

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURE – September 2018

1. Introduction

Central Bedfordshire SENDIASS has two part time Officers, volunteer supporters and SENDIASS support officer .

Our service supports and informs parents, carers and young people and we have no statutory remit to investigate child abuse. However, because the welfare of the child is paramount and statistics indicate that children with special needs are both more vulnerable to abuse and more likely to be abused all staff and volunteers have a duty to pass on any information in relation to suspected abuse of a child, young person or a vulnerable adult. We aim to contribute to a culture of open referral regarding the safety of a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

2. Central Bedfordshire SENDIASS role in Child Protection

All staff and volunteers have an obligation to pass on concerns in relation to child abuse to the appropriate agencies, remembering the following:

- a) The welfare of the child is paramount
- b) All children, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious beliefs and/or sexual identity, have the right to protection from abuse
- c) All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately – this may require a referral to Children’s Social Care, and in emergencies, the Police
- d) All staff (paid/unpaid) working in the service have responsibility to report concerns to the appropriate officer
- e) All concerns and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously by staff and volunteers and responded to appropriately
- f) A commitment to safe recruiting, selection and vetting including a DBS check
- g) Arrangements for policy and procedure review.

3. Confidentiality

Any information given to staff or volunteers by parents/carers/YP is deemed confidential by the service and is only to be disclosed to other agencies with the agreement of the parent/carer/YP. However, in cases of suspected abuse it is considered necessary to disclose this information without the permission of the parent/carer/YP to the designated person or appropriate agency. Parents, carers and young people are informed of our practice regarding confidentiality at initial telephone and face to face contact.

Central Bedfordshire SENDIASS is committed to partnership with parents/carers/YP and as such supports the principles of openness and honesty with parents/carers/YP, however the safety and welfare of the child will always be paramount.

4. What is child abuse and neglect?

Child abuse can take the form of **Physical** abuse, **Emotional** abuse, **Sexual** abuse and **Neglect**.

Information about each form of abuse can be seen in **Appendix A: 'Recognising suspected child abuse and/or allegation of child abuse.'**

Staff, and volunteers will attend child protection training provided locally, relevant to their role, and should be part of the induction programme. Adequate training will ensure that staff and volunteers are confident in identifying child abuse and effective in carrying out the child protection policy and procedures.

Appendix B: 'Deciding when to refer', sets out the criteria which should be followed when deciding whether or not to refer to Children's Social Care.

5. How to make a referral

If a parent or child discloses information which leads you to suspect that a child/young person might be at risk, or you have noticed physical or behavioural indicators which cause you concern, you should take the following action:

- React calmly, take what is being said seriously and offer reassurance
- **Do not ask questions**
- Discuss your concern with the service manager, **0300 300 8088**
- In all instances where it is suspected that a child or young person is suffering significant harm as a result of abuse or serious neglect this should be referred to:

Central Bedfordshire Council Intake and Assessment Team by telephone on 0300 300 8585 or 0300 300 8123 out of hours

The written referral must be completed the same working day or within 24 hours.

<https://forms.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/officeforms/Bic100.ofml>

Social Care can receive these by;

**Postal Address
Intake and Assessment Team
Children's Specialist Services
Central Bedfordshire Offices
High Street North
Dunstable
Beds LU6 1LF**

Fax number: 0300 300 8225, please ensure that it is marked urgent and confidential.

In emergencies, out of hours, please contact the Emergency Duty Team on: 0300 300 8123

If a child is potentially/seriously injured – ring 999.

If a child is alone or someone is threatening to harm the child: ring 999 or the Bedford police station **01234 841212** and ask for the child's local police station (ie provide the child's home address).

The parents/carers and young person should give permission for the referral to be made and receive a copy of the referral unless that would put the child/young person's welfare at risk.

Children's Social Care must acknowledge the receipt of the referral in writing to the referrer within 24 hours and notify the referrer of the outcome of their referral in writing within 7 days

Accurate records must be kept by volunteers and SENDIASS staff.

6. Recording suspected or actual incidents of child abuse

Important information includes:

- The date and time of disclosure
- The suspicion, allegation or actual incident of abuse
- Details given to you about the date, time and place of the incident
- Who disclosed the incident
- Who else was present at the time of the disclosure
- Any information you may think relevant e.g. observations during a home visit
- Details of reporting (who to, who by and when)
- Conversations with other professionals.

All recording should be factual and be kept confidential and secure. It can only be shared on a need to know basis.

Remember, that any allegation may eventually lead to criminal proceedings **so do not ask** question, just take notes from anyone who may disclose abuse to you and write down factual observations, not your opinions.

Records must be signed and dated. Specific child protection records will be kept separate and only persons directly involved in the case will have access to the records. Where information is requested by Children's Social Care, the Partnership Officer, in discussion with Children's Social Care, should ensure that information passed on is relevant. Where a volunteer/staff member cannot contact an Officer, they should seek further advice from a specialist in child protection. (See agencies listed in 5 above),

7. Roles and responsibilities in relation to child protection concerns

SENDIASS Partnership Officers:

- Attend relevant training to ensure he/she can recognise the signs and symptoms of child abuse.
- Attend relevant training to ensure support can be given to the member of staff or volunteer involved in the child abuse case.

- Collect all relevant information regarding the child protection concern.
- Consider appropriateness of speaking with or involving the parents/carers/YP.
- Be aware of the impact of the situation and offer support to the volunteer or member of staff or organise appropriate support.

Volunteers

- Attend relevant training to ensure they can recognise signs and symptoms of child abuse.
- Make themselves familiar with the organisation's child protection policy and procedure.
- Report any concerns or allegations of child abuse to the SENDIASS Manager
- If the manager is not available, contact the Intake and Assessment team
- Write a factual report (see 6 above).

8. Contribution of the Service to further investigations

The service will co-operate fully with enquiries carried out by Children's Social Care, by providing relevant information about a particular incident or about the family.

We are, however, not able to provide a professional opinion on what might be the best course of action for the child.

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Next Review Date: August 2020