

# **John Perry Primary School Child Protection Policy**

**Author:** Mr Wayne Pedro

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**CHILD PROTECTION POLICY**  
**John Perry Primary School**

**Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body on an annual basis.

The policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Governing Body Sept 16

It is due for review on *insert date* (up to 12 months from the above date).

Signature ..... Date .....

Head Teacher

Signature ..... Date .....

Chair of Governors

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Safeguarding is defined as protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of health and/or development, ensuring that children grow up in the provision of safe and effective care and optimising children's life chances.

This Child Protection Policy forms part of a suite of documents and policies which relate to the safeguarding responsibilities of the school.

In particular this policy should be read in conjunction with the Safer Recruitment Policy, Behaviour Policy, Physical Intervention Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy.

### **Purpose of a Child Protection Policy**

To inform staff, parents, volunteers and governors about the school's responsibilities for safeguarding children. To enable everyone to have a clear understanding of how these responsibilities should be carried out.

### **Pan London Child Protection and Safeguarding Children Procedures**

The school follows the procedures established by the Pan London child protection procedures procedure and practice for all agencies in London working with children and their families.

### **School Staff & Volunteers**

School staff and volunteers are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour and failure to develop because they have daily contact with children.

All school staff and volunteers will receive safeguarding children training, so that they are knowledgeable and aware of their role in the early recognition of the indicators of abuse or neglect and of the appropriate procedures to follow. This training is refreshed every three years. It is good practice for the Designated Senior Person to deliver an annual update.

Temporary staff will be made aware of the safeguarding policies and procedures by the Designated Senior Person.

### **Mission Statement**

Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to when they have a worry or concern.

Establish and maintain an environment where school staff and volunteers feel safe, are encouraged to talk and are listened to when they have concerns about the safety and well being of a child.

Ensure children know that there are adults in the school whom they can approach if they are worried.

Ensure that children who have been abused will be

supported in line with a child protection plan, where deemed necessary.

Include opportunities in the PSHE curriculum for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

Contribute to the five outcomes which are key to children's wellbeing:

- be healthy
- stay safe
- enjoy and achieve
- make a positive contribution
- achieve economic wellbeing

**Implementation, Monitoring and Review of the Child Protection Policy**

The policy will be reviewed annually by the governing body. It will be implemented through the school's induction and training programme, and as part of day to day practice. Compliance with the policy will be monitored by the Designated Senior Person and through staff performance measures.

## 2. STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

In order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, the school will act in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- Education Act 2002 (section 175)
- London Safeguarding Children Board Inter-agency Child Protection and Safeguarding Children Procedures
- Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (DfES 2006)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government 2010)
- The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005
- Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Teachers and Other Staff (DfE 2011)

Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government 2010) requires all schools to follow the procedures for protecting children from abuse which are established by the London Safeguarding Children Board.

Schools are also expected to ensure that they have appropriate procedures in place for responding to situations in which they believe that a child has been abused or are at risk of abuse - these procedures should also cover circumstances in which a member of staff is accused of, or suspected of, abuse.

Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (DfES 2006) places the following responsibilities on all schools:

- Schools should be aware of and follow the procedures established by the London Safeguarding Children Board
- Staff should be alert to signs of abuse and know to whom they should report any concerns or suspicions
- Schools should have procedures (of which all staff are aware) for handling suspected cases of abuse of pupils, including procedures to be followed if a member of staff is accused of abuse, or suspected of abuse
- A Designated Senior Person should have responsibility for co-ordinating action within the school and liaising with other agencies
- Staff with designated responsibility for child protection should receive appropriate training

Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (DfES 2006) also states:

**“All parents need to understand that schools and FE colleges have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are their pupils or students, that this responsibility necessitates a child protection policy and procedures, and that a school or FE college may need to share information and work in partnership with other agencies when there are concerns about a child’s welfare.”**

### **3. THE DESIGNATED SENIOR PERSON**

The Designated Senior Person for Child Protection in this school is:

NAME: Annette Rose

A Deputy DSP should be appointed to act in the absence/unavailability of the DSP.

The Deputy Designated Senior Person for Child Protection in this school is:

NAME: Sue Cross

It is the role of the Designated Senior Person for Child Protection to:

- Ensure that he/she receives refresher training at two yearly intervals to keep his or her knowledge and skills up to date
- Ensure that all staff who work with children undertake appropriate training to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding children.

effectively and that this is kept up to date by refresher training at three yearly intervals

- Ensure that new staff receive a safeguarding children induction within 7 working days of commencement of their contract
- Ensure that temporary staff and volunteers are made aware of the school's arrangements for safeguarding children within 7 working days of their commencement of work.
- Ensure that the school operates within the legislative framework and recommended guidance
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of the HSCB Inter-agency Child Protection and Safeguarding Children Procedures
- Develop effective working relationships with other agencies and services
- Decide upon the appropriate level of response to specific concerns about a child e.g. discuss with parents, offer an assessment under the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) or refer to Children, Schools and Families social care.
- Liaise and work with Children's Services: Safeguarding and Specialist Services over suspected cases of child abuse
- Ensure that accurate safeguarding records relating to individual children are kept separate from the academic file in a secure place, marked 'Strictly Confidential' and are passed securely should the child transfer to a new provision
- Submit reports to, ensure the school's attendance at child protection conferences and contribute to decision making and delivery of actions planned to safeguard the child
- Ensure that the school effectively monitors children about whom there are concerns, including notifying Children's Services: Safeguarding and Specialist Services when there is an unexplained absence of more than two days for a child who is the subject of a child protection plan
- Provide guidance to parents, children and staff about obtaining suitable support
- Discuss with new parents the role of the DSP and the role of safeguarding in the school. Make parents aware of the safeguarding procedures used and how to access the child protection policy.

#### **4. THE GOVERNING BODY**

The Governing Body has overall responsibility for ensuring that there are sufficient measures in place to safeguard the children in their establishment. It is recommended that a nominated governor for child protection is appointed to take lead responsibility.

The nominated governor for child protection is:

NAME Penny Whyte

In particular the Governing Body must ensure:

- Child protection policy and procedures
- Safe recruitment procedures
- Appointment of a DSP who is a senior member of school leadership team
- Relevant safeguarding children training for school staff/volunteers is attended
- Safe management of allegations
- Deficiencies or weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements are remedied without delay
- A member of the Governing Body (usually the Chair) is nominated to be responsible in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against the Head Teacher
- Safeguarding policies and procedures are reviewed annually and information provided to the local authority about them and about how the above duties have been discharged

## **5. SCHOOL PROCEDURES - STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES**

If any member of staff is concerned about a child he or she must inform the Designated Senior Person.

The member of staff must record information regarding the concerns on the same day. The recording must be a clear, precise, factual account of the observations.

The Designated Senior Person will decide whether the concerns should be referred to Children's Services: Social Services. If it is decided to make a referral to Children's Services: S.S. this will be discussed with the parents, unless to do so would place the child at further risk of harm.

Particular attention will be paid to the attendance and development of any child about whom the school has concerns, or who has been identified as being the subject of a child protection plan and a written record will be kept.

If a pupil who is/or has been the subject of a child protection plan changes school, the Designated Senior Person will inform the social worker responsible for the case and transfer the appropriate records to the Designated Senior Person at the receiving school, in a secure manner, and separate from the child's academic file.

The Designated Senior Person is responsible for making the senior leadership team aware of trends in behaviour that may affect pupil welfare. If necessary, training will be arranged.

## 6. WHEN TO BE CONCERNED

All staff and volunteers should be aware that the main categories of abuse are:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

All staff and volunteers should be concerned about a child if he/she presents with indicators of possible significant harm – **see Appendix 1 for details.**

Generally, in an abusive relationship the child may:

- Appear frightened of the parent/s or other household members e.g. siblings or others outside of the home
- Act in a way that is inappropriate to her/his age and development (full account needs to be taken of different patterns of development and different ethnic groups)
- Display insufficient sense of 'boundaries', lack stranger awareness
- Appear wary of adults and display 'frozen watchfulness'

## 7. DEALING WITH A DISCLOSURE

If a child discloses that he or she has been abused in some way, the member of staff / volunteer should:

- Listen to what is being said without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what is being said
- Allow the child to talk freely
- Reassure the child, but not make promises which it might not be possible to keep
- Not promise confidentiality – it might be necessary to refer to Children's Services: Safeguarding and Specialist Services

- Reassure him or her that what has happened is not his or her fault
- Stress that it was the right thing to tell
- Listen, only asking questions when necessary to clarify
- Not criticise the alleged perpetrator
- Explain what has to be done next and who has to be told
- Make a written record (see Record Keeping)
- Pass the information to the Designated Senior Person without delay

### **Support**

Dealing with a disclosure from a child, and safeguarding issues can be stressful. The member of staff/volunteer should, therefore, consider seeking support for him/herself and discuss this with the Designated Senior Person.

## **8. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Safeguarding children raises issues of confidentiality that must be clearly understood by all staff/volunteers in schools.

- All staff in schools, both teaching and non-teaching staff, have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly the investigative agencies (Children's Services: Social Services and the Police).
- If a child confides in a member of staff/volunteer and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the member of staff/volunteer tell the child in a manner appropriate to the child's age/stage of development that they cannot promise complete confidentiality – instead they must explain that they may need to pass information to other professionals to help keep the child or other children safe.
- Staff/volunteers who receive information about children and their families in the course of their work should share that information only within appropriate professional contexts.

## **9. COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS**

John Perry School will:

Undertake appropriate discussion with parents prior to involvement of another agency unless to do so would place the child at further risk of harm.

Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibilities placed on the school and staff for safeguarding children.

## **10. RECORD KEEPING**

When a child has made a disclosure, the member of staff/volunteer should:

- Make brief notes as soon as possible after the conversation. Use the school record of concern sheet wherever possible.
- Not destroy the original notes in case they are needed by a court
- Record the date, time, place and any noticeable non-verbal behaviour and the words used by the child
- Draw a diagram to indicate the position of any injuries
- Record statements and observations rather than interpretations or assumptions

All records need to be given to the Designated Senior Person promptly. No copies should be retained by the member of staff or volunteer.

The Designated Senior Person will ensure that all safeguarding records are managed in accordance with the Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005.

## **11. ALLEGATIONS INVOLVING SCHOOL STAFF/VOLUNTEERS**

An allegation is any information which indicates that a member of staff/volunteer may have:

- Behaved in a way that has, or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against/related to a child
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way which indicates s/he would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children

This applies to any child the member of staff/volunteer has contact within their personal, professional or community life.

The person to whom an allegation is first reported should take the matter seriously and keep an open mind. S/he should not investigate or ask leading questions if seeking clarification; it is important not to make assumptions. Confidentiality should not be promised and the person should be advised that the concern will be shared on a 'need to know' basis only.

Actions to be taken include making an immediate written record of the allegation using the informant's words - including time, date and place where the alleged incident took place, brief details of what happened, what was said and who was

present. This record should be signed, dated and immediately passed on to the Head teacher.

If the concerns are about the Headteacher, then the Chair of Governors should be contacted.

The recipient of an allegation must **not** unilaterally determine its validity, and failure to report it in accordance with procedures is a potential disciplinary matter.

The Head teacher will not investigate the allegation itself, or take written or detailed statements, but will assess whether it is necessary to refer the concern to the Local Authority Designated Officer. If the allegation meets any of the three criteria set out at the start of this section, contact should always be made with the Local Authority Designated Officer without delay.

If it is decided that the allegation meets the threshold for safeguarding the LADO will advise.

If it is decided that the allegation does not meet the threshold for safeguarding, it will be handed back to the employer for consideration via the school's internal procedures.

The Headteacher should, as soon as possible, **following briefing** from the Local Authority Designated Officer inform the subject of the allegation.

For further information see:

HSCB Inter-agency Child Protection and Safeguarding Children  
Procedures (2010)  
Section 4.1 Managing Allegations Against Adults who work with Children  
and Young People

## APPENDIX 1 - INDICATORS OF HARM

### **PHYSICAL ABUSE**

*Physical abuse 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.*

### **Indicators in the child**

#### **Bruising**

It is often possible to differentiate between accidental and inflicted bruises. The following must be considered as non accidental unless there is evidence or an adequate explanation provided:

- Bruising in or around the mouth
- Two simultaneous bruised eyes, without bruising to the forehead, (rarely accidental, though a single bruised eye can be accidental or abusive)
- Repeated or multiple bruising on the head or on sites unlikely to be injured accidentally, for example the back, mouth, cheek, ear, stomach, chest, under the arm, neck, genital and rectal areas
- Variation in colour possibly indicating injuries caused at different times
- The outline of an object used e.g. belt marks, hand prints or a hair brush
- Linear bruising at any site, particularly on the buttocks, back or face
- Bruising or tears around, or behind, the earlobe/s indicating injury by pulling or twisting
- Bruising around the face
- Grasp marks to the upper arms, forearms or leg
- Petechae haemorrhages (pinpoint blood spots under the skin.) Commonly associated with slapping, smothering/suffocation, strangling and squeezing

#### **Fractures**

Fractures may cause pain, swelling and discolouration over a bone or joint. It is unlikely that a child will have had a fracture without the carers being aware of the child's distress.

If the child is not using a limb, has pain on movement and/or swelling of the limb, there may be a fracture.

There are grounds for concern if:

- The history provided is vague, non-existent or inconsistent
- There are associated old fractures
- Medical attention is sought after a period of delay when the fracture has caused symptoms such as swelling, pain or loss of movement

Rib fractures are only caused in major trauma such as in a road traffic accident, a severe shaking injury or a direct injury such as a kick.

Skull fractures are uncommon in ordinary falls, i.e. from three feet or less. The

injury is usually witnessed, the child will cry and if there is a fracture, there is likely to be swelling on the skull developing over 2 to 3 hours. All fractures of the skull should be taken seriously.

### **Mouth Injuries**

Tears to the frenulum (tissue attaching upper lip to gum) often indicates force feeding of a baby or a child with a disability. There is often finger bruising to the cheeks and around the mouth. Rarely, there may also be grazing on the palate.

### **Poisoning**

Ingestion of tablets or domestic poisoning in children under 5 is usually due to the carelessness of a parent or carer, but it may be self harm even in young children.

### **Fabricated or Induced Illness**

Professionals may be concerned at the possibility of a child suffering significant harm as a result of having illness fabricated or induced by their carer. Possible concerns are:

- Discrepancies between reported and observed medical conditions, such as the incidence of fits
- Attendance at various hospitals, in different geographical areas
- Development of feeding / eating disorders, as a result of unpleasant feeding interactions
- The child developing abnormal attitudes to their own health
- Non organic failure to thrive - a child does not put on weight and grow and there is no underlying medical cause
- Speech, language or motor developmental delays
- Dislike of close physical contact
- Attachment disorders
- Low self esteem
- Poor quality or no relationships with peers because social interactions are restricted
- Poor attendance at school and under-achievement

### **Bite Marks**

Bite marks can leave clear impressions of the teeth when seen shortly after the injury has been inflicted. The shape then becomes a more defused ring bruise or oval or crescent shaped. Those over 3cm in diameter are more likely to have been caused by an adult or older child.

A medical/dental opinion, preferably within the first 24 hours, should be sought where there is any doubt over the origin of the bite.

### **Burns and Scalds**

It can be difficult to distinguish between accidental and non-accidental burns and scalds. Scalds are the most common intentional burn injury recorded.

Any burn with a clear outline may be suspicious e.g. circular burns from cigarettes, linear burns from hot metal rods or electrical fire elements, burns of uniform depth over a large area, scalds that have a line indicating immersion or poured liquid.

Old scars indicating previous burns/scalds which did not have appropriate treatment or adequate explanation. Scalds to the buttocks of a child, particularly in the absence of burns to the feet, are indicative of dipping into a hot liquid or bath.

The following points are also worth remembering:

- A responsible adult checks the temperature of the bath before the child gets in.
- A child is unlikely to sit down voluntarily in a hot bath and cannot accidentally scald its bottom without also scalding his or her feet.
- A child getting into too hot water of his or her own accord will struggle to get out and there will be splash marks

### **Scars**

A large number of scars or scars of different sizes or ages, or on different parts of the body, or unusually shaped, may suggest abuse.

### **Emotional/behavioural presentation**

Refusal to discuss injuries

Admission of punishment which appears excessive

Fear of parents being contacted and fear of returning home

Withdrawal from physical contact

Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather

Fear of medical help

Aggression towards others

Frequently absent from school

An explanation which is inconsistent with an injury

Several different explanations provided for an injury

### **Indicators in the parent**

May have injuries themselves that suggest domestic violence  
Not seeking medical help/unexplained delay in seeking treatment

Reluctant to give information or mention previous injuries  
Absent without good reason when their child is presented for treatment  
Disinterested or undisturbed by accident or injury  
Aggressive towards child or others  
Unauthorised attempts to administer medication  
Tries to draw the child into their own illness.  
Past history of childhood abuse, self harm, somatising disorder or false allegations of physical or sexual assault  
Parent/carer may be over involved in participating in medical tests, taking temperatures and measuring bodily fluids  
Observed to be intensely involved with their children, never taking a much needed break nor allowing anyone else to undertake their child's care.  
May appear unusually concerned about the results of investigations which may indicate physical illness in the child  
Wider parenting difficulties, may (or may not) be associated with this form of abuse.  
Parent/carer has convictions for violent crimes.

### **Indicators in the family/environment**

Marginalised or isolated by the community  
History of mental health, alcohol or drug misuse or domestic violence  
History of unexplained death, illness or multiple surgery in parents and/or siblings of the family  
Past history of childhood abuse, self harm, somatising disorder or false allegations of physical or sexual assault or a culture of physical chastisement.

### ***EMOTIONAL ABUSE***

***Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children 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 the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.***

***It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.***

### **Indicators in the child**

Developmental delay

Abnormal attachment between a child and parent/carer e.g. anxious, indiscriminate or no attachment

Aggressive behaviour towards others

Child scapegoated within the family

Frozen watchfulness, particularly in pre-school children  
Low self esteem and lack of confidence

Withdrawn or seen as a 'loner' - difficulty relating to others

Over-reaction to mistakes

Fear of new situations

Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations

Neurotic behaviour (e.g. rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking)  
Self harm

Fear of parents being contacted

Extremes of passivity or aggression  
Drug/solvent abuse

Chronic running away

Compulsive stealing

Low self-esteem

Air of detachment – 'don't care' attitude

Social isolation – does not join in and has few friends

Depression, withdrawal

Behavioural problems e.g. aggression, attention seeking, hyperactivity, poor attention

Low self esteem, lack of confidence, fearful, distressed, anxious

Poor peer relationships including withdrawn or isolated behaviour

### **Indicators in the parent**

Domestic abuse, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may be features in families where children are exposed to abuse.

Abnormal attachment to child e.g. overly anxious or disinterest in the child  
Scapegoats one child in the family

Imposes inappropriate expectations on the child e.g. prevents the child's developmental exploration or learning, or normal social interaction through overprotection.

Wider parenting difficulties, may (or may not) be associated with this form of abuse.

### **Indicators of in the family/environment**

Lack of support from family or social network.

Marginalised or isolated by the community.

History of mental health, alcohol or drug misuse or domestic violence.

History of unexplained death, illness or multiple surgery in parents and/or siblings of the family

Past history of childhood abuse, self harm, somatising disorder or false allegations of physical or sexual assault or a culture of physical chastisement.

### **NEGLECT**

***Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.***

***Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:***

- ***provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);***
- ***protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;***
- ***ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or***
- ***ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.***
- 

***It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.***

### **Indicators in the child**

#### **Physical presentation**

Failure to thrive or, in older children, short stature

Underweight

Frequent hunger  
Dirty, unkempt condition  
Inadequately clothed, clothing in a poor state of repair  
Red/purple mottled skin, particularly on the hands and feet, seen in the winter due to cold  
Swollen limbs with sores that are slow to heal, usually associated with cold injury  
Abnormal voracious appetite  
Dry, sparse hair  
Recurrent / untreated infections or skin conditions e.g. severe nappy rash, eczema or persistent head lice / scabies/ diarrhoea  
Unmanaged / untreated health / medical conditions including poor dental health  
Frequent accidents or injuries

### **Development**

General delay, especially speech and language delay  
Inadequate social skills and poor socialization

### **Emotional/behavioural presentation**

Attachment disorders  
Absence of normal social responsiveness  
Indiscriminate behaviour in relationships with adults  
Emotionally needy  
Compulsive stealing  
Constant tiredness  
Frequently absent or late at school  
Poor self esteem  
Destructive tendencies  
Thrives away from home environment  
Aggressive and impulsive behaviour  
Disturbed peer relationships  
Self harming behaviour

### **Indicators in the parent**

Dirty, unkempt presentation  
Inadequately clothed  
Inadequate social skills and poor socialisation  
Abnormal attachment to the child .e.g. anxious  
Low self esteem and lack of confidence  
Failure to meet the basic essential needs e.g. adequate food, clothes, warmth, hygiene  
Failure to meet the child's health and medical needs e.g. poor dental health; failure to attend or keep appointments with health visitor, GP or hospital; lack of

GP registration; failure to seek or comply with appropriate medical treatment;  
failure to address parental substance misuse during pregnancy

Child left with adults who are intoxicated or violent

Child abandoned or left alone for excessive periods

Wider parenting difficulties, may (or may not) be associated with this form of abuse

### **Indicators in the family/environment**

History of neglect in the family

Family marginalised or isolated by the community.

Family has history of mental health, alcohol or drug misuse or domestic violence.  
History of unexplained death, illness or multiple surgery in parents and/or siblings of the family

Family has a past history of childhood abuse, self harm, somatising disorder or false allegations of physical or sexual assault or a culture of physical chastisement.

Dangerous or hazardous home environment including failure to use home safety equipment; risk from animals

Poor state of home environment e.g. unhygienic facilities, lack of appropriate sleeping arrangements, inadequate ventilation (including passive smoking) and lack of adequate heating

Lack of opportunities for child to play and learn

### ***SEXUAL ABUSE***

***Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.***

***The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.***

***They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.***

### **Indicators in the child**

**Physical presentation**

Urinary infections, bleeding or soreness in the genital or anal areas  
Recurrent pain on passing urine or faeces

Blood on underclothes Sexually transmitted infections Vaginal soreness or bleeding

Pregnancy in a younger girl where the identity of the father is not disclosed and/or there is secrecy or vagueness about the identity of the father

Physical symptoms such as injuries to the genital or anal area, bruising to buttocks, abdomen and thighs, sexually transmitted disease, presence of semen on vagina, anus, external genitalia or clothing

### **Emotional/behavioural presentation**

Makes a disclosure.

Demonstrates sexual knowledge or behaviour inappropriate to age/stage of development, or that is unusually explicit

Inexplicable changes in behaviour, such as becoming aggressive or withdrawn Self-harm - eating disorders, self mutilation and suicide attempts

Poor self-image, self-harm, self-hatred Reluctant to undress for PE

Running away from home

Poor attention / concentration (world of their own)

Sudden changes in school work habits, become truant Withdrawal, isolation or excessive worrying

Inappropriate sexualised conduct

Sexually exploited or indiscriminate choice of sexual partners Wetting or other regressive behaviours e.g. thumb sucking

Draws sexually explicit pictures

Depression

### **Indicators in the parents**

Comments made by the parent/carer about the child.

Lack of sexual boundaries

Wider parenting difficulties or vulnerabilities

Grooming behaviour

Parent is a sex offender

### **Indicators in the family/environment**

Marginalised or isolated by the community.

History of mental health, alcohol or drug misuse or domestic violence.

History of unexplained death, illness or multiple surgery in parents and/or siblings of the family

Past history of childhood abuse, self harm, somatising disorder or false allegations

of physical or sexual assault or a culture of physical chastisement. Family member is a sex offender.