ relationship where sex is exchanged for affection or gifts, to serious organised crime by gangs and groups. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power in the relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim which increases as the exploitative relationship develops. Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying including cyberbullying and grooming. However, it is also important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse.

This is also commonly linked with **child trafficking**. Child trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring and/or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation.

### **Further definitions and information: Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

FGM involves procedures that include the partial or total removal of the external female genital organs for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time of the procedure and in later life (‘Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines: Female Genital Mutilation’).

Staff need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. There is a range of potential indicators that a child or young person may be at risk of FGM, which individually may not indicate risk but if there are two or more indicators present this could signal a risk to the child or young person. Victims of FGM are likely to come from a community that is known to practise FGM. Professionals should note that girls at risk of FGM may not yet be aware of the practice or that it may be conducted on them, so sensitivity should always be shown when approaching the subject. Staff should activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children’s social care.

The UK Government has issued guidance on FGM. It is considered child abuse in the UK and a grave violation of the human rights of girls and women. In all circumstances where FGM is practised on a child it is a violation of the child’s right to life, their right to their bodily integrity, as well as their right to health. The UK Government has signed a number of international human rights laws against FGM, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Girls are at particular risk of FGM during school summer holidays. This is the time when families may take their children abroad for the procedure. Many girls may not be aware that they may be at risk of undergoing FGM.

Signs that a child is at risk of FGM or that FGM has already taken place:

- The family comes from a community that is known to practice FGM
- In conversation a child may talk about FGM
- A child may express anxiety about a special ceremony
- The child may talk or have anxieties about forthcoming holidays to their country of origin

- Parent/carer requests permission for authorised absence for overseas travel or you are aware that absence is required for vaccinations
- Prolonged absence from school with noticeable behaviour change, especially after a return from holiday (which is addressed by the school's robust attendance policy and monitoring)
- Spending long periods of time away from the class during the day
- A child who has undergone FGM is a child protection issue. Consideration might then also include younger siblings for example. Referral to social services and the police should be made.

(\*Warning signs that FGM may be about to take place, or may have already taken place, can be found in the publication 'Multi-Agency Practice Guidelines: Female Genital Mutilation' (p.11-12)).

### **Further definitions and information: Private Fostering**

Private fostering occurs when a child under the age of 16 (under 18 if disabled) is cared for by someone who is not the child's parent or immediate close relative. This is a private arrangement made between a parent and the 'carer' for 28 days or more. Such private fostering arrangements must be reported to the relevant local authority.

Close relatives are defined as step-parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, uncles or aunts (whether of full blood, half blood or marriage/affinity).

## **A SAFER CULTURE AND GOOD SAFEGUARDING PRACTICE**

### **Prevention**

- Through the creation of an open culture which respects all individual's rights and discourages discrimination and bullying of any kind.
- Through a positive school atmosphere with teaching and pastoral support for pupils, and identifying designated child protection staff with overall responsibility for child protection.
- Through our Pastoral Team Form Tutors, offering all pupils an opportunity to talk and discuss any worries or concerns.
- Monitor children who have been identified as at risk, keeping in a secure place clear records of pupils' progress, maintaining sound policies on confidentiality, providing information to other professionals, submitting reports to case conferences and attending case conferences.
- Work with parents to build an understanding of the School's responsibility to ensure the welfare of all children and a recognition that this may occasionally require children to be referred to investigative agencies as a constructive and helpful measure.
- Use the curriculum to raise pupils' awareness and build confidence so that pupils have a range of contacts and strategies to ensure their own protection and understand the importance of protecting others.
- Include in the core and enhanced curriculum opportunities for PSHE and SEAL which will equip pupils with the skills they need to stay safe and develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life.

- Make the safeguarding/child protection policy accessible to staff, parents/carers and visitors.

### **Protection**

- Ensure every member of staff know the name of the Designated Senior Person for Child Protection.
- To be vigilant in cases of suspected child abuse, recognising the signs and symptoms, have clear procedures whereby teachers report such cases to senior staff and are aware of local procedures so the information is effectively passed on to the relevant professionals.
- Provide and support child protection training regularly to school staff and, in particular, to designated teachers to ensure that their skills and expertise are up-to-date. Targeted funding for this work is solely used for this purpose.
- Contribute to an inter-agency approach to child protection by developing effective and supportive liaison with other agencies.
- Have a clear understanding of the various types of bullying - physical, verbal and indirect, and act promptly and firmly to combat it, making sure that pupils are aware of the School's position on this issue and who they can contact for support.

### **Support**

- Have an ethos in which children feel secure, their viewpoints are valued, they are encouraged to talk and are listened to.
- Provide suitable support and guidance so that pupils have a range of appropriate adults to whom they can turn to if they are worried or in difficulties.
- Providing support to any pupil or member of staff who may have been abused, and to parents/carers.
- Take particular care that pupils with SEN, who may be especially vulnerable to abuse, are supported effectively with particular attention paid to ensuring that those with communication difficulties are able to express themselves to a member of staff with appropriate communication skills.
- Have clear guidelines on handling allegations of abuse by members of staff, ensuring that all staff are fully aware of the procedures.
- Ensuring that when a pupil with a Child Protection Plan leaves, their information is transferred to the new school immediately and the child's social worker is informed.
- Staff will be supported through regular training and opportunities to discuss their queries and concerns with the Designated Senior Person.

### **Training**

The school recognises that safeguarding issues can occur in different complex forms and situations as mentioned above. For these reasons, comprehensive training covering all such topics/issues is provided to staff and pupils regularly and awareness is raised throughout the school through various methods.

Safeguarding training and raising awareness:

- Whole school training for all staff and pupils annually.
- Designated Senior Person additional training at least once every two years relevant to their role and when required in response to new guidance and legislation to reflect the changing issues.
- Training and raising awareness through workshops and assemblies.
- Curriculum teaching (e.g. PSHE).

The training will ensure that:

- All staff are aware and alert to the current safeguarding issues and risks.
- The Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding is well equipped to address concerns and implement policies and procedures.
- In-depth to cover all areas as they arise, including for example (but not exclusive to) recognising forms of child abuse, e-safety, female genital mutilation (FGM), extremism and radicalisation etc.
- Timely and appropriate preventative action can take place to address concerns.
- Authorised staff are well equipped to have preventative discussions with parents/carers, where appropriate, whose children might be at risk of a child protection issue.
- Pupils are well informed of the current safeguarding issues (through assemblies, PSHE, etc.).

### **Safer recruitment and selection**

The school will follow all guidelines and regulations on safer recruitment practice and vetting (see separate Safer Recruitment Policy).

The recruitment of staff will follow Government guidelines in line with the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and 'Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment' documentation and the school's Safer Recruitment Policy. All individuals including volunteers (where necessary) will be subjected to an enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check (formerly known as a CRB check) and will be checked against the DBS Barred List (list of names barred from working with children) prior to their appointment. These checks will be updated regularly. Individuals barred from working with children and young persons will not be knowingly employed by the School. The School will immediately cease to employ an individual if it is later discovered that the individual is included in any of the above barred lists.

Teacher status checks will also be conducted on applicants against the NCTL (National College for Teaching and Leadership) database for any suspensions or prohibitions and to verify individual records. Any offer of employment will always be made on a conditional basis, subject to the relevant checks being carried out and the receipt of satisfactory references.

A Single Central Record will be kept of all vetting checks, which will include verification of identity and the date these checks were made. Records on any relevant qualifications and permission to work for non-EU nationals will also be kept. The school will only use agencies that rigorously check their supply staff. Staff joining the school will familiarise themselves with the Safeguarding/Child Protection policies of the school.

From January 2010 it became mandatory that at least one person on any Appointments Committee should have completed Safer Recruitment training. Details of all staff and governors who have completed this training are held at the establishment.

### **Professional confidentiality**

Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with the pupils in school, particularly in the context of child protection. The only purpose of confidentiality in this respect is the benefit of the child.

All personal information should be treated as confidential and particular care taken with sensitive information. Information must be treated on a “need to know” basis. Relevant factors include:

- What is the purpose of the disclosure?
- What is the nature and extent of the information to be disclosed?
- To whom is the disclosure to be made (and is the recipient under a duty to treat the material as confidential)?
- Is the proposed disclosure a proportionate response to the need to protect the welfare of a pupil to whom the confidential information relates?

Any child or young person wishing to disclose information must be informed that the member of staff has a professional responsibility to share any relevant information with other professionals who can help. No pupil should be promised that anything they say will be kept confidential if the matter is related to child protection or abuse. It is essential for the member of staff to tell the pupil that they will record anything the pupil says to ensure an exact record as possible is kept for future reference. At the same time, staff should only disclose the information to the relevant people (i.e. Designated Person).

The manner in which this message is conveyed to the young person should be done to reassure that the professional is acting in their best interests. Only people who need to know will be informed in the school such as the Designated Person responsible for safeguarding young people.

### **Staff code of conduct**

All staff are expected to adhere to a Code of Conduct and children will be treated with respect. Whilst it would be unrealistic to prohibit all physical contact between adults and children, staff should avoid placing themselves in a position where their actions might be open to criticism or misinterpretation and should exercise caution in these situations and when they are alone with pupils. For example, when giving first aid and it is necessary for the child to remove clothing for this treatment, there should be another adult present where possible.

Where a child may require regular, intimate care, the parent(s)/carer(s) will be asked to sign a form giving their permission. Similarly, another member of staff will be present where possible. Children will also be asked whether they would like an adult of the same sex to be present when possible.

Where incidents occur that might otherwise be misconstrued or where it becomes necessary to physically restrain or use force to control a child for their own safety and the safety of others, to prevent a criminal act, or to maintain good order, this will be appropriately recorded and reported to the Designated Senior Person, Headteacher and parent(s)/carer(s).

Staff should be aware of the possible risks that might arise from contact with pupils outside of school. No staff member is allowed to accompany or take pupils out for any reason, at any time, including weekends, without permission from the school and the parent(s)/carer(s). The Designated Senior Person and Headteacher will always be made aware of any such contact.

### **Photographs/images**

Photographs and images of pupils in school events or carrying out other school activities will often be on display around the school or used for promoting the positive image of the school. Parents/carers will be asked for consent. If images of pupils are requested for other purposes e.g. newspaper publication, consent will also be requested. If pupils are asked to take part in TV programmes there will be liaison with the Child Employment Officer as necessary as well as a request for consent from parents/carers.

### **Data Protection Act**

The Data Protection Act 1998 regulates the handling of personal data. Essentially, this is information kept about an individual on a computer or in a manual filing system. The Act lays down requirements for the processing of this information which includes obtaining, recording, storing and disclosing it.

If making a decision to disclose personal data the Data Protection Act 1998 must be complied with. This includes eight data protection principles. There should not be an obstacle if:

- There are particular concerns about the welfare of the pupil;
- Information is disclosed to social services or to another professional organisation e.g. the police;
- The disclosure is justified under the common law duty of confidence.

Professionals can only work together to safeguard children if there is an exchange of relevant information between them. This has been recognised in principle by the Courts. Any disclosure of personal information to others (including social services departments) must always have regards to both common and statute law.

Normally, personal information should only be disclosed to third parties (including other agencies) with the consent from the subject of that information. Wherever possible, consent should be obtained before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances consent may not be possible or desirable but the safety and welfare of a child dictates that the information should be shared. The law permits the disclosure of confidential information necessary to safeguard a child. Disclosure should be justifiable in each case according to the particular facts of the case and legal advice should be sought if in doubt.

### **Child Protection Conferences**

A Child Protection Conference may be convened by Social Services to which all involved agencies would be invited.

Where a case involves a pupil in our School a representative is usually invited to attend the meeting. The Headteacher or other Designated Senior Person may attend – the choice of this representative will depend on the circumstances of each individual case.

Staff may be requested to provide a report for a Child Protection meeting. Any report should be relevant, concise and professional. All reports should be submitted in the first instance to the Headteacher or, if not available, the Designated Senior Person.

All staff that are required to attend such meetings, prepare reports and maintain relationships with parents during and after a referral has been made will be fully supported by staff with specialist child protection training.

## **Records**

Accurate records will be kept of all child protection concerns or incidents relating to individual children, secure and separate from educational records. All records will be confidential and only accessed by the Headteacher, Designated Senior Person and authorised senior staff members where appropriate.

The school will not agree to disclose without the order of the Court where possible. Where a child moves from Platanos College, any child protection records will be forwarded to the receiving school. A copy of the records will be kept until the child reaches the age of 25 years and will then be destroyed, according to the recommendations of the Records Management Society Guidelines for School Records version 3.1.

## **Monitoring**

All child protection incidents at the school will be followed by a review of the safeguarding procedures and a report to the Governors. The Governors will ensure that any weaknesses in the child protection arrangements are changed without delay.

Policies and procedures will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis and in accordance with new guidelines and regulations as these become available.

## **PART 2: PROCEDURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

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### **PROCESSES FOR SAFEGUARDING YOUNG PEOPLE**

There are four key processes that underpin work with young people in need and their families. Each needs to be carried out effectively in order to achieve improvements in the lives of young people in need.

- Assessment of needs
- Planning of services
- Intervention
- Reviewing of services

School personnel will need to develop skills that enable them to look for changes in behaviour. These need to be personal, for example an exuberant child becoming withdrawn or a normally quiet child becoming more excitable.

- The role of school staff is to make a referral, **not** to conduct an investigation.
- Always act promptly.
- In order for an individual to obtain the help they need, the following referral process needs to be observed.



## **RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACTION**

### **All staff/practitioners/volunteers/members of the organisation**

1. Be familiar with safeguarding and child protection and follow the school's procedures and protocols for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of children and know who to contact to raise concerns about a child's welfare.
2. Remember that an allegation of child abuse or neglect may lead to a criminal investigation, so do not do anything that may jeopardise a police investigation, such as asking a child leading questions or attempting to investigate the allegations of abuse.
3. All adults in the school are required to be vigilant and report instances of actual or suspected child abuse or neglect to the Designated Senior Person for Child Protection and/or Headteacher. All children have an absolute right to a childhood free from abuse, neglect or exploitation. All members of the school have a responsibility to be mindful of these issues related to children's safety and welfare and a duty to report and refer concerns, however minor they may appear to be (**NB:** it is not the role of the school staff reporting the concern to investigate those concerns, but to seek clarification and report to the Designated Senior Person).
4. Report instances or suspected cases of female genital mutilation (FGM) to the police. The school acknowledges that this is mandatory.

### **Contacts**

Designated Senior Person for Child Protection/Safeguarding:

**Ms T. Williams**

Deputy Designated Senior Person for Child Protection/Safeguarding:

**Mr L. Boyles (there are several deputies at the school)**

### **Procedures for staff/volunteers/visitors with a safeguarding concern**

1. Must be vigilant in order to identify potential incidences of abuse.
2. Report instances or concerns immediately to the Designated Senior Person or, if unavailable, the Deputy Designated Senior Person, or Headteacher. Do not investigate the concerns, but report.
3. Must keep an accurate written record of the conversation (including full names, date(s), time(s), location (if applicable), verbatim dialogue).
4. Should request medical attention if required without delay. All evidence (e.g. notes and computers) must be safeguarded and preserved. **Please refer to the Health and Safety and First Aid Policy.**
5. Must listen carefully to the child and keep an open mind. Staff should not take a decision as to whether or not the abuse has taken place.

6. Must reassure the child but not give a guarantee of absolute confidentiality. The member of staff should explain that they need to pass the information to the Designated Person who will ensure that the correct action is taken.
7. Must not ask leading questions, i.e. a question which suggests its own answer.
8. Must complete any documentation for external agencies where appropriate.

### **Procedures for the Designated Senior Person**

1. To co-ordinate actions in the school with the Headteacher and liaise with the relevant external agencies where necessary over suspected or actual cases of child abuse once reported.
2. Follow up and document reported concerns and assess whether a referral is necessary.
3. To identify the signs and symptoms of abuse and decide when to make a referral and to ensure that staff observe and implement the school's procedures.
4. Will take into account the nature and seriousness of the suspicion or complaint. A complaint involving a serious criminal offence will always be referred to Lambeth Social Services or the police. The school has no discretion in this matter.
5. Will take into account the wishes of the pupil who complained provided that the pupil is of sufficient understanding and maturity and properly informed. However, there may be times when the situation is so serious that decisions may need to be taken, after all appropriate consultation, that override a pupil's wishes.
6. Will take into account the wishes of the pupil's parents provided they have no interest which is in conflict with the pupil's best interests and that they are properly informed. Again, it may be necessary to override parental wishes in some cases. If the Designated Senior Person is concerned that disclosing information to parents would put a child at risk, he/she will take further advice from the relevant professionals before making a decision.
7. Will consider the duties of confidentiality, so far as applicable.
8. To keep full records of reports and referrals made.

#### *Note(s):*

*If a pupil is felt to be in need of protection and becomes the subject of a Child Protection Plan, parents/carers should regard the school as a source of help and support.*

*It is important to remember that a referral or consultation with Social Care/Family Services is an expression of concern about a child's welfare. It is not an accusation or a presumption of responsibility about a parent or carer.*

*In the course of an investigation, social workers or the police may wish to speak with a child, without parental knowledge or consent. The Headteacher, acting in "loco parentis", has the discretion to agree to this to enable the authorities to explore concerns and determine whether there are grounds for further action. In these cases the Headteacher will ensure that the child's welfare is secured and he/she has access to a trusted adult.*

## **DESIGNATED RESPONSIBILITY**

All schools should have a senior member of staff who has designated responsibility for child protection/safeguarding and who must receive appropriate training in dealing with child protection concerns.

### **Responsibilities of the Designated Senior Person for Child Protection:**

- Keep the Headteacher informed of any safeguarding/child protection issues.
- Referring a child, if there are concerns about possible abuse, to the multi-agency safeguarding hub/social services of the local authority. Referrals should be made in writing, using the multi-agency referral form.
- Liaising with other agencies and professionals.
- Acting as a focal point for staff to discuss concerns.
- Keeping written records of concerns about a child even if there is no need to make an immediate referral. Ensuring that all such records are kept confidentially and securely and are separate from pupil records.
- Ensuring that an indication of further record-keeping is marked on the pupil records.
- Ensuring that either they or the class teacher attends case conferences, core groups, or other multi-agency planning meetings, contributes to assessments, and provides a report which has been shared with the parents.
- Organising child protection induction, and update training at least every 3 years, for all school staff.
- Promoting good safeguarding practices and raising awareness throughout the establishment.
- Providing, with the Headteacher, an annual report for the Governing Body, detailing any changes to the policy and procedures; training undertaken by the Designated Senior Person for Child Protection, and by all staff and governors; number and type of incidents/cases, and number of children on the child protection register (anonymised).

### **If you are responsible for making referrals:**

- Know who to contact in police, health, education, school and children's social care to express concerns about a child's welfare.
- Refer any concerns about child abuse or neglect to children's social care or the police.
- Have an understanding of the Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families, which underpins the processes of assessing needs, planning services and reviewing the effectiveness of service provision at all stages of work with children in need and families. (The

dimensions of the Common Assessment Framework (2006b) are based on those in the Assessment Framework.)

- When referring a child to children's social care you should consider and include any information you have on the child's developmental needs and their parents'/carers' ability to respond to these needs within the context of their wider family and environment. This information may have been obtained during the completion of a Common Assessment (2006b).
- Similarly, when contributing to an assessment or providing services you should consider what contribution you are able to make in respect of each of these three domains.
- Specialist assessments, in particular, are likely to provide information relevant to a specific dimension, such as health, education or family functioning.
- See the child and ascertain his or her wishes and feelings as part of considering what action to take in relation to concerns about the child's welfare.

## **DISCLOSURE**

### **Disclosure may arise in a number of ways**

- Raising a concern with a student based on observation.
- Student approaching a member of staff.
- Colleague or peer sharing information.

### **Managing disclosure: what do children need?**

- Please consider what children and young people need to safeguard them from harm and promote their welfare, and what factors can help or hinder a young person's development.
- Think about children's physical, emotional and learning needs.
- Also consider any specific needs for disabled children or those from black or ethnic minority families.

### **Guidance on managing a disclosure**

- Depending on your role, you do not need to find out all of the details prevailing in a situation since the Designated Senior Person (DSP) will follow up the situation. **Refer the concern to the DSP (if you are not the DSP).**
- Stay calm and reassuring. Listen to and take the information given to you by the young person seriously.
- Confirm in a positive manner that the young person has done the right thing in telling you about their concern.

- Convey verbally and by non-verbal communication that you know how difficult it might be for them to tell you about such difficult experiences.
- If taken by surprise, try and find a space where information can be discussed in privacy as soon as possible.
- Address the issue of confidentiality and the possible involvement of others where appropriate, so that the young person is made aware of your responsibilities.
- Be supportive and give realistic encouragement.
- Avoid asking leading questions such as “Who did that?”, “Tell me their name?”.
- However, some questions may need to be asked especially relating to the young person’s safety for example, “Are you going to be safe when you leave school?”, “Who will be at home tonight?”.
- If it seems important to have more information ask more open questions such as “Are you able to tell me more?”.
- Reflect back what the young person has said rather than asking direct questions.
- Avoid interrupting the young person during a disclosure.
- Some situations may need immediate action and may not be able to wait such as reporting a very recent sexual or physical assault where the young person may still have useful forensic evidence on their person, in which case the designated person and the police may need to be contacted.
- Reassure the pupil and avoid blame.

### **FOLLOWING THE DISCLOSURE**

#### **Do**

- Be alert to signs of abuse and neglect. It can happen anywhere.
- Be prepared to respond calmly. Children are more likely to allow you to help them if you are prepared to listen and appear not to panic.
- Keep a clear record of your concerns and what action you took.
- Make yourself aware of school procedures for responding to suspected abuse.
- Consult your Designated Senior Person at the school (or the social services depending on your role).
- Where circumstances allow be honest as possible with parent(s)/carer(s) about your concern and actions.

## **Do not**

- Promise the child that you will not tell anyone else. Instead explain that to help them stop the abuse you will need to talk to other people.
- Try to "go it alone". Children are best protected when all agencies do work together.

## **Receive and reassure**

- Listen to the child. If you are shocked by what they tell you, try not to show it. Take what they say seriously. Children rarely lie about abuse and to be disbelieved adds to the traumatic nature of disclosing. Children may retract what they have said if they meet with revulsion or disbelief.
- Accept what the child says. Be careful not to burden them with guilt by asking "Why didn't you tell me before?"
- Stay calm and reassure the child that they have done the right thing in talking to you. It is essential to be honest with the child, so do not make promises you may not be able to keep, e.g. "I'll stay with you" or "Everything will be all right now".
- Don't promise confidentiality: you have a duty to refer a child who is at risk.
- Try to alleviate any feelings of guilt that the child displays. For example, you could say: "You're not to blame" or "You're not alone, you're not the only one this sort of thing has happened to".
- Acknowledge how hard it must have been for the child to tell you what happened.
- Empathise with the child - don't tell them what they should be feeling.

## **Reaction**

- React to the pupil only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer this matter; but do not "interrogate" them for full details.
- Do not ask "leading" questions such as: "What did he do next?" (this assumes that he did!) or "Did he touch your private parts?". Such questions may invalidate your evidence (and the child's) in any later prosecution in court. Instead ask open questions like, "Anything else to tell me?", "Yes?" or "And?".
- Do not criticise the perpetrator: the pupil may love him/her and reconciliation may be possible.
- Do not ask the pupil to repeat everything to another member of staff.
- Explain what you have to do next and to whom you have to talk.
- Inform the designated teacher for child protection.

- Try to see the matter through yourself and keep in contact the pupil.
- Ensure that if a Social Care Interview is to follow, the pupil has a “support person” present if they wish (possibly yourself).

### **Record**

- Make some very brief notes at the time on any paper which comes to hand and write them up as soon as possible.
- Do not destroy your original notes in case they are required by a court.
- Record the date, time, place, and who else was around; any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child. If the family uses their family’s own private sexual words, record the actual words use, rather than translating them into “proper” words.
- Draw a diagram to indicate the position of any bruising.
- Be objective in your recording: include statements and observable things, rather than your interpretations or assumptions.

### **Support**

- Make sure that you continue to support the child, providing time and a safe space throughout the process of investigation and afterwards.
- Get some support for yourself, without disclosing confidential information about the child to colleagues.

### **Acting on concerns**

- Children have a right to be safe and well.
- Adults have a responsibility to safeguard children.
- You have one small piece of the jigsaw.
- Abuse and neglect are damaging.
- If children and families are given help it can stop a child from being harmed.
- Child abuse and neglect continue because of the secrecy and silence that surround them.
- Children rarely lie about abuse.
- An abuser may abuse many other children who also have a right to protection.

### **Making a referral**

- This is my worry
- This is what I have seen and/or heard: when, who from and where
- This is what I have done
- What more do I need to do?

- Are parent(s)/carer(s)/child aware of this referral?
- How will you let me know what is going to happen next?
- What is your name?
- Who should I speak to if I am not happy with what you say or do?

### **Making a referral: additional information**

- Do you know if there are professionals involved (e.g. a psychologist, school nurse, health visitor)?
- Is the child disabled and in what ways?
- How do the child and family communicate, in what language?
- Do they use other ways of communicating, e.g. signing?
- Do you know the name and address of the child's GP?
- Put your concerns in writing within 48 hours.

## **CONCERNS, COMPLAINTS OR ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF**

1. This procedure should be used in any case in which it is alleged that a staff member, governor, visiting professional or volunteer has:
  - a. Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may harm a child;
  - b. Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
  - c. Behaved in a way that indicates he/she is unsuitable to work with children.
2. Although it is an uncomfortable thought, it needs to be acknowledged that there is the potential for staff in schools to abuse children.
3. The school takes all complaints made against members of staff seriously. Procedures are in place for pupils, parents/carers and staff to share any concerns.
4. All staff must report any potential safeguarding concerns about an individual's behaviour towards children immediately. Allegations or concerns about colleagues and visitors must be reported directly to the Designated Person and Headteacher unless the concern relates to the Designated Person/Headteacher.
5. All concerns/complaints regarding child protection will be brought immediately to the attention of the Headteacher who will contact the Local Authority Designated Person and the Designated Governor where appropriate. A separate Concerns and Complaints Policy is also available.
6. If the subject of complaint is the Headteacher, it should be brought to the attention of the Chair of Governors/Designated Governor and/or Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
7. If the subject of complaint is a Governor, it should be brought to the attention of the Headteacher and/or Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

8. Where it appears that a criminal offence may have been committed, this will be reported jointly to the police.
9. **The Designated Governor is: Ms T. Smith**
10. **The Lambeth CYPS Designated Officer is: Mr G. Griffin (Safeguarding Children Manager for Schools)**
11. Staff who are formally disciplined for any abuse of pupils (or who resign before disciplinary action can be instigated) will be notified to the local Children and Young People's Service and must be notified to the Disclosure and Barring Service and NCTL for possible inclusion on their list of persons barred from working with children and young people.

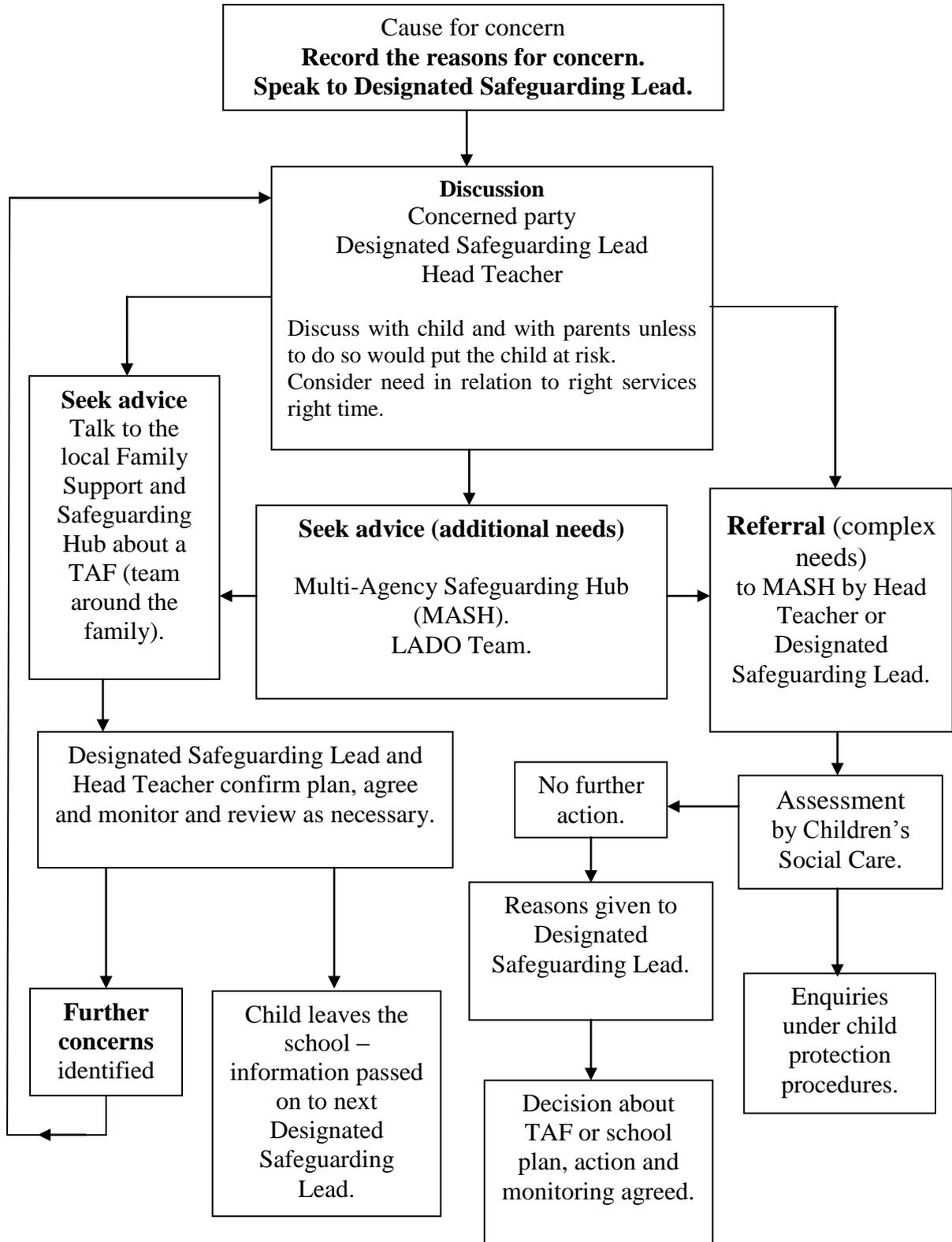
## ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK TRIANGLE



What are the kinds of things that worry us?

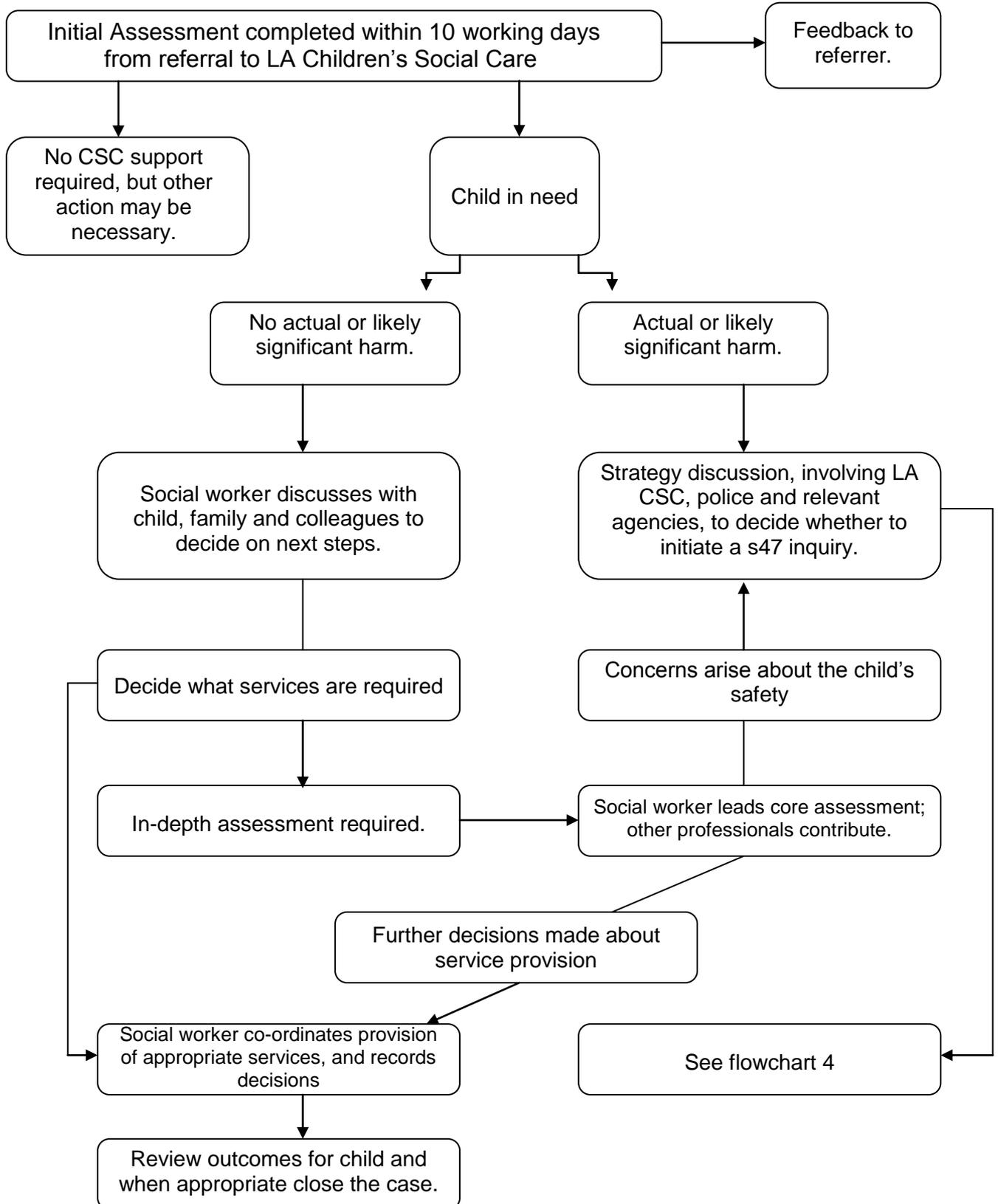
From the DfE *'Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families'* (although archived guidance, it nevertheless provides a helpful source of information and guidance).

## RESPONDING TO CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD

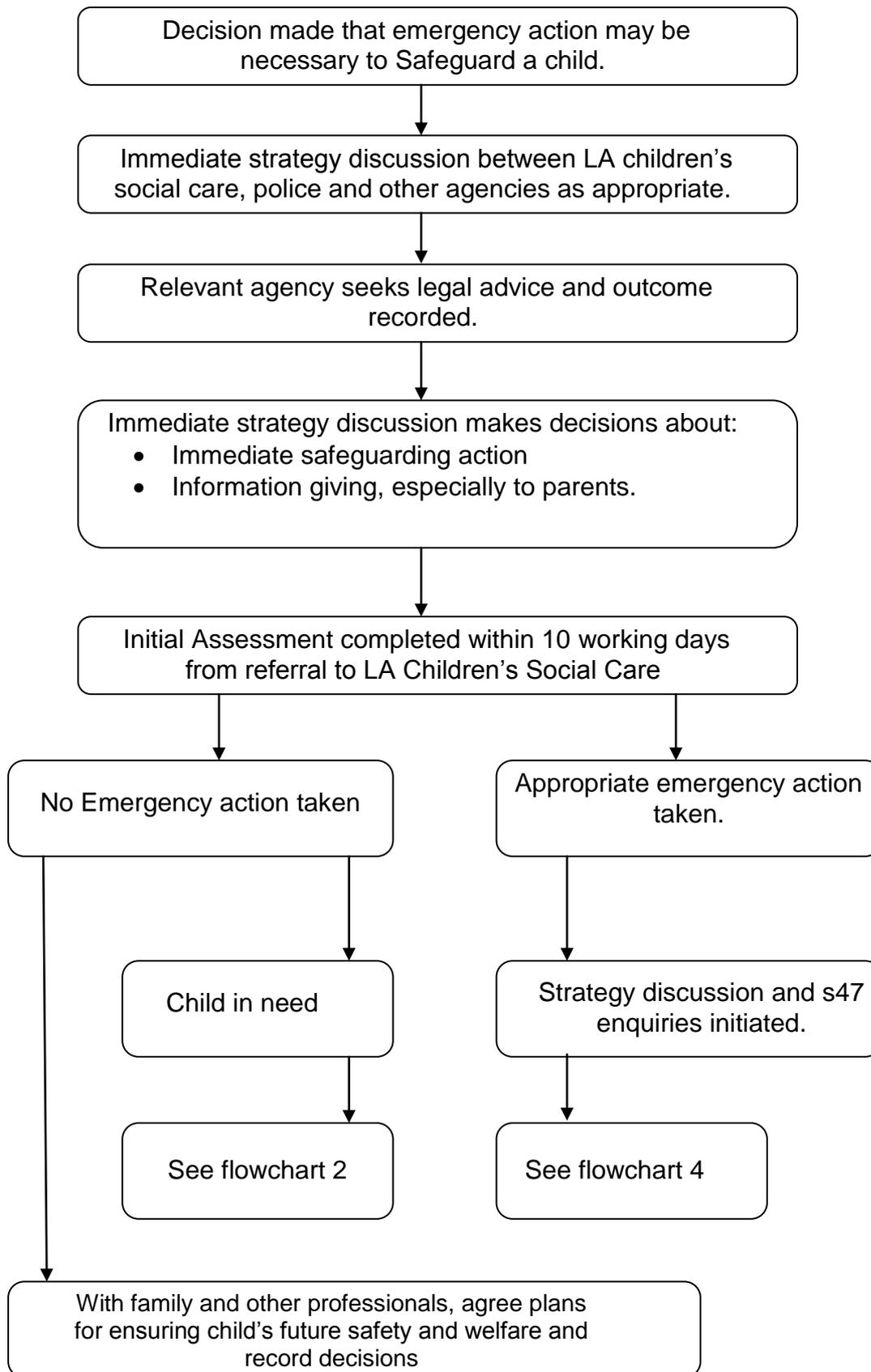


## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

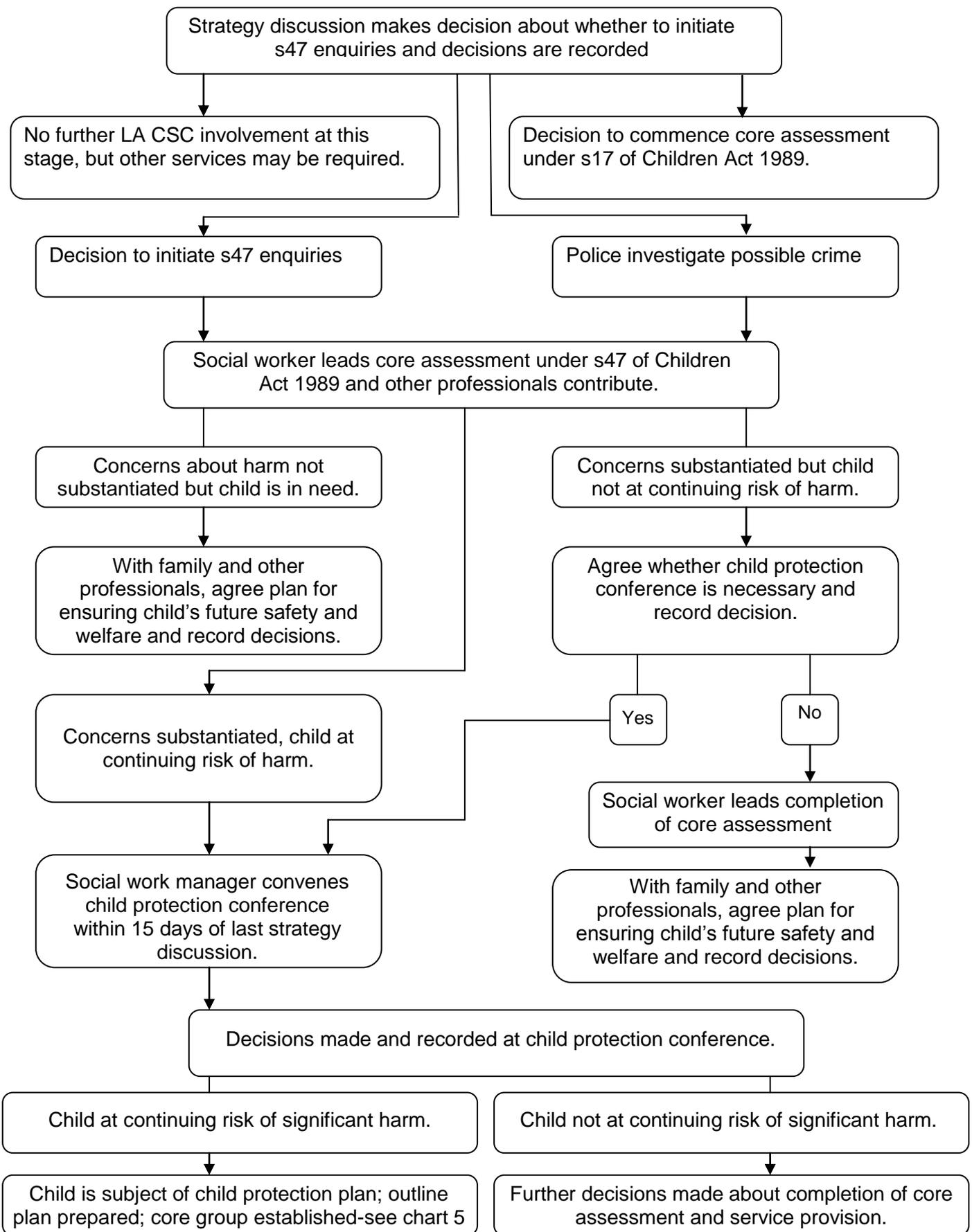
The following flowchart (2) is from “What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused” and shows what happens after a referral to Social Care has led to an “initial assessment”.



The following flowchart (3) is from “What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused” and shows what happens after a referral to Social Care has led to an “urgent action to safeguard children”.



The following flowchart (4) is from “What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused” and shows what happens after a Strategy Discussion.



The following flowchart (5) is from “What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused” and shows what happens after a Child Protection Conference.

