

# Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

## Pathway CTM Limited

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## Policy Statement and Principles

Pathway CTM makes a positive contribution to a strong and safe community, recognising the right of every individual to stay safe. We believe our children, young people and adults at risk have equal rights to protection, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity. We understand that all those who work for or on behalf of Pathway CTM have a unique and crucial role to play in shaping and inspiring the lives of children, young people and adults at risk and will report any concerns appropriately.

Pathway CTM comes into contact with children, young people and adults at risk through the provision of mentorship and careers' guidance services to sixth form students in the UK. This includes running events, telephone and conference mentorship.

Safeguarding is paramount in all that we do. We understand that all adults working for and with us – in a paid or voluntary capacity – have a unique and crucial role to play in this and commit to maintain a professional attitude of '**it could happen here**', where safeguarding is concerned and must report any concerns appropriately and without delay.

For the purposes of this policy when we relate to a child or children this includes everyone under the age of 18, and when referring to "staff," this includes all individuals who are paid employees, volunteers and/or anyone working with the company.

This policy is one of a series in our integrated safeguarding portfolio and is provided to ensure you are aware of and understand your responsibilities and that of others, towards safeguarding the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk, along with the reporting procedures for safeguarding and student protection concerns. It acknowledges and is in line with the following statutory and departmental advice and guidance;

- [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Data Protection Act 2018](#)
- [General Data Protection Regulations 2018](#)
- [Information Sharing Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers](#)
- [The Counter-terrorism and Security Act 2015 \(section 26 Prevent duty\)](#)
- [Serious Crime Act \(2015\) \(section B of the Female Mutilation Act 2003 \(as inserted by section 74\)](#)
- [Children Act 1989](#)

We ensure that everyone working directly with children, reads at least Part one, Part 5 and Annex B of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), Staff Handbook, the Role of the DSL and [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#) guidance.

### Policy principles

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- A student-centred and coordinated approach to safeguarding
- Welfare of the student is paramount, and consider, at all times, what is in their best interest
- All individuals, regardless of, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion, belief or sexual orientation, have equal rights to protection
- All safeguarding concerns will be reported appropriately

## Policy aims

- To provide clear guidance to PathwayCTM's staff, volunteers and third parties on their safeguarding role, responsibilities, duties and how to exercise these effectively
- To set our procedures and protocols for safeguarding and ensure we exercise consistent good practice in this area
- To demonstrate PathwayCTM's commitment to prioritising good safeguarding
- To ensure we practice robust procedures in checking for suitability of all adults working with students in a paid or voluntary capacity

Safeguarding is paramount in all that we do. We understand that all adults working for and with us – in a paid or voluntary capacity – have a unique and crucial role to play in this and commit to maintain a professional attitude of '**it could happen here**', where safeguarding is concerned and must report any concerns appropriately and without delay.

## Statutory and best practice guidance

- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Keeping Children Safe in Education September
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018
- General Data Protection Regulations 2018
- Information Sharing Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers
- The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (section 26 Prevent duty)
- Serious Crime Act (2015) (section B of the Female Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74))
- Children Act 1989

## Definitions

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purpose of this guidance as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online
- Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Promoting the upbringing of children with their birth parents, or otherwise their family network through a kinship care arrangement, whenever possible and where this is in the best interests of the children
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes in line with the
- Outcomes set out in the Children's Social Care National Framework

*Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023*

**Child protection:** part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering from, or likely to suffer from, significant harm.

**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. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them, or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

**Children:** Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change their status or entitlements to services or protection.

**Adult at risk:** An adult at risk is ‘any person who is aged 18 years or over and at risk of abuse or neglect because of their needs for care and support’.

**Victim(s):** For the purposes of this policy, we, in places, use the term ‘victim’. It is a widely recognised and understood term. It is important that adults recognise that not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim or would want to be described in this way. Ultimately, adults should be conscious of this when managing any incident and be prepared to use any term with which the individual child at risk is most comfortable.

**Alleged perpetrator(s):** For the purpose of this policy, we, in places, use the term ‘alleged perpetrator(s)’ and where appropriate ‘perpetrator(s)’. These are widely used and recognised terms, however, adults should think very carefully about terminology, especially when speaking in front of a student or adults at risk not least because in some cases the abusive behaviour will have been harmful to the perpetrator as well.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Ingrid Leake  
Email [ingrid@pathwayctm.com](mailto:ingrid@pathwayctm.com) / Telephone 07874 880516

It is everyone’s responsibility to understand our duty to protect the safety and welfare of students and to know what to do if we are worried a student is being abused.

We will ensure concerns are recorded and handled promptly and ensure we put in place safeguarding measures – including training, DBS checks and tailored support – to uphold the highest standards of safeguarding and minimise the risk of safeguarding allegations or issues arising.

As staff are in regulated activity, we will ensure that a DBS enhanced, with a barred list check, is carried out.

The CEO is responsible for ensuring that we have robust and effective safeguarding procedures, protocols and policies in place, that safer recruitment practices are followed and that all staff have up-to-date training and records. They will also provide support to the DSL and as appropriate.

**The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** leads our work on safeguarding and student protection. They will receive DSL training to equip them with knowledge and skills to undertake their duties in accordance with statutory and best practice guidance set out in this policy. This training will be refreshed every two years. The DSL has been granted the necessary authority to act on safeguarding matters. This responsibility will not be delegated.

In addition to the formal training, their knowledge and skills will be updated at regular intervals and at least annually, to keep them up to date with any development relevant to their role including Prevent, FGM and online safety.

PathwayCTM is committed to protecting and safeguarding the welfare of all students. All employees of PathwayCTM will share in the company’s commitment to safeguarding and child protection, will

read this policy and any other safeguarding documents or guidance provided, will know the safeguarding team and be trained (refreshed every two years) to identify and act upon any concerns around the welfare of a student.

All staff – whether paid or unpaid, or acting in a voluntary capacity as an employee of a client or partner organisation – will promote good practice in safeguarding, will adhere to the terms of this policy and will receive appropriate training and upskilling. We expect all staff to be good role models and to act in the best interests of the students at all times.

The DSL will:

- Manage referrals
- Work with other safeguarding partners and agencies to understand children's social care referral arrangements
- Work in accordance with information sharing and record keeping guidance
- Ensure the safeguarding policies are regularly reviewed against the latest guidance
- Raise awareness, ensuring staff understand PathwayCTM's safeguarding policies and procedures
- Provide advice and support to staff on safeguarding and child protection matters
- Understand the views of students, encourage a culture of listening and the difficulties they may have in approaching staff about circumstances
- Understand the importance of holding, using and sharing information effectively, both within and outside the organisation
- Keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of all concerns, in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance
- Understand relevant data protection legislation and regulations - Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR)

Full details of the role and responsibilities of the DSL can be found in Annex 1.

All staff will:

- Be aware of the systems within the organisation which support safeguarding
- Know who the DSL are and what their role in safeguarding is
- If they have a concern about a child's welfare or a child tells them they are being abused, immediately follow the organisation's child protection procedures
- Read at least Part one, Part five and Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education, What to do if you're worried a child is being abused, PathwayCTM's Staff Handbook, and immediately raise any concerns they may have around discharging their role and responsibilities with the DSL
- Complete appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety), from induction and is regularly updated
- Understand safeguarding and promoting the welfare of student's is everyone's responsibility and will consider, at all times, what is in the best interest of the child
- Work in accordance with the Human Rights Act and the Equality Act and not unlawfully discriminate against a child because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, or sexual orientation (protected characteristics)
- Be aware of how to make a referral to children's social care, especially section 17 (children in need) and section 47 (a child suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm) that may follow a referral, along with their potential role in such assessments.
- Understand that Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe and promoting their welfare. If in any

doubt about sharing information, staff should speak to the DSL (or deputy). Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of students.

## **Child Protection Procedures**

Staff should be aware of safeguarding issues that can put students at risk of harm.

Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking and/or alcohol misuse, deliberately missing education, serious violence (including that linked to county lines), radicalisation and consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos can be signs that students are at risk.

## **Increased vulnerability**

Staff should be aware that a student may not feel ready or know how to tell someone they are being abused, exploited, or neglected and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful.

Some students may be at an increased risk of abuse or face additional barriers which makes them less likely to disclose. Adults should be alert to a student who:

- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
- has a mental health need
- is a young carer
- is showing signs of being drawn into anti-social/criminal behaviour
- is at risk of modern slavery, radicalisation, FGM or exploitation
- is living in challenging family circumstances e.g. domestic abuse
- has a family member in prison, or is affected by parental offending
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug or alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- is misusing alcohol or other drugs themselves
- has returned home to their family from care
- is at risk of 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage
- is a privately fostered child
- is persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day
- is showing signs of a lack of self-care (including of personal care), or at risk of exploitation which might be as a result of financial difficulties brought on by financial, organisational or material abuse.

## **Recognising abuse**

To ensure that students, and vulnerable adults are protected from harm, we need to be aware of all indicators of abuse and neglect. Knowing what to look for is vital for early identification of abuse or neglect. Staff must follow the procedures set out below and be aware of indicators of abuse and neglect, including exploitation, so that they are able to identify cases of students who may be in need of help or protection. Staff should be aware that abuse, neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events and cannot be covered by one definition or one label alone. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another, therefore adults should be vigilant and if they are unsure, they should always speak to the DSL.

It is not the responsibility of the staff to investigate welfare concerns or determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation. All those working directly with children, however, have a duty to recognise concerns and maintain an open mind. Accordingly, all concerns regarding the welfare of students must be immediately reported to the DSL.

## **Indicators of abuse and neglect:**

**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 from 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 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 to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving 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. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males.

Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and all adults should be aware of it and of our policy and procedures for dealing with it.

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

**Child on Child abuse:**

Staff should be aware that children can abuse other children. This can happen face to face or online and is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (sometimes known as 'teenage relationship abuse')

- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse)
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- sexual harassment such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes, and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes images and/or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery)
- upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification or cause the victim humiliation, distress, or alarm
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)

### **Self-abuse**

Any means by which a child seeks to harm themselves. This can take many physical forms, including cutting, bruising, scratching, hair-pulling, poisoning, overdosing, and eating disorders.

### **PathwayCTM's Reporting Procedures**

All staff are aware of safeguarding issues that can put students at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as drug taking, alcohol abuse, deliberately missing education or absent from education, consensual and non-consensual sharing of inappropriate images (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) put children in danger.

It is **not** the responsibility of the staff to investigate welfare concerns or determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation. All those working directly with students, however, have a duty to recognise concerns and maintain an open mind. Accordingly, all concerns regarding the welfare of students must be immediately reported to the DSL.

### **Staff must immediately report to the DSL:**

- any suspicion that a student is injured, marked, or bruised in a way which is not readily attributable to the normal knocks or scrapes received
- any explanation given which appears inconsistent or suspicious
- any concerns that a student may be suffering from inadequate care, ill treatment, or emotional maltreatment
- any concerns that a student is presenting signs or symptoms of abuse or neglect
- any hint or disclosure of abuse from any person
- any concerns regarding a person(s) who may pose a risk to a student.

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw, and each small piece of information will help the DSL to decide how to proceed.

**It is very important that staff report their concerns** – they do not need 'absolute proof' that the student is at risk.

## **If you are concerned about a student, young person or adult at risk's welfare**

There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a student may be at risk but have no 'real' evidence.

In these circumstances, staff will try to give the student the opportunity to talk. The signs they have noticed may be due to a variety of factors, for example, a parent has moved out, a pet has died, a grandparent is very ill. It is fine to ask the student if they are OK or if they can help in any way.

All concerns should be reported to the DSL. If the student does begin to reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below. Following an initial conversation with the student, if the member of staff remains concerned, they should immediately discuss their concerns with the DSL.

## **If a student discloses to you**

It takes a lot of courage for a student to disclose that they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual; their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell; they may have lost all trust in adults; or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault.

If a student talks to a member of staff or volunteer about any risks to their safety or wellbeing, the staff member or volunteer must let the student know they cannot keep the information secret but will keep it private and only pass it on to those who can help them.

The point at which they tell the student this is a matter for professional judgement. If they jump in immediately the student may think that they do not want to listen, if left until the very end of the conversation, the student may feel that they have been misled into revealing more than they would have otherwise.

During their conversations with the student staff will:

- allow them to speak freely
- listen to and take seriously any disclosure or information that a student may be at risk of harm
- remain calm and not overreact – the student may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting their listener
- give reassuring nods or words of comfort – 'I'm so sorry this has happened', 'I want to help', 'This isn't your fault', 'You are doing the right thing in talking to me'
- reassure and support the student as far as possible
- try to keep questions to a minimum and of an 'open' nature e.g. 'Can you tell me what happened?' rather than 'Did x hit you?'
- not be afraid of silences – remember how hard this must be for the student
- not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort. It may be anything but comforting to a student who has been abused
- try not to show signs of shock, horror or surprise
- not express feelings or judgements regarding any lead alleged to have harmed the student
- avoid admonishing the student for not disclosing earlier. Saying things such as 'I do wish you had told me about this when it started' or 'I can't believe what I'm hearing' may be the staff member's way of being supportive but may be interpreted by the student to mean that they have done something wrong
- under no circumstances ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened. It is the staff members responsibility to elicit enough information to pass on to the DSL in order that they can make an informed decision of what to do next
- repeat back to the student the information provided to seek clarification and understanding
- explain to the student what will happen next

Staff should not investigate but, wherever possible, elicit enough information to pass on to the DSL in order that s/he can make an informed decision of what to do next.

The staff member or volunteer must immediately speak with the DSL and follow the recording and monitoring procedures below.

### **Key points to remember:**

- share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family
- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the student, refer to police or children's social care
- seek support for yourself if you are distressed

### **Recording and monitoring**

All concerns or disclosures must be verbally reported to the DSL without delay, and accurate records made using PathwayCTM's Cause for Concern Form.

Records should include a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern/disclosure, recorded verbatim where possible, a note made of dates, names, location, description of any injuries seen, and distinguish between observation, fact, opinion and hypothesis.

The Cause for Concern form should be signed, dated and handed to the DSL as soon as practically possible.

If in any doubt about recording requirements, staff should discuss with the DSL.

### **Action by the DSL**

Following any information raising concern or a disclosure, the DSL will consider:

- Any urgent medical needs of the student
- Seeking advice from the student's education provider
- Consulting with appropriate persons e.g., children's social care or police
- The student's wishes

The DSL will keep a clear and comprehensive summary of the concerns, including discussions, details of how the concern was followed up, resolved, and a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

Records will be securely retained and only accessible to the safeguarding team, in compliance with Data Protection and UKGDPR requirements.

### **Why is all of this important?**

It is important for students to receive the right help at the right time to address safeguarding risks, prevent issues escalating and to promote student's welfare. Research and local child safeguarding practice reviews have repeatedly shown the dangers of failing to take effective action.

Examples of poor practice include:

- failing to act on and refer the early signs of abuse and neglect
- poor record keeping
- failing to listen to the views of the student
- failing to re-assess concerns when situations do not improve
- not sharing information with the right people within and between agencies
- sharing information too slowly, and

- a lack of challenge to those who appear not to be taking action.

## **Further information**

### **Abuse of Trust**

All staff should recognise that inappropriate behaviour towards students is unacceptable and that their conduct towards students must be beyond reproach.

In addition, staff should understand that, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over (e.g. teacher, youth worker) to have a sexual relationship with a child under 18 where that person is in a position of trust in respect of that child, even if the relationship is consensual. A situation where a person is in a position of trust could arise where the child is in full-time education and the person looks after children under 18 in the same establishment as the child, even if they do not teach the child.

### **Child abduction and community safety incidents**

Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a minor from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. Child abduction can be committed by parents or other family members; by people known but not related to the victim (such as neighbours, friends and acquaintances); and by strangers.

Further information is available at: [www.actionagainstabduction.org](http://www.actionagainstabduction.org) and [www.clevernevergoes.org](http://www.clevernevergoes.org).

### **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

We know that different forms of harm often overlap, and that perpetrators may subject children and young people to multiple forms of abuse, such as criminal exploitation (including county lines) and sexual exploitation.

In some cases, the exploitation or abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants (for example, money, gifts or affection), and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage, such as increased status, of the perpetrator or facilitator.

Children can be exploited by adult males or females, as individuals or groups. They may also be exploited by other children, who themselves may be experiencing exploitation – where this is the case, it is important that the child perpetrator is also recognised as a victim.

Whilst the age of the child may be a contributing factor for an imbalance of power, there are a range of other factors that could make a child more vulnerable to exploitation, including, sexual identity, cognitive ability, learning difficulties, communication ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

Some of the following can be indicators of both child criminal and sexual exploitation where children:

- appear with unexplained gifts, money or new possessions
- associate with other children involved in exploitation
- suffer from changes in emotional well-being
- misuse alcohol and other drugs
- go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late, and
- regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

Some additional specific indicators that may be present in CSE are children who:

- have older boyfriends or girlfriends; and
- suffer from sexually transmitted infections, display sexual behaviours beyond expected sexual development or become pregnant.

Further information on signs of a child's involvement in sexual exploitation is available in Home Office guidance: [Child sexual exploitation: guide for practitioners](#)

### **Code of Conduct/Staff Handbook**

All adults are provided with access to PathwayCTM's Staff Handbook, which sets out the standards of conduct expected from adults who engage our services.

### **Complaints Procedure**

All complaints will be taken seriously, and procedures will be followed by the DSL as detailed in our Complaints Policy. Complaints from staff are dealt with under our grievance and/or disciplinary procedures.

### **Confidentiality and Sharing Information**

We will have regard to [Information Sharing Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services for children, young people, parents and carers](#).

Regardless of the duty of confidentiality, if any adult has reason to believe that a child may be suffering harm, or be at risk of harm, their duty is to forward this information without delay to the DSL.

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with the data protection principles of the UK General Data Protection Regulations, Data Protection Act 2018, and Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Information is:

- Used fairly, lawfully, and transparently
- Used for specified, explicit purposes
- Used in a way that is adequate, relevant, and limited to only what is necessary
- Accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date
- Kept for no longer than is necessary
- Handled in a way that ensures appropriate security, including protection against unlawful or unauthorised processing, access, loss, destruction, or damage.
- We understand that the Data Protection Act does not prevent the sharing of information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child. (Appendix 2 – Golden Rules of Information Sharing).

### **County lines**

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line". This activity can happen locally as well as across the UK - no specified distance of travel is required. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims.

Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including any type of education institutes.

Children are also increasingly being targeted and recruited online using social media. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs can manufacture drug debts which need to be worked off or threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

A number of the indicators for CCE and CSE as detailed above may be applicable to where children are involved in county lines. Some additional specific indicators that may be present where a child is criminally exploited through involvement in county lines are children who:

- go missing (from school or home) and are subsequently found in areas away from their home
- have been the victim, perpetrator or alleged perpetrator of serious violence (e.g. knife crime)
- are involved in receiving requests for drugs via a phone line, moving drugs, handing over and collecting money for drugs
- are exposed to techniques such as 'plugging', where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection
- are found in accommodation that they have no connection with, often called a 'trap house or cuckooing' or hotel room where there is drug activity
- owe a 'debt bond' to their exploiters
- have their bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing.

Further information on the signs of a child's involvement in county lines is available in guidance published by the [Home Office](#) and The Children's Society [County Lines Toolkit For Professionals](#).

### **Children who are absent from education**

All staff should be aware that students being absent from school, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods, and students missing education can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect such as sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, so-called 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. It is important that staff are aware of unauthorised absence procedures and children missing education procedures.

### **Children with family members in prison**

Approximately 200,000 children in England and Wales have a parent sent to prison each year. These children are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. The National Information Centre on Children of Offenders, [NICCO](#) provides information designed to support professionals working with offenders and their children, to help mitigate negative consequences for those children.

### **Contextual Safeguarding**

Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with a risk of abuse exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra familial harms take a variety of different forms and students can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual abuse (including harassment and exploitation), domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse), criminal exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines and radicalisation.

## Cybercrime

Cybercrime is criminal activity committed using computers and/or the internet. It is broadly categorised as either 'cyber-enabled' (crimes that can happen off-line but are enabled at scale and at speed on-line) or 'cyber dependent' (crimes that can be committed only by using a computer).

Cyber-dependent crimes include:

- unauthorised access to computers (illegal 'hacking'), for example accessing a computer network
- 'Denial of Service' (Dos or DDoS) attacks or 'booting'. These are attempts to make a computer, network or website unavailable by overwhelming it with internet traffic from multiple sources, and,
- making, supplying or obtaining malware (malicious software) such as viruses, spyware, ransomware, botnets and Remote Access Trojans with the intent to commit further offence, including those above.

Students with particular skills and interest in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into cyber-dependent crime.

## Data Protection

PathwayCTM is aware that, among other obligations, the [Data Protection Act 2018](#), and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) place duties on organisations and individuals to process personal information fairly and lawfully and to keep the information we hold safe and secure.

We have regard to the ICO guidance '[For Organisations](#)'.

Further information can be found in our Data Protection Policy.

## Domestic abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and introduced the first ever statutory definition of domestic abuse and recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children, as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse. The statutory definition of domestic abuse, based on the previous cross-government definition, ensures that different types of relationships are captured, including ex-partners and family members. The definition captures a range of different abusive behaviours, including physical, emotional and economic abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour. Under the statutory definition, both the person who is carrying out the behaviour and the person to whom the behaviour is directed towards must be aged 16 or over and they must be "personally connected" (as defined in section 2 of the 2021 Act).

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child to parent abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home. The government has issued statutory guidance to provide further information for those working with domestic abuse victims and perpetrators, including the impact on children.

All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Experiencing domestic abuse can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Young people can also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships. This form of child-on-child abuse is sometimes referred to as 'teenage relationship abuse'. Depending on the

age of the young people, this may not be recognised in law under the statutory definition of 'domestic abuse' (if one or both parties are under 16). However, as with any child under 18, where there are concerns about safety or welfare, child safeguarding procedures should be followed and both young victims and young perpetrators should be offered support.

## **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

Section 5B of the 2003 Act introduces a mandatory reporting duty which requires teachers - this includes qualified teachers or persons who are employed or engaged to carry out teaching work in schools and other institutions, in England and Wales to report 'known' cases of FGM in under 18s which they identify in the course of their professional work to the police.

It will be rare for staff to see visual evidence, and they should not be examining students, but the same

definition of what is meant by "to discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out" is used for all professionals to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies.

**Staff must personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out.** Unless the staff member has a good reason not to, they should also still consider and discuss any such case with the DSL and involve children's social care as appropriate. All staff are made aware of the indicators of FGM and are requested to undertake training. All concerns are reported immediately to the DSL who will activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multiagency liaison with police and children's social care.

The practice is illegal in the UK. FGM typically takes place between birth and around 15 years old; however, it is believed that the majority of cases happen between the ages of 5 and 8.

Risk factors for FGM include:

- low level of integration into UK society
- mother or a sister who has undergone FGM
- girls who are withdrawn from PSHE
- visiting female elder from the country of origin
- being taken on a long holiday to the country of origin
- talk about a 'special' procedure to become a woman

Indications that FGM may have already taken place may include:

- difficulty walking, sitting or standing and may even look uncomfortable
- spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet due to difficulties urinating
- spending long periods of time away from a classroom during the day with bladder or menstrual problems
- frequent urinary, menstrual or stomach problems
- prolonged or repeated absences from school, especially with noticeable behaviour changes (e.g. withdrawal or depression) on the girl's return
- reluctance to undergo normal medical examinations
- confiding in a professional without being explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear.
- talking about pain or discomfort between her legs

## **Forced Marriage**

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some communities use religion and culture as a way to coerce a person into marriage.

In addition, since February 2023 it has also been a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence, threats or another form of coercion are not used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial 'marriages' as well as legal marriages.

All staff are made aware of the indicators of forced marriage and all concerns are reported immediately to the DSL who will activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multiagency liaison with police and children's social care.

## **Good Practice Guidelines, Staff Behaviour Policy/Staff Handbook**

To meet and maintain our responsibilities towards students we need to agree standards of good practice which form a code of conduct for all staff.

PathwayCTMs' good practice includes:

- treating all students with respect
- setting a good example by conducting ourselves professionally and appropriately
- taking responsibility for our own actions and behaviours and avoiding any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question our motivation and intentions
- encouraging positive, respectful and safe behaviour among students
- being a good listener
- being alert to changes in students' behaviour and to signs of abuse and neglect
- recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse
- reading and understanding the safeguarding suite of policies and guidance documents on wider
- safeguarding issues, for example bullying, behaviour, physical contact and information-sharing
- maintaining appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between students and avoiding the use of sexualised or derogatory language
- being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some students lead to an increased risk of abuse
- referring all concerns about a student's safety and welfare to the DSL, or, if necessarily make a direct referral to police or local authority
- adhere to the company policies with regard to the use of personal mobile devices, communication with students, use of social media and online networking
- acknowledge our responsibility to inform the CEO of any change in our personal circumstances which may affect our ability to work with students as soon as reasonably practicable
- work in an open and transparent way, including self-reporting if their conduct or behaviour falls short of these guiding principles
- work with other colleagues where possible, avoiding any situations which may leave it open to question
- discuss and/or take advice from the DSL over any incident which may give rise to concern

- immediately record any incidents, concerns, actions and decisions made
- apply the same professional standards regardless of sex, race, disability, religion or belief or sexual orientation, have equal rights to protection
- be aware of the Confidentiality Policy
- be aware that breaches of the law and other professional guidelines could result in criminal and/or disciplinary action being taken

## **Homelessness**

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The DSL should be aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. Whilst referrals and/or discussion with the Local Housing Authority should be progressed as appropriate, and in accordance with local procedures, this does not, and should not, replace a referral into local authority children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a new legal duty on English councils so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to meaningful help including an assessment of their needs and circumstances, the development of a personalised housing plan, and work to help them retain their accommodation or find a new place to live. The following factsheets usefully summarise the new duties: [Homeless Reduction Act Factsheets](#). The new duties shift the focus to early intervention and encourage those at risk to seek support as soon as possible, before they are facing a homelessness crisis.

In most cases staff will be considering homelessness in the context of children who live with their families, and intervention will be on that basis. However, it should also be recognised in some cases 16- and 17-year-olds could be living independently from their parents or guardians, for example through their exclusion from the family home, and will require a different level of intervention and support. Local authority children's social care will be the lead agency for these children and the DSL should ensure appropriate referrals are made based on the child's circumstances. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities have published joint [statutory guidance](#) on the provision of accommodation for 16- and 17-year-olds who may be homeless and/or require accommodation.

## **Honour-based Abuse (HBA)**

HBA encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage (FM), and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of so-called HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and will be handled and escalated as such.

All staff are made aware of the indicators of HBA and all concerns are reported immediately to the DSL who will activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multiagency liaison with police and children's social care.

## **Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA) and Equality Act 2010**

The [Human Rights Act](#) sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that everyone in the UK is entitled to and contains the Articles and protocols of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) (the Convention) that are deemed to apply in the UK. It compels organisations to respect and protect an individual's human rights when they make individual decisions about them.

We understand our obligations under the [Equality Act](#) and will not unlawfully discriminate against

staff or students because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, or sexual orientation (protected characteristics).

### **Impact of Abuse**

The impact of student abuse should not be underestimated. Many students do recover well and go on to lead healthy, happy and productive lives, although most adult survivors agree that the emotional scars remain, however well buried. For some student's full recovery is beyond their reach, and the rest of their childhood and their adulthood may be characterised by anxiety or depression, self-harm, eating disorders, alcohol and substance misuse, unequal and destructive relationships and long-term medical or psychiatric difficulties.

### **Looked After and Previously Looked After Children**

A student who has been in the care of their local authority for more than 24 hours is known as a looked after child or may be referred to as children in care. Looked after children are those living with foster parents, living in a residential children's home or living in residential settings like schools or secure units. The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse and/or neglect.

A previously looked after student potentially remains vulnerable and all staff should have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe.

### **Mental health concerns**

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. If a staff member has a mental health concern about a child, that is also a safeguarding concern, they should discuss this immediately with the DSL.

### **Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism**

Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms, including sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs.

Further information on the signs that someone may be a victim of modern slavery, the support available to victims and how to refer them to the NRM is available in Statutory Guidance. [Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims - GOV.UK](#)

### **Online Safety**

We understand students increasingly use mobile phones, tablets and computers on a daily basis. They are a source of fun, entertainment, communication and education. However, we know that some adults and young people will use these technologies to harm students. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails, to enticing students to engage in sexually harmful conversations, exchange of youth produced imagery, webcam photography or face-to-face meetings.

PathwayCTM understands there may be online risks to both students and staff and look to protect and lower the risk to both.

We believe an effective approach to online safety empowers and protects all parties in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns where appropriate. The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable and ever evolving, but can be categorised 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 with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising, and adults posing as children with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.

**Conduct:** 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

**Commerce** - risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams. If staff feel students or staff are at risk, they will consider reporting it to the Anti-Phishing Working Group <https://apwg.org/>

All staff receive online safety awareness training from induction, advice regarding the use of social networking and electronic communication with students and agree to follow our communication and acceptable use of technology guidelines as outlined in our Staff Handbook and Acceptable Use Policy.

If staff know of misuse of social sites, either by a staff member or student, the issue should be reported to the DSL without delay.

### **Preventing radicalisation**

**Note: This preventing radicalisation section remains under review, following the publication of a [new definition of extremism](#) on the 14 March 2024.**

Children may be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk should be a part of a whole setting safeguarding approach.

**Extremism** is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces.

**Radicalisation** is the process of a person legitimising support for, or use of, terrorist violence.

**Terrorism** is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat must be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

Although there is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism, there are [factors that may indicate concern](#).

It is possible to protect people from extremist ideology and intervene to prevent those at risk of radicalisation being drawn to terrorism. As with other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in student's behaviour, which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying students who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include DSL [making a Prevent referral](#).

### **The Prevent duty**

We understand our duty under section 26 of the Counter- Terrorism and Security Act 2015, to

exercise our functions, to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism”. This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

The Prevent duty will be seen as part of our wider safeguarding obligations. We will familiarise ourselves with the revised [Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales](#), especially paragraphs 141-210, which are specifically concerned with education and are aware of local procedures for making a Prevent referral.

## **Channel**

Channel is a voluntary, confidential support programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being susceptible to being drawn into terrorism. Prevent referrals are assessed and may be passed to a multi- agency Channel panel, which will discuss the individual referred to determine whether they are at risk of being drawn into terrorism and consider the appropriate support required.

Statutory guidance on Channel is available at: [Channel guidance](#) and [Channel training from the Home Office](#).

## **Additional support**

[The Department has published further advice for those working in education settings with safeguarding responsibilities on the Prevent duty](#). The advice is intended to complement the Prevent guidance and signposts to other sources of advice and support.

The Home Office has developed three e-learning modules:

- [Prevent awareness e-learning](#) offers an introduction to the Prevent duty.
- [Prevent referrals e-learning](#) supports staff to make Prevent referrals that are robust, informed and with good intention.
- [Channel awareness e-learning](#) is aimed at staff who may be asked to contribute to or sit on a multi-agency Channel panel.

## **Partnerships with Others**

We recognise that it is essential to establish positive and effective working relationships with safeguarding partners and other agencies. There is a joint responsibility under Working together to safeguard children, on all agencies to share information to ensure the safeguarding of all children.

## **Private Fostering**

Private fostering occurs when a student under the age of 16 (under 18, if disabled) is provided with care and accommodation by a person who is not a parent, person with parental responsibility for them or a relative in their own home. A student is not privately fostered if the person caring for and accommodating them has done so for less than 28 days and does not intend to do so for longer. Such arrangements may come to the attention of staff through the normal course of their interaction, and promotion of learning activities, with students.

Whilst most privately fostered children are appropriately supported and looked after, they are a potentially vulnerable group who should be monitored by the local authority, particularly when the student has come from another country. In some cases, privately fostered children are affected by abuse and neglect, or be involved in trafficking, student sexual exploitation or modern-day slavery.

## **Racist and Homophobic Incidents**

PathwayCTM values the individuality of all our students. We are committed to giving all our students every opportunity to achieve the highest standards. Within this ethos of achievement, we do not

tolerate bullying or harassment of any kind. We have regard to the Department for Education specific [guidance on bullying including homophobic and transphobic bullying and bullying related to sexual orientation, transgender, disability, race and religion.](#)

### **Reporting Directly to Child Protection Agencies**

Staff should follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, they may also share information directly with children's social care, police or the NSPCC if:

- the situation is an emergency and the DSL, CEO are all unavailable
- they are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the student's safety
- for any other reason they make a judgement that direct referral is in the best interests of the student

### **Safer Recruitment**

PathwayCTM is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Our DSL is Safer Recruitment trained and will follow the statutory guidance in Part 3, Keeping Children Safe in Education, adopting robust safer recruitment procedures that detect, deter, and prevent people who are unsuitable to work with children from gaining access to students.

### **Induction and Training**

All new members of staff (including volunteers) will receive an induction and safeguarding and child protection awareness training, including online safety, which will give an overview of the organisation, ensure they know its purpose, values, services, structure and to enable them to recognise the possible signs of abuse and neglect and to know what to do if they have a concern.

All staff and volunteers will be expected to attend safeguarding updates regularly, at least annually, in order to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

New staff and volunteers will receive an explanation during their induction which includes the company's safeguarding policies, reporting and recording arrangements, the Staff Handbook, details for the DSL and at least Part one, Part five and Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education, and What to do if

you're worried a student is being abused.

There will be a recruitment panel responsible for the safe recruitment of all those working directly with students. They will always be at least one member of each recruitment panel will have attended safer recruitment training.

Further information around our safer recruitment and procedures can be found in our Safer Recruitment Policy.

### **Managing Low-level Concerns or Allegations against Adults**

We have a good understanding and clear procedures for dealing with low-level concerns and/or allegations as laid out in Part 4 Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance.

#### Section 1: Allegations that may meet the harm threshold

This section applies to all cases in which it is alleged that a member of staff, volunteer, or third party has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child, and/or
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child, and/or

- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children, and/or
- Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

If we are in any doubt as to whether a concern meets the harm threshold, we will consult our local authority designated officer (LADO).

We will deal with any allegation of abuse quickly, in a fair and consistent way that provides effective child protection while also supporting the individual who is the subject of the allegation.

A 'case manager' will lead any investigation. This will be the DSL (or deputy), or the CEO where the DSL is the subject of the allegation. The case manager will be identified at the earliest opportunity.

Our procedures for dealing with allegations will be applied with common sense and judgement.

#### Suspension of the accused until the case is resolved

Suspension of the accused will not be the default position and will only be considered in cases where there is reason to suspect that a student or other students is/are at risk of harm, or the case is so serious that there might be grounds for dismissal. In such cases, we will only suspend an individual if we have considered all other options available and there is no reasonable alternative.

Based on an assessment of risk, we will consider reasonable alternatives so that the individual does not have direct or unsupervised contact with student or students concerned.

If in doubt, the case manager will seek views from PathwayCTM's HR adviser and the LADO, as well as the police and children's social care where they have been involved.

#### Definitions for outcomes of allegation investigations

- Substantiated: there is sufficient evidence to prove the allegation
- Malicious: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation and there has been a deliberate act to deceive, or to cause harm to the subject of the allegation ,
- False: there is sufficient evidence to disprove the allegation
- Unsubstantiated: there is insufficient evidence to either prove or disprove the allegation (this does
- not imply guilt or innocence)
- Unfounded: to reflect cases where there is no evidence or proper basis which supports the allegation being made

#### Procedure for dealing with allegations

In the event of an allegation that meets the criteria above, the case manager will take the following steps:

- Conduct basic enquiries in line with local procedures to establish the facts to help determine whether there is any foundation to the allegation before carrying on with the steps below
- Discuss the allegation with the LADO. This is to consider the nature, content and context of the allegation and agree a course of action, including whether further enquiries are necessary to enable a decision on how to proceed, and whether it is necessary to involve the police and/or children's social care services (the case manager may, on occasion, consider it necessary to involve the police before consulting the LADO for example, if the accused individual is deemed to be an immediate risk to children or there is evidence of a possible criminal offence. In such cases, the case manager will notify the LADO as soon as practicably possible after contacting the police)
- Inform the accused individual of the concerns or allegations and likely course of action as soon

as possible after speaking to the LADO (and the police or children's social care services, where necessary). Where the police and/or children's social care services are involved, the case manager will only share such information with the individual as has been agreed with those agencies

- Where appropriate (in the circumstances described above), carefully consider whether suspension of the individual from contact with students is justified or whether alternative arrangements such as those outlined above can be put in place. Advice will be sought from the LADO, police and/or children's social care services, as appropriate
- If immediate suspension is considered necessary, agree and record the rationale for this with the LADO. The record will include information about the alternatives to suspension that have been considered, and why they were rejected. Written confirmation of the suspension will be provided to the individual facing the allegation or concern within 1 working day, and the individual will be given a named contact at the organisation and their contact details
- If it is decided that no further action is to be taken in regard to the subject of the allegation or concern, record this decision and the justification for it and agree with the LADO what information should be put in writing to the individual and by whom, as well as what action should follow both in respect of the individual and those who made the initial allegation
- If it is decided that further action is needed, take steps as agreed with the LADO to initiate the appropriate action in the organisation and/or liaise with the police and/or children's social care services as appropriate
- Provide effective support for the individual facing the allegation or concern, including appointing a named representative to keep them informed of the progress of the case and considering what other support is appropriate.

#### Additional considerations third party adults

If there are concerns or an allegation is made against someone not directly employed by PathwayCTM, we will take the actions below in addition to our standard procedures.

- We will not decide to stop working with an individual due to safeguarding concerns without finding out the facts and liaising with our LADO to determine a suitable outcome
- We will involve the employer fully, but PathwayCTM will take the lead in collecting the necessary information and providing it to the LADO as required
- We will address issues such as information sharing, to ensure any previous concerns or allegations known to the employer are taken into account (we will do this, for example, as part of the allegations management meeting or by liaising directly with the agency where necessary)

When working with a third party, we will inform them of our process for managing allegations, and keep them updated about our policies as necessary, and will invite the third party's HR manager or equivalent to meetings as appropriate.

#### Specific actions

##### Action following a criminal investigation or prosecution

The case manager will discuss with the LADO whether any further action, including disciplinary action, is appropriate and, if so, how to proceed, taking into account information provided by the police and/or children's social care services.

##### Conclusion of a case where the allegation is substantiated

If the allegation is substantiated and the individual is dismissed or PathwayCTM ceases to use their services, or the individual resigns or otherwise ceases to provide their services, PathwayCTM will make a referral to the DBS for consideration of whether inclusion on the barred lists is required.

## Individuals returning to work after suspension

If it is decided on the conclusion of a case that an individual who has been suspended can return to work, the case manager will consider how best to facilitate this.

The case manager will also consider how best to manage the individual's contact with the student or students who made the allegation, where necessary.

## Unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious allegation

If a report is:

- Determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the DSL will consider the appropriate next steps.
- If they consider that the student who made the allegation is in need of help, or the allegation may have been a cry for help, a referral to children's social care may be appropriate
- Shown to be deliberately invented, or malicious, PathwayCTM will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the individual(s) who made it

## Confidentiality and information sharing

PathwayCTM will make every effort to maintain confidentiality and guard against unwanted publicity while an allegation is being investigated or considered.

The case manager will take advice from the LADO, police and children's social care services, as appropriate, to agree:

- Who needs to know about the allegation and what information can be shared
- How to manage speculation, leaks and gossip
- What, if any, information can be reasonably given to the wider community to reduce speculation
- How to manage press interest if, and when, it arises

## Record-keeping

The case manager will maintain clear records about any case where the allegation or concern meets the criteria above and store them on the individual's confidential personnel file for the duration of the case.

The records of any allegation that, following an investigation, is found to be malicious or false will be deleted from the individual's personnel file (unless the individual consents for the records to be retained on the file).

For all other allegations (which are not found to be malicious or false), the following information will be kept on the file of the individual concerned:

- A clear and comprehensive summary of the allegation
- Details of how the allegation was followed up and resolved
- Notes of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome
- A declaration on whether the information will be referred to in any future reference

In these cases, PathwayCTM will provide a copy to the individual, in agreement with children's social care or the police as appropriate.

## References

When providing employer references, we will:

- Not refer to any allegation that has been found to be false, unfounded, unsubstantiated or malicious, or any repeated allegations which have all been found to be false, unfounded,

- unsubstantiated or malicious
- Include substantiated allegations, provided that the information is factual and does not include opinions

### Learning lessons

After any cases where the allegations are substantiated, the case manager will review the circumstances of the case with the LADO to determine whether there are any improvements that we can make to our procedures or practice to help prevent similar events in the future. This will include consideration of (as applicable):

- Issues arising from the decision to suspend the member of staff
- The duration of the suspension
- Whether or not the suspension was justified
- The use of suspension when the individual is subsequently reinstated. We will consider how future investigations of a similar nature could be carried out without suspending the individual

For all other cases, the case manager will consider the facts and determine whether any improvements can be made.

### Non-recent allegations

Abuse can be reported, no matter how long ago it happened.

We will report any non-recent allegations made by a student the LADO in line with our local authority's procedures for dealing with non-recent allegations.

Where an adult makes an allegation to PathwayCTM that they were abused as a child, we will advise the individual to report the allegation to the police.

### Section 2: Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold

This section applies to all concerns (including allegations) about members of staff, volunteers and third party, which do not meet the harm threshold set out in section 1 above.

Concerns may arise through, for example:

- Suspicion
- Complaint
- Safeguarding concern or allegation from another adult
- Disclosure made by a student, parent or other adult within or outside the PathwayCTM
- Pre-employment vetting checks

We recognise the importance of responding to and dealing with any concerns in a timely manner to safeguard the welfare of students.

### Definition of low-level concerns

The term 'low-level' concern is any concern – no matter how small – that an adult working in or on behalf of PathwayCTM may have acted in a way that:

- Is inconsistent with our staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work, and
- Does not meet the allegations threshold or is otherwise not considered serious enough to consider a referral to the LADO
- Examples of such behaviour could include, but are not limited to:
- Being overly friendly with students
- Taking photographs of students on their mobile phone/personal devices or contrary to PathwayCTM's policies
- Engaging with a student on a one-to-one basis in a secluded area or behind a closed door

- Humiliating students

If PathwayCTM is in any doubt as to whether a low-level concern meets the harm threshold, it will consult the LADO.

### Sharing low-level concerns

We recognise the importance of creating a culture of openness, trust and transparency to encourage all staff to confidentially share low-level concerns so that they can be addressed appropriately.

We will create this culture by:

- Ensuring staff are clear about what appropriate behaviour is, and are confident in distinguishing expected and appropriate behaviour from concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour, in themselves and others
- Empowering staff to share any low-level concerns and empowering them to self-refer
- Addressing unprofessional behaviour and supporting the individual to correct it at an early stage
- Providing a responsive, sensitive and proportionate handling of such concerns when they are raised

### Responding to low-level concerns

If the concern is raised via a third party, the DSL (or deputy) will collect evidence where necessary by speaking:

- Directly to the person who raised the concern, unless it has been raised anonymously
- To the individual involved and any witnesses

The DSL will use the information collected to categorise the type of behaviour and determine any further action, in line with PathwayCTM's Staff Handbook. The CEO will be the ultimate decision-maker in respect of all low-level concerns, though they may wish to collaborate with the DSL.

### **Record keeping**

All low-level concerns will be recorded in writing. In addition to details of the concern raised, records will include the context in which the concern arose, any action taken and the rationale for decisions and action taken.

Records will be:

- Kept confidential, held securely and comply with the DPA 2018 and UK GDPR
- Reviewed so that potential patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour can be identified. Where a pattern of such behaviour is identified, we will decide on a course of action, either through our disciplinary procedures or, where a pattern of behaviour moves from a concern to meeting the harms threshold as described in section 1, we will refer it to the LADO
- Retained at least until the individual leave their employment at PathwayCTM

Where a low-level concern relates to a third-party adult, we will notify the individual's employer, so any potential patterns of inappropriate behaviour can be identified.

### References

We will not include low-level concerns in references unless:

- The concern (or group of concerns) has met the threshold for referral to the LADO and is found to be substantiated; and/or
- The concern (or group of concerns) relates to issues which would ordinarily be included in a

reference, such as misconduct or poor performance.

### **Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children**

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex from primary to secondary stage and into colleges. It can also occur online. 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 and will be exacerbated if the alleged perpetrator(s) attends the same setting. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable.

It is essential that **all** victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. Detailed advice is available in Part five of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

### **Serious Violence**

All staff will be made aware of indicators, which may signal that students are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that students have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs. Staff will notify the DSL immediately if they are concerned about any student.

There are a number of indicators, which may signal children are at risk from, or are involved with, serious violent crime. These may include:

- increased absence from school
- a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups
- a significant decline in performance
- signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries
- unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

The likelihood of involvement in serious violence may be increased by factors such as:

- being male
- having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school
- having experienced child maltreatment and having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery.

A fuller list of risk factors can be found in the Home Office's [Serious Violence Strategy](#).

### **Training**

All new members of staff (including volunteers) will receive an induction and safeguarding and child protection awareness training, including online safety, which will give an overview of the organisation, ensure they know its purpose, values, services, structure and to enable them to

recognise the possible signs of abuse and neglect and to know what to do if they have a concern.

All staff and volunteers will be expected to attend safeguarding updates regularly, at least annually, in order to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard students effectively.

New staff and volunteers will receive an explanation during their induction which includes the company's safeguarding policies, reporting and recording arrangements, the Staff Handbook, details for the DSL and at least Part one, Part five and Annex B of Keeping Children Safe in Education, and What to do if you're worried a student is being abused.

There will be a recruitment panel responsible for the safe recruitment of all those working directly with students. They will always be at least one member of each recruitment panel will have attended safer recruitment training.

### **Volunteers**

We understand that some people, otherwise unsuitable for working with students, may use volunteering to gain access to students. For this reason, any volunteers, in whatever capacity, will be given the same recruitment consideration as paid staff, including a risk assessment as indicated in Keeping Children Safe in Education.

### **Whistleblowing**

We understand that staff are often the first to realise that there may be something seriously wrong within the company. However, they may not express their concerns because they feel that speaking up would be disloyal to another adult or PathwayCTM. They may also fear harassment or victimisation. In these circumstances it may be easier to ignore the concern rather than report what may just be a suspicion of malpractice.

We are committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity, and accountability. We expect adults who have serious concerns about any aspect of our work to come forward and voice those concerns. It is recognised that most cases will have to proceed on a confidential basis, more details and organisations which may be contacted can be found in our Whistleblowing Policy and below.

### **NSPCC Child Protection Helpline**

The NSPCC Child Protection Helpline is a free 24-hour service that provides counselling, information, and advice to anyone concerned about a child at risk of abuse.

Telephone: 0808 800 5000 - Email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

### **NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line**

The NSPCC has launched a government funded Whistleblowing Advice Line. This will take calls from professionals from any sector who are worried about the way their, or another, organisation is dealing with child protection issues. Adults who don't feel able to escalate these issues internally can contact the service, as well as those who have been unsuccessful in doing so.

- General guidance on whistleblowing can be found via: [Advice on Whistleblowing](#)
- The NSPCC's what you can do to report abuse dedicated helpline is available as an alternative route for those who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally or have concerns about the way a concern is being handled by their company.
- Call 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday
- Email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

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**Chris McNamara CEO**

## **Appendix 1 The Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead**

### **Availability**

The DSL should always be available for staff to discuss any safeguarding concerns. Whilst generally speaking the DSL would be expected to be available in person. “available” means in exceptional circumstances availability via phone and or Skype or other such media is acceptable.

### **Manage referrals**

The DSL is expected to refer cases:

- of suspected abuse and neglect to the local authority children’s social care as required and support staff who make referrals to local authority children’s social care
- to the Channel programme where there is a radicalisation concern as required and support staff who make referrals to the Channel programme
- where a person is dismissed or left due to risk/harm to a child to the Disclosure and Barring Service as required, and
- where a crime may have been committed to the Police as required. [NPCC - When to call the police](#) should help understand when to consider calling the police and what to expect when working with the police.

### **Working with others**

The DSL is expected to:

- act as a source of support, advice and expertise for all staff
- act as a point of contact with the safeguarding partners
- liaise with the CEO to inform him or her of issues- especially ongoing enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 and police investigations. This should include being aware of the requirement for children to have an Appropriate Adult. Further information can be found in the Statutory guidance - [PACE Code C 2019](#).
- as required, liaise with the “case manager” and the local authority designated officer(s) (LADO) for child protection concerns in cases which concern a staff member
- liaise with staff on matters of safety and safeguarding and welfare (including online and digital safety) and when deciding whether to make a referral by liaising with relevant agencies so that children’s needs are considered holistically

### **Information sharing and managing the child protection file**

The DSL is responsible for ensuring that student protection files are kept up to date. Information should be kept confidential and stored securely.

Records should include:

- a clear and comprehensive summary of the concern
- details of how the concern was followed up and resolved
- a note of any action taken, decisions reached and the outcome.

### **Raising awareness**

The DSL should:

- ensure each member of staff has access to, and understands, PathwayCTM’s Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and procedures
- ensure the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy is reviewed annually (as a minimum), available publicly and the procedures and implementation are updated and reviewed regularly

## **Training, knowledge and skills**

The DSL should undergo training to provide them with the knowledge and skills required to carry out the role. This training should be updated at least every two years. The DSL should also undertake Prevent awareness training. Training should provide DSLs with a good understanding of their own role, how to identify, understand and respond to specific needs that can increase the vulnerability of children, as well as specific harms that can put children at risk, and the processes, procedures and responsibilities of other agencies, particularly local authority children's social care, so they:

- understand the assessment process for providing early help and statutory intervention, including local criteria for action and local authority children's social care referral arrangements
- have a working knowledge of how local authorities conduct a child protection case conference and a child protection review conference and be able to attend and contribute to these effectively when required to do so
- understand the importance of the role the DSL has in providing information and support to local authority children social care in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of students
- understand the lasting impact that adversity and trauma can have, including on student's behaviour, mental health and wellbeing
- are alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), those with relevant health conditions and young carers
- understand the importance of information sharing, both within the organisation, and with the safeguarding partners, other agencies, organisations and practitioners
- understand the requirements of the Prevent duty and are able to provide advice and support to staff on protecting students from the risk of radicalisation are able to understand the unique risks associated with online safety
- obtain access to resources and attend any relevant or refresher training courses
- encourage a culture of listening to students and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff

In addition to the formal training set out above, their knowledge and skills should be refreshed (this might be via e-bulletins, meeting other DSLs, or simply taking time to read and digest safeguarding developments) at regular intervals, as required, and at least annually, to allow them to understand and keep up with any developments relevant to their role.

## **Providing support to staff**

Training should support the DSL in developing expertise, so they can support and advise staff and help them feel confident on welfare, safeguarding and child protection matters. This includes specifically to:

- ensure that staff are supported during the referrals processes

## **Understanding the views of students**

It is important that all students feel heard and understood. Therefore, the DSL should be supported in developing knowledge and skills to:

- encourage a culture of listening to students and taking account of their wishes and feelings, among all staff
- understand the difficulties that students may have in approaching staff about their circumstances and consider how to build trusted relationships which facilitate communication.

## **Holding and sharing information**

The critical importance of recording, holding, using and sharing information effectively is set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education, and therefore the DSL should be equipped to:

- understand the importance of information sharing, both within the organisation and with other safeguarding partners, agencies, organisations and practitioners
- understand relevant data protection legislation and regulations, especially the Data Protection

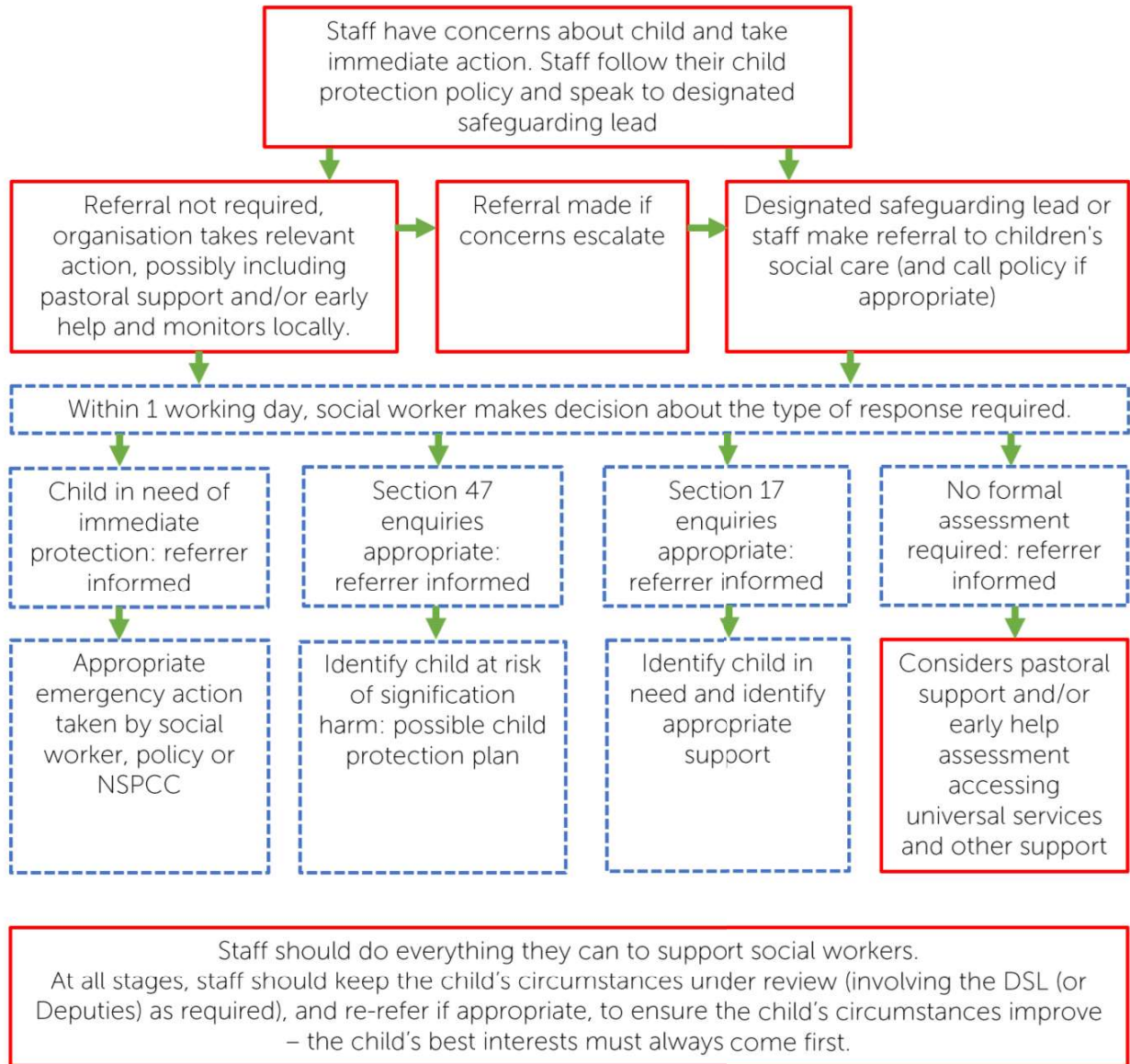
Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)

- be able to keep detailed, accurate, secure written records of all concerns, discussions and decisions made including the rationale for those decisions. This should include instances where referrals were
- or were not made to another agency such as LA children's social care or the Prevent program etc.

**Appendix 2: The seven golden rules for sharing information (including personal information)**

1. All children have a right to be protected from abuse and neglect. Protecting a child from such harm takes priority over protecting their privacy, or the privacy rights of the person(s) failing to protect them. The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) provide a framework<sup>1</sup> to support information sharing where practitioners have reason to believe failure to share information may result in the child being at risk of harm.
2. When you have a safeguarding concern, wherever it is practicable and safe to do so, engage with the child<sup>2</sup> and/or their carer(s), and explain who you intend to share information with, what information you will be sharing and why. You are not required to inform them, if you have reason to believe that doing so may put the child at increased risk of harm (e.g., because their carer(s) may harm the child, or react violently to anyone seeking to intervene, or because the child might withhold information or withdraw from services).
3. You do not need consent to share personal information about a child and/or members of their family if a child is at risk or there is a perceived risk of harm. You need a lawful basis<sup>3</sup> to share information under data protection law, but when you intend to share information as part of action to safeguard a child at possible risk of harm<sup>4</sup>, consent may not be an appropriate basis for sharing. It is good practice to ensure transparency about your decisions and seek to work cooperatively with a child and their carer(s) wherever possible. This means you should consider any objection the child or their carers may have to proposed information sharing, but you should consider overriding their objections if you believe sharing the information is necessary to protect the child from harm.
4. Seek advice promptly whenever you are uncertain or do not fully understand how the legal framework supports information sharing in a particular case. Do not leave a child at risk of harm because you have concerns you might be criticised for sharing information. Instead, find out who in your organisation/agency can provide advice about what information to share and with whom. This may be your manager/supervisor, the designated safeguarding children professional, the data protection/information governance lead (e.g., Data Protection Officer<sup>5</sup>), Caldicott Guardian, or relevant policy or legal team. If you work for a small charity or voluntary organisation, follow the NSPCC's safeguarding guidance.
5. When sharing information, ensure you and the person or agency/organisation that receives the information take steps to protect the identities of any individuals (e.g., the child, a carer, a neighbour, or a colleague) who might suffer harm if their details became known to an abuser or one of their associates.
6. Only share relevant and accurate information with individuals or agencies/organisations that have a role in safeguarding the child and/or providing their family with support and only share the information they need to support the provision of their services. Sharing information with a third party rarely requires you to share an entire record or case-file – you must only share information that is necessary, proportionate for the intended purpose, relevant, adequate and accurate.
7. Record the reasons for your information sharing decision, irrespective of whether or not you decide to share information. When another practitioner or organisation requests information from you, and you decide not to share it, be prepared to explain why you chose not to do so. Be willing to reconsider your decision if the requestor shares new information that might cause you to regard information you hold in a new light. When recording any decision, clearly set out the rationale and be prepared to explain your reasons if you are asked.

## Appendix 3 – Actions where there is a concern about a child



Colour Key:

Organisation Action

Other Agency Action