

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Authored by Directors

Last reviewed: August 2023

Next review: August 2024



Our Commitment

Dorset Wellbeing believe that the safeguarding and protection of all children and young people is of the utmost importance, at the forefront of our operations and is everyone's responsibility within the organisation.

As an organisation, we commit to doing the best we can to ensure that Dorset Wellbeing is a safe, caring and supportive place for those we work with.

This includes ensuring that our staff are aware of the signs of distress and abuse and are aware of the processes we have in place to address any safeguarding concerns. This is a skill and duty we recognise to be vital as an organisation trusted with the welfare of individuals in partnership with their primary carers and other agencies.

This document

- Defines the role and responsibilities of individuals in the organisation
- Applies to all people who work for and with Dorset Wellbeing, including our staff, stakeholders, volunteers and contractors
- Supports our aims as an organisation
- Is based on current legislation, government guidance and best practice. These documents are referenced at the end of this policy
- Contains the relevant contact details at the end of this policy

Obligations

Our young people have the right to protection, regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, belief, first language, race, culture, health or disability. They have a right to be safe at Dorset Wellbeing. In addition, we have a statutory duty to safeguard young people and Dorset Wellbeing will ensure that it meets its legal and statutory obligations. Young people should both feel and be safe at Dorset Wellbeing, and our policies need to be carefully designed and systematically monitored to reflect this.

This policy reflects Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership's (PDSCP) procedures and national statutory guidance, 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (updated July 2018) and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (updated September 2023).

*'Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is **everyone's** responsibility. **Everyone** who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the **best interest** of the child.'*



'Working Together to Safeguard Children', HM Government statutory guidance, defines safeguarding as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best life outcomes.

In addition, this policy ensures that all staff at Dorset Wellbeing are clear about the procedures in place and actions necessary to safeguard young people and are able to deal appropriately with a safeguarding / child protection issue.

Its aims are:

1. to ensure child protection and the safety of young peoples is a high priority within Dorset Wellbeing
2. to raise the awareness of all staff and identify responsibility in reporting concerns about young peoples' social, emotional, physical or academic wellbeing (see anti bullying policy, student behaviour policy and health and safety policy)
3. to ensure effective communication between all staff when dealing with potential safeguarding / child protection issues, and that confidentiality, respect and trust is maintained at all levels
4. to clarify the correct procedures for those who encounter an issue of safeguarding / child protection, and that training for all staff is up-to-date
5. to ensure that we meet our statutory obligations to safeguard our young people.

NB: For the purposes of this policy, "staff" refers to any member of staff, whether permanent or part-time, paid or unpaid, contracted, visiting or invited into the Dorset Wellbeing community in any capacity where they will be in contact with young people.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Directors will act in accordance with Section 175 / Section 157 of the Education Act 2002 and the supporting statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2023) to safeguard and promote the welfare of young people at Dorset Wellbeing.

The Directors are accountable for ensuring that Dorset Wellbeing meets its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding and that all policies and procedures are in place and effective.

It is a Dorset Safeguarding Standard (recommended by the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership) that Directors receive an annual report from the Designated



Safeguarding Lead in order to help monitor compliance with statutory responsibilities. This will be reviewed at the Oversight Committee and allow monitoring of whether mandatory policies, procedures and training are in place and, more importantly, are effective.

The Oversight Committee and Directors will ensure that all involved with the provision receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction. This training should equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place are effective and support the delivery of a robust approach to safeguarding. Their training will be regularly updated.

The Oversight Committee and Directors are aware of their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, (including the Public Sector Equality Duty), and their local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

The Dorset Standards also require schools and colleges to complete and submit to the Safeguarding Children Board an annual audit of its safeguarding and child protection arrangements, including an action plan. Our last Safeguarding Audit was completed in October 2022.

All adults at Dorset Wellbeing have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of young people by taking appropriate action. This includes taking action where there are child protection concerns.

The Directors are accountable for ensuring that Dorset Wellbeing has an effective Safeguarding Policy which is reviewed at least annually and available publicly on the website.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads and deputy DSLs as well as other key members of staff are required to undertake accredited training every two years. All staff regardless of their role will undertake basic training when appointed and subsequently online or in house within a 12 month period. In addition, updates will be provided at least annually to bring all staff members up to date with the latest information and guidance.

Dorset Wellbeing is committed to providing a safe environment to learn and work, including when online. Filtering and monitoring are both important parts of safeguarding young people and staff from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material.

Directors, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and designated Oversight Committee member work closely with our IT support and service providers in all aspects of filtering



and monitoring. The DSL will take the lead responsibility for safeguarding and online safety.

Our IT support, Directors and DSL will work together to procure systems, identify risk and carry out necessary reviews and checks.

Our IT support has the technical responsibility for maintaining filtering and monitoring systems, providing reports, completing actions following concerns and undergoing checks to systems.

Staff must report any concerns about the health, safety or wellbeing of a young person at Dorset Wellbeing immediately to the DSLs. These concerns may be first- or second-hand. The initial concern may be reported either in person or by phone but it is a requirement that it is given to the DSL in written form using My Concern. A decision will then be made as to the most appropriate course of action. More details on the procedures can be found on page 8.

Everyone must follow the guidelines in this policy and in the Code of Behaviour issued to all staff, especially if a young person makes a disclosure of abuse. Abuse can be of a sexual, emotional, physical or discriminatory nature. It can also be the result of neglect or linked to culture, faith and belief. Even if no disclosure has been made, staff should be aware of the signs and symptoms below and refer any concerns to the DSL to agree a course of action, although any staff member can make a referral directly to children's social care.

Please remember, 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 designated safeguarding lead or a deputy. Fears about sharing information **must not** be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Forms of Abuse

Recognising child abuse – signs and symptoms

Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023) is clear: 'All staff should be aware of the indicators of abuse and neglect so that they are able to identify cases of children who may be in need of help or protection'.

Recognising child abuse is not always easy, and it is not the responsibility of Dorset Wellbeing staff to decide whether or not child abuse has definitely taken place or if a



child is at significant risk. All staff, however, have a clear responsibility to act if they have a concern about a child's welfare or safety or if a child talks about (discloses) abuse. They should maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' and always have the young person's best interests in mind.

KCSiE is clear that 'where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from harm, it is important that a referral to local authority children's social care (and if appropriate the police) is made immediately.'

It is accepted that in all forms of abuse there are elements of emotional abuse, and that safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. Some children and young people are subjected to more than one form of abuse at any one time and in most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

Abuse: a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. 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 by another child or children. This is known as child-on-child abuse.

child-on-child abuse can take many forms and can include (but is not limited to) bullying (including cyber bullying), sexual violence and sexual harassment, physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, biting or otherwise causing physical harm. Hazing or other initiation activities which develop into bullying or criminal misconduct are also in this category. This also includes upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. This is now a criminal offence. Abuse is abuse and should not be dismissed as "banter", "just having a laugh" or "part of growing up".

Sexting is a form of child-on-child abuse which involves images or videos which are indecent or of a sexual nature, generated by children under the age of 18 or of children under the age of 18, shared via a mobile phone, handheld device or website. We will adhere to guidance from UKCCIS regarding reporting and responding to sexting incidents.



We recognise that child-on-child abuse is gendered in nature and girls are more likely to be victims and boys perpetrators but that all child to child abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously by Dorset Wellbeing.

All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should consider whether children are at a risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children 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.

There is a risk that children may be approached by or become involved with individuals associated with criminal networks and gangs involved in serious violent crime. This could include involvement in county lines networks. Indicators that may signal this are similar to those in child sexual exploitation but also may include increased absence and missing episodes and signs of assault or unexplained injuries.

Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and may be a single incident or a pattern of incidents. That abuse can be, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional. Children can be victims of domestic abuse. They may see, hear, or experience the effects of abuse at home and/or suffer domestic abuse in their own intimate relationships (teenage relationships abuse). All of which can have a detrimental and long-term impact on their health, well-being, development, and ability to learn.

Examples of possible indicators of each of the kinds of abuse. The list below is not exhaustive:

Physical Abuse

Abusive Action

Hitting. Slapping. Pushing. Kicking. Poisoning. Drowning. Suffocating. Burning / Scalding. Misuse of medication. Restraint. Inappropriate sanctions.

Signs & Symptoms

Series of unexplained falls, major injuries or pain. Injuries/bruises at different stages of healing. Bruising in unusual sites e.g. inner arms, thighs, ears, hands. Abrasions. Teeth indentations. Injuries to head or face. Young person very passive.



Sexual Abuse

Abusive Action

Including rape and sexual assault or sexual contact and acts to which the student has not consented, or could not consent, or was pressured into consenting. It may also include non-contact activities involving children in looking at or the production of sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging sexual behaviour or grooming(including via the internet). Perpetrators can be both adults and children. Victims may be any age or gender.

Signs & Symptoms

Change in behaviour. Overt sexual behaviour or language. Difficulty in walking, sitting or stomach pain. Pain/itching or injuries to genital and/or anal area. Fear and nightmares / bed wetting. Change in eating patterns.

Neglect

Abusive Action

Includes acts of omission. Ignoring physical or medical care needs. Failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services. Withholding necessities of life e.g. nutrition, heating, medications.

Signs & Symptoms

Absence of food, heat, hygiene, clothing, comfort. Preventing students from having access to services. Isolation. Absence of prescribed medication. Complaining of being tired all the time.

Emotional Abuse

Abusive Action

Threats of harm or abandonment. Deprivation of contact. Humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks. Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations or overprotection. Seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another. Bullying including cyberbullying.

Signs & Symptoms

Failure to thrive, self harm, withdrawal, depression. Covering and fearfulness. Change in/disturbed sleep patterns. Agitation, confusion, change in behaviour. Change in appetite/weight.



Examples of possible indicators of each of the kinds of abuse. The list below is not exhaustive:

Discriminatory

Abusive Action

Racist, sexist, or that based on a young person's disability. Other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

Signs & Symptoms

Low self esteem, withdrawal, depression, fear, anger.

Linked to Culture, Faith or Belief

Abusive Action

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Forced Marriage. So-called 'honour based violence.' Radicalisation and extremism

Signs & Symptoms

Change in behaviour, withdrawal, prolonged absence from school, planned long holidays, unreasonable restrictions and controls. Talk of a "special procedure or celebration". Vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values. Expression of extreme views, and lack of respect to others or tolerance to diversity. Obsessive and extended secretive use of the internet.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Abusive Action

Exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something e.g. alcohol, affection, gifts, money as a result of performance of sexual acts. This can occur through technology e.g. by posting sexual images on the Internet / mobile phone. Grooming methods may lead students not to recognise they are being abused but consider they are acting voluntarily/"in a relationship".

Signs & Symptoms

Change in behaviour, friendship groups, social activities. Sudden increase in wealth and possessions.



Procedures

Any concerns about the health, safety or welfare of a young person either in or out of Dorset Wellbeing, must be reported immediately to the DSLs or Deputy DSLs. These concerns may be first or second-hand. A decision will then be made as to the most appropriate course of action.

All staff should be aware that children may not feel ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused, exploited, or neglected, and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful, For example, children may feel embarrassed, humiliated, or being threatened this could be due to their vulnerability, disability and/or sexual orientation or language barriers. This should not prevent staff from having a professional curiosity and speaking to the DSL if they have concerns about a child. It is also important that staff determine how best to build trusted relationships with children and young people which facilitate communication.

If staff receive a disclosure they will:

1. Take what the child says seriously and react calmly; do not interrupt
2. Tell the child they are not to blame - young people are the victims of abuse, never the cause
3. Explain what will happen next as early as possible; do not promise not to tell anyone, even if this means that the child refuses to disclose anymore
4. Ensure they are clear about what has happened but keep questions to an absolute minimum; anything that could be construed as leading the child will invalidate their testimony in court
5. Remember TED : tell / explain / describe
6. Record the conversation as accurately as possible, as soon as possible after the event using the child's language writing the entry into My Concern.
7. The DSLs will be notified by My Concern that a concern has been reported. You may also wish to pass on the information immediately to the DSL either in person or via the designated mobile numbers.

If you are concerned about a young person's safety and wellbeing, or there is a concern, complaint or allegation about an adult or yourself, you should do the following:

1. Inform the DSL immediately in person or using My Concern
2. Write careful notes of what you witnessed, heard or were told (in My Concern)
3. Take advice from the DSL to reduce or remove risk to the welfare of young people

If the young person is at immediate risk of significant harm, ask the DSL or a senior member of staff to contact the police or social services to make a referral.



Any adult has the right to report any concerns or suspicions about another in confidence and free from harassment. Please see the Whistle Blowing Policy for further information. A summary of this guidance is given to every member of staff as the Code of Behaviour.

Any action taken when dealing with an issue of child protection will be in line with the procedures outlined in documentation from Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership.

If a teacher (or someone involved in the education of a child), in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, or is in danger of being carried out, on a girl under the age of 18 the individual must report this to the police. This is a mandatory duty.

child-on-child abuse

Dorset Wellbeing endeavours to minimise risk by:

- Training staff on the nature and prevalence and effect of child-on-child abuse and how to prevent, identify and respond to child-on-child abuse.
- Educating young people about the nature and prevalence of child-on-child abuse via open dialogue in citizenship and e-safety lessons and the wider curriculum.
- Ensuring that all child-on-child abuse issues are fed back to the DSL so that any trends can be identified.
- Creating a culture in which young people feel safe and able to share their concerns openly in a non-judgemental environment and have them listened to and responded to promptly and appropriately.

Allegations will be recorded, investigated and dealt with in the same way as any other safeguarding concern. We will be mindful, as stated in KCSiE, that “all systems and processes should operate with the best interests of the child at their heart”. In cases of child-on-child sexual violence a risk assessment should be completed by the DSL and should consider the victim, the alleged perpetrator, all other children and young people and if appropriate any adults in the setting that may require protection. We will particularly consult the DfE’s advice - Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges: Advice for Oversight Committee, Proprietors, Head Teachers, Principals, Senior Leadership Teams and Designated Safeguarding Leads (September 2021).

We recognise the need to provide support for victims, alleged perpetrator, perpetrators and any other child or young person affected by the incident of abuse and will draw upon local services and agencies to guide us with processes and support appropriate to our young people to ensure that all needs are met.



Allegations against staff

In cases of allegations of abuse made against a member of staff, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and the police will be informed immediately. The Dorset Social Services LADO can be contacted at: lado@dorsetcc.gov.uk. In the case of any allegations of abuse, the member of staff concerned may be suspended (without prejudice) subject to further investigation. Further information can be found in the Whistle-blowing and Resolving Problems policies.

If staff have a safeguarding concern or an allegation about another member of staff (including supply staff, volunteers or contractors) that does not meet the harm threshold, then this should be shared in accordance with the Low-level Concerns Procedure as found in the Managing Allegations Policy.

Other Allegations

In cases of allegations of abuse of a young person by a member of the local community, the Children's Advice and Duty Service (ChAD) can be called on 01305 228 866. In cases of suspected radicalisation and extremism the Dorset Prevent Team can be contacted during office hours on 01202 229 319 or by email on preventreferrals@dorset.pnn.police.uk.

Written records will be kept of any referrals and stored securely in line with data protection procedures. We will support the young person throughout the process by ensuring that they are fully informed and have access to counselling or support. If necessary, the DSL or another nominated staff member will take the role of "Appropriate Adult" for police or Social Care interviews. Dorset Wellbeing will co-operate fully with external agencies and share information as appropriate. Dorset Wellbeing will attend any strategy meetings convened. In addition, we will endeavour to attend multi-agency meetings and keep regular contact with the local Social Services Officer and the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership to ensure we aim for best practice at all times.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The effectiveness of the safeguarding policy can be measured both day to day and more strategically.

1. Ongoing monitoring/evaluation:

Feedback from our young people, finding the degree to which they feel safe and happy
Feedback from our fellow professionals and parents, finding the degree to which they



feel their young people are safe and happy Feedback from staff in training sessions and appraisals as well as through questionnaires Record of incidents reported to the DSL

2. Strategic monitoring/evaluation:

Formal review of cases reported to the DSL through the Oversight Committee and an evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of interventions through the Dorset Safeguarding Annual Audit.

Contact Details

DSLs

Ms Helen Rosaline: 07788 105045 | helen@dorsetwellbeing.org

Ms Alexa Temel: 07551 342 534 | alexa@dorsetwellbeing.org

Deputy DSLs

Mrs Tracie Burnett 07729081705

Mrs Sharon Patterson: 07395 044 850

Mr Matt Mason: 07407 390040

Mr Os Filmalter: 07899 844 025

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole - Children's First Response Hub - 01202 735046
childrensfirstresponse@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Dorset - Children's Advice and Duty Service (ChAD) Professionals 01305 228558

Dorset Families and Members of the Public - 01202228866

In an emergency or out of hours contact:

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole - Out of hours contact - 01202 738256
childrensoohs@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Dorset - Out of hours service - 01305 228558

Police Non-Emergency - 101

Police Emergency - 999

Referenced Documents & Links

[Keeping children safe in education \(KCSIE\) 2023](#)

[Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) updated July 2018



Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership's (PDSCR) Procedures

[What to do if you are Worried a Child is being Abused - Advice for Practitioners](#)

UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS), Sexting in Schools and Colleges:

Responding to Incidents and Safeguarding Young People

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-digital-and-technology-standards-in-schools-and-colleges/filtering-and-monitoring-standards-for-schools>