

ST HELEN AND ST KATHARINE

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The School of St Helen and St Katharine recognises it has a unique and important role to play in child protection. In particular we believe that:

- Schools can contribute to the prevention of abuse.
- All children have the right to be protected from harm.
- Children need support which matches their individual needs including those who may be experiencing abuse

Aims and Objectives

The school's policy applies to all staff, governors and volunteers working in school and focuses on the three key areas of prevention, protection and support.

To contribute to the prevention of abusive experiences by:

- Clarifying standards of behaviour for staff and pupils
- Introducing appropriate work within the curriculum to equip pupils with the skills needed to keep themselves safe from abuse.
- Developing staff awareness of the causes of abuse
- Encouraging pupils' and parental participation in practice
- Addressing concerns at the earliest possible stage
- Establishing a safe and nurturing environment where children can learn and develop.

To contribute to the protection of our pupils in the following ways:

- Including appropriate work within the curriculum
- Implementing child protection policies and procedures which are reviewed annually by the governing body
- Working in partnership with pupils, parents and agencies
- Providing a process by which allegations of abuse against members of staff, including the Head, or volunteers will be handled
- Ensuring that any deficiencies in the procedures are remedied without delay
- Safe practices of staff recruitment and selection

To contribute to supporting our pupils in the following ways:

- Identifying individual needs where possible
- Designing plans to meet needs

We recognise that because of the day to day contact with children, school staff are ideally placed to observe the outward signs of abuse and staff in school will therefore:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, encouraged to talk and are listened to.
- Ensure that children know that there are adults in the school who they can approach if worried.

Procedures

Staff in the School of St Helen and St Katharine will follow the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB) procedures in all cases of abuse or suspected abuse and have regard to the statutory obligations placed on us by Section 175 of the 2002 Education Act and 'Every Child Matters'.

All staff:

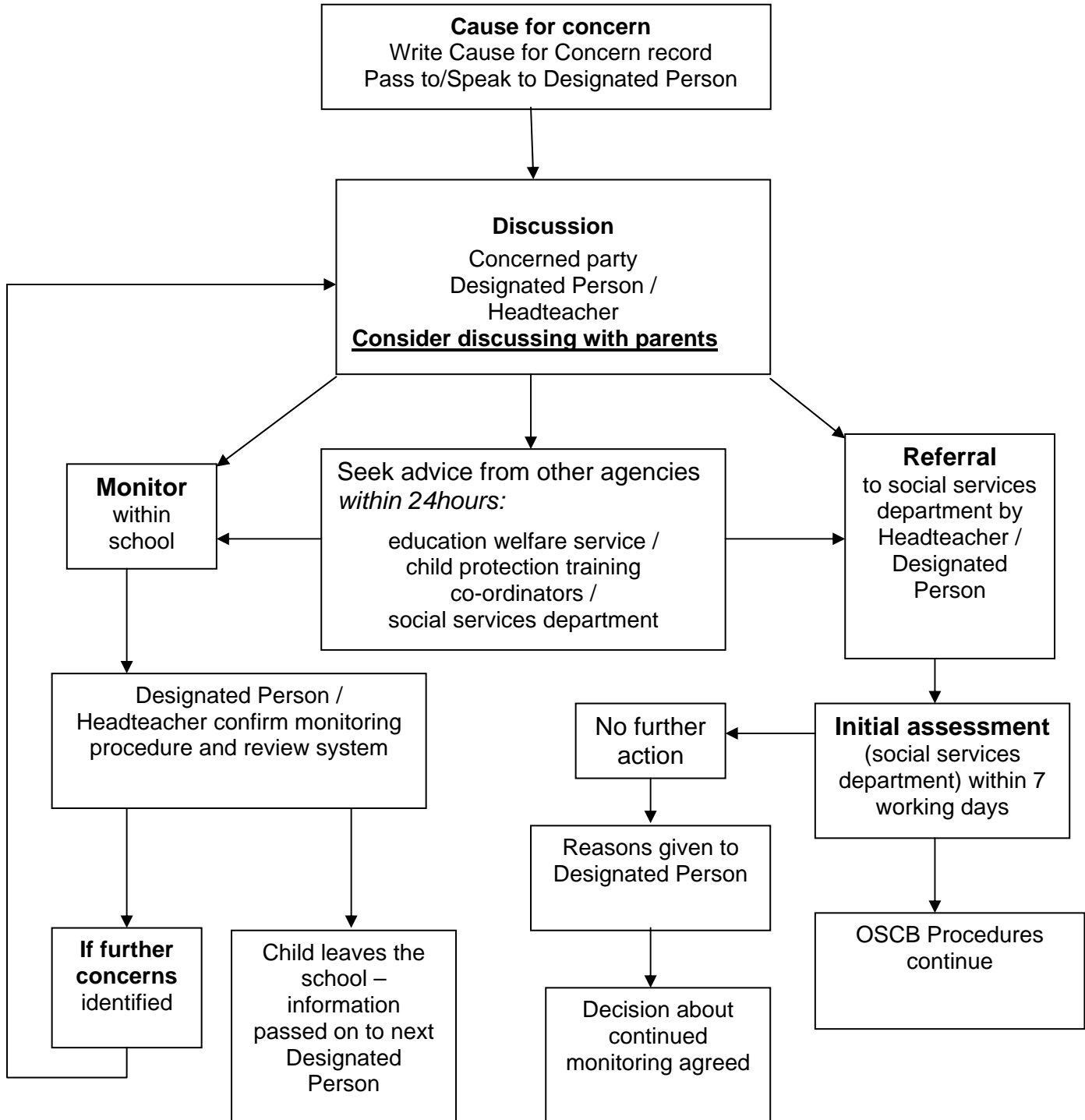
- Should be familiar with the school's child protection policy including issues of confidentiality.
- Should be aware of safe working practices when working with children – see school guidance in Appendix 1
- All staff are expected to be alert to signs which might indicate some form of abuse: physical, neglect, sexual, emotional, bullying, drug/alcohol abusing parents, domestic violence, child on child abuse. Signs to be aware of include physical injury, withdrawal, lack of concentration, self harm, depression, social isolation, lack of self esteem, needy behaviour and aggression. (See Appendix 4 for definitions and more detailed signs.)
- Should make a written record of concerns which should be handed to a designated staff member.
- Should deal with a disclosure of abuse from a child in line with the recommendations in Appendix 2. These must be passed to a designated staff member immediately, followed by a written account. The School procedure for dealing with disclosure is given in Appendix 3
- Should be involved in ongoing monitoring and recording to support the implementation of individual education programmes and interagency child protection and child support plans
- Will be subject to vetting by the Criminal Records Bureau whether new staff, supply staff, work placement students, volunteers etc.

Designated Staff

- Currently they are **Rita Gunn**, Deputy Head and **Alison Dexter**, Senior Nurse. Along with the Head teacher, they will be responsible for co-ordinating all child protection activity.
- Where the school has concerns about a child, the designated person, in consultation with appropriate staff and outside agencies, will decide on what should happen next. See flowchart for decision-making.
- Child Protection information needs to be dealt with in a confidential manner. A written record will be made of what information has been shared with whom, and when. Staff will be informed of relevant details when the designated person feels their having knowledge of a situation will improve their ability to deal with an individual child and /or family.
- Child Protection records will be stored securely in a central place separate from academic records. They should be kept for the period during which the child is attending the school.
- Access to these by other staff, apart from a designated person will be restricted, and a written record will be kept of who has had access to them.
- Parents should be aware of information held on their children and kept up to date regarding any concerns or developments by the appropriate members of staff. General communications with parents should be in line with normal home school procedures and give due regard to which adults have parental responsibility.

- **No information held on a child must be disclosed to a parent, if it would put the child at risk of significant harm.**
- If a pupil moves from our school, child protection records will be forwarded onto the new school, with due regard to their confidential nature.
- Where the nature of the abuse is by a girl/girls against another girl, the school's anti-bullying procedures will be followed.

Summary of in-school procedures to follow where there are concerns about a child



Governing Body

Safeguarding Children in Education (DfES /0027/2004) does not require new practice, but clarifies roles and responsibilities of Governors in relation to Child Protection. The guidance states that governing bodies are accountable for ensuring that the school:

- has a Child Protection policy and procedures in accordance with LEA/OSCB guidelines
- operates safe recruitment procedures and ensures appropriate checks are carried out on all new staff and volunteers
- has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff/volunteers/Head
- has at least one senior member of the school's leadership team designated to lead on child protection issues
- that the designated person undertakes training to OSCB standards, and attends refresher training at least every two years
- the headteacher and all other staff who work with children undertake training at three-yearly intervals; designated staff will be trained two yearly. Also that temporary staff and volunteers are made aware of the school's arrangements for Child Protection and their responsibilities.
- ensures that an item is placed on the governors termly agenda to report on changes to child protection policy/procedures, training undertaken by the designated staff and other staff, the number of incidents/pupils (without details or names) and the place of child protection issues in the school curriculum
- remedies any deficiencies or weaknesses brought to its attention without delay
- has a nominated governor who undertakes an annual review of child protection policy and procedures and the efficiency with which they are implemented and reports to the governing body
- governors are responsible for reviewing the child protection policy and procedures annually
- a member of the governing body (usually the Chair) is nominated to be responsible for liaising with the LEA/partner agencies in the event of allegations of abuse being made against the headteacher

Nominated Governor

- The nominated governor is **Sandy Tinson**
- She is responsible for liaising with the Headteacher/designated staff over all matters regarding child protection issues. The role is strategic rather than operational – she will not be involved in concerns about individual pupils.
- The nominated governor should liaise with the Headteacher and designated staff to produce an annual report for governors.

Working with other agencies to protect children

1. Involving parents

- In general, we will discuss concerns with parents before approaching other agencies, and will seek their consent to making a referral to another agency. Appropriate staff will approach parents after consultation with the designated person. However, there may be occasions when school will contact another agency before informing parents, if the school decides that contacting parents may increase the risk of significant harm to the child.

2. Multi-agency work

- We will work in partnership with other agencies in the best interests of the children. Therefore, school will, where necessary, liaise with the school nurse and doctor, and make referrals to Social Services. Referrals should be made, by a designated person, to the central Local Authority Call Centre within 24 hours of receiving an allegation of abuse. Where a child already has a social worker, the referral should indicate that fact and the social worker should also be informed.
- We will co-operate with Social Services where they are conducting child protection enquiries. Furthermore, school will endeavour to attend appropriate inter-agency meetings such as Initial and Review Child Protection Conferences, and Planning and Core Group meetings, as well as Family Support Meetings
- We will provide written reports as required for these meetings. If school is unable to attend, a written report will be sent.
- Where a child in school is subject to an inter-agency plan of protection, school will contribute to the preparation, implementation and review of the plan as appropriate.

Our role in the prevention of abuse

We will identify and provide opportunities for children to develop skills, concepts, attitudes and knowledge to promote their safety and well-being.

1. The Curriculum

- Relevant issues will be addressed through the PSHCE curriculum. For example, self esteem, emotional literacy, assertiveness, power, sex and relationship education, bullying.
- Relevant issues will be addressed through other areas of the curriculum. For example, English, History, RS, Drama, Art.

2. Other areas of work

- All our policies which address issues of power and potential harm, e.g. Anti-Bullying, Equal opportunities, Code of Conduct, need to be linked, to ensure a whole school approach.
- Our child protection policy cannot be separated from the general ethos of the school, which should ensure that children are treated with respect and dignity, feel safe, and are listened to.

3. Recruitment

- The School will follow DCFS guidelines for setting up and implementing appropriate procedures for safer recruitment including advertising, identity, health and CRB checks and interview practice.
- This will apply to all staff (academic and non-academic), contract staff and volunteers.
- The School will ensure that staff regularly involved in recruitment will receive appropriate training

Our role in supporting children

We will offer appropriate support to individual children who have experienced abuse or who have abused others.

- An individual support plan will be devised, implemented and reviewed regularly for these children. This plan will detail areas of support, and who will be involved.
- We will ensure the school works in partnership with parents/carers and other agencies as appropriate.

Staff support

We recognise the stressful and traumatic nature of child protection work. Support is available for any member of staff from a designated person.

Staff training

- The designated staff will attend an appropriate training course for designated persons and will be retrained every two years.
- The school will aim to ensure all staff (academic and non-academic) receive updated INSET appropriate to their roles and responsibilities, especially staff new to the school. The Head and all staff should receive retraining every three years.
- Child protection awareness will be included in staff induction programmes.
- Voluntary workers will be made aware of the school's child protection arrangements.
- The Nominated Governor will aim to have attended specific training on their role.
- Staff, in addition to the Headmistress, who are regularly involved in recruitment will receive appropriate training in safer recruitment practices.
- Training completed will be recorded by the school.

Procedures in the event of an allegation against a member of staff

Although it is an uncomfortable thought, it needs to be acknowledged that there is the potential for staff in school to abuse children. We will follow the procedures laid down by Oxfordshire in any case of allegation against a member of staff, contractor or volunteer working with our pupils.

Staff should:

- Report any allegation against a member of staff/volunteer to the Headteacher, or in the case of an allegation against the Headteacher to the Chair of Governors.

The Headteacher should:

- Where the allegation concerns harm or potential harm to a pupil; a possible criminal offence involving a pupil or behaviour indicating unsuitability to work with children then the allegation must be reported to LEA child protection officer by the headteacher on the same day. (See Staff Handbook for contact details.)
- The allegation should not be investigated by the headteacher
- Cooperate with the LEA child protection officer, social service department and police in all subsequent strategy meetings and investigations
- Consider invoking the school's disciplinary procedures, where investigation does not lead to further social service or police involvement

- Keep parents/guardians informed of the allegation, if they did not already know, and of all subsequent progress
- Contribute to any support mechanisms put in place for the pupil by social services
- Keep the person against whom the allegation is made informed of progress. They should be advised to consult their professional association.
- Make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity
- Avoid any compromise agreement, should the employee tender his/her resignation; the allegation must be recorded
- Report to the ISA, within one month of their leaving, any person leaving the school because they are considered unfit to work with children. Any other misconduct will be reported to the GTC
- Keep a clear and comprehensive written record of any allegations made, how it was followed up, how it was resolved, a note of any action taken and decisions reached. This should be kept on the employee's file and a copy given to him/her. The record should be kept for a period of ten years from the date of the allegation.
- Make every effort to resolve the case as quickly as possible consistent with a fair and thorough investigation.

It is noted that the provisions of the Section 175 of the Education Act, place a general duty of care on St Helen and St Katharine's to provide for the welfare of children in our care and, as such, staff will adhere to other related school policies, eg Code of Conduct, Pastoral Care Policy, Drug and Substance Misuse Policy and the Anti -Bullying Policy.

Appendix 1

Guidance on Safe Working Practice

The purpose of this guidance is to provide clear advice on appropriate and safe behaviours for all adults working with children in paid or unpaid capacities, in all settings and in all contexts. It aims to:

- keep children safe by clarifying which behaviours constitute safe practice and which should be avoided
- assist adults working with children to do so safely and responsibly, and to monitor their own standards and practice
- support managers and employers in setting clear expectations of behaviour and codes of practice
- support safer recruitment practice
- minimise the risk of misplaced or malicious allegations made against adults who work with children
- reduce the incidence of positions of trust being abused or misused.

The guidance below is taken from the DCSF guidance for all those working with children and young people.

Background

The vast majority of adults who work with children act professionally and aim to provide a safe and supportive environment which secures the well-being and very best outcomes for children and young people in their care. However, it is recognised that in this area of work tensions and misunderstandings can occur. It is here that the behaviour of adults can give rise to allegations of abuse being made against them. Allegations may be malicious or misplaced. They may arise from differing perceptions of the same event, but when they occur, they are inevitably distressing and difficult for all concerned. Equally, it must be recognised that some allegations will be genuine and there are adults who will deliberately seek out, create or exploit opportunities to abuse children. It is therefore essential that all possible steps are taken to safeguard children and young people and ensure that the adults working with them are safe to do so. Some concerns have been raised about the potential vulnerability of adults in this area of work; this document has been produced in response to these concerns.

What to do if you are worried a child is being abused

All staff should be familiar with the School's procedures and protocols for safeguarding the welfare of children and young people. They have a duty to report any child protection or welfare concerns to a designated member of staff as indicated in these procedures.

Underpinning Principles

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- It is the responsibility of all staff to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.
- 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.
- Staff should work and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way.
- The same professional standards should always be applied regardless of culture,

- disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity.
- Staff should continually monitor and review their practice and ensure they follow the guidance contained in this document.

Guidance for safer working practice

General principles

- All adults who work with children and young people have a crucial role to play in shaping their lives. They have a unique opportunity to interact with children and young people in ways that are both affirming and inspiring. This guidance has been produced to help staff establish safe and responsive environments which safeguard young people and reduce the risk of adults being unjustly accused of improper or unprofessional conduct.
- This means avoiding any conduct which would lead **any reasonable person** to question the motivation and intentions
- Staff should remember that their behavior has a significant impact on the girls and they must therefore adopt a professional approach to all aspects of their work; this includes dress, communication and social contact.
- If in doubt staff should discuss any uncertainties or confusion with their line manager.
- Similarly if staff feel that an incident could be misinterpreted they should document it and report immediately to a senior member of staff.

Specific Guidance

- **Confidentiality:** Staff may have access to confidential information about children and young people in order to undertake their responsibilities. In some circumstances they may have access to or be given highly sensitive or private information. These details must be kept confidential at all times and only shared when it is in interests of the child to do so. Such information must not be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the child or young person concerned. If there is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential staff should seek guidance from a senior member of staff or nominated child protection person. Information given to a member of staff by a girl must be passed to a designated person if there is any issue of child protection; confidentiality must not be promised.
- **The use of email for communication** is an increasingly used technology and one which girls will need to use at university; however such communication should be for factual information, instructions etc and should not lapse into the casual. Similarly staff should not give out personal mobile phone numbers except where necessary for emergency contact, for example on a visit and texting/telephoning should be used in emergencies only. Pupils should not be accepted as 'friends' on social networking sites
- **Social activities:** Many staff arrange social activities, particularly in upper school, and these are much enjoyed by the girls but they should always be group activities and staff behaviour may be relaxed and should always remain professional.
- **Physical contact.** St Helen's is not a school which bars physical contact; there are activities which require it eg PE or music and there may be circumstances where a distressed girl may need comfort. Such contact must always remain appropriate for the task and staff should stop immediately if it is apparent that it causes the girl discomfort. Such contact should always be open and take place in an environment which could not be regarded as secret; all offices have glazed panels to ensure that neither girls nor staff feel that actions could be misinterpreted. It goes without saying that these panels should not be covered. If there has been a need to reassure a distressed girl then the incident should be documented and passed to the form tutor or designated child protection

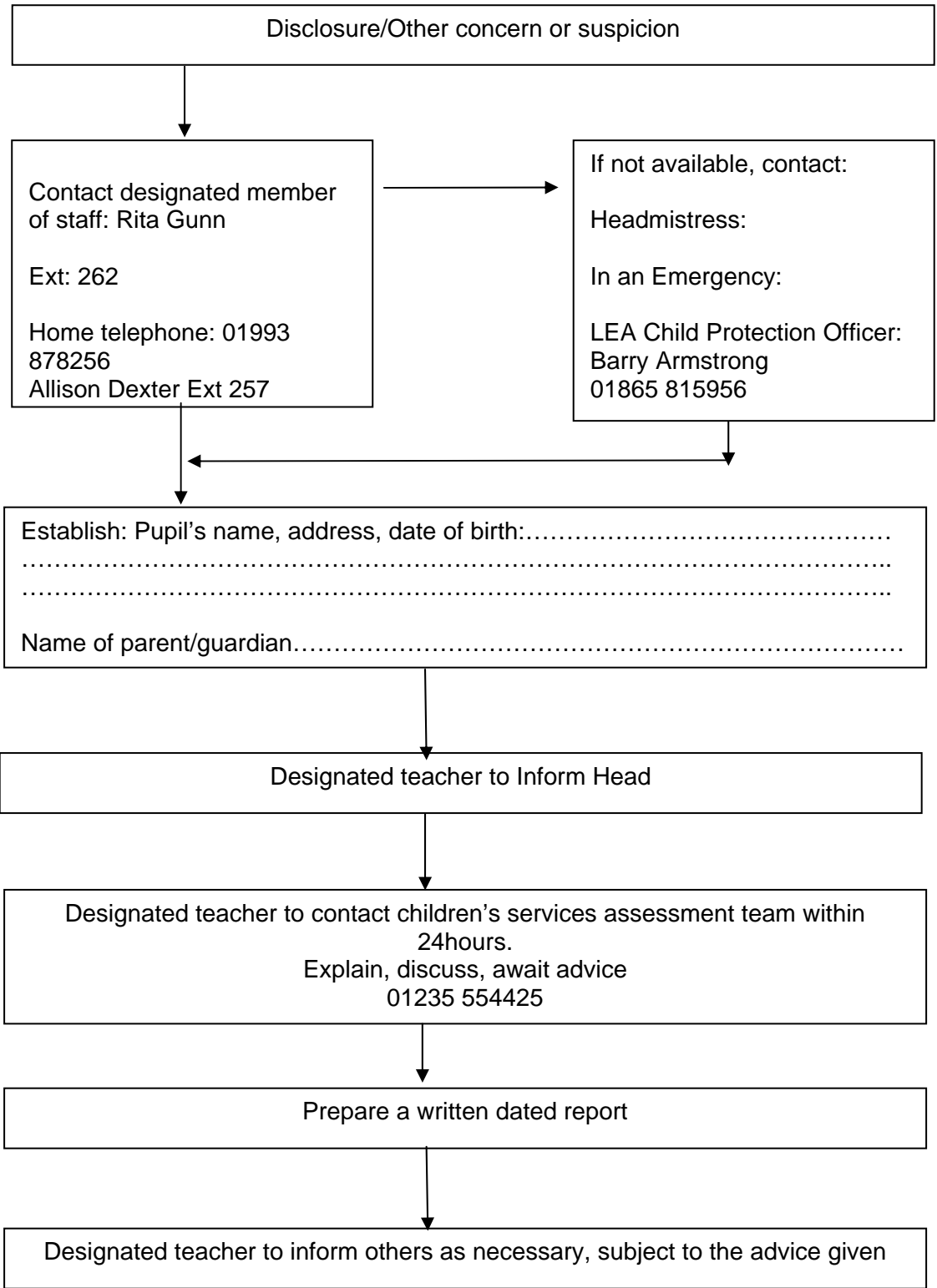
- person if that is felt to be the necessary channel.
- **One to one situations** should only take place in rooms which are in public areas of the school; most rooms have glazed panels and these rooms should always be used in these circumstances.
 - **Driving girls in your own car.** Except in an emergency, this would always be with parental consent. Staff are always advised to carry two or more girls and to ensure that if dropping girls off they are not left with one girl for an extended period of time.
 - **Photographs and videos of activities** are often taken but care should be taken that girls cannot easily be identified and that they are taken of groups rather than individuals. Where individuals are photographed eg sport or drama then the focus should obviously be the activity rather than the girl. Most parents have consented to photographs been used for publicity purposes as long as the girl cannot be identified; a list of those who have refused permission is in the staff noticeboard and staff should be aware of these. Individual permission is required where the girls name is published.

Appendix 2

Procedure for dealing with disclosures (the 6 R's):

1. Receive
 - Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief
 - Take what is said seriously
 - Note down what has been said
2. Reassure
 - Reassure the pupil that they have done the right thing in talking to you
 - Be honest and do not make promises you cannot keep eg "It will be alright now"
 - **Do not promise confidentiality**; you have a duty to refer
 - Reassure and alleviate guilt, if the pupil refers to it eg "you're not to blame"
 - Reassure the child that information will only be shared with those who need to know
3. React
 - React to the pupil only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer the matter, but do not interrogate for full details
 - Do not ask leading questions; "Did he/she....?" Such questions can invalidate evidence.
 - Do ask open questions; "Anything else you want to say?"
 - Do not criticise the perpetrator; the pupil may have affection for him/her
 - Do not ask the pupil to repeat it all for another member of staff
 - Explain what you have to do next and who you have to talk to
4. Record
 - Make some 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
 - Record the date, time, place, any non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child. Ensure that as far as possible you have recorded the actual words used by the child.
 - Record statements and observable things rather than your interpretations or assumptions
5. Remember
 - Contact the designated member of staff
 - The designated teacher may be required to make appropriate records available to Social & Health care
6. Relax
 - Get some support for yourself

Appendix 3
School Procedures for dealing with disclosure



Disclosure/Other concern or suspicion

Contact designated member of staff: Rita Gunn

Ext: 262

Home telephone: 01993 878256

Allison Dexter Ext 257

If not available, contact:

Headmistress:

In an Emergency:

LEA Child Protection Officer:
Barry Armstrong
01865 815956

Establish: Pupil's name, address, date of birth:.....

.....

Name of parent/guardian.....

Designated teacher to Inform Head

Designated teacher to contact children's services assessment team within 24hours.

Explain, discuss, await advice

01235 554425

Prepare a written dated report

Designated teacher to inform others as necessary, subject to the advice given

Appendix 4 Signs of Abuse

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, (this includes prostitution) whether or not they are aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, penetrative or non-penetrative acts and/or non contact activities such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Children cannot give consent because of their dependant condition. However, the question of consent may be more complex with older children or when there is a small age gap between 'abuser' and 'abused'. The key issue is assessing whether exploitation has occurred.

Signs that MAY INDICATE Sexual Abuse

- Sudden changes in behaviour and school performance
- Displays of affection which are sexual and age inappropriate
- Self harm, self mutilation or attempts at suicide
- Alluding to secrets which they cannot reveal
- Tendency to cling or need constant reassurance
- Regression to younger behaviour for example thumb sucking, playing with discarded toys, acting like a baby
- Distrust of familiar adults. Anxiety of being left with relatives, a child minder or lodger
- Unexplained gifts or money
- Depression and withdrawal
- Fear of undressing for gym activities
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Fire setting

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, 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.

Signs that MAY INDICATE physical abuse

- Bruises and abrasions around the face
- Damage or injury around the mouth
- Bi-lateral injuries such as two bruised eyes
- Bruising to soft area of the face such as the cheeks
- Fingertip bruising to the front or back of torso
- Bite marks
- Burns or scalds (unusual patterns and spread of injuries)
- Deep contact burns such as cigarette burns
- Injuries suggesting beatings (strap marks, welts)
- Covering arms and legs even when hot

- Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts

Injuries need to be accounted for. Inadequate, inconsistent or excessively plausible explanations, or a delay in seeking treatment should signal concern.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is persistent emotional ill treatment, which is likely to have severe adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless, unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being placed on children and/or seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.

Signs that MAY INDICATE emotional abuse

- Over reaction to mistakes
- Lack of self confidence/esteem
- Sudden speech disorders
- Self harming
- Extremes of passivity and/or aggression
- Compulsive stealing
- Drug, alcohol, solvent abuse
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Unwillingness or inability to play
- Excessive need for approval, attention and affection

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairments to their health or development.

Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter; failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; failure to ensure adequate supervision or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include the neglect of a child's basic emotional needs.

Signs that MAY INDICATE neglect.

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Constant tiredness
- Inadequate clothing
- Frequent lateness or non attendance at school
- Untreated medical problems
- Poor relationship with peers
- Compulsive stealing and scavenging
- Rocking, hair twisting and thumb sucking

- Running away
- Loss of weight or being constantly underweight
- Low self esteem

Policy last reviewed.....January 2010
Next review due.....January 2011
Person responsible for review Internally Deputy Head, annually by Governing Body
AudienceStaff/Parents