

## Fishwick Primary School Policy on Child Protection

### A. Named staff/personnel with specific responsibility for Child Protection

Academic Year	Designated Senior Leader & 'Back-Up' or Deputy DSL	Nominated Governor
2014/15	Vicki Conway – DSL Helena Garnham – Deputy DSL Pam Eyre – Back up DSL	Julie Ascroft

### B. Training for Designated Staff in School (DSLs should refresh their training every 2 years KCSIE 2014)

Name of Staff Member / Governor	Date when last attended CP Training	Provided by Whom (e.g. LCC, Governor Services)
Vicki Conway	April 2015	LCC
Helena Garnham	October 2013	LCC
Pam Eyre	October 2014	LCC

### C. Whole School Child Protection Training (all staff should receive induction and "regular" updated training KCSIE 2014)

Who attended (e.g. all teaching and welfare / support staff, Governors, volunteers)	Date	Training Delivered by
All teaching staff, teaching assistants, admin and welfare. All staff joining after January 2015 receive CP training as part of Induction	30.1.15	Vicki Conway

### D. Review dates for this policy ( annual review required KCSIE 2014)

Review Date	Changes made	By whom
January 2016		

## 1. PURPOSE OF A CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

An effective whole school child protection policy is one which provides clear direction to staff and others about expected codes of behaviour in dealing with child protection issues. An effective policy also makes explicit the school's commitment to the development of good practice and sound procedures. This ensures that child protection concerns and referrals may be handled sensitively, professionally and in ways which prioritise the needs of the child.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

Fishwick Primary School fully recognises the contribution it can make to protect children and support pupils in school'.

There are three main elements to our Child Protection Policy'.

- (a) **Prevention:**  
(e.g. positive school atmosphere, teaching and pastoral support to pupils).
- (b) **Protection:**  
(By following agreed procedures, ensuring staff are trained and supported to respond appropriately and sensitively to Child Protection concerns).
- (c) **Support:**  
(To pupils and school staff and to children who may have been abused).

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers in school.

## 3. SCHOOL COMMITMENT

We recognise that high self- esteem, confidence, peer support and clear lines of communication with trusted adults helps all children, and especially those at risk of or suffering abuse.'

Our school will therefore:

- (a) Establish and maintain an ethos where children feel secure and are encouraged to talk, and are listened to *e.g. in PSHE sessions, with our BLP, counsellor sessions if appropriate.*
- (b) Ensure that children know that there are adults in the school who they can approach if they are worried or are in difficulty.
- (c) Include in the curriculum activities and opportunities for PSHE which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe and / or communicate their fears or concerns about abuse (See curriculum overview, Childline posters).

- (d) Include in the curriculum material which will help children develop realistic attitudes to the responsibilities of adult life, particularly with regard to childcare and parenting skills.
- (e) Ensure that every effort will be made to establish effective working relationships with parents and colleagues from other agencies.

#### 4. FRAMEWORK

'Effective safeguarding systems are those where:

- The child's needs are paramount, and the needs and wishes of child, be they be a baby or infant, or an older child, should be put first, so that every child receives the support they need before a problem escalates;
- All professionals who come into contact with children and families are alert to their needs and any risks of harm that individual abusers, or potential abusers, may pose to those children;
- All professionals share appropriate information in a timely way and can discuss concerns about an individual child with colleagues (in school this would be the DSL/backup DSL) and local authority children's social care.
- High quality professionals are able to use their expert judgement to put the child's needs at the heart of the safeguarding system so that the right solutions can be found for each individual child;
- All professionals contribute to whatever actions are needed to safeguard and promote the child's welfare and take part in regularly reviewing the outcomes for the child against specific and outcomes. (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013)

Child protection is the responsibility of *all* adults and especially those working with children. The development of appropriate procedures and the monitoring of good practice are the responsibilities of the Lancashire Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

**[www.lancashire.gov.uk/safeguardingchildrenboard/](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/safeguardingchildrenboard/) will provide you with all of the information you need about the LSCB**

#### 5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

*All* adults working with or on behalf of children have a responsibility to protect children. There are, however, key people within schools and the Local Authority who have specific responsibilities under Child Protection procedures. The names of those carrying these responsibilities in school for the current year are listed on the cover sheet of this document.

What is the role of the Designated Senior Leader (Child Protection)?

- Responsible for maintaining child welfare and child protection records centrally, securely and, where appropriate (i.e. CP records), confidentially

- Responsible for sharing records appropriately when children leave or move schools
- Responsible for co-ordinating action in child protection situations e.g. monitoring and support plans in school, referring to other agencies, attending Child Protection Conferences and other meetings
- Ensures that a CP policy is in place and that staff are aware
- Reviews policy annually and ensures sign-off by Governing Body
- Attends refresher training every 2 yrs (inc. multi-agency training)
- Ensures all staff receive induction and an update every 3 yrs
- Offers support and advice to staff, day to day, who may have concerns about children in school.

#### 5.4. What are the roles and responsibilities of the named governor responsible for Child Protection?

- The named governor has overall responsibility to ensure that the school has appropriate Safeguarding measures in place.
- S/he should also take appropriate training.
- The named governor does not have day to day dealings with the school and so does not have any operational role in individual safeguarding issues. In the interests of confidentiality and data protection, governors should not be given any details relating to specific child protection situations.

#### **See Keeping Children Safe in Education (DCFS 2014)**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education>

Who is available within the Local Authority to offer advice and support?

The Safeguarding in Education team in Lancashire include Mary Aurens and Colin McIntyre.

Advice is also available from LADO, Legal, Schools HR, School Advisor and the CAF officer.

**See Safeguarding Children & Safer Recruitment in Education' (DfES 2007) There should already be a hard copy in school but, if not, it can be accessed at: [www. teachernet.gov.uk](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk)**

## **6. PROCEDURES**

Where it is believed that a child is suffering from, or is at risk of significant harm, we will follow the procedures set out in the document produced by Lancashire Safeguarding Children Board (2011) and Document A1 in the CP Information Pack - 'Handling Concerns About the Welfare or Safety of A Child in School.'

The child protection policy and child protection procedures should be reviewed at the start or near the start of each academic year.

*How does our school ensure that other adults in school know what to do if there are child protection concerns?*

Through our H&S Leaflet other adults will be informed about our child protection procedures.

*How do we inform parents of the school's duties and responsibilities under the Child Protection procedures?*

The policy is on the school website, and available in school office.

## **7. TRAINING AND SUPPORT**

Our school will ensure that the Designated Senior Leader, back up Designated Senior Leader and the nominated governor for Child Protection attend training relevant to their role' at intervals of not longer than 2 years. The Designated Senior Leader/back up DSL will also attend Multi Agency Child Protection training within this timescale.'

All staff receive level 1 child protection training through induction and an update every three years delivered by the DSP. The staff will be kept informed on current child protection issues in staff meetings.

For further support and information contact the local authority on 01772 533863 – there is also a leaflet in folder at back of CP Information Pack support. There are networks available to staff if there are concerns or queries (e.g. LCC Employee Welfare and Counselling Service 08000 214 154 [www.youreap.co.uk](http://www.youreap.co.uk) or use the link

<http://lccintranet2/corporate/web/?siteid=5193&pageid=27239>

## **8. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Confidentiality is an issue which needs to be discussed and fully understood by all those working with children, particularly in the context of child protection'.

The school ensures that parents, governors and every adult working in / associated with the school understands the need for and basic principles regarding confidentiality through appropriate training and access to the CP policy and procedure.

A teacher or other adult can never guarantee confidentiality to a child because it's the teacher's duty to report anything that concerns the safeguarding of that child or any child about whom information is disclosed.

*What should they say to a child who asks the adult to keep a secret and how should the child be advised that the information may need to be shared with others?*

- Tell the child that you must pass this information on.
- Never make promises about confidentiality or keeping 'secrets' to children (e.g. see Appendix 2 of the attached Procedures template)

Who needs to be given information relating to a child about whom there are concerns? Any agency which may need to deal with the child e.g. the police, social services or health service.

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 Children's Social Care Services], must always have regard to both common and statute law.

Normally, personal information should only be disclosed to third parties (including other agencies) with the consent of the subject of that information (*Data Protection Act 1998, European Convention on Human Rights, Article 8*). 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 dictate that the information should be shared. The law permits the disclosure of confidential information necessary to safeguard a child or children. Disclosure should be justifiable in each case, according to the particular facts of the case, and legal advice should be sought if in doubt.

**See also Document A10(ii) in the Child Protection Information Pack**

## **9. RECORDS AND MONITORING**

Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. Our school is clear about the need to record any concerns held about a child or children within our school, the status of such records and when these records, or parts thereof, should be shared with other agencies.

What system does your school have for recording concerns about the welfare or behaviour of a child?

How are these concerns passed to the DSL – do you have blank pro-forma's in a central place for staff to complete – once completed where are they put – be mindful of confidentiality issues – if not given direct to DSL – perhaps sealed in an envelope and placed in a designated place for the DSL to pick up

When it becomes apparent there are child protection concerns the staff member concerned will raise the issue with the DSP who will decide if it needs recording. If it does the DSP will use the Lancashire proforma. The record should be written within 24 hours. (See appendix 5)

These (CP) records are kept separate from other school records in a locked cabinet in the Head teacher's office.

**See also Document A10(i) in the Child Protection Information Pack**

## **10. CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCES**

Case Conferences

In the event of attendance at a conference, wherever possible, DSP will attend. Although the well being of the child is the first priority, wherever possible, support will be given to the family.

Policies, procedures, staff awareness and training will be reviewed annually.

**Go to [www.lancashire.gov.uk/safeguardingchildreboard/](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/safeguardingchildreboard/) and access Chapter of the Safeguarding Children Procedures; Managing Individual Cases where there are Concerns about a Child's Safety and Welfare – Procedures**

## 11. SUPPORTING PUPILS AT RISK

Our school recognises that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self worth and to view the world in a positive way. This school may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. Whilst at school, their behaviour may still be challenging and defiant and there may even be moves to consider suspension or exclusion from school.

It is also recognised that some children who have experienced abuse may in turn abuse others. This requires a considered, sensitive approach in order that the child can receive appropriate help and support<sup>1</sup>.

This school will endeavour to support pupils through:

- (a) The curriculum, to encourage self-esteem and self-motivation;
- (b) The school ethos, which promotes a positive, supportive and secure environment and which gives all pupils and adults a sense of being respected and valued;
- (c) The implementation of school behaviour management policies (required under the Code of Practice, 1993 Education Act)<sup>2</sup>;
- (d) A consistent approach, which recognises and separates the cause of behaviour from that which the child displays. This is vital to ensure that all children are supported within the school setting;
- (e) Regular liaison with other professionals and agencies who support the pupils and their families, in-line with appropriate confidentiality parameters;
- (f) A commitment to develop productive, supportive relationships with parents, whenever possible and so long as it is in the child's best interests to do so;
- (g) The development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable staff group trained to respond appropriately in child protection situations.

This policy should be considered alongside other related policies in school. These are.... (for example)

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<sup>1</sup> Guidance for schools on the management and support of young people who display problematic or sexually harmful behaviour, for example is available via [mary.aurens@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:mary.aurens@lancashire.gov.uk)

<sup>2</sup> See also Education & Inspections Bill + 'Advice and Guidance to Schools and Local Authorities on Managing Behaviour and Attendance: the legal framework for school discipline', 2006.

- Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs
- School Security
- Staff Codes of Conduct
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Anti-bullying
- Special Education Needs
- Health and Safety
- E-safety
- Handling Allegations of Abuse Against Staff

We recognise that, statistically, children with behavioural difficulties and disabilities are particularly vulnerable to abuse. School staff who work, in any capacity, with children with profound and multiple disabilities, sensory impairment and/or emotional and behaviour problems will need to be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse.

#### **See CP Information Pack Document C4**

It must also be stressed that in a home environment where there is domestic violence, drug or alcohol misuse, children may also be particularly vulnerable and in need of support or protection.

**Go to [www.lancashire.gov.uk/safeguardingchildrenboard/](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/safeguardingchildrenboard/) and click on contents and go to CHILDREN IN SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

## **12. SAFER SCHOOLS, SAFER STAFF**

Fishwick has adopted the DCSF / IRSC Guidance for Safe Working Practices for the Protection of Children and Staff in Education Settings, March 2009. This is available for all staff and volunteers in the school staff room. **See Document A10 in the CP Information Pack**

What information is made available to school staff about 'counselling' and/or giving advice to children/young people about sexual matters?

**Go to: <http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/safeguardingchildrenboard/>, Appendix Q: 'Working with Sexually Active Young People Under the Age of 18**

*What steps are taken by the school to recruit and select safe staff?*

The headteacher and Chair of Governors have undertaken safer selection training. The whole selection process follows advice given in training from advertising post, to short listing, to interviewing and asking pertinent questions and to obtaining CRB clearance. **(see Document A6)**

The school has adopted Lancashire LEA procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff. **(see Document A7)**

**Documents A6(i) and (ii), A8 and A7(i) in the Child Protection Information Pack.**

**Also, go to: <http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/safeguardingchildrenboard/> Chapter 6, pp.16-20, and Appendix R: 'Procedure for Managing Allegations Against People who work with Children3'**

If an allegation is made against a member of staff/volunteer then the Head Teacher is the Senior Officer who deals with this and liaises with the Local Authority. If the allegation is against the Head Teacher then the Senior Officer who deals with this is the Chair of Governors.

In all instances, the Senior Officer has no role of investigation at the onset of the allegation and advice should be sought from the Safeguarding in Education Team (01772 532723) or LADO (01772 533953)

### **13. USE OF MOBILE PHONES AND CAMERA'S**

The Statutory Framework for EYFS requirements which came into force on 01.09.2012 states that;

"The safeguarding policy and procedures must include an explanation of the action to be taken in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff, and cover the use of mobile phones and cameras in the setting" EYFS 2012 s3.4.

Children have their photographs taken to provide evidence of their achievements for developmental records (The Early Years Foundation Stage, EYFS 2012). Staff, visitors, volunteers and students are not permitted to use their own mobile phones to take or record any images of children for their own records during session times.

#### Procedures

Under the Data Protection Act 1998, the school must seek parental consent to take photographs and use video recorders. Photographs will be stored on the shared drive which is password protected.

The schools digital camera/s or memory cards must not leave the school Setting unless on an official school trip. Photos are printed / uploaded in the setting by staff and once done images are then removed from the cameras memory.

Parents are reminded that in recording/photographing events such as sports day, outings/trips, Christmas and fundraising events that they only photograph their own child. It is further requested that photographs which capture images of other children in the background are not displayed on social networking websites.

Any member of staff employed by the school may use school cameras to photograph or record pupil activities. Many mobile phones have inbuilt cameras. It is the school's policy that the cameras may not be used on the school premises without permission of the head teacher. Under no circumstances may personal mobile phone cameras be used to capture images of pupils. Staff may carry mobile phones on school premises. These may be used to receive urgent calls or if staff need to be contactable in the event of an emergency. However, mobile phones are not to be used in classrooms in school hours.

#### **Cameras and mobile phones are prohibited in all toilet and changing areas**

If an allegation is made against a member of staff/volunteer then the Head

Teacher is the Senior Officer who deals with this and liaises with the Local Authority. If the allegation is against the Head Teacher then the Senior Officer who deals with this is the Chair of Governors.

In all instances, the Senior Officer has no role of investigation at the onset of the allegation and advice should be sort from the Safeguarding in Education Team (01772 532723) or LADO (01772 533953)

## **SCHOOL CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES**

**The DSL will ensure that the school Child Protection policy is made publically available and that parents are aware of the fact that suspected abuse or neglect may be made and the school/colleges role within this. That staff know the policy and use it appropriately, it is reviewed and updated regularly along with the governing body/management committee.**

## **1. What Should Staff/Volunteers Do If They Have Concerns About A Child or Young Person in School?**

Education professionals who are concerned about a child's welfare or who believe that a child is or may be at risk of abuse should pass any information to the Designated Senior Leader (**DSL**) in school; this should *always* occur as soon as possible and certainly within 24 hours (see Flowchart at Appendix 1):

**The Designated Senior Leader is: Vicki Conway**

**The Back Up Designated Senior Leader is: Helena Garnham**

It is these senior colleagues who are responsible for taking action where the welfare or safety of children or young people is concerned. If staff are uncertain about whether their concerns are indeed 'child protection' then a discussion with their DSL/line manager will assist in determining the most appropriate next course of action<sup>3</sup>:

### **Staff should never:**

- Do nothing/assume that another agency or professional will act or is acting.
- Attempt to resolve the matter themselves, the process in our school is that all concerns are reported to the DSL/backup DSL, if no one who is DSL trained is contactable, then the concerns are reported to the next most senior member of staff.

### **What should the DSL consider right at the outset?**

- Am I dealing with 'risk' or 'need'? (By definition, a child at risk is also a child in need. However, what is the *priority / level and immediacy* of risk / need?)
- Can the level of need identified be met:
  - In or by the school or by accessing universal services/ undertaking a level 2 or 3 CAF/TAF without referral to Children's Social Care (formerly Social Services) or other targeted services
  - By working with the child, parents and colleagues?

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<sup>3</sup> Detailed information on possible signs and symptoms of abuse can be found in Document C1 of the CP Information Pack and / or [www.lancashire.gov.uk/safeguardingchildrenboard/](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/safeguardingchildrenboard/) Appendix H while the LSCB '**Procedures for the Management of Individual Cases**' click on contents and go to Chapter 13 Appendices and got to 13.3:- [NICE Guidelines 'When to suspect child maltreatment'](#)

- What resources are available to me / the school and what are their limitations?
- Is the level of need such that a referral needs to be made to Children's Social Care which requests that an assessment of need be undertaken? **(Level 4 on the current CoN)**
- Is the level and/or likelihood of risk such that a child protection referral needs to be made (i.e. a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm? **(Level 4 on the current Con)**)
- What information is available to me: Child, Parents, Family & Environment?
- What information is inaccessible and, potentially, how significant might this be?
- Who do I/don't I need to speak to now and what do they need to know?
- Where can I access appropriate advice and/or support? (Safeguarding in Education Team 01772 532723)
- If I am not going to refer, then what action am I going to take? (e.g. time-limited monitoring plan, discussion with parents or other professionals, recording etc)

## **2. Feedback to Staff Who Report Concerns to the Designated Senior Leader**

Rules of confidentiality dictate that it may not always be possible or appropriate for the Designated Senior Leader to feedback to staff who report concerns to them. Such information will be shared on a 'need to know' basis only and the Designated Senior Leader will decide which information needs to be shared, when and with whom. The primary purpose of confidentiality in this context is to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.

## **3. Thresholds for Referral to Children's Social Care (CSC)**

Where a Designated Senior Leader or line manager considers that a referral to CSC may be required, there are two thresholds for (and their criteria) and types of referral that need to be carefully considered:

### **(i) Is this a Child In Need?**

Under section 17 (s.17(10)) of the Children Act 1989, a child is in need if:

- (a) He is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity to achieve or maintain, a reasonable standard of health or development, without the provision of services by a local authority;
- (b) His health or development is likely to be impaired, or further impaired, without the provision of such services;
- (c) He is disabled.

### **(ii) Is this a Child Protection Matter?**

Under section 47(1) of the Children Act 1989, a local authority has a duty to make enquiries where they are informed that a child who lives or is found in their area:

- (a) is the subject of an Emergency Protection Order;

- (b) is in Police Protection; or where they have
- (c) **reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm.**

Therefore, it is the 'significant harm' threshold' that justifies statutory intervention into family life. A professional making a child protection referral under s.47 must therefore provide information which clearly outlines that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm.

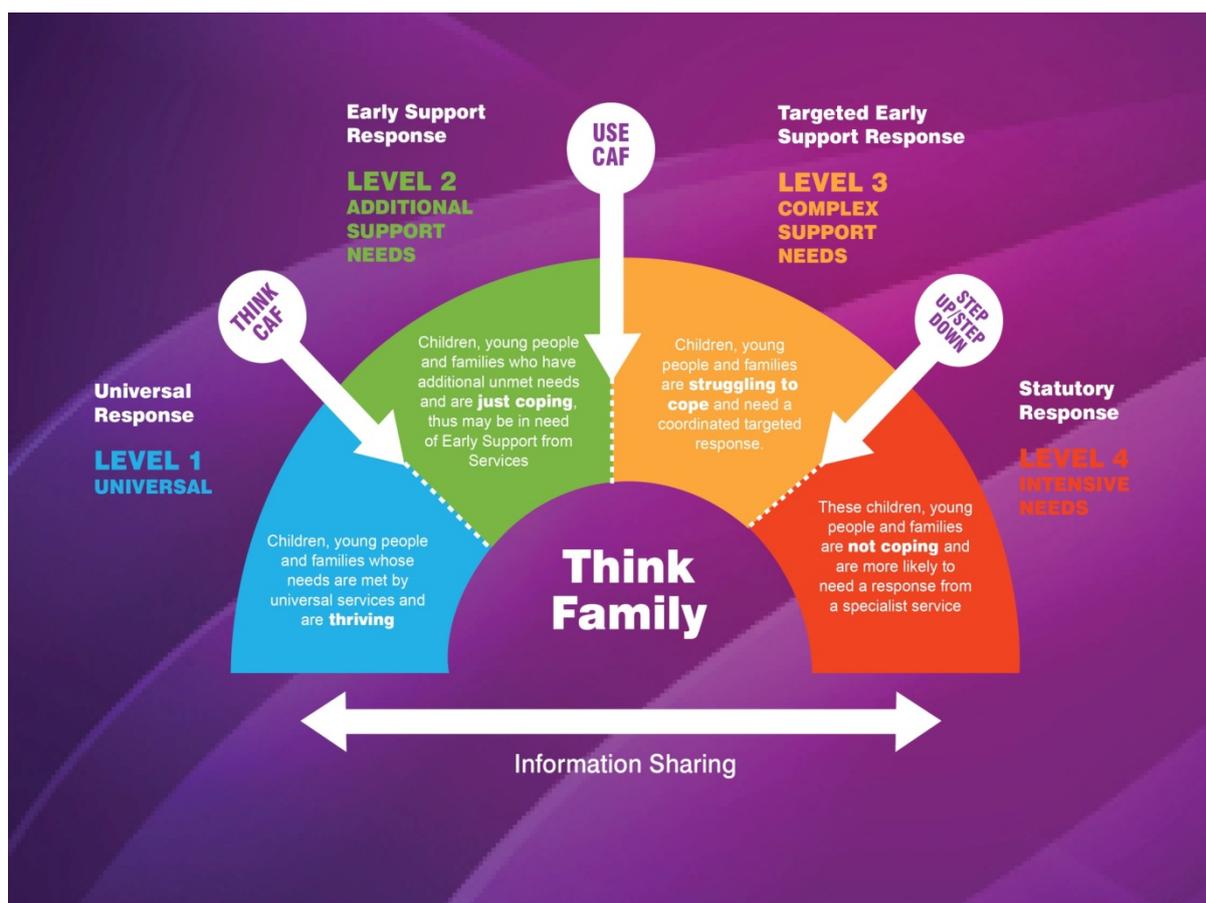
**The Designated Senior Leader will make judgements around 'significant harm', levels of 'need' and when to refer.**

#### 4. Making Referrals to CSC (Guidance for the Designated Senior Leader)

**As of 31<sup>st</sup> October 2013, the thresholds and documentation for referrals to CSC changed**

The Lancashire CoN provides 4 levels to described family circumstances

- **LEVEL 1** Universal – thriving
- **LEVEL 2** Additional Support Needs – Just coping
- **LEVEL 3** Complex Support Needs – Struggling to Cope
- **LEVEL 4** Intensive Needs – Not Coping



**The link below enables you to access the documents to enable a referral to CSC and also the CAF/TAF forms as well as relevant guidance documents**

<http://www.lancashirechildrenstrust.org.uk/resources/?siteid=6274&pageid=40180>

## **5. CSC Responses to Referrals and Timescales**

In response to a referral, Children's Social Care may decide to:

- Provide advice to the referrer and/or child/family;
- Refer on to another agency who can provide services;
- Convene a Strategy Meeting (within five working days);
- Provide support services under Section 17;
- Undertake a Statutory Assessment (completed within 45 working days);
- Convene an Initial Child Protection Conference (within 15 working days of a Strategy Meeting)  
(see [www.lancashire.gov.uk/safeguardingchildrenboard](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/safeguardingchildrenboard) - **click on contents and go to Chapter 3**; Managing Individual Cases where there are Concerns about a Child's Safety and Welfare - Procedures)
- Accommodate the child under Section 20 (with parental consent);
- Make an application to court for an Order;
- Take no further action.

### **1. Feedback from Children's Social Care**

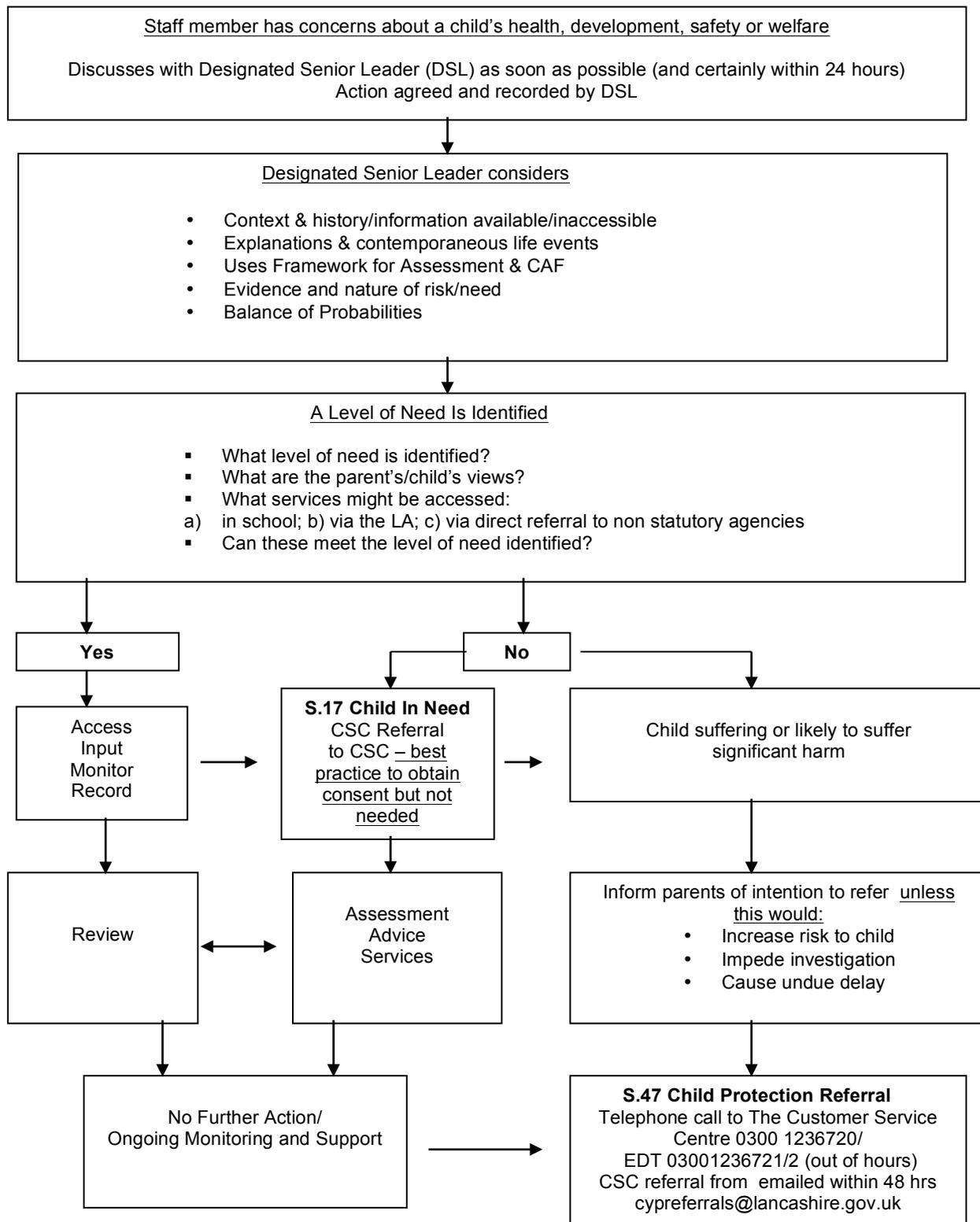
Upon receiving referral, Children's Social Care will decide on a course of action. They should acknowledge receipt of a written referral within **ONE** working day. If the referrer has not received an acknowledgement within **THREE** working days they should make contact with the relevant manager in the Children's Social Care Team. The Children's Social Care manager is responsible for ensuring that the referrer and the family (provided this does not increase any risk to the child) are informed of the outcome of the referral and reasons for supporting the decision. This will be done as soon as possible and, in all cases, within a **maximum of 7 working days**.

### **7. Risk Assessment 'Checklist'**

- Does/could the suspected harm meet the LSCB definitions of abuse?
- Are there cultural, linguistic or disability issues?
- I am wrongly attributing something to impairment?

- Does the chronology indicate any possible patterns which could/do impact upon the level of risk?
- Are any injuries or incidents acute, cumulative, episodic?
- Did any injuries result from spontaneous action, neglect, or intent?
- Explanations consistent with injuries/behaviour?
- Severity and duration of any harm?
- Effects upon the child's health/development?
- Immediate/longer term effects?
- Likelihood of recurrence?
- Child's reaction?
- Child's perception of the harm?
- Child's needs, wishes and feelings?
- Parent's/carer's attitudes/response to concerns?
- How willing are they to cooperate?
- What does the child mean to the family?
- What role does the child play?
- Possible effects of intervention?
- Protective factors and strengths of/for child (i.e. resilience/vulnerability)
- Familial strengths and weaknesses?
- Possibilities?
- Probabilities?
- When and how is the child at risk?
- How imminent is any likely risk?
- How grave are the possible consequences?
- How safe is this child?
- What are the risk assessment options?
- What are the risk management options?
- What is the interim plan?

## APPENDIX 1: TAKING ACTION ON CHILD WELFARE/PROTECTION CONCERNS IN SCHOOL



The Designated Senior Leader in School is: Vicki Conway Tel / Room: 01772 491402

The 'Back Up' DSL is: Helena Garnham Tel / Room: 01772 491402

## **APPENDIX 2: TALKING AND LISTENING TO CHILDREN**

### **If a child wants to confide in you, you *SHOULD***

- Be accessible and receptive;
- Listen carefully and uncritically, at the child's pace;
- Take what is said seriously;
- Reassure children that they are right to tell;
- Tell the child that you must pass this information on;
- Make sure that the child is ok ;
- Make a careful record of what was said (see *Recording*).

### **You should *NEVER***

- Investigate or seek to prove or disprove possible abuse;
- Make promises about confidentiality or keeping 'secrets' to children;
- Assume that someone else will take the necessary action;
- Jump to conclusions, be dismissive or react with shock, anger, horror etc;
- Speculate or accuse anybody;
- Investigate, suggest or probe for information;
- Confront another person (adult or child) allegedly involved;
- Offer opinions about what is being said or the persons allegedly involved;
- Forget to record what you have been told;
- Fail to pass this information on to the correct person (the Designated Senior Leader).

### **Children with communication difficulties, or who use alternative/augmentative communication systems**

- While extra care may be needed to ensure that signs of abuse and neglect are interpreted correctly, any suspicions should be reported in exactly the same manner as for other children;
- opinion and interpretation will be crucial (be prepared to be asked about the basis for it and to possibly have its validity questioned if the matter goes to court).

The LA's Child Protection Information Pack (2004) provides guidance on these issues insofar as children with disabilities/complex needs are concerned – See Document C4.

### **Recordings should**

- State who was present, time, date and place;
- Be written in ink and be signed by the recorder;
- Be passed to the DSL or Head Teacher immediately (certainly within 24 hours);
- Use the child's words wherever possible;
- Be factual/state exactly what was said;
- Differentiate clearly between fact, opinion, interpretation, observation and/or allegation.

### **What information do you need to obtain?**

- Schools have **no investigative role** in child protection (Police and Children's Social Care will investigate possible abuse very thoroughly and in great detail, they will gather evidence and test hypotheses – leave this to them!);
- Never prompt or probe for information, your job is to listen, record and pass on;
- Ideally, you should be clear about what is being said in terms of **who, what, where and when**;
- The question which you should be able to answer at the end of the listening process is 'might this be a child protection matter?';
- If the answer is yes, or if you're not sure, record and pass on immediately to the Designated Senior Leader /Head Teacher/line manager.

#### **If you do need to ask questions, what is and isn't OK?**

- **Never** asked closed questions i.e. ones which children can answer yes or no to e.g. Did he touch you?
- **Never** make suggestions about who, how or where someone is alleged to have touched, hit etc e.g. Top or bottom, front or back?
- If we must, use only '**minimal prompts**' such as 'go on ... tell me more about that ... tell me everything that you remember about that ... ..'
- Timescales are very important: '**When was the last time this happened?**' is an important question.

#### **What else should we think about in relation to disclosure?**

- Is there a place in school which is particularly suitable for listening to children e.g. not too isolated, easily supervised, quiet etc;
- We need to think carefully about our own body language – how we present will dictate how comfortable a child feels in telling us about something which may be extremely frightening, difficult and personal;
- Be prepared to answer the 'what happens next' question;
- We should never make face-value judgements or assumptions about individual children. For example, we 'know that [child.....] tells lies';
- Think about how you might react if a child DID approach you in school. We need to be prepared to offer a child in this position exactly what they need in terms of protection, reassurance, calmness and objectivity;
- Think about what support **you** could access if faced with this kind of situation in school.

### APPENDIX 3: Children’s Social Care Integrated Assessment and Support Teams

The Customer Service Centre                      0300 123 6720  
email address for referrals                      [cypreferrals@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:cypreferrals@lancashire.gov.uk)  
Emergency Duty Team (Out of Hours)      0300 123 6721/2

### APPENDIX 4: An organisation which can demonstrate a good safeguarding culture and ethos will have all of the aspects of the exemplar below in place

