

Child Protection Policy

(Statutory)

Last Reviewed/Approved by Trustees' Full Board: 08/12/2022

Review Cycle: Annually

Review Date: Autumn Term 2023

Policy Statement

- We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children.
- We make every effort to provide a safe and welcoming environment underpinned by a culture of openness where both children and adults feel secure, able to talk and believe that they are being listened to.
- We maintain an attitude of "it could happen here" where safeguarding is concerned.
- The purpose of this policy is to provide staff, volunteers and trustees with the framework they need in order to keep children safe and secure in our school and to inform parents and guardians how we will safeguard their children whilst they are in our care.
- Specific guidance is available to staff within the procedure documents.

Definitions

Within this document, through documents referenced within and through working practice in school, the following terms and definitions are recognised:

Child protection is an aspect of safeguarding but is focused on how we respond to children who have been significantly harmed or are at risk of significant harm.

The term **staff** applies to all those working for or on behalf of the school, full time or part time, including supply staff, in either a paid or voluntary capacity. This also includes parents and trustees.

Child refers to all young people who have not yet reached their 18 birthday. On the whole, this will apply to students in our school; however, the policy will extend to cover all children and young people for the time that they are in the school's care and visiting children and students from other establishments

Parent refers to all adults in a parenting role, for example, birth parents, adoptive parents, step parents, guardians and foster carers.

Abuse could mean neglect, physical, emotional or sexual abuse or any combination of these. Parents, carers and other people can harm children either by direct acts and / or failure to provide proper care. Explanations of these are given within the procedure document.

Aims

- To provide staff with the framework to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of children and in so doing ensure they meet their statutory responsibilities.
- To ensure consistent good practice across the school.
- To demonstrate our commitment to protecting children.

Principles and Values

- Children have a right to feel secure and cannot learn effectively unless they do so.
- All children have a right to be protected from harm.
- All staff have a key role in prevention of harm and an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may indicate a child is at risk of harm, either in the school or in the community, taking into account *contextual safeguarding*, in accordance with the guidance.
- We acknowledge that working in partnership with other agencies protects children and reduces risk and so we will engage in partnership working throughout the child protection process to safeguard children.
- Whilst the school will work openly with parents as far as possible, it reserves the right to contact Children's Social Care or the police, without notifying parents if this is believed to be in the child's best interests.

Leadership and Management

We recognise that staff anxiety around child protection can compromise good practice and so have established clear lines of accountability, training and advice to support the process and individual staff within that process.

In this school any individual can contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) if they have concerns about a young person.

DSL is **Heidi Shering** and the DDSLs are **David Pover (Head teacher)**, **Katja Gibson**, **Victoria Becher**, **Jack Barfoot** and **Lisa Mann**

Training

All staff in our school are expected to be aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse and must be able to respond appropriately. Training is provided to the whole school every year with separate training to all new staff on appointment. The DSL will attend training annual training to enable them to fulfil their role and regular updates and reviews throughout the year.

Any update in national or local guidance will be shared with all staff in briefings and then captured in the next whole school training. This policy will be updated during the year to reflect any changes brought about by new legislation.

Trustee training is provided as required.

Referral

Following any concerns raised, the DSL/DDSL will assess the information and consider if significant harm has happened or there is a risk that it may happen. If the evidence suggests the threshold of significant harm, or risk of significant harm has been reached, or if it is not clear if the threshold is met, then the DSL will contact Children's Social Care and if appropriate the police. If the DSL/DDSL is not available or there are immediate concerns, the staff member will refer directly to Children's Social Care and the police if appropriate.

Generally, the DSL/DDSL will inform the parents prior to making a referral. However, there are situations where this may not be possible or appropriate, particularly when informing parents may place the child at further risk

The exception to this process will be in those cases of known FGM where there is a mandatory requirement for the teacher to report directly to the police. The DSL should also be made aware.

Confidentiality

- We maintain that all matters relating to child protection are to be treated as confidential and only shared as per the 'Information Sharing Advice for Practitioners' (DfE 2018) guidance
- There is a lawful basis for child protection concerns to be shared with agencies who have a statutory duty for child protection.
- Information will be shared with individuals within the school who 'need to know'.
- All staff are aware that they cannot promise a child to keep a disclosure confidential.

As a school we will educate and encourage students to keep safe through:

- The content of both the academic and pastoral curriculum, tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities in individual children, including children who are victims of abuse, and children with SEND.
- The school ethos which helps children to feel safe and able to talk freely about their concerns, believing that they will be listened to and valued.
- Every child having access to a "trusted adult" in school.
- Regular reminders on how to be safe online
- Our Burgate expectations; Be safe, be respectful, be ready to learn

Dealing with allegations against staff

If a concern is raised about the practice or behaviour of a member of staff this information will be recorded and passed to the headteacher, **David Pover**. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will be contacted, and the relevant guidance will be followed.

If the allegation is against the headteacher, the person receiving the allegation will contact the LADO or Chair of Trustees directly. **The nominated link-trustee responsible for Safeguarding is Heather Arnold.**

Dealing with allegations against students

If a concern is raised that a child under 18 is abusing another child under 18, the “child on child abuse” guidance will be followed (Annex 5)

Annual review

As a school, we review this policy at least annually in line with Department for Education (DfE), Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) and Hampshire County Council (HCC) requirements and other relevant statutory guidance.

Physical Intervention

We acknowledge that staff must only ever use physical interventions as a last resort, when a child is endangering him/herself or others, and that at all times it must be with minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person.

Such events must be recorded with the DSL and a member of the LT and signed by a witness.

We recognise that touch is appropriate in the context of working with children, and all staff have been given guidance to ensure they are clear about their professional boundary.

Physical restraint training is provided to key members of the staff team who are responsible, where possible for all physical restraint within school

Safeguarding students who are vulnerable to extremism

Since 2010, when the Government published the Prevent Strategy, there has been an awareness of the specific need to safeguard children, young people and families from violent extremism.

The Burgate School and Sixth Form values freedom of speech and the expression of beliefs/ ideology as fundamental rights underpinning our society’s values. Both students and teachers have the right to speak freely and voice their opinions. However, freedom comes with responsibility and free speech that is designed to manipulate the vulnerable or that leads to violence and harm of others goes against the moral principles in which freedom of speech is valued. Free speech is not an unqualified privilege; it is subject to laws and policies governing equality, human rights, community safety and community cohesion.

The current threat from terrorism in the United Kingdom may include the exploitation of vulnerable people, to involve them in terrorism or in activity in support of terrorism. The normalisation of extreme views may also make children and young people vulnerable to future manipulation and exploitation. The Burgate School and Sixth Form is clear that this exploitation and radicalisation should be viewed as a safeguarding concern.

We seek to protect children and young people against the messages of all violent extremism including, but not restricted to, those linked to religious ideologies, or to Far Right/Neo Nazi/White Supremacist ideology, Irish Nationalist and Loyalist paramilitary groups, and extremist Animal Rights movements.

This school does not tolerate any extremist views expressed by any visitors to the school, including parents. If a staff member hears such views, then they must refuse any further dialogue with that person and inform the DSL or DDSL immediately.

Date reviewed/approved by the Board of Trustees: 08/12/2022

Annex 1: Roles and responsibilities within The Burgate School and Sixth Form

DSL is Heidi Shering and the Deputy DSLs are David Pover (Head teacher) Katja Gibson (Deputy Head), Victoria Becher (Assistant Head), Jack Barfoot (Head of Year & Designated Teacher for Looked After Children) and Lisa Mann (Head of Year)

There is a nominated link-trustee for safeguarding, **Heather Arnold**, who will evaluate the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding framework. The Chair of Trustees **David Millar** will receive reports of allegations against the headteacher and act on the behalf of the Trustees.

Staff responsibilities

All staff have a key role to play in identifying concerns early and in providing help for children. To achieve this, they will:

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the school who they can approach if they are worried or have concerns.
- Plan opportunities within the curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to assess and manage risk appropriately and keep themselves safe.
- Attend training in order to be aware of and alert to the signs of abuse.
- Maintain an attitude of "it could happen here" with regards to safeguarding.
- Be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.
- Recognise that abuse, neglect, or other adverse childhood experiences, can have an impact on the mental health, behaviour and education of children.
- Record their concerns if they are worried that a child is being abused and report these to the DSL as soon as practical that day. If the DSL is not contactable immediately a Deputy DSL should be informed.
- Be prepared to refer directly to social care, and the police if appropriate, if there is a risk of significant harm and the DSL or their Deputy is not available.
- Follow the allegations procedures if the disclosure is an allegation against a member of staff.
- Follow the procedures set out by the HSCP and take account of guidance issued by the DfE.
- Support students in line with their child protection plan.
- Treat information with confidentiality but never promising to "keep a secret".
- Notify the DSL or DDSL of any child on a child protection plan or child in need plan who has unexplained absence.
- Have an understanding of "Early Help" and be prepared to identify and support children who may benefit from this intervention.
- Liaise with other agencies that support students and provide early help.
- Ensure they know who the DSL and Deputy DSL are and know how to contact them.
- Have an awareness of the Child Protection Policy, the Behaviour Policy, the Staff Behaviour Policy (or Code of Conduct), child on child abuse procedures, the safeguarding response for children who go missing from education and the role of the DSL.

Leadership Team responsibilities:

- Contribute to inter-agency working in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 guidance.
- Provide a co-ordinated offer of early help when additional needs of children are identified.
- Ensure staff are alert to the various factors that can increase the need for early help. (Paragraph 19 KCSiE 2022_
- Working with Children’s Social Care, support their assessment and planning processes including the school’s attendance at conference and core group meetings.
- Carry out tasks delegated by the governing body such as training of staff, safer recruitment and maintaining a single central register.
- Provide support and advice on all matters pertaining to safeguarding and child protection to all staff regardless of their position within the school.
- Treat any information shared by staff or students with respect and follow agreed policies and procedures.
- Ensure that allegations or concerns against staff are dealt with in accordance with guidance from Department for Education (DfE), Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) and Hampshire County Council (HCC).
- Determine if a concern about a member of staff is a “low level concern” or an allegation.

Trustees will ensure that:

- The school has effective safeguarding policies and procedures including a Child Protection Policy, a Staff Behaviour Policy or Code of Conduct, a Behaviour Policy and a response to children who go missing from education.
- HSCP is informed in line with local requirements about the discharge of duties via the annual safeguarding audit.
- Recruitment, selection and induction follows safer recruitment practice including all appropriate checks.
- Allegations against staff are dealt with by the headteacher. Allegations against the headteacher are dealt with by the Chair of Trustees
- A member of the Leadership Team is appointed as DSL and has this recorded in their job description.
- Staff have been trained appropriately and this is updated in line with guidance.
- Any safeguarding deficiencies or weaknesses are remedied without delay.
- A nominated trustee for safeguarding is identified.

DSL responsibilities (to be read in conjunction with DSL role description in KCSiE)

In addition to the role of all staff and the leadership team the DSL will:

- Refer cases to social care, and the police where appropriate, in a timely manner avoiding any delay that could place the child at more risk.
- Assist the Trustees in fulfilling their safeguarding responsibilities set out in legislation and statutory guidance.

- Attend appropriate training and demonstrate evidence of continuing professional development to carry out the role.
- Ensure every member of staff knows who the DSL and the DDSLs are, have an awareness of the DSL role and know how to contact them.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in being alert to the signs of abuse and responsibility for referring any concerns about a child to the DSL and concerns about an adult to the Headteacher.
- Ensure that those staff that need to know, are aware of those children who have experienced, or are experiencing abuse in order to promote their educational outcomes and provide the appropriate support.
- Ensure whole school training occurs regularly with at least annual updates so that staff and volunteers can fulfil their responsibilities knowledgeably.
- Ensure any members of staff joining the school outside of the agreed training schedule receive induction prior to commencement of their duties
- Keep records of child protection concerns securely and separately from the main student file and use these records to assess the likelihood of risk
- Ensure that safeguarding records are transferred accordingly (separate from student files) and in a timely fashion when a child transfers school
- Ensure that where a student transfers school and is on a child protection plan or is a child looked after, their information is passed to the new school immediately and that the child's social worker is informed. Consideration is given to a transition meeting prior to moving if the case is complex or on-going.
- Be aware of the training opportunities and briefings provided by HSCP to ensure staff are aware of the latest local guidance on safeguarding
- Develop, implement, and review procedures in the school that enable the identification and reporting of all cases, or suspected cases, of abuse
- Meet any other expectations set out for DSLs in KCSiE 2022

Annex 2: The Burgate School and Sixth Form Child Protection Procedures

Overview

The following procedures apply to all staff working in the school and will be covered by training to enable staff to understand their role and responsibility.

The aim of our procedures is to provide a robust framework which enables staff to take appropriate action when they are concerned that a child is being harmed or is at risk of harm.

The prime concern at all stages must be the interests and safety of the child. Where there is a conflict of interest between the child and an adult, the interests of the child must be paramount.

All staff are aware that children with disabilities, special needs, certain medical conditions or with language deficit or English as a second language may have more difficulty in communicating concerns or feelings. They may be more likely to communicate concerns with behaviours rather than words. Additionally, staff will question the cause of knocks and bumps in children who have limited mobility, which will include children (for example younger siblings) visiting the site in addition to students.

If a member of staff suspects abuse, spots signs or indicators of abuse, including online, or they have a disclosure of abuse made to them they must ensure they are following the same procedures as stated below and email wellbeing@burgate.hants.sch.uk – for immediate attention. This email is being monitored by four key members of staff. If the referrer does not receive a response within an hour or by the end of the school day, they must speak directly to a member of the safeguarding team.

It is our intention to ensure there is always a DSL or DDSL available on site. Where this is not possible the DSL or DDSL will be available via the telephone.

MyConcern is being used by the pastoral team to log concerns

If a member of staff suspects abuse, spots signs or indicators of abuse, or they have a disclosure of abuse made to them they must:

- Make an initial record of the information (on paper or electronically, using the student's own words)
- Report it to the DSL immediately
- The DSL will consider if there is a requirement for immediate medical intervention, however urgent medical attention should not be delayed if the DSL is not immediately available (see point 8 below)
- Make an accurate record (which may be used in any subsequent court proceedings) as soon as possible and within 24 hours of the occurrence, of all that has happened, including details of:
 - Dates and times of their observations
 - Dates and times of any discussions in which they were involved.

- Any injuries
- Explanations given by the child / adult
- What action was taken
- Any actual words or phrases used by the child

The records must be signed and dated by the author and/or logged onto MyConcern

- In the absence of the DSL or DDSs, be prepared to refer directly to Children’s Social Care (and the police if appropriate) if there is the potential for immediate significant harm

Following a report of concerns the DSL must:

- Decide whether or not there are sufficient grounds for suspecting significant harm in which case a referral must be made to Children’s Social Care and the police if it is appropriate. The rationale for this decision should be recorded by the DSL.
- Normally the school should try to discuss any concerns about a child’s welfare with the family and where possible to seek their agreement before making a referral to Children’s Social Care. However, in accordance with DfE guidance, this should only be done when it will not place the child at increased risk or could impact a police investigation. The child’s views should also be taken into account.
- If there are grounds to suspect a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm the DSL (or Deputy) must contact Children’s Social Care via the Children’s Reception Team (CRT) on 01329 225379 and make a clear statement of:
 - the known facts
 - any suspicions or allegations
 - whether or not there has been any contact with the child’s family

If the DSL feels unsure about whether a referral is necessary, they can phone CRT to discuss concerns.

For Wiltshire children contact Integrated Front Door (IFD) 0300 4560108 or email Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) mash@wiltshire.gov.uk

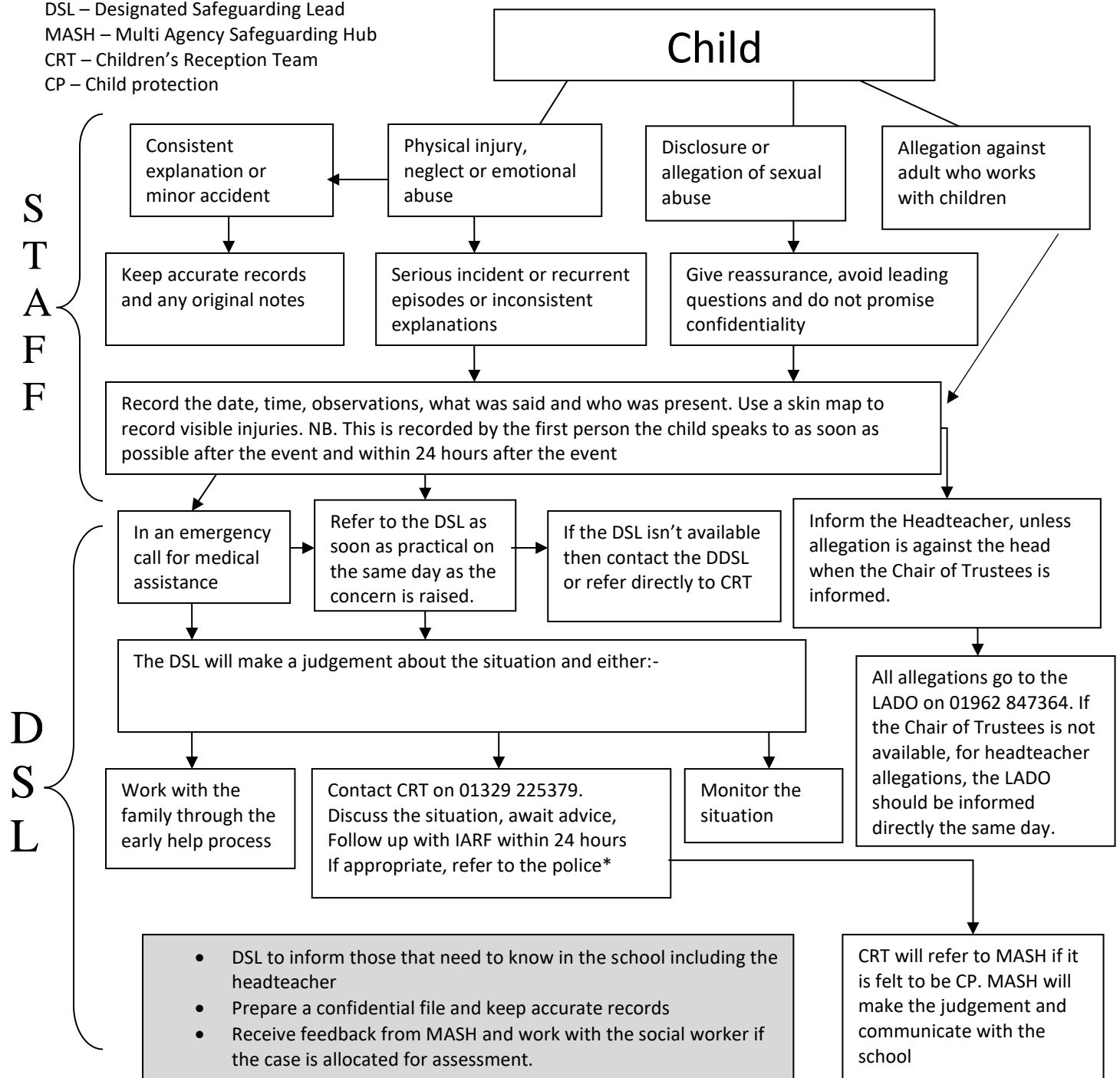
For Dorset children contact Dorset Children’s Advice and Duty Service (CHAD) 01305 228558

- If there is not a risk of significant harm, the DSL will either actively monitor the situation or consider the Early Help process
- The DSL must confirm any referrals in writing to Children’s Social Care, within 24 hours, including the actions that have been taken. The written referral must be made using the Inter-Agency Referral Form (IARF) which will provide Children’s Social Care with the supplementary information required about the child and family’s circumstances. (IARF can be accessed at the following page <https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/contacts>)

- If a child is in immediate danger and urgent protective action is required, the police must be called. The DSL must also notify Children’s Social Care of the occurrence and what action has been taken.
- Where there are doubts or reservations about involving the child’s family, the DSL should clarify with Children’s Social Care or the police whether the parents should be told about the referral and, if so, when and by whom. This is important in cases where the police may need to conduct a criminal investigation.
- When a student is in need of *urgent* medical attention and there is suspicion of abuse the DSL or their Deputy should take the child to the nearest A&E, having first notified Children’s Social Care. The DSL should seek advice about what action Children’s Social Care will take and about informing the parents, remembering that parents should normally be informed that a child requires urgent hospital attention.
- In cases of allegations against staff or low level concerns, the HSCP procedure or the school “low level concern” procedure will be followed.

Annex 3: Flowchart for child protection procedures

DSL – Designated Safeguarding Lead
MASH – Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub
CRT – Children’s Reception Team
CP – Child protection



* In the cases of known FGM, the teacher who was made aware will also make contact with the police

Annex 4: Dealing with disclosures

All staff should:

A member of staff who is approached by a child should listen positively and try to reassure them. They cannot promise complete confidentiality and should explain that they may need to pass information to other professionals to help keep the child safe. The degree of confidentiality should always be governed by the need to protect the child.

Additional consideration needs to be given to children with communication difficulties and for those whose preferred language is not English. It is important to communicate with them in a way that is appropriate to their age, understanding and preference.

Guiding principles, the seven R's

Receive

- Listen to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what is said and take it seriously
- Make a note of what has been said as soon as practicable

Reassure

- Reassure the student, but only so far as is honest and reliable
- Don't make promises you may not be able to keep e.g. 'I'll stay with you' or 'everything will be alright now' or 'I'll keep this confidential'
- Do reassure e.g. you could say: 'I believe you', 'I am glad you came to me', 'I am sorry this has happened', 'We are going to do something together to get help'

Respond

- Respond to the student only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer this matter, but do not interrogate for full details
- Do not ask 'leading' questions i.e. 'did he touch your private parts?' or 'did she hurt you?' Such questions may invalidate your evidence (and the child's) in any later prosecution in court
- Do not ask the child why something has happened.
- Do not criticise the alleged perpetrator; the student may care about him/her, and reconciliation may be possible
- Do not ask the student to repeat it all for another member of staff. Explain what you have to do next and whom you have to talk to. Reassure the student it will be the DSL or DDSL.

Report

- Share concerns with the DSL as soon as possible, the same day
- If you are not able to contact your DSL or the DDSL, and the child is at risk of immediate harm, contact the children's services.

Record

- If possible, make some very brief notes at the time, and write them up as soon as possible
- Keep your original notes on file

- Record the date, time, place, persons present and noticeable nonverbal behaviour, and the words used by the child. If the child uses sexual 'pet' words, record the actual words used, rather than translating them into 'proper' words
- Complete a body map to indicate the position of any noticeable bruising or marks
- Record facts and observable things, rather than your 'interpretations' or 'assumptions'

Remember

- Support the child: listen, reassure, and be available
- Complete confidentiality is essential. Share your knowledge only with appropriate professional colleagues
- Look after yourself
- Be aware that children may not feel or know how to tell somebody that they are being abused, exploited or neglected and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful.

Review (led by DSL)

- Has the action taken provided good outcomes for the child?
- Did the procedure work?
- Were any deficiencies or weaknesses identified in the procedure? Have these been remedied?
- Is further training required?

What happens next?

It is important that concerns are followed up and it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that they are. The member of staff should be informed by the DSL what has happened following the report being made. If they do not receive this information they should be proactive in seeking it out.

If a member of staff believes that their concerns have not been dealt with effectively or that the child remains at risk, they should initially speak to the DSL to reconsider that the risks are understood. If this does not result in a satisfactory outcome, or the DSL rationale appears to miss the risk to the child, then the Whistleblowing procedures of the school should be followed. If the DSL is unhappy with the response from the Children's Social Care, they should consider following the HSCP escalation protocol.

Receiving a disclosure can be upsetting for the member of staff and schools should have a procedure for supporting them after the disclosure. This might include reassurance that they have followed procedure correctly and that their swift actions will enable the allegations to be handled appropriately.

In some cases additional counselling might be needed and staff should be encouraged to recognise that disclosures can have an impact on their own emotions.

Annex 5: Allegations against adults who work with children

Working Together to Safeguarding Children (2018) states that organisations should have clear policies for dealing with allegations against people who work with children. Those policies should make a clear distinction between an allegation, a complaint, or a concern about the quality of care or practice.

Allegations as defined by KCSiE should be reported to the LADO. Complaints or concerns can be managed independently by the school under internal procedures.

Complaints could include:

- Breaches of the code of Conduct
- Any breach of data protection or confidentiality
- Poor behaviour management
- Inappropriate use of social media
- Misadministration of medication

Concerns could include:

- Inappropriate use of language, shouting or swearing
- Discussing personal or sexual relationships with, or in the presence of students
- Making (or encouraging others to make) unprofessional comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate children, or might be interpreted as such

Lower Level Concerns (LLC) which do not reach the allegations harm threshold (or complaints criteria) should be dealt with under the school's LLC procedure)

Procedure for Allegations that meet the harm threshold.

This procedure should be used in all cases in which it is alleged a member of staff, supply staff, Trustee or volunteer in a school, or another adult who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child; or
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm to children
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children.

When considering allegations of suitability, the LADOs would consider the following situations:

- Parents of children who are placed on a CIN plan or are receiving Early Help.
- Arrests for offences against adults.
- Presentation to other professionals around mental health, domestic abuse and/or substance misuse.

- Extreme political or religious viewpoints which could be considered Hate Crime.
- Concerns about behaviour in their private lives which may impact on children.

The LADO criteria for intervention in any of these situations will be assessed against the likelihood and impact of transferable risk to children.

In dealing with allegations or concerns against an adult, staff must:

- Report any concerns about the conduct of any member of staff or volunteer to the Headteacher as soon as possible
- If an allegation is made against the Headteacher, the concerns need to be raised with the Chair of Trustees as soon as possible. If unavailable, then the LADO should be contacted directly.
- There may be situations when the Headteacher or Chair of Trustees will want to involve the police immediately if the person is deemed to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence.
- Once an allegation has been received by the Headteacher or Chair of Trustees they will contact the LADO on 01962 876364 or child.protection@hants.gov.uk as soon as possible and before carrying out any investigation into the allegation other than preliminary enquiries.
- Inform the parents of the allegation unless there is a good reason not to.

In liaison with the LADO, the school will determine how to proceed and if necessary the LADO will refer the matter to Children's Social Care and/or the police.

If the matter is investigated internally, the LADO will advise the school to seek guidance from their personnel/HR provider in following procedures set out in chapter 4 of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2022) and the HSCP procedures

http://4lscb.proceduresonline.com/hampshire/p_alleg_against_staff.html.

Supply Staff

Whilst the school is not the employer of supply teachers, it is still required that school report the allegation to the LADO.

If the matter requires an internal investigation, this will be carried out by the school in liaison with an HR representative (acting as the employer) from the supply agency.

Low Level Concerns (LLC)

The LLC policy is part of the whole school approach to safeguarding. The purpose of the policy is to encourage an open and transparent culture, which enables the school to identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour at an early stage. It should also empower staff to share LLC with the DSL. LLC will be managed independently by the school under internal procedures.

Annex 6: Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges

Child on child Abuse

Context

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment as well as their emotional well-being. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and offline (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. It is important to recognise that some perpetrators may themselves also be victims.

Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are extremely complex to manage. It is essential that victims are protected, offered appropriate support and every effort is made to ensure their education is not disrupted. It is also important that other children, adult students and school and college staff are supported and protected as appropriate.

Policy

We believe that all children have a right to attend school and learn in a safe environment. Children should be free from harm by adults in the school and other children.

We recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers and this will be dealt with under our child protection policy and in line with KCSiE (2022)

This policy is underpinned by the principle that there is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment. We are clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up

We will minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse by: -

Prevention:

- Taking a whole school approach to safeguarding & child protection
- Providing training for staff
- Providing a clear set of values and standards, underpinned by the school's behaviour policy and pastoral support system, and by a planned programme of evidence-based content delivered through the curriculum.
- Engaging with specialist support and interventions.

Responding to reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment:

- Children making a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment will be taken seriously, kept safe and be well supported.
- Understanding that our initial response to a report from a child is incredibly important and can encourage or undermine the confidence of victims of sexual violence and harassment to report or to come forward in the future.
- If the report includes an online element, staff will be mindful of the Searching, Screening and Confiscation: advice for schools (DfE 2018) guidance.
- Staff taking the report will inform the DSL or DDSL as soon as practicably possible but at least within 24 hours.
- Staff taking the report will never promise confidentiality.
- Parents or carers will normally be informed (unless this would put a child at greater risk)
- If a child at risk of harm, is in immediately danger, or has been harmed, a referral will be made to Children's Social Care

Risk Assessment:-

Following a report, the DSL will make an immediate risk and needs assessment on a case-by-case basis.

The risk assessment will consider:

- The victim, especially their protection and support.
- The alleged perpetrator, their support needs and any discipline action.
- All other children at the school.
- The victim and the alleged perpetrator sharing classes and space at school.

The risk assessment will be recorded and kept under review.

Where there has been other professional intervention and/or other specialist risk assessments, these professional assessments will be used to inform the school's approach to supporting and protecting pupils.

Action: The DSL will consider:-

- The wishes of the victim.
- The nature of the incident including whether a crime has been committed and the harm caused.
- Ages of the children involved.
- Developmental stages of the children.
- Any power imbalance between the children.
- Any previous incidents.
- Ongoing risks.
- Other related issues or wider context.

Options: The DSL will manage the report with the following options:-

- Manage internally
- Refer to Early Help
- Refer to Children's Social Care
- Report to the police (generally in parallel with a referral to Social Care)

Ongoing Response:

- All concerns, discussions and decision made, and the reasons for those decisions, should be recorded in writing. Records should be reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified and addressed.
- The DSL will manage each report on a case by case basis and will keep the risk assessment under review.
- Where there is a criminal investigation into a rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault, the alleged perpetrator should be removed from any classes they share with the victim during that investigation.
- The DSL will consider how best to keep the victim and perpetrator a reasonable distance apart on school premises and on transport where appropriate.
- Where a criminal investigation into a rape or assault by penetration leads to a conviction or caution, the school will take suitable action. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances, the rape or assault is likely to constitute a serious breach of discipline and lead to the view that allowing the perpetrator to remain in the same school or college would seriously harm the education or welfare of the victim (and potentially other students).
- Where a criminal investigation into sexual assault leads to a conviction or caution, the school will consider any suitable sanctions in light of the behaviour policy, including consideration of permanent exclusion. Where the perpetrator is going to remain at the school, the principle would be to continue keeping the victim and perpetrator in separate classes and continue to consider the most appropriate way to manage potential contact on school premises and transport. The nature of the conviction or caution and wishes of the victim will be especially important in determining how to proceed in such cases.
- The victim, alleged perpetrator and other witnesses (children and adults) will receive appropriate support and safeguarding on a case-by-case basis. A trusted adult, chosen by the student, will be available to provide additional support.
- The school recognises that taking disciplinary action and providing appropriate support are not mutually exclusive actions and will occur at the same time if necessary.

Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious reports

- If a report is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded or malicious the DSL should consider whether the child and/or person who has made the allegation is in need of help or

may have been abused by someone else and whether this is a cry for help. In such circumstances, a referral to children's social care may be appropriate.

- If a report is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the school should consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual who made it, in accordance with the behaviour policy.

Physical Abuse

While a clear focus of peer-on-peer abuse is around sexual abuse and harassment, physical assaults and initiation violence and rituals from pupils to pupils can also be abusive.

These are equally not tolerated and if it is believed that a crime has been committed, will be reported to the police.

The principles from the anti-bullying policy will be applied in these cases, with recognition that any police investigation will need to take priority.

Annex 7: Online safety

As a school/college it is essential that we safeguard children from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material.

A comprehensive approach to online safety empowers staff to protect and educate students and colleagues in their use of technology and establishes the following mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns where appropriate. We actively promote and encourage students, staff, and parents to report anything they feel uncomfortable about via our wellbeing@ email or directly to a trusted adult.

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable and ever changing, but can be classified into four areas of risk:

- **Content:** being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful content, for example: pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation and extremism.
- **Contact:** being subjected to harmful online interaction for other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adult posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.
- **Conduct:** personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending and receiving explicit images (e.g. consensual and non consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying; and
- **Commerce:** risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. We will report any risks to the Anti-Phishing working group (<https://apwg.org>)

We ensure that online safety is a running and interrelated theme when devising and implementing policies and procedures, including our whole school training and discussions with parents and students.

Annex 8 – Whistleblowing in a safeguarding context

While the school has a separate whistleblowing policy, this is a summary that outlines the process when there is a concern that safeguarding issues have not been reported or followed correctly.

This does not replace the whistleblowing policy and should be read in conjunction with it.

Whistleblowing is a term that is used when staff want to report a concern within their organisation the involves their manager or a person senior to them in the organisation which may prevent them from the following the normal reporting systems.

If you are concerned that any member of staff is not following safeguarding processes or behaving in a way that is placing children at risk, you should make the DSL or headteacher aware.

If your concern is about the headteacher, you should raise this with the Chair of Trustees, David Millar via email dmillar@burgate.hants.sch.uk

If you believe that a member of staff is harming a child (an allegation) and this has been reported to the headteacher and no action has been taken, or the member of staff you have concerns about is the headteacher, then you are able to contact the LADO on 01962 876364 or child.protection@hants.gov.uk

Annex 9 - Briefing sheet for temporary and supply staff

For supply staff and those on short contracts in The Burgate School and Sixth Form

While working in The Burgate School and Sixth Form, you have a duty of care towards the students here. This means that at all times you should act in a way that is consistent with their safety and welfare.

In addition, if at any time you have a concern about a child or young person, particularly if you think they may be at risk of abuse or neglect, it is your responsibility to share that concern with the school Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who is Heidi Shering (wellbeing@burgate.hants.sch.uk)

This is not an exhaustive list but you may have become concerned as a result of:

- Observing a physical injury, which you think may have been non-accidental.
- Observing something in the appearance of a child or young person which suggests they are not being sufficiently well cared for.
- Observing behaviour that leads you to be concerned about a child or young person.
- A child or young person telling you that they have been subjected to some form of abuse.
- Observing adult behaviour that leads you to be concerned about their suitability to work with children and young people.

In any of the circumstances listed here, you must write down what you saw or heard, date and sign your account, and give it to the DSL as soon as possible and no longer than 24 hours later. This may be the beginning of a legal process – it is important to understand that legal action against a perpetrator can be seriously damaged by any suggestion that the child has been led in any way.

If a child talks to you about abuse, you should follow these guidelines:

- Rather than directly questioning the child, just listen and be supportive
- Never stop a child who is freely recalling significant events, but don't push the child to tell you more than they wish.
- Make it clear that you may need to pass on information to staff in other agencies who may be able to help – do not promise confidentiality. You are obliged to share any information relating to abuse or neglect.

- Write an account of the conversation immediately, as close to verbatim as possible. Put the date and timings on it and mention anyone else who was present. Then sign it and give your record to the DSL, who should contact Children’s Social Care if appropriate.

The school has a policy on safeguarding children and young people which you can find, together with the local procedures to be followed by all staff, in the safeguarding file on your desktop or in the school office and staff room.

If your concern involves the DSL or the headteacher, you should contact the Chair of Trustees, David Millar (dmillar@burgate.hants.sch.uk) or the LADO (child.protection@hants.gov.uk)

Remember, if you have a concern, report it to the DSL immediately.

Annex 10 - What is child abuse?

For further information and clarification refer to the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP)

<https://www.hampshirescp.org.uk/professionals>

What is abuse and neglect?

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

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional abuse

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during

pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

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

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

The HSCP neglect strategy is used to provide a more detailed summary of neglect and the local thresholds for referrals.

Indicators of abuse

Neglect

The nature of neglect

Neglect is a lack of parental care but poverty and lack of information or adequate services can be contributory factors.

Far more children are registered to the category of neglect on child protection plans than to the other categories. As with abuse, the number of children experiencing neglect is likely to be much higher than the numbers on the plans.

Neglect can include parents failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision or stimulation
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

Neglect is a difficult form of abuse to recognise and is often seen as less serious than other categories. It is, however, very damaging: children who are neglected often develop more slowly than others and may find it hard to make friends and fit in with their peer group.

Neglect is often linked to other forms of abuse, so any concerns school staff have should at least be discussed with the DSL.

Indicators of neglect

It is important to recognise that indicators alone cannot confirm whether a child is being abused. Each child should be seen in the context of their family and the wider community and a proper assessment should be carried out by the appropriate persons. What is important to keep in mind is that if you feel unsure or concerned, do something about it. Do not keep it to yourself.

Physical indicators of neglect

- Constant hunger and stealing food
- Poor personal hygiene - unkempt, dirty or smelly
- Underweight
- Dress unsuitable for weather
- Poor state of clothing
- Illness or injury untreated

Behavioural indicators of neglect

- Constant tiredness
- Frequent absence from school or lateness
- Missing medical appointments
- Isolated among peers
- Frequently unsupervised
- Stealing or scavenging, especially food
- Destructive tendencies

Emotional abuse

The nature of emotional abuse

Most harm is produced in *low warmth, high criticism* homes, not from single incidents.

Emotional abuse is difficult to define, identify/recognise and/or prove.

Emotional abuse is chronic and cumulative and has a long-term impact.

All kinds of abuse and neglect have emotional effects although emotional abuse can occur by itself.

Children can be harmed by witnessing someone harming another person – as in domestic violence.

It is sometimes possible to spot emotionally abusive behaviour from parents to their children, by the way that the adults are speaking to, or behaving towards children. An appropriate challenge or intervention could affect positive change and prevent more intensive work being carried out later on.

Indicators of emotional abuse

Developmental issues

- Delays in physical, mental and emotional development
- Poor school performance
- Speech disorders, particularly sudden disorders or changes.

Behaviour

- Acceptance of punishment which appears excessive
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Continual self-deprecation (I'm stupid, ugly, worthless etc)
- Neurotic behaviour (such as rocking, hair-twisting, thumb-sucking)
- Self-mutilation
- Suicide attempts
- Drug/solvent abuse

- Running away
- Compulsive stealing, scavenging
- Acting out
- Poor trust in significant adults
- Regressive behaviour – e.g., wetting
- Eating disorders
- Destructive tendencies
- Neurotic behaviour
- Arriving early at school, leaving late

Social issues

- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Withdrawal from social interaction
- Over-compliant behaviour
- Insecure, clinging behaviour
- Poor social relationships

Emotional responses

- Extreme fear of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations (“I deserve this”)
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Self-disgust
- Low self-esteem
- Unusually fearful with adults
- Lack of concentration, restlessness, aimlessness
- Extremes of passivity or aggression

Physical abuse

The nature of physical abuse

Most children collect cuts and bruises quite routinely as part of the rough and tumble of daily life. Clearly, it is not necessary to be concerned about most of these minor injuries. But accidental injuries normally occur on the *bony prominences* – e.g., shins. Injuries on the *soft* areas of the body are more likely to be inflicted intentionally and should therefore make us more alert to other concerning factors that may be present.

A body map can assist in the clear recording and reporting of physical abuse. The body map should only be used to record observed injuries and no child should be asked to remove clothing by a member of staff of the school.

Indicators of physical abuse / factors that should increase concern

- Multiple bruising or bruises and scratches (especially on the head and face)
- Clusters of bruises – e.g., fingertip bruising (caused by being grasped)
- Bruises around the neck and behind the ears – the most common abusive injuries are to the head

- Bruises on the back, chest, buttocks, or on the inside of the thighs
- Marks indicating injury by an instrument – e.g., linear bruising (stick), parallel bruising (belt), marks of a buckle
- Bite marks
- Deliberate burning may also be indicated by the pattern of an instrument or object – e.g., electric fire, cooker, cigarette
- Scalds with upward splash marks or *tide marks*
- Untreated injuries or current injuries or burns
- Bald patches.

In the social context of the school, it is normal to ask about a noticeable injury. The response to such an enquiry is generally light-hearted and detailed. So, most of all, concern should be increased when:

- the explanation given does not match the injury
- the explanation uses words or phrases that do not match the vocabulary of the child (adult words)
- no explanation is forthcoming
- the child (or the parent) is secretive or evasive
- the injury is accompanied by allegations of abuse or assault

You should be concerned if the child or young person:

- is reluctant to have parents contacted
- runs away or shows fear of going home
- is aggressive towards themselves or others
- flinches when approached or touched
- is reluctant to undress to change clothing for sport
- wears long sleeves during hot weather
- is unnaturally compliant in the presence of parents
- has a fear of medical help or attention
- admits to a punishment that appears excessive.

Sexual abuse

The nature of sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is often perpetrated by people who are known and trusted by the child – e.g., relatives, family friends, neighbours, babysitters, people working with the child in school, faith settings, clubs or activities. Children can also be subject to child sexual exploitation.

Sexual exploitation is seen as a separate category of sexual abuse.

Characteristics of child sexual abuse:

- it is often planned and systematic – people do not sexually abuse children by accident, though sexual abuse can be opportunistic
- grooming the child – people who abuse children take care to choose a vulnerable child and often spend time making them dependent

- grooming the child's environment – abusers try to ensure that potential adult protectors (parents especially) are not suspicious of their motives.

Most people who sexually abuse children are men, but some women sexually abuse too.

Indicators of sexual abuse

Physical observations

- Damage to genitalia, anus or mouth
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Unexpected pregnancy, especially in very young girls
- Soreness in genital area, anus or mouth and other medical problems such as chronic itching
- Unexplained recurrent urinary tract infections and discharges or abdominal pain

Behavioural observations

- Sexual knowledge inappropriate for age
- Sexualised behaviour or affection inappropriate for age
- Sexually provocative behaviour/promiscuity
- Hinting at sexual activity
- Inexplicable decline in school performance
- Depression or other sudden apparent changes in personality
- Becoming insecure or clinging
- Lack of concentration, restlessness, aimlessness
- Socially isolated or withdrawn
- Overly-compliant behaviour
- Acting out, aggressive behaviour
- Poor trust or fear concerning significant adults
- Regressive behaviour,
- Onset of wetting, by day or night; nightmares
- Onset of insecure, clinging behaviour
- Arriving early at school, leaving late, running away from home
- Suicide attempts, self-mutilation, self-disgust
- Suddenly drawing sexually explicit pictures
- Eating disorders or sudden loss of appetite or compulsive eating
- Regressing to younger behaviour patterns such as thumb sucking or bringing out discarded cuddly toys
- Become worried about clothing being removed
- Trying to be 'ultra-good' or perfect; overreacting to criticism.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily

engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact and can happen online. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point.

- Some of the following signs may be indicators of sexual exploitation:
- Children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- Children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
- Children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends;
- Children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant;
- Children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being;
- Children who misuse drugs and alcohol;
- Children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- Children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

Annex 11: Useful contacts

Key Personnel	Name	Contact details
DSL	Heidi Shering Deputy Head	Tel: 01425 652039 ext: 232 hshering@burgate.hants.sch.uk
Deputy DSL	Katja Gibson (Deputy Head) Vicky Becher (Assistant Head) Jack Barfoot (Head of Year & DT for LAC)	Tel: 01425 652039 ext: 208 Tel: 01425 652039 ext: 234 Tel: 01425 652039 ext: 270
School's named "Prevent" lead	Heidi Shering Deputy Head	Tel: 01425 652039 ext: 200 hshering@burgate.hants.sch.uk
Nominated link-trustee Chair of Trustees	Heather Arnold David Millar	harnold@burgate.hants.sch.uk dmillar@burgate.hants.sch.uk

Children's Referral team / Professionals line	Hampshire Social Services (Hampshire) Wiltshire (MASH) Dorset (Ferndown Children's Social Care Team)	01329 225379 02380 877722 0300 456 0108 (out of hours: 0845 6070 888) 01202 877445 Email: ferndownchildadmin@dorsetcc.gcsx.gov.uk
Police	Hampshire /Wiltshire/Dorset County depends on child's home address	101 Or 999 (emergency)
Safeguarding Advisors Local Authority Designated Officers LADOs	Barbara Piddington Fiona Armfield Shona McMinn	HCC Safeguarding Unit 01962 876364 Child.protection@hants.gov.uk
Hampshire CAMHS		02380 743000
Wiltshire CAMHS		01722 336262 ext. 2779
Early Help Hub (Hampshire tier 2 service)		02380 812113