



Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and procedure
To be reviewed: **June 2022**

Policy aim:

This policy has been developed in line with, '**working to safeguard children 2015**', '**Framework for the assessment of children in need and their families, 2000**', '**What to do if you are worried a child is being abused, 2015**' and '**Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board, guidelines.**'

Bardwell Branch-Out recognises that all staff have a full and active part to play in protecting children and young people from harm and that the child's welfare is a paramount concern. Branch-Out strives to provide a safe, caring, positive and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical, and moral development of every child/young person, free from discrimination and bullying – where all children can play and develop happily.

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers at Bardwell Branch-Out. The aims of the policy are:

- To support children's/young person's development in ways that will foster, security, confidence and resilience.
- To provide an environment in which all children and young people feel safe, secure, valued and respected. In addition, feel confident and know how approach any staff member if there are difficulties.
- To raise the awareness of all staff and volunteers of the need to safeguard all children and young people and their responsibilities in identifying and reporting concerns.
- To provide a systematic means of monitoring children and young people who are known or thought to be at risk of harm, contributing to assessments of need and support plans.
- To acknowledge the need for effective communication between all staff and volunteers in relation to safeguarding children and young people.
- To develop a structured procedure within Branch-Out to be followed by all staff and volunteers when dealing with concerns.
- To develop and maintain effective working relationships with relevant agencies involved with safeguarding children and young people.
- To ensure that all staff and volunteers have been recruited via Safer Recruitment techniques.



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Procedures:

- All staff and volunteers will understand and fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities. The Bardwell Branch-Out management will have undertaken designated lead safeguarding through OSCB and will be updated every 2 years. All play workers will have undertaken generalist safeguarding training, updated every 3 years.
- All staff and volunteers joining Branch-Out will be made aware of this policy and the procedures for child protection during their induction when starting at Branch-Out.
- Branch-Out management will have undertaken safer recruitment (updated every 5 years) training to ensure the suitability of adults and volunteers working with children and young people at Branch-Out.
- The name of any member of staff considered not suitable to work with children and young people will be notified to the DBS with the advice and support of the LADO.
- All procedures will be reviewed on an annual basis.

All staff and volunteers at Branch-Out will follow OSCB procedures and LA guidance in all cases of abuse or suspected abuse (www.oscb.org.uk).

- All staff and volunteers understand their responsibility to safeguard children and young people, sharing any concerns that they have.
- If there is a concern regarding a child or young person's welfare, possible abuse or neglect a referral is made to the LCSS North team on 0345 241 2703. For children and young people in immediate danger contact the MASH team on 0345 0507666.
- All staff will have undertaken training for CPOMS during their generalist safeguarding training. All concerns are to be detailed and accurate and inputted in a timely manner. All records are kept confidential and secure by ensuring that all staff sign out once they have logged a concern.
- Where appropriate, Branch-Out management will attend and support case conferences, family support meetings, core groups or other multi agency planning meetings. In addition, management will establish and maintain links with relevant agencies and co-operate as required with enquires.



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- All staff and volunteers will understand the procedure in dealing with allegations against staff in terms of child protection and how it differs from other concerns.
- All staff and volunteers will have undertaken the online Prevent course on anti-terrorism and extremism. This is a statutory requirement under the counter terrorism and security act 2015.

Supporting Children and young people.

Bardwell Branch-Out recognises that a child or young person who is subjected to abuse may feel anxious, helpless, scared and humiliated. This could manifest in a range of different behaviours outside the norm for that child. Branch-Out will support children and young people by:

- Encouraging the development of self-esteem and resilience in every aspect of life, in addition to providing a caring, safe and positive environment.
- Liaise and work in partnership with all other support services involved in safeguarding children and young people.
- Ensuring that all major and significant concerns are referred to social care in a timely manner.
- Notifying Social Care when a child or young person attending Branch-Out is privately fostered.

Confidentiality.

- Branch-Out recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential.
- Branch-Out management will disclose personal information about a child or young person to other members of staff and volunteers on a need to know basis only.
- However, all staff and volunteers must be aware that they have a professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children and young people.



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Branch - Out will always undertake to share our intention to refer a child or young person to Social Care with their parents /carers unless to do so could put the child at greater risk of harm or impede a criminal investigation. If in doubt, we will consult with OSCB or MASH.

- Branch-Out will take no names consultations to the LCSS, local Assessment and MASH teams to discuss concerns regarding a child or young person. However, it's understood that if they ask for a name it will be disclosed and will then become a referral.

Supporting all Staff.

- Branch-Out recognises that all staff and volunteers who have become involved with a child or young person who has suffered harm or appears to be likely to suffer harm may find the situation stressful and upsetting.
- Branch-Out will support such staff and volunteers by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with the Branch-Out management and to seek further support. This could be provided by another trusted colleague and/or a representative of a professional body as appropriate.
- In consultation with all staff and volunteers, Branch-Out have adopted a code of conduct and handbook. These form part of the staff and volunteer induction. Branch-Out understands that staff should have access to advice on the boundaries of appropriate behaviour.
- Branch-Out recognises that the Designated Leads should have access to support and appropriate workshops, courses or meetings organised by OSCB.

Allegations against Staff.

- All staff and volunteers should take care not to place themselves in a vulnerable position with a child or young person. It is always advisable for interviews or work with individual children or parents to be conducted in view of other adults.
- Branch-Out understands that a child or young person may make an allegation against a member of staff. If such an allegation is made, the member of staff or volunteer receiving the allegation will immediately inform Branch-Out management or the most senior member of staff available.



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- Branch Management on all such occasions will discuss the content of the allegation with the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) before taking any action. Our Oxfordshire County contacts are Alison Beasley, LADO (01865 815956) or Donna Crozier, Assistant LADO (01865 816382).

- If the allegation made to a member of staff concerns management themselves, the person receiving the allegation will immediately inform a member of the Bardwell School safeguarding team who will consult with the LADO without notifying the manager first.

- Branch-Out will follow the procedures for managing allegations against staff, a copy of which can be accessed through the OSCB website.

- Suspension of the member of staff or volunteer against whom an allegation has been made needs careful consideration, consulting with the above-named professionals in making this decision.

Whistleblowing.

- Branch-Out recognises that children cannot be expected to raise concerns in an environment where staff and volunteers fail to do so.

- All staff and volunteers should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues and appropriate advice will be sought from the LADO where necessary.

Physical Intervention.

- Branch-Out's policy and procedures on physical intervention is set out separately in the Physical Intervention Policy (PP25). It complies with OSCB Guidance.

Anti-Bullying.



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- Branch-Out's policy on the prevention and management of bullying is set out in a separate policy and acknowledges that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures. Bullying is a safeguarding matter that if left unresolved can become a child protection matter. Branch-Out will take seriously any bullying concerns and both investigate and take action to protect pupils where appropriate.
- Branch-Out adopts Bardwell School's Anti Bullying policy which should be read alongside the school's behaviour policy.

Health and Safety.

- Branch-Out's Health and safety policy reflects the consideration we give to the protection of our children and young people both physically within Branch-Out and offsite when undertaking trips and visits. Our health and safety policy is a separate document (PP12) that is shared with all staff and volunteers during the induction process.

Children with Special Educational Needs.

At Branch-Out, we recognise that children with special educational needs (SEN) and impairments can face additional safeguarding challenges. This policy reflects the fact that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children. This can include:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse such as behaviour, mood and injury relate to the child's impairment without further exploration;
- children with SEN and impairments can be disproportionately impacted by things like bullying- without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming these barriers.

Mobile Phones.

- During both after school club and holiday sessions, staff are not permitted to make/receive calls/text during working time. The only exception will be in the case of emergency. This will be agreed with the session leader beforehand.



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- All

staff phones are to be placed within the mobile phone box which is locked within the kitchen. The Bardwell Branch-Out phone number will need to be directed to, in the case that a staff member requires to be contacted by a family member or other contact. **The Bardwell Branch-Out mainline number is: 07721 233995**

- When offsite, all staff will be able to have their phones for emergency purposes. However, staff are not permitted to use any recording equipment on their phone including photos, videos, sound recordings and social media
- The session leader for the day's session will have the Bardwell Branch-Out mobile phone on them at all times. The camera has been disabled and is encrypted with the leader's fingerprints and PIN.

Types of abuse and neglect:

All Branch-Out staff and volunteers should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases multiple issues will overlap with one another.

Abuse: a form 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 others (e.g. via the internet). They may be abused by an adult or adults or another child or children.

Physical abuse: a form of abuse which 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 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 cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of



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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: 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 care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Specific Safeguarding Issues

Peer on Peer abuse: Branch-Out recognises that children are capable of abusing their peers. In a situation where child abuse is alleged to have been carried out by another child, our child protection procedures should be adhered to for both the victim and the alleged abuser; this means it should be considered as a childcare and protection issue for both children.

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. 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.



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Radicalisation: The Counter Terrorism & Security Act 2015 places a Prevent duty on specified schools to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”. The education and childcare specified authorities in Schedule 6 to the Act are as follows:

- The proprietors of maintained schools, non-maintained special schools, maintained nursery schools, independent schools (including academies and free schools) and alternative provision academies, PRUs, registered early years providers, registered late years providers and some holiday schemes.

Schools/settings subject to the Prevent Duty will be expected to demonstrate activity in the following areas –

- Assessing the risk of children being drawn into terrorism.
- Demonstrate that they are protecting children and young people from being drawn into terrorism by having robust safeguarding policies.
- Ensure that their safeguarding arrangements take into account the policies and procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- Make sure that staff have training that gives them the knowledge and confidence to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism, and to challenge extremist ideas which can be used to legitimise terrorism.
- Expected to ensure children are safe from terrorist and extremist material when accessing the internet in school.

Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

The sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people, (or a third person or persons) receive something, (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affections, gifts, money) as a result of them performing and/or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child’s immediate recognition; for example, being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources.



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Violence, coercion and intimidations are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child's or young person's limited availability of choice, resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability. (DCSF 2009).

Key Facts about CSE

- Sexual exploitation often starts around the age of 10 years old. Girls are usually targeted from age 10 and boys from age 8.
- It affects both girls and boys and can happen in all communities.
- Any person can be targeted but there are some particularly vulnerable groups: Looked after Children, Children Leaving Care and Children with Disabilities.
- Victims of CSE may also be trafficked (locally, nationally and internationally).
- Over 70% of adults involved in prostitution were sexually exploited as children or teenagers.

Sexual violence or abuse against children represents a major public health and social welfare problem within UK society, affecting 16% of children under 16. That is approximately 2 million children.

Good practice – Individuals

- Recognise the symptoms and distinguish them from other forms of abuse
- Treat the child/young person as a victim of abuse
- Understand the perspective / behaviour of the child/young person and be patient with them
- Help the child/young person to recognise that they are being exploited
- Collate as much information as possible
- Share information with other agencies and seek advice / refer to Social Care

Good practice – Organisations

- Ensure robust safeguarding policies and procedures are in place which cover CSE
- Promote and engage in effective multi-agency working to prevent abuse
- Work to help victims move out of exploitation
- Cooperate to enable successful investigations and prosecutions of perpetrators

Female Genital Mutilation FGM



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FGM

is child abuse and a form of violence against women and girls, and therefore should be dealt with as part of existing child safeguarding/protection structures, policies and procedures.

FGM is illegal in the UK. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the practice is illegal under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003.

Other than in the excepted circumstances, it is an offence for **any person (regardless of their nationality or residence status)** to:

- perform FGM in England, Wales or Northern Ireland (section 1 of the Act);
- assist a girl to carry out FGM on herself in England, Wales or Northern Ireland (section 2 of the Act); and
- Assist (from England, Wales or Northern Ireland) a non-UK person to carry out FGM outside the UK on a **UK national or permanent UK resident** (section 3 of the Act).

Forced marriages (FM)

FM is now a specific offence under s121 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 that came into force on 16 June 2014.

A FM is a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties, and where duress is a factor. Forced marriage is when someone faces physical pressure to marry (e.g. threats, physical violence or sexual violence) or emotional and psychological pressure (e.g. if someone is made to feel like they're bringing shame on their family). This is very different to an arranged marriage where both parties give consent.

FM is illegal in England and Wales. This includes:

- taking someone overseas to force them to marry (whether or not the forced marriage takes place)
- marrying someone who lacks the mental capacity to consent to the marriage (whether they're pressured to or not)

Child Criminal Exploitation

Child criminal exploitation interlinks with a number of multiple vulnerabilities and offences, including the child or young person being exposed to, and/or being victim



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of,
physical and emotional violence, neglect, sexual abuse and exploitation, modern day slavery and human trafficking, domestic abuse and missing episodes.

Criminal drug exploitation is also known as 'county lines', when gangs and organised crime networks exploit children to sell drugs. Often these children are made to travel across counties, and they use dedicated mobile phone 'lines' to supply drugs.

Like other forms of abuse and exploitation, county lines exploitation:

- can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years;
- can affect any vulnerable adult over the age of 18 years;
- can still be exploitation even if the activity appears consensual;
- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and is often accompanied by violence or threats of violence;
- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and young people or adults; and
- is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the exploitation.

Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. One of the key factors found in most cases of county lines exploitation is the presence of some form of exchange (e.g. carrying drugs in return for something). Where it is the victim who is offered, promised or given something they need or want, the exchange can include both tangible (such as money, drugs or clothes) and intangible rewards (such as status, protection or perceived friendship or affection).

It is important to remember the unequal power dynamic within which this exchange occurs and to remember that the receipt of something by a young person or vulnerable adult does not make them any less of a victim. It is also important to note that the prevention of something negative can also fulfil the requirement for exchange, for example a young person who engages in county lines activity to stop someone carrying out a threat to harm his/her family.



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Some potential indicators of county lines involvement and exploitation are listed below, with those at the top of particular concern:

- persistently going missing from school or home and / or being found out-of-area;
 - unexplained acquisition of money, clothes, or mobile phones
 - excessive receipt of texts / phone calls and/or having multiple handsets
 - relationships with controlling / older individuals or groups
 - leaving home / care without explanation
 - suspicion of physical assault / unexplained injuries
 - parental concerns
 - carrying weapons
-
- significant decline in school results / performance
 - gang association or isolation from peers or social networks
 - self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being

Sexting

Sexting can be seen as harmless but creating or sharing explicit images of a child is illegal, even if the person doing it is a child. A young person is breaking the law if they:

- Take an explicit photo or video of themselves or a friend.
- Share an explicit image or video of a child, even if it's shared between children of the same age.



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• Possess, download or store an explicit image or video of a child, even if the child gave their permission for it to be created.

However, as of January 2016 in England and Wales, if a young person is found creating or sharing images, the police can choose to record that a crime has been committed but that taking formal action isn't in the public interest.

Crimes recorded this way are unlikely to appear on future records or checks, unless the young person has been involved in other similar activities which may indicate that they're a risk.

Modern Slavery and Child Trafficking

Slavery is the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised.

Victims of modern slavery may be;

- forced to work – through coercion, or mental or physical threat;
- owned or controlled by an 'employer', through mental or physical abuse or the threat of abuse;
- dehumanised, treated as a commodity or bought and sold as 'property';
- physically constrained or have restrictions placed on their freedom of movement

Although many people think of modern slavery and human trafficking as only affecting adults, it affects children as well. Both adults and children can be recruited, moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold. Victims are often subject to multiple forms of exploitation.

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 provides legal protection and support to victims and covers two offences – i) human trafficking and ii) forced labour and servitude.

Children do not have to prove that they have been coerced or persuaded in order to be a victim of modern slavery, i.e. a child's consent to being trafficked is irrelevant and it is not necessary to prove coercion or any other inducement for there to be an offence. This includes their engagement in criminal activity.



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It is

also not just about trafficking adults and children across national borders, human trafficking can take place anywhere. The Government estimates that there are tens of thousands of people in modern slavery in the UK.

Children are trafficked for;

- child sexual exploitation
- benefit fraud
- forced marriage
- domestic servitude such as cleaning, childcare, cooking
- forced labour in factories or agriculture
- criminal activity such as pickpocketing, begging, transporting drugs, working on cannabis farms, selling pirated DVDs and bag theft

Many children are trafficked into the UK from abroad, but children can also be trafficked from one part of the UK to another.

Public authorities have a duty under the Act to notify the Home Office when they come across potential victims of modern slavery and people trafficking.

Dealing with Disclosures

*If a child asks to speak to you about a problem, do not promise confidentiality.
Explain that it may be necessary to consult a colleague.*

Receive

Always stop and listen straight away to someone who wants to tell you about incidents or suspicions of abuse. Listen quietly and actively, giving your undivided attention. Allow silences when needed. Do not show shock or disbelief but take what is said seriously.

Reassure

Stay calm, no judgements, empathise. **Never make a promise that you can keep what a child has said a secret.** Give reassurance that only those who need to know will be told. Reassure the young person that they were right to tell you.



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React

React to the student only as far as is necessary for you to establish whether or not you need to refer this matter, but don't interrogate for full details.

Don't ask leading questions – keep the open questions e.g. *'is there anything else you want to say?'*

If you need to try to get more details - use open questions, *'tell me a bit more about that'*

If you do ask questions remember to record the questions you ask as well as the responses the young person gives

Do not criticize the perpetrator; the student may have affection for him/her.

Explain what you will do next – inform designated lead, keep in contact.

Record

If possible, make brief notes about what they are actually telling you at the time. Keep these notes, however rough they are. If you are unable to make notes at the time write down what was said as soon as you can.

Record what was actually said by the student rather than your interpretation of what they are telling you, be factual at all times

Record the date, time, place and any noticeable nonverbal behaviour.

Report

Report the incident to the designated lead and do not tell any other adults or students what you have been told.



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Never attempt to carry out an investigation of suspected abuse by interviewing the young person or any others involved. This is a highly skilled role and any attempts by yourself could affect possible criminal proceedings.

Record Keeping

The Safeguarding Leads for child protection are responsible for ensuring that the necessary paperwork is completed and sent to the relevant people and stored in a safe and confidential place. This means that the records will be a coherent factual record of the concerns that are stored on individual children in a clear chronological order.

The designated senior person for child protection within this provision is:



Rich Mills – richm@bardwell.oxon.sch.uk

The deputy designated person is:



Shannon Paxton – shannonp@bardwell.oxon.sch.uk



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Both are contactable on:

T: 01869 242182
M: 07721 233 995

Other contactable Safeguarding services:

MASH (Multi- Agency Safeguarding Hub) – **0845 050 7666**

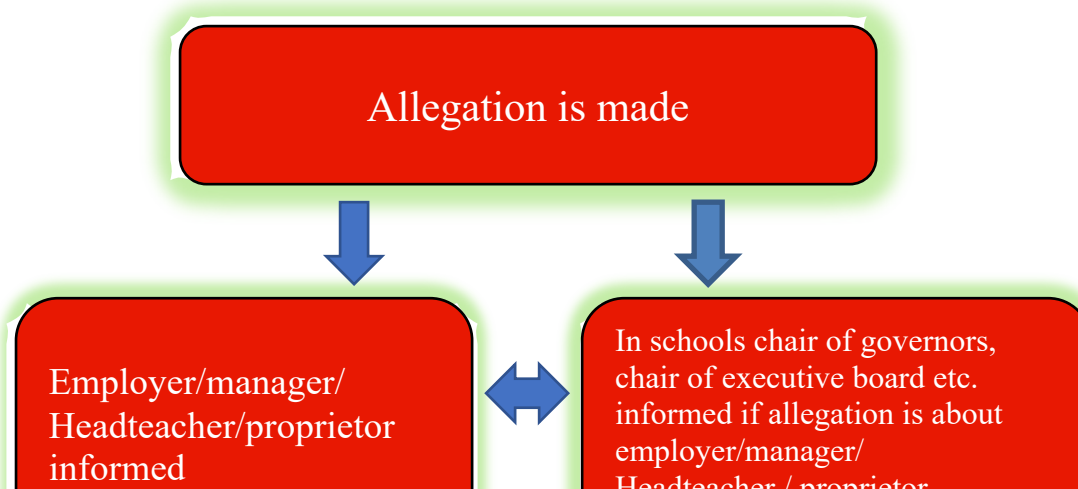
LADO Team/Alison Beasley – **01865 810 603 / 01865 815956**

Emergency Social Care Team – **0800 833 408 (Out of Hours)**

Police – **999 (emergency) / 101 (non-emergency contact)**

Annex A: **Allegation flowchart**

If you have a concern that a person who works with children and young people may have behaved inappropriately or you have received information that may constitute an allegation you must:





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Please note JEM: Joint Evaluation Meeting

Annex B: **Concern flowchart**



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Staff have concerns about a child or young person

referral not required,
setting takes relevant
action, possibly including
early help and monitors in
house

referral made in
concerns escalate

DSL or (staff member)
make referral to social
care/police

Social care makes a decision on how to progress the referral and
the type of response required

Child in need of
immediate
protection
(referrer informed)

Section 47 enquiry
(referrer informed)

Section 17 enquiry
(referrer informed)

No further action
required
(referrer informed)

Appropriate
emergency action
taken by police or
social care

Identify child at risk of
significant harm, will
proceed to initial child
protection plan (ICPC)

Identify child in
need, offer
appropriate support
to child and family

Setting consider early
help assessment, working
with other universal
services (consider CAF)

At all stages, staff should keep the child's best interest at the forefront of any decisions. The child's circumstances should be kept under review, and re-referrals should be made where appropriate.



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Annex C: **Other Specific Safeguarding Concerns**

