

Buckinghamshire  
Safeguarding Children Partnership

# Single Agency Child Protection Policy Toolkit

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This toolkit has been designed to support organisations developing, or updating, their own Child Protection Policy. It is broken down into sections relating to various safeguarding issues, each of which should be considered by your organisation.

There are a variety of different organisations working with or providing services for children and young people in Buckinghamshire. These range from large, statutory agencies, through to very small community or voluntary organisations.

It is intended that this toolkit will be helpful across this entire spectrum of the children's workforce. However, it is only a guide, and all agencies should tailor the content of their policy to ensure it is relevant and proportionate to their service and the role that it has in relation to children.

## Key

*When using the toolkit, please note the following:*

### Yellow Boxes

contain example wording or points of note which your organisation may wish to consider or adapt.

### Purple Boxes

contain additional clarification of content, further information or potential signposting links.

### CUT & PASTE

sections marked Cut & Paste - such as details of the referral process to First Response or definitions from Working Together - will remain relevant (and unchanged) whatever your organisation and so can be cut and paste directly into your policy.

## Why do organisations need a Child Protection Policy?

Any organisation or agency working with children and young people under the age of 18 (or 21 in cases of young people with disabilities) should have a clear and concise Child Protection Policy.

All members of staff, contractors and any volunteers (whether they are paid or unpaid) should be fully aware of the policy, understand its purpose and be confident as to their responsibilities with regards to safeguarding the children and young people they come into contact with or who are in their care.

**It is the responsibility of every member of your organisation to ensure that any concerns about the welfare of a child or young person are shared and that appropriate action is taken.**

It is important that your Child Protection Policy is easily accessible to staff, volunteers, contractors and users of your services. Your Child Protection Policy should be published on your organisation's website. If this is not possible, a hard copy should be available for anyone who wishes to view it.

Your Child Protection Policy should also be available in a format that is accessible and you may need to make alternative formats available upon demand, or offer to talk through the policy where necessary.

# Content Page

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- ♦ Visitors

## Supporting documents

- ♦ Flowchart - What to do if you are concerned about a child or young person in Buckinghamshire
- ♦ Flowchart - What to do if you are concerned about the behaviour of a staff member or volunteer towards a child or young person

*Both of these flowcharts can be printed independently of the toolkit.*

# Policy Checklist

## Name of Agency / Organisation:

Author Contact Detail	Name:	
	Telephone Number:	
	Email:	
Date of Completion:		Date of Review:

Have you taken the following areas into consideration?	YES	NO	N/A
- Opening Child Protection Policy Statement / Introduction			
- Definitions of Abuse & Safeguarding Concerns			
- Details of Organisations Safeguarding Lead			
- What to do if you are worried about a child			
- Have you displayed the two supporting procedures flowcharts?			
- Organisational Policies & Procedures			
- Safer Recruitment			
- Training			
- Recording & Retention			
- Confidentiality & Information Sharing			
- Whistleblowing			
- e - Safety			
- Photography and use of images of children			
- Visitors			

Have you taken into consideration the needs of children from ALL groups who may have additional safeguarding concerns relating to:	YES	NO	N/A
- Race ( <i>inc. gypsy, Roma and traveller communities</i> )			
- Gender ( <i>inc. transgender and non-binary</i> )			
- Disability ( <i>inc. physical, sensory, learning disability, mental health issues or long term / life limiting illness</i> )			
- Age			
- Religious or spiritual beliefs			
- Sexual Orientation ( <i>inc.- but not limited to - heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, asexual</i> )			
- Living in a rural or isolated community			
- From a lower economic group or living in poverty			
- Being new to the Country ( <i>inc. migrant worker, refugee or asylum seeker</i> )			

# Child Protection Policy: Opening Statement

You may wish to begin your Child Protection Policy with an opening statement. This should highlight your organisation's commitment to safeguarding and clarify the responsibilities of both the organisation, and its staff and volunteers, in relation to safeguarding the children who use your service, or who come into contact with your organisation.

## Example Child Protection Policy Opening Statement

**[Insert NAME OF ORGANISATION]** is fully committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of all children. We recognise our responsibilities to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and neglect.

**[Insert NAME OF ORGANISATION]** acknowledges its duty to act appropriately with regards to any allegations towards a member of staff or volunteer, or towards any disclosures or suspicion of abuse.

**[Insert NAME OF ORGANISATION]** recognises its duty of care to safeguard children as detailed under the [Children Acts' 1989](#) and [2004](#) and [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#).

**[Insert NAME OF ORGANISATION]** believes that:

- ⇒ The welfare of all children is paramount.
- ⇒ All children, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender, language, ethnicity, religious or spiritual beliefs and/or sexual identity, have the right to protection from abuse.
- ⇒ All allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse should be taken seriously and responded to in a swift and appropriate manner.

**[Insert NAME OF ORGANISATION]** will ensure that:

- ⇒ All children will be treated equally and with respect and dignity.
- ⇒ The welfare of each child will always be of highest priority.
- ⇒ Bullying (in any form) is neither accepted nor condoned.
- ⇒ Action will be taken to stop any inappropriate verbal or physical behaviour.
- ⇒ There is a clear line of accountability with regards to safeguarding concerns.
- ⇒ Staff and volunteers will be kept updated with regards to changes in legislation and policies for the protection of children and young people.
- ⇒ Staff and volunteers will undertake relevant and appropriate development and training in relation to safeguarding children.
- ⇒ All staff and volunteers within the organisation are fully aware of their responsibilities to safeguarding and their duty to the children and young people in their care, and that they fully understand the correct process for reporting concerns.

### Info Box

The primary function of the **Children Act** is to promote and protect the rights of children and young people in the UK.

**Working Together to Safeguard Children** is a statutory guidance document focused on the use of multi-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

# Child Protection Policy: Introduction

The introduction should include reference to relevant safeguarding legislation (if not already covered by an opening statement). The opening statement below can be cut and paste into your policy.



CUT & PASTE



This policy has been developed in accordance with the principals established by the Children's Act 1989 and 2004 and in line with the following:

- ⇒ [\*Working Together to Safeguard Children\*](#)
- ⇒ [\*What to do if you are worried a child is being abused 2015\*](#)
- ⇒ [\*Keeping Children Safe in Education 2016\*](#) (if you are an educational establishment)



CUT & PASTE



## Info Box

In addition to the above, agencies should ensure that their policy refers to any relevant additional legislation or guidance relating to their own sector or organisation.

If you have not included an opening Child Protection Statement, your introduction should include your organisation's commitment to the welfare and protection of the children in your care and to ensuring that all staff members and volunteers are fully aware of, and signed up to, their responsibilities within their role.

The introduction can reinforce the view that safeguarding is **everyone's responsibility** and that anyone connected to the organisation, not simply those in direct daily contact with children, must adhere to the child protection policy. This includes following the appropriate processes if they have a child protection concern.

You could also include details of the responsibilities your staff or volunteers hold with regards to safeguarding. These could include (but are not limited too):

### Example Roles & Responsibilities

All staff and volunteers working within **[Insert NAME OF ORGANISATION]** must:

- ⇒ Understand the different categories of abuse and neglect, and how to recognise the signs.
- ⇒ Recognise that some parents/carers may require additional support in raising their children, for example as a result of mental health issues, learning disabilities, substance misuse or domestic abuse.
- ⇒ Understand their responsibility to report any concerns that a child is being, or is at risk of being, abused or neglected. This includes reporting any concern they may have regarding another staff member or volunteer's behaviour towards a child or children.
- ⇒ Understand the line of accountability for reporting safeguarding concerns, and be fully aware of the organisation's safeguarding lead and their role within the organisation.
- ⇒ If appropriate; liaise with other agencies, contribute to safeguarding assessments and attend child protection meetings / core groups / conferences.

## Info Box

Please refer to the Buckinghamshire Safer Recruitment Toolkit for guidance on embedding safeguarding into job descriptions and the wider recruitment process.

# Recognising the signs of abuse / safeguarding concerns

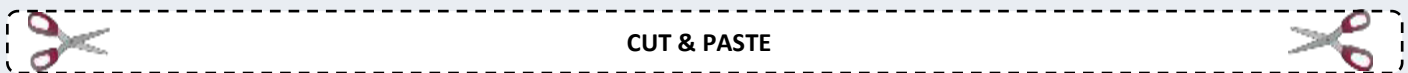
All staff and volunteers working within your organisation need to be aware that the abuse of children and young people, and the safeguarding concerns which may put them at risk, can take many forms.

Below is a breakdown of the different categories of abuse, along with a clear definition for each.

These definitions are taken from Working Together 2018 and can be cut & paste directly into your policy.

Abuse can take many different forms, and dependent upon organisation you may wish to add additional detail about specific types of abuse. For example some organisations might want to make reference to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), peer on peer abuse or add something around bullying.

When writing this section you should think about the type of work your organisation does with children and young people and tailor the content accordingly.



**Abuse:** A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. 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.

**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 persistent 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 capacity, 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, although it may occur alone.

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

The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex), or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. 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.

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

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.

# Recognising the signs of abuse / safeguarding concerns

**Child Sexual Exploitation:** This is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity:

- (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or
- (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

**Child Criminal Exploitation:** As set out in the Serious Violence Strategy, published by the Home Office, where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity:

- (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or
- (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or
- (c) through violence or the threat of violence.

The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

**Extremism:** Extremism goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable - including the young - by seeking to sow division between communities on the basis of race, faith or denomination; justify discrimination towards women and girls; persuade others that minorities are inferior; or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society.

Extremism is defined in the Counter Extremism Strategy 2015 as *“the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also regard calls for death of members of our armed forces as extremist.”*

**County Lines:** As set out in the Serious Violence Strategy, published by the Home Office, County Lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other forms of ‘deal line’.

They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money, and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.



CUT & PASTE





# Details of your safeguarding lead

Your organisation should have a Safeguarding Lead in place and should clearly set out the responsibilities associated with this role. The Safeguarding Lead should be fully aware of their responsibilities, which include:

- ➡ Providing a direct point of contact for any staff member or volunteer who has a child protection concern
- ➡ Ensuring all concerns are dealt with in a prompt and secure manner, and in line with the organisation's procedures
- ➡ Ensuring that all child protection concerns are recorded and managed in an appropriate manner. This includes, where necessary, referring the concern to Children's Social Care (via First Response) or the Local Authority Designated Officer (in the case of allegations relating to staff or volunteers)

Your child protection policy should include details of your Safeguarding Lead, including up to date contact details.

You should ensure that all staff and volunteers (both new and existing) are aware of this role and know who to contact if they need to raise a child protection concern. It is also worth considering having an additional Safeguarding Lead who can fulfil this role when the Safeguarding Lead is unavailable (i.e. due to annual leave or sickness).

## Example Safeguarding Lead Statement

All organisations working with children and young people should have a Safeguarding Lead in place.

The Safeguarding Lead will provide a direct point of contact for any staff member or volunteer who has a child protection concern, record any concerns in a clear (and secure) manner, and ensure that the appropriate action is taken.

The Safeguarding Lead should also ensure that the Child Protection Policy is being fully adhered too.

The Safeguarding Lead for **[Insert NAME OF ORGANISATION]** is.....  
They can be contacted on.....

If the Safeguarding Lead is not available (due to annual leave, sickness etc), staff and volunteers should report to the Deputy Safeguarding Lead who is .....  
They can be contacted on.....

If neither the Safeguarding Lead nor Deputy Safeguarding Lead is available, advice should be immediately sought from:

The First Response Team on 01296 383962  
(outside of office hours call: 0800 999 7677)

email: [secure-cypfirstresponse@buckscs.gov.uk](mailto:secure-cypfirstresponse@buckscs.gov.uk)

NB. This email address is only secure if emailing from another secure account.

## Info Box

Further information and additional resources, which may be helpful to safeguarding leads, are available on the [BSCP website](#). This includes information on multi-agency policies and procedures.

# What to do if you are concerned about a child

It is important that every staff member and volunteer within your organisation is clear about what they need to do if they have safeguarding concerns.

This section should emphasise the responsibility **all** staff and volunteers have to raise any concerns regarding the welfare and safety of children, and outline the procedure they should follow to do this.

It should also include advice on what staff and volunteers should do if a child discloses abuse which has happened / is happening to them.

## Example Disclosure of Abuse Statement

**Disclosure of abuse:** If a child or young person discloses to you that abuse or inappropriate behaviour has / may / is taking place, you should:

- ◆ Listen to the child. Allow them to tell you what has happen in their own way, and at their own pace. Do not interrupt a child who is freely recalling significant events.
- ◆ Remain calm. Be reassuring and supportive but try not to respond emotionally.
- ◆ Do not ask leading questions. Only ask questions if you are seeking clarification about something they have said. Use TED; Tell, Explain, Describe.
- ◆ When you are able to, make an accurate record of what you have been told, taking care to note any times, dates or locations mentioned. Use the child's own words where possible. Do not substitute anatomically correct names for body part names used by the child.
- ◆ Reassure the child that they did the right thing in telling someone and you are glad they told you. Reassure the child that they have not done anything wrong.
- ◆ Do not promise to keep their disclosure a secret, but reassure the child that you will only share the information with the right people who will be able to help them. Explain what you will do next.
- ◆ At your earliest opportunity, speak to your Safeguarding Lead regarding the disclosure. If your Safeguarding Lead and deputy Safeguarding Lead are not available, ring First Response for advice.

**If there is immediate risk of harm to a child DO NOT DELAY, ring 999**

It is important to emphasise the need for staff and volunteers to contact their Safeguarding Lead in the first instance. The Safeguarding Lead will help to determine the correct course of action based on the level of need, and where appropriate can assist with making a referral to Children's Social Care or Early Help.

The Safeguarding Lead should take action in line with the BSCP process for *What to do if you are concerned about a child in Buckinghamshire*. A flowchart explaining this process is available to download on the BSCP website.

The Safeguarding Lead should refer to the [BSCP Thresholds Document](#) to inform decision making.

If the Safeguarding Lead is unclear whether or not to make a referral to Children's Social Care, they can contact First Response for advice.

# What to do if you are concerned about a child

In order to be prepared for a possible disclosure, your organisation will need to:

➡ Have robust systems in place for managing confidential information relating to safeguarding concerns, as well as allegations (whether founded or malicious) against a member of staff or volunteer. Clear guidelines detailing the retention, storage and subsequent destruction of the records, along with timescales, should be available.

➡ Consider the support available for any member of staff or volunteer who is disclosed to or who is the subject of an allegation.

This can obviously be a difficult experience for those involved and your organisation also has a duty of care to keep its employees and volunteers emotionally “safe”.

## Info Box

The Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership has produced some wallet cards that can be used to remind staff how to respond to a concern about a child:



- ◆ Basic wallet card which reminds staff that safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility.

Staff are directed to contact their safeguarding lead if they have a concern and there is space to write who this is

- ◆ Detailed wallet card for safeguarding leads or those who have regular contact with vulnerable children and young people.

This provides information on the course of action to take at different levels of need.

We also have laminated versions of the BSCP Thresholds document which you can display in areas where staff will see them.

Please contact [bscp@buckscc.gov.uk](mailto:bscp@buckscc.gov.uk) if you would like us to send you some free copies.

If you have public facing areas, such as waiting rooms, consider whether you could display a poster or leaflets encouraging members of the public to report any concerns they have about a child.

## Policies & Procedures

This section should confirm that your Child Protection Policy has been written in line with the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership multi-agency policies and procedures - which can be found in the [online manual](#). It could also link to any other relevant internal or sector based policies, procedures or guidance documents.

Staff and volunteers should be encouraged to familiarise themselves with relevant policies and procedures. Your policy should also include the date it will undergo internal review.

The BSCP would suggest that child protection policies are reviewed internally on an annual basis.

# Allegations or concerns regarding a member of staff or volunteer within your organisation

Disclosures of abusive or inappropriate behaviour towards children may be made in relation to staff members or volunteers within your organisation. Alternatively, staff members or volunteers may have concerns regarding behaviour they have witnessed from another member of staff or volunteer towards children.

## Info Box

Larger organisations may require two separate documents:

- ➡ A Child Protection Policy
- ➡ A separate policy relating to managing allegations against a member of staff or volunteer.

These documents should cross reference each other, and staff / volunteers should be made aware of both.

Any single agency policy should be in line with the BSCP [Managing Allegations Against Staff and Volunteers](#)

If your organisation does not have a separate policy relating to managing allegations, this section should set out the process for responding to any allegations that are made against staff or volunteers working within your organisation.

Your organisation should identify a named lead for managing allegations. Depending on the size and nature of your organisation, this could be your Safeguarding Lead. Contact details for the named person should be provided in your policy.

**In response to any allegation, the named person should respond in line with the BSCB Procedure for Managing Allegations and, where appropriate, must contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) on 01296 382070.**

The flowchart provided at Appendix B sets out the key actions to take in response to an allegation and can be included in your policy.

**If the concern relates directly to the named person for managing allegations, you will need to approach the LADO directly for advice.**

In order to support the managing allegations process, your organisation will need to:

- ➡ Follow all advice given by the LADO throughout the investigation process, including how to manage the staff member or volunteer against whom the allegation is made, as well as supporting other staff and volunteers within the workplace.
- ➡ Follow all advice given by the LADO relating to supporting the child making the allegation, as well as other children and young people connected to the organisation.
- ➡ Ensure feedback is provided to the LADO about the outcome of any internal investigations within your agency.

## Transfer of Risk

Should an individual staff member or volunteer be involved in child protection, other safeguarding procedures or Police investigations in relation to abuse or neglect, they must inform their manager of employer.

In these circumstances, the organisation will need to assess whether there is any potential for risk to transfer to the workplace and the individual's own work with children.

# Allegations or concerns regarding a member of staff or volunteer within your organisation

## Info Box

A number of leaflets relating to allegations are available on the BSCP website:



[Information for Parents & Carers](#)



[Employee Information](#)

In some cases, allegations can be made against a member of staff or volunteer due to their own naivety regarding the appropriateness of their behaviour when working in a position of trust, or from a lack of training about safeguarding boundaries.

All staff members and volunteers should undertake basic Child Protection training (as a minimum) if they are working with children or young people – for more information, please view the Training Page on the BSCP website.

New staff members and volunteers may also benefit from the BSCP [Professional Boundaries leaflet](#) which your organisation could make available as part of their induction pack.

## Safer Recruitment

All organisations working with children and young people should ensure that they have a robust recruitment and selection process in place. By ensuring a high standard of safe practice from initial recruitment, organisations have an opportunity to identify and reject inappropriate candidates at interview stage, or in some cases deter potential abusers from even applying.

Coupled with robust safe practice policies, these processes could help to reduce the risk of abuse to children and young people by staff or volunteers.

This section should state your organisations commitment to following safer recruitment practices in line with the Buckinghamshire Safer Recruitment Toolkit.

It should also refer to any safer recruitment guidance issued by your organisation.

## Info Box

Further information relating to Safer Recruitment can be found on the BSCP website:

[www.bucksscp.org.uk/professionals/safer-employment/](http://www.bucksscp.org.uk/professionals/safer-employment/)

# Training

Your Child Protection Policy should include a commitment to allow staff and volunteers to access appropriate training, along with information on how this can be accessed.

The BSCP has produced a Safeguarding Children Training Pathway for employers, which outlines an appropriate pathway for safeguarding training.

All staff and volunteers working with children and young people must undertake basic safeguarding awareness training, which should be updated on a three yearly basis.

Mandatory induction sessions, and single agency training sessions, are provided by all the BSCP Partner Agencies. However if your organisation does not have this facility, training is available via the e-Learning signposts on the BSCP website.

For staff who need more advanced and specialist training, the BSCP provides a comprehensive multi-agency safeguarding training programme for staff and volunteers who work with children and young people. These courses can be accessed via the BSCP website.

Any training provided by your agency should take into account any specific duties or requirements relevant to your organisation. For example, a range of organisations - including local authorities, schools, higher and further education, NHS Trusts, NHS Foundation Trusts, the Police, prisons and probation - have a duty of care to prevent children from being drawn into terrorism.

For such organisations, it is good practice to provide training on PREVENT to all staff / volunteers working with children and young people. More information can be found on the BSCP website.

## Recording and Record Retention

When a disclosure of abuse, or an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer, has been made, your organisation will have records. This section should set out the need to maintain records in a way that is both confidential and secure. If your organisation has a separate policy on recording and storing information, you should link to it. Otherwise, this section should set out the mechanisms and processes that will be used to ensure the appropriate recording and storing of information.

When a staff member is disclosed to, and shares that information with the Safeguarding Lead, it is the Safeguarding Lead's responsibility to ensure that the information is recorded and stored in a confidential way. Many organisations have their own statutory or nationally prescribed requirements in terms of the length of time these records should be kept. When timescales are not specified, organisations should keep records of the concern and subsequent actions taken for a minimum of 6 years. This record should not be shared with any other member of staff or volunteer.

If the allegation is made against a member of staff, a comprehensive, confidential summary of the allegation should be kept on their personnel file. This record should be kept by the organisation until normal retirement age, or 10 years after the allegation if longer. This record should include a clear outcome, including when cases have been investigated and found to be without substance.

### Info Box

**Education Staff:** For cases in which an allegation was proven to be false, unsubstantiated or malicious, the allegation should not be included in employer references, even if that person has been the subject of repeated allegations.

**Non-Education Staff:** All allegations should be included in employer references, clearly stating the outcome to any investigation.

# Confidentiality & Information Sharing

It is important that all staff and volunteers are aware of the confidential nature of child protection information. As such, this section of the policy should include a clear breakdown of how information should be shared.

Child protection concerns, disclosures from children or safeguarding allegations made against another staff member or volunteer **MUST NOT** be discussed across the workforce as a whole.

This information should be shared solely with the Safeguarding Lead / Deputy Safeguarding Lead (and/or with First Response / the LADO as appropriate)

Personal information which is shared by the child on a 1:1 level, such as sexual orientation or gender identification, should not be disclosed to the workforce as a whole.

If staff and volunteers wish to discuss situations in order to gain a wider perspective from colleagues, this should be done on an anonymous basis, with names and identifying information relating to the child and their family remaining strictly confidential.

## Consent

When responding to a concern about a child, making a referral to First Response or contacting the LADO, the safeguarding lead should consult the thresholds document to clarify whether consent from the child / family is required.

In any situation where a child is at risk of harm, consent is not required.

## Information Sharing

Information Sharing is vital to effective safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

It is also an intrinsic part of any frontline practitioners job when working with children. Decisions about how much information to share, with whom and when, can have a profound impact on a child's life. It could ensure that a child receives the right services at the right time and prevent a need from becoming more acute or difficult to meet.

At the other end of the spectrum, it could be the difference between life and death.




Poor, or non-existent, information sharing is a factor repeatedly flagged up as an issue in Serious Case Reviews carried out following the death of, or serious harm to, a child as a result of abuse or neglect.

Your child protection policy should set out the importance of appropriate information sharing in effectively safeguarding children.

It should signpost to further information to support professionals to make decisions on when and how to share information appropriately. You may also have your own organisational or sector based guidance.

### Info Box

Further information is available on the BSCP website:

-  BSCP Multi-Agency Information Sharing Code of Practice
-  HM Government Information Sharing Guidance (2015)
-  Seven Golden Rules for Information Sharing



# Escalation & Challenge

The protection of children will always be an area in which there may be differences of opinion about the best cause of action. It is very important that all those working with children and families feel able to air their views and constructively challenge the action of others. This includes cases where the differences of opinion is with professionals who are more senior or experienced. Similarly, agencies and professionals should not be defensive if challenged.

Your child protection policy should set out the importance of staff feeling confident that they can raise any concerns they have about actions or decisions relating to safeguarding that are made by other professionals or agencies. You should refer to the BSCP Escalation, Challenge and Conflict Resolution Procedure which provides a clear process for concerns to be raised.

# Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing occurs when an employee or worker raises a concern about a dangerous or illegal activity that they are aware of through their work that may affect others e.g. customers, members of the public or their employer.

Concerns could cover a variety of areas, including safeguarding concerns about children and young people. Your child protection policy should provide information on how staff and volunteers can access your organisations Whistleblowing Policy.

# e-Safety

Technology is playing an ever increasing role in the lives of children and young people. As such, it is important that staff and volunteers understand the responsibility they have to use this technology appropriately when working with children.

Your organisation should have an acceptable use policy in terms of the internet, use of social media and electronic contact with children. If media such as emails or mobile phones are to be used to contact children, this use should be agreed and monitored by your organisation. Use of personal email addresses, mobile numbers or social media accounts should be strongly discouraged, as it can leave both parties in a vulnerable position if relationship boundaries become blurred.

If staff and volunteers need to be able to use technology as part of their role (i.e. social media accounts) this should be approved at managerial level, and a designated work account should be set up which is accessible to all relevant staff.

## Info Box

Any staff member or volunteer working with children should be aware of the potential risks connected to the use of technology; from cyber bullying, to sexting, distribution of images and the potential for radicalisation.

Information regarding these topics, and others, can be found on the BSCP e-safety and Prevent pages on the website.



# Photography and the Use of Images of Children

Many organisations use photographs of children to capture achievements, monitor child development and help promote successes. However, organisations need to ensure that their staff and volunteers understand that these images should be used appropriately and with due consent.

Below is an example statement relating to the acceptable usage of photographs and images of children.

## Example Statement relating to appropriate use of images of children.

As confirmed in the Data Protection Act, **[Insert NAME OF ORGANISATION]** will ensure written consent is sought from the parent or carer of any child under the age of 18 using our service before any photographs are taken.

If consent is given, **[Insert NAME OF ORGANISATION]** will make a clear agreement with the parent or carer as to how the image will be used (for example, in a school brochure or on a drama schools website) and how widely (as part of a schools bulletin for all parents, on the child's individual development records etc)

Due consideration will be given to the appropriateness of clothing and posture, and details such as the child's name or age will not be shared unless integral to the use of the image (such as the acceptance of an award), in particular when additional identifiers (i.e. a school or uniform logo) are also being shared.

## Visitors

As an organisation committed to safeguarding, your Child Protection Policy will need to set out how you will ensure that all visitors to your establishment follow the same guidelines laid out for staff and volunteers.

Whatever their purpose on site, it is important that visitors are aware of your Child Protection Policy, that they are clear as to appropriate conduct with children and that they know how to raise a concern about a child.

If a visitor is likely to have unsupervised access to children, your organisation must ensure that they are DBS checked and follow any safeguarding guidelines that you have, for example not using a mobile phone to photograph or video a child/ren, or to ensure that doors are left open / they are visible during one to one contact.