# independent



# PRISM independent sCHOOL

**Safe Guarding Policy**

# Foreword

The Department of Health has recognised that the Voluntary Sector has a part to play in safeguarding young people and promoting their welfare, as part of a multi-agency approach.

This document provides the guidelines which staff are expected to take into account when dealing with child protection issues.

All staff are expected to familiarise themselves with its contents, to complete the required training course and to take seriously their responsibilities in this area of work.

A copy of the document will be available to all employees and volunteers.

Paul Craven

Executive headteacher

# A. INTRODUCTION

The Government through “Every Child Matters” has committed us all to partnership working and PRISM Independent School, as an Alternative Provider of education, is an integral part of the voluntary sector has a responsibility to provide appropriate facilities and responses to young people in matters of child protection.

This document provides guidelines to ensure that all staff understands their role in Child Protection issues. It is designed to underpin the PRISM Independent School Child Protection Procedures.

As circumstances dictate this Guideline document will be reviewed and updated.

# B. THE LAW

## Duty of Care

Staff who come into regular contact with children and young people, whether paid or voluntary (and irrespective of whether they work for a statutory or voluntary agency) are expected to play a part in protecting children and young people. Anyone employed to work with young people is under a legal ‘duty of care’.

This has been interpreted in case law as the duty (as opposed to the authority) to act as a careful parent would. If a worker causes injury or loss by failing to carry out her/his duties in a careful way the worker (and possibly the employer) could be held liable in civil law either to the young people or parents/carers for negligence. Similarly if a young person causes loss or damage to someone else or their property whilst under a worker’s supervision, the worker could be held liable if it were shown that he/she had failed to supervise adequately.

The law requires anyone working with young people to report information concerning abuse or potential abuse of young people, (See Roles and Responsibilities Page 7). This information may include: -

* Information, which leads them to believe a young person, is suffering or was at risk of suffering significant harm. (See glossary).
* Information or behaviour that could indicate a young person is at risk of causing significant harm to other young people.

Prior to the Children and Young Persons Act 1989 (which came into force on 14 October 1991) the law was less detailed and required enquiries to be made by local authorities only if it was felt there would be grounds for bringing care proceedings.

Now all agencies are required to make enquiries wherever they suspect that a child is suffering from ‘significant’ harm or is likely to do so and they should make such enquiries as they think necessary in order to enable them to decide what, if any, action should be taken.

Although ultimate responsibility lies with the Social Services Department, the law clearly states that this does not diminish the role of other agencies in working together to protect children and young people.

# SEXUAL OFFENCES ACT 2003: Abuse of Trust

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 replaces that of 2000 and became law May 2004.

The purpose behind the offences in the Act is to enable the prosecution of abusive and exploitative sexual activity. To achieve this, the Act includes a number of offences that criminalize sexual activity between under 18s and under 16s. However, this will not lead to the prosecution of mutually agreed sexual activity within normal adolescence behaviour, where there is no evidence of sexual exploitation or coercion.

Abuse of trust is created where it is an offence for a person aged 18 or over intentionally in certain sexual ways in relation to a child aged under 18, where the adult is in a position of trust in respect of the child. In cases of Abuse of Trust the child may be aged 16 or 17.

The legislation describes a number of situations whereby a sexual relationship with someone of 16 or 17 (under 18) is against the law. These include:

* In a hospital, a nursing home, children’s home or other institution providing health and/or social care.
* When being looked after by the local authority, whether in foster care, residential care or semi-independent accommodation.
* In full time education.
* In detention under any court or enactment.

Reference is made to working on an individual basis by providing services under, or pursuant to, section 114 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000. This category covers employees who provide or secure support for young people facing barriers to effective participation in learning. They also provide information, advice, guidance and personal development opportunities and broker access to specialist help on such issues as drug abuse or teenage pregnancy. Therefore, in line with the PRISM Independent School Personnel Manual this will be viewed as a disciplinary matter.

For further information and guidance go to [www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk)

# C. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

# What Role Does PRISM Independent School Play In Child Protection?

PRISM Independent School is an alternative provider, which should provide an environment in which young people feel safe and are able to disclose abuse and/or circumstances in which they are or feel at risk.

PRISM Independent School is NOT an investigative agency for child protection. This means if we have concerns that a young person may be ‘at risk’ (see glossary) we must alert the relevant people using the procedures outlined below. We will continue to work with the young person but under no circumstances will we assume an investigative role.

The staff member will make it clear to all young people that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, and if a young person is considered ‘at risk’ the information will be passed to the relevant agencies. (See Confidentiality Statement Appendix F).

PRISM Independent School may provide programmes that enable young people to address issues arising out of their experiences of risk or abuse. It may also provide programmes designed to assist young people to manage and reduce the likelihood and/or continuation of risk and abuse.

PRISM Independent School will work in partnership with other agencies to define appropriate programmes for young people identified as ‘at risk’. An example of this may include working with Social Services ‘key workers’ to provide elements of the young person’s individual ‘Child Protection Plan’, (See Child Protection Conference P21).

Staff working within PRISM as an alternative provider for schools and Pupil referral Units will need to work to the relevant referring bodies Child Protection Policy and must therefore familiarise themselves with the procedures and be aware of who is the designated Child Protection Liaison Officer for that particular school/referrer.

# Background Information and Principles Relating to Working with Young People on Issues of Risk and Abuse

Whenever we work with young people and in whatever setting, issues of risk and abuse may be present. Therefore staff must:

* Always be open to the possibility that young people may be living with or in danger of abuse or risk.
* Remember disclosure may not always be immediate. In some situations you may need to allow time for disclosure to take place gradually.
* Remember young people may go to great lengths to hide risk or abuse.

Reasons include:

* + because they wish to protect others (including, sometimes, the perpetrator),
  + because they are ashamed,
  + because they are fearful of the consequences of disclosure,
  + because they think it is their fault.
* Acknowledge that the young person’s experience is real and a starting point from which the worker can begin to assist the young person in obtaining help.
* Always take seriously disclosure of abuse or risk. Young people rarely make up such things. Never indicate disbelief or surprise - your reaction to an attempt at disclosure may be critical in a young person deciding whether or not to take the issue forward.
* Always follow the PRISM Independent School Child Protection Procedures and these guidelines when dealing with issues of disclosed or **suspected** abuse or risk.
* Remember disclosure may raise issues for yourself and/or others working with you. This may be unexpected and can never form part of your discussions with young people. It is essential you use your own support networks to address this. These may include supervision both managerial and non managerial, as well as support from colleagues and friends.

# How do You Know When Abuse or Risk May Exist?

It is good practice to develop a culture within the organisation which gives a clear message to young people that it is safe to disclose.

There is no sure way of ‘recognising’ young people who are at risk or living with abuse. Instead there are factors that may or may not be indicators of abuse. As ‘indicators’ these factors cannot be seen as evidence, so a checklist is not helpful. Training and/or time spent with child protection advisors can help you to understand these indicators, particularly in relation to changes in young people’s patterns of behaviour.

Staff within PRISM Independent School have a role that is about building positive relationships with young people, which often means that staff are well placed to notice any outward signs of abuse and/or any significant changes in behaviour.

If you have any concerns about a young person whom you feel may be showing signs of risk or abuse yet are uncertain use the steps outlined in these guidelines

# D. Handling Disclosures

# This section needs to be read in conjunction with section H (Absolute confidentiality).

When a young person discloses information about abuse to a member of staff, it may be done indirectly rather than directly and be limited in detail. An abused young person is likely to be under severe emotional stress and the member of staff chosen may be the only adult with whom the young person feels it is safe to talk. When the young person discloses in confidence, the member of staff will need to display tact and sensitivity in responding. The member of staff will need to reassure the young person and retain their trust, whilst explaining the need to inform other professionals.

In any discussions with the young person, do:

* Be accessible and receptive.
* Listen carefully.
* Do not ask leading questions
* Take it seriously.
* Reassure the child / young person that they are right to tell.
* Inform the child/young person that you will have to pass the information on, highlight the confidentiality statement.
* Negotiate getting help.

Make careful records of what was said using the young person’s own words, do not use your own interpretation; it is vital that this is factual information and is recorded as soon as is practicable following the disclosure. Date, time and sign the record. This record could be used in any subsequent legal proceedings. Details of the referral should be confirmed in writing to Social Services within 48 hours and copied to your line manager.

Do not:

* Jump to conclusions, speculate or accuse anybody.
* Stop a child/young person from freely recalling significant events.
* Directly question the young person or suggest words for him/her to use.
* Interrupt the child/young person or try to get the young person to disclose all the details.
* Show shock or ask the young person if they are sure.

# E. Abuse and Neglect – DEFINITIONS

**General**

A young person up to the age of 18 years is considered to be abused or at risk of abuse by parents or carers “when the basic needs of the young person are not being met through avoidable acts of either commission or omission so as to have caused or to have placed the young person at risk of significant harm”.

To obtain an emergency protection or supervision order will depend on a comparison of the young person’s health or development with what could be reasonably expected of a similar young person.

Somebody may abuse or neglect a young person 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 a stranger.

**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 feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. This situation is commonly described using terms such as fabricated or fictitious illness.

**Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment 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 feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve 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 ill treatment of a child though it may occur alone.

**Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**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. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

NB. These definitions are from the Working Together document where ‘child’ is used = child/young person.

**Domestic Violence**

Children may suffer both directly and indirectly if they live in households where there is domestic violence. Domestic violence is likely to have a damaging effect on the health and development of children, and it will often be appropriate for such children to be regarded as children in need.

# F. CHILDREN INVOLVED IN PROSTITUTION

Where a child is suspected of being, or is found to be, involved in prostitution, s/he should be treated as a victim of abuse and regarded as a child in need (and in many cases in need of protection) under the CA1989. In such cases a strategy meeting between the Police, Social Services and any other relevant agencies should take place to consider whether the criteria for initiating a s.47 inquiry are met and, if necessary, plan the enquiry. The meeting will consider:

* The needs of the child and what arrangements may be necessary for his or her immediate safety.
* How to co-ordinate arrangements for the child's safety with any criminal investigations.
* How arrangements for continuing protection and diversion will be taken forward.
* Whether s.47 enquiries are necessary.

If this initial consideration suggests the child is "in need" they should be dealt with under section 17 of the Children Act, and a child and family assessment should be undertaken by Social Services. This assessment should follow any locally agreed children in need procedures.

If at any stage it is believed there is reasonable evidence the child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, s.47 enquiries should commence as in any other situation.

If the child is already being looked after by the Local Authority an urgent Looked After Review, including all relevant agencies, may be convened at which it will be decided whether a child protection conference is also necessary.

# G. CHILD PORNOGRAPHY ON THE INTERNET

When somebody is discovered to have placed child pornography on the Internet, or accessed child pornography, the Police should normally consider whether that individual might also be involved in the active abuse of children. In particular, the individual's access to children should be established, within family and employment contexts and in other settings (e.g. work with children as a volunteer).

Where pornography on the Internet is suspected on a PRISM Independent School computer that is designated for staff use only, The Executive Headteacher must be informed immediately. Dependent upon the situation and seriousness of the offence, The Executive Headteacher will either confiscate the computer or ensure that the offensive material is cleaned off. Where a PRISM Independent School computer is available for public use, i.e. by young people within the project a sign must be displayed highlighting that nothing from the Internet should be downloaded that could be considered offensive.

If a member of staff is aware of any offensive material on the computer, the computer should be locked in a secure place and the Executive Headteacher must be notified together with the line manager. On no account is the computer to be used by either staff or young people until after an investigation is completed and the computer is released by the Executive Headteacher for use.

# H. ABSOLUTE CONFIDENTIALITY

No service for young people, or any individual, should ever guarantee a young person absolute confidentiality. The boundaries of confidentiality must always be made clear to young people before they make use of a service (i.e. have the confidentiality policy statement clearly visible and draw the attention of new users, newly appointed employed staff [paid and voluntary] and visitors to it, have the policy on cards and handouts.

**Confidentiality**

Individuals or organisations do not always interpret confidentiality in the same way. It is essential to have a clear understanding of what is meant by the confidentiality we offer to young people.

**When to Share Information**

There are situations when staff must share information.

* Where there is a child protection issue (i.e. young person is at risk of suffering significant harm); (see glossary)
* Where the life of the young person or a third party is at risk;
* When sharing the information with your immediate team (where appropriate); or on a need to know basis.
* When in supervision with your line manager.

Any discussion with regard to the latter two points should be more about the situation than the individuals involved.

It is the policy of the authority and of its partner agencies that any matter in which there is a child protection issue or where life may be at risk, information will always be disclosed using the PRISM Independent School Child Protection Procedures.

Every young person should be made aware of the confidentiality boundaries of the organisation, each project should ensure a young person is aware of the likely or possible outcomes of the information being passed on to another agency. This is essential if the young person is to retain any control or self-determination (and therefore trust in the project).

If the decision is made to pass on information the worker should attempt to obtain the young person’s permission to do so (**failure to obtain the consent will not constitute a reason for not passing on the information).**

**Action to be taken if abuse is suspected**

Whenever any member of staff suspects that a child has suffered abuse or is at risk of suffering abuse, the worker must inform their line manager, the information must then be shared with the organisation Child Protection Liaison Officer (CPLO) and/or Executive Headteacher. In consultation with the worker, a decision must be made as to whether there are grounds for suspecting abuse or potential risk of abuse.

In the case of immediate risk or concern the CPLO will contact the referring School/Referral Unit who will work to their own procedures and make contact with Social Services, in less urgent situations the CPLO may support the worker in contacting the referring School/referral unit CPLO for advice to identify if a referral is necessary.

If the young person is aged over 16 and not referred through a School/Referral Unit the worker must share any concerns with PRISM Independent School CPLO and will be supported in any required referrals to Social Services. Reporting the matter to Social Services Child Assessment Team must be given priority. It is unacceptable to delay the referral as this could put the young person further at risk.

All relevant information recorded on the appropriate referral form must be passed on by the CPLO and should include the young person’s name, address, date of birth, telephone contact numbers of parents/carers and details of the allegation where possible.

The CPLO will keep the member of staff making the referral, informed of developments.

An accurate written record must be kept of all that has occurred. The written record must include a factual account of what is alleged to have occurred or been said using the young person’s own words, including any visible marks or injuries. This record must be timed, dated and signed.

Staff must seek guidance from the CPLO before making enquiries of parents when abuse is suspected even if a young person has been taken to hospital. Referring School/Referral Unit and/or Social Services, as the lead agency will decide who is the appropriate person to contact and inform parents.

There are strict procedures in the event of an allegation against a member of staff. (see Allegations Against Staff ).

When a child requires medical attention and there is suspicion of abuse, Social Services will make appropriate arrangements to accompany the young person.

Where a parent/guardian is unwilling/unable to attend, the young person must be accompanied at all times by a responsible adult, who will be identified in discussion with Social Services, the young person and School/referring unit or agency.

**Once a referral is made**

The young person who discloses abuse should not have to repeat the information. It is the responsibility of the member of staff to whom the referral was made to provide the information to the CPLO. The CPLO should not interview the young person concerned.

# J. CODES OF PRACTICE

This guidance is to be observed in the context of the PRISM Independent School Code of Conduct for all staff. For the purposes of this document, the following issues have been highlighted.

**STAFF**

At no time is any non-approved adult to have access to young people without constant supervision from an approved member of staff. NB. 'Approved' means an adult who has been cleared in accordance with the Criminal Records Bureau. Volunteers must be cleared in accordance with all the procedures required for the appointment of paid staff.

Projects must only be allowed to operate with the required number of staff on duty.

Regular team meetings and sessional briefings should be held to clarify child protection roles and responsibilities and to ensure that all work is delivered proactively and reactively in issues relating to child protection.

**CRB Checks**

Any employee or volunteer who fails a CRB check will have the right to put forward a reason/account of the incident/incidents in question.

If a potential employee/volunteer fails to pre notify PRISM Independent School of any historical incidents that show up on the CRB check then this person will not be employed for any reason.

Once all information has been gathered the Executive Headteacher will make an informed judgement. The Executive Headteacher will take into account the nature of any incident and the age of the person when this happened.

No one will be considered with a History of:

* Offences against children
* Arson
* Violence
* Use of guns or knives
* Drug dealing

**Working with Young People**

Ensure that at all times and in all places, full and detailed consideration is given so that you do not place yourself in a vulnerable position as far as child protection is concerned.

If a young person seeks a one-to-one conversation, in a private space, inform a colleague that you have agreed to do this and ask them to check on you frequently. Avoid physical contact with young people when ever possible, e.g. do not encourage or readily accept physical displays of affection or offer physical comfort; do not engage in physical 'horseplay'.

Ensure that you maintain professional boundaries with both staff and young people in all situations, particularly during residential work.

**Operational Procedures**

Keep full and detailed written records of all child protection related incidents. These must be kept locked securely. Include date, time, name(s) of people involved and details of incident/allegation.

Ensure that the Childline number and other local agency information is prominently displayed in your meeting place

* **Childline 0800 1111**
* **NSPCC 0800 800500**

If you are concerned about any situation arising in connection with child protection matters, ensure that you raise them with your line manager in the first instance.

# K. REFERRAL PROCESS

**Initial Assessment**

The initial assessment by the Social Services Department of all children in need - whether or not there are child protection concerns - should be completed within a maximum of seven working days of the date of referral. However, the initial assessment period may be very brief if the criteria for initiating s.47 enquiries are met. Social Services will inform the referrer as to actual and potential outcomes in order that appropriate support can be offered to the young person.

**Child Protection Conferences**

The purpose of the conference is to assess the risk to the young person and to pool information about the young person and their family. (See appendix B, refer to ACPC procedures these can be obtained through, Social Services, Bradford Area Child Protection Committee, [section 6] or via [www.Bradford.gov.uk](http://www.Bradford.gov.uk), publications, Child Protection Procedures).

Before a young person is registered the conference must decide that there is actual, or the likelihood of, significant harm leading to the need for a child protection plan.

The purpose of the child protection register is to provide a safeguard for children/young people who have been abused or neglected and/or are considered to be at risk of abuse or neglect and are currently the subject of an inter-agency plan to protect them.

If you are invited to a child protection conference you will be expected to provide a written report which must be with the chair of the conference a minimum of two days prior to the conference (see appendix B) and you will be required to keep all information shared in the conference as confidential. The role of the CPLO will be to support you through this process.

If the young person’s name is placed on the Child Protection Register the conference will draw up an outline Child Protection Plan. The plan will identify a worker from the Social Services Department who will co-ordinate the group of professionals who have responsibility for producing the Child Protection Plan. If it is considered appropriate you may be asked to join this group.

# FLOW CHART 1 – REFERRAL

**WORKER HAS CONCERNS ABOUT CHILDS WELFARE**

Worker discusses with relevant CPLO

Concerns about child’s immediate safety

**See flow chart 3 on Emergency Action safety**

**See flow chart 2 on Initial Assessment**

Feedback to referrer on next course of action

Initial assessment required

No further child protection action, although may need to act to ensure services provided

Still has concerns

No longer has concerns

DATE

SIGNATURE OF REFERRER

NAME OF REFERRER

If under 16 and/referred by School, CPLO refers to referring School/referral unit, post 16 inform referral agency referral to SS may be required following up in writing within 48 hours

School/referring agency acknowledge receipt of referral to CPLO and decide on next course of action within one working day

No further Social Services involvement at this stage, although other action may be necessary e.g. Onward referral

# FLOW CHART 2 – WHAT TO DO IF YOU’RE WORRIED A CHILD IS BEING ABUSED

**INITIAL ASSESSMENT COMPLETED WITHIN 7 WORKING DAYS FROM REFERRAL TO SOCIAL SERVICES**

Child in need

# FLOW CHART 3 – URGENT ACTION TO SAFEGUARD CHILDREN

In-depth assessment required

Decide what services are required

Social Worker discusses with child, family and colleagues to decide on next steps

Further decisions made about service provision

Social Worker leads core assessment; other professionals contribute

Concerns arise about the child’s safety

Actual or likely significant harm

No Social Services support required, but other action may be necessary e.g. onward referral

Feedback to referrer

Review outcomes for child and when appropriate close the case

**See flow chart 4**

Social Worker co-ordinates provision of appropriate services and records decisions

Strategy discussion, involving Social Services, police and relevant agencies, to decide whether to initiate an s47 enquiry

No actual or likely significant harm

**Decision made that emergency action may be necessary to safeguard a child**

Appropriate emergency action taken

Relevant agency sees child and outcome recorded

Relevant agency seeks legal advice and outcome recorded

Immediate strategy discussion between Social Services, Police and other agencies as appropriate

Immediate strategy discussion makes decisions about:

* immediate safeguarding
* information giving, especially to parents

No emergency action taken

Strategy discussion and s47 enquires initiated

Child in need

**See flow chart 4**

**See flow chart 2**

**With family and other professionals, agree plan for ensuring child’s future safety and welfare and record decisions**

# FLOW CHART 4 – WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE STRATEGY DISSCUSSION?

**STRATEGY DISCUSSION MAKES DECISIONS ABOUT WHETHER TO INITIATE S47 ENQUIRIES AND DECISIONS ARE RECORDED**

No further Social Services involvement at this stage, but other services may be required

Decision to commence core assessment under s17 of the Children Act 1989

# FLOW CHART 5 – WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCE, INCLUDING THE REVIEW PROCESS?

Child at continuing risk of significant harm

Concerns substantiated child at continuing risk of harm

Police investigate possible crime

Agree whether child protection conference necessary and record decision

**With family and other professional agree plan for ensuring child’s future safety and welfare and record decisions**

Further decisions made about completion of core assessment and service provision according to agreed plan

**Child’s name placed on Child Protection register, outline child protection plan prepared; core group established - See flow chart 5**

Child not at continuing risk of significant harm

Decisions made and recorded at child protection conference

Social Work Manager convenes child protection conference within 15 working days of last strategy discussion

**With family and other professionals agree plan for ensuring child’s future safety and welfare and record decisions**

No

Yes

Social Worker leads completion of core assessment

Concerns about harm not substantiated but child in need

Concerns substantiated but child not at continuing risk of harm

Social Worker leads core assessment under s47 of Children Act 1989 and other professionals contribute

Decision to initiate s47 enquires

**CHILD’S NAME PLACED ON CHILD PROTECTION REGISTER**

Key Worker leads on core assessment to be completed within 35 working days of commencement

Core group meets within 10 working days of child protection conference

Core group members commission further specialist assessments as necessary

Child protection plan developed by key worker, together with core group members and implemented

Child protection plan developed by key worker, together with core group members and implemented

Core group members provide/commission the necessary interventions for child and/or family members

First child protection review conference is held within 3 months of initial conference

Review conference held

....

Some remaining concerns about harm

No further concerns about harm

Child’s name remains on the register; child protection plan is revised and implemented

Child’s name removed from register and reasons recorded

Review conference held within 6 months of initial child protection review conference

Further decisions made about continued service provision

# L. RECORD KEEPING

Accurate record keeping is an essential part of best practice in all work with young people. In matters of child protection in particular it can allow the building of a wider picture and identify patterns of behaviour.

All sites/projects are expected to keep accurate and as detailed as possible records of work undertaken including incidents/concerns arising out of contact with young people. The referral form should be signed and dated and sent to the CPLO.

If a concern arises regarding child protection an additional recording should be kept in a separate log. All concerns, however small, should be recorded, the written record must be signed and dated and timed as this may be read for evidence. Full details of observable behaviours and conversations must also be recorded. Any opinions recorded must be accompanied by evidence/explanations. It must also be clearly stated that these are opinions.

If there are signs of physical abuse, the worker should use a skin map, with the young person’s permission (see appendix A), to record marks and should give a brief description of their size, colour etc. Workers should not investigate markings or disturb any clothing. Do not further investigate, i.e. asking friends, etc. Workers should record details of any alleged marks but must state whether or not they have seen them. They should state the source of any allegations. (i.e. a friend said they’d seen a bruise).

NB. Where an injury is not visible then a worker must not undress a young person in order to see if there are any marks. Undressing the young person in these circumstances could constitute assault. The CPLO must be contacted immediately or as soon as possible when such an incident/concern arises.

All completed paperwork which relates to a child protection issue must be passed and held on to by the CPLO who will collate forms etc. and will have responsibility for ensuring a confidential action sheet is kept up to date. The CPLO will keep the referring worker up to date with any appropriate information

# M. PROACTIVE WORK

Due to the nature of the relationships that staff build with young people, issues around child protection may arise during informal conversations or during other apparently unrelated activities. Staff should actively seek to identify planned programmes of work that enable young people to explore these issues; this could be during group work sessions and/or in residential or other sessions, i.e. workshops on relationships, equal opportunities, sexual health, bullying etc.

PRISM Independent School is in many ways ideally placed to respond to new challenges. We provide an environment in which many young people may find it possible to disclose areas of difficulty in their lives. We are already undertaking issue based work that always stems from the needs and wishes of young people and in which they are therefore more likely to participate. We can respond swiftly to changing needs and priorities which become apparent through our day to day contact with young people by providing relevant, targeted programmes and activities (e.g. group work on issues such as self-esteem, assertiveness, healthy lifestyles, dealing with conflict etc.).

# N. ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF

Employees working in projects are particularly vulnerable both to the possible consequences of their close relationships with young people and to malicious or misplaced allegations made by young people deliberately or innocently, arising from normal and proper association with them.

Equally, young people in the projects are particularly vulnerable to the actions of employees who wilfully or otherwise disregard legislative, PRISM Independent School guidance and regulations. The following are the procedures for the management of situations wherever allegations of abuse are made against staff.

PRISM Independent School has procedures for dealing with an allegation of professional abuse. If an allegation of abuse is received against another member of staff, this could be from young person (either against themselves or another young person), parent or carer. The member of staff must inform the CPLO immediately.

If immediate action is required to secure the safety of a young person or for any other reason, it is the responsibility of the CPLO to take such action in consultation with The Board.

**Support for a member of staff during a period of suspension**

It would generally be expected that an individual against whom an allegation of child abuse has been made would seek support and advice from their professional association or trade union. However, PRISM Independent School can also provide the following:

* The name of a colleague as a contact. The main role of the contact person is to ensure that the member of staff is kept informed as to the progress of the investigation and to act as a point of communication.
* The support of the colleague will also offer the option of confidential counselling external to the project.
* In certain cases, it may be decided that suspension of an employee is not an appropriate course of action where an allegation of child abuse has been made and in these circumstances PRISM Independent School may be able to provide an opportunity for the employee to be seconded to alternative work within the organisation. This would be entirely dependent on the circumstances of the individual case.
* Where allegations are unsubstantiated, the Line Manager should be responsible for ensuring that a return to work is handled smoothly and sensitively, and to follow up any necessary action to try to prevent further allegations. The Executive Headteacher is available to advise about ways in which this should be handled.

# CRB Checks Communication with the community and the media

Under no circumstances should any member of PRISM Independent School staff respond to queries from the public and/or the media. All such queries will be dealt with through the Executive Headteacher. In the event that you are contacted please record the following details about the person who has contacted you:

* Name
* Telephone number
* Organisation
* Deadline
* Their line of enquiry/questions.
* Tell them the matter will be looked into and that someone will call them back shortly. Then pass all this information to the Executive Headteacher

# APPENDIX A: RECOGNITION OF CHILD ABUSE (SKIN MAP)

**NAME OF YOUNG PERSON**

**D DATE OF BIRTH**

Skin-maps

DATE

NAME OF REFERRER

SIGNATURE OF REFERRER

# APPENDIX B: Report Writing for Child Protection Conferences and/or Court

The report will be shared with the parent and the young person and his/her legal representative.

Reports should not be lengthy. They should be based on fact. Where opinions are given they must be balanced and identified as such, eg. Descriptions of the young person’s strengths as well as weaknesses. They should be written in lay terms, and so, for instance, explain references to issue based work, programming, etc. They should incorporate information from other agencies appropriately and sensitively. The report will need to be signed by the worker who writes it.

# APPENDIX C: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

# Child Protection Register

A central register is maintained for each area covered by a Social Services Department. This register lists all the children/young people resident in the area (including those who have been placed there by another local Authority or Agency) who are considered to be at continuing risk of significant harm and for whom there is a Child Protection Plan.

# Significant Harm

There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm. Consideration of the severity of ill treatment may include the degree and the extent of physical harm, the duration and frequency of abuse and neglect, the extent of premeditation, degree of threat and coercion, sadism, and bizarre or unusual elements in child sexual abuse.

* Each of these elements has been associated with more severe effects on the child, and/or relatively greater difficulty in helping the child overcome the adverse impact of the ill treatment. Sometimes, a single traumatic event may constitute significant harm, eg. A violent assault, suffocation or poisoning. More often, significant harm is a compilation of significant events, both acute and long-standing, which interrupt, change or damage the child’s physical and psychological development. Some children live in family and social circumstances where their health and development are neglected. For them, it is the corrosiveness of long-term emotional, physical or sexual abuse that causes impairment to the extent of constituting significant harm. In each case, it is necessary to consider any ill treatment alongside the family’s strengths and supports.

To understand and establish significant harm, it is necessary to consider:

* The family context.
* The child’s development within the context of their family and wider social and cultural environment.
* Any special needs, such as a medical condition, communication difficulty or disability that may affect the child’s development and care within the family.
* The nature of harm, in terms of ill treatment or failure to provide adequate care.
* The impact on the child’s health and development.
* The adequacy of parental care.

It is important always to take account of the child’s reactions, and his or her perceptions, according to the child’s age and understanding. There are more details concerning definitions of abuse available in Working Together Document available from your Area Office. ‘Harm’ means ill treatment or the impairment of health or development. ‘Development’ means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development. ‘Health’ means physical or mental health. ‘Ill-treatment’ includes sexual abuse and forms of ill-treatment, which are not physical.

**Under s.31(10) of the Act:**

Where the question of whether harm suffered by a child is significant in terms of the child’s health and development, his health or development shall be compared with that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child. (Working Together to Safeguard Children, Dept of Health).

# APPENDIX D: TELEPHONE NUMBERS & USEFUL CONTACTS

Below are the contact numbers they may be needed when dealing with Child Protection issues.

CP Team 01274 434343

CPLO 01904 340492

07790414403

# Help lines

##### Child Line 0800 1111

**NSPCC 0800 800 500**

# APPENDIX E: Acknowledgments & references

* The Kent Child Protection Document
* Hampshire Youth Service
* DƒEE
* Bracknell Forest Youth Service
* National Youth Agency
* Children’s Legal Centre
* Department of Health
* Surrey Area Child Protection and Independent Review Unit
* NSPCC
* Min Partner Independent Consultant & Trainer
* Kay Taylor Duke freelance Social Worker, Consultant, Trainer
* Gloria King Berkshire Education Department
* Surrey Domestic Violence Forum
* Surrey Education Personnel Service
* Bracknell Personnel Department
* Working together to safeguard children (1999)
* Margaret Raynor Child Protection Co-ordinator OMBC
* Oldham MBC Education Welfare Service

With thanks to friends and colleagues who helped with the drafting of the document and special thanks to Oldham Youth Service who allowed us to use their document as a base.

# APPENDIX F: CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

# PRISM

# Confidentiality Statement

PRISM Independent School believes that you have the right to privacy and safety; we strive to provide a place where you feel at ease to talk about yourself.

There may be situations where we may have to share information with people outside this organisation in order to protect your safety. We will only do this when we feel you, or another person is likely to come to some harm.

For example

* You or someone you know is being sexually, physically or emotionally abused.
* You or someone you know is being threatened with violence.
* Where the life of you or a third party is at risk.
* Where inaction could lead to another person being in a situation of risk, harm or abuse.
* Where there may be the need for immediate medical attention including the threat of self-harm.

We will not pass on any information about you without discussing it with you first



**PRISM Independent School**

**Anti-Bullying Policy**

**Statement of Intent**

PRISM Independent School is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our learners so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all learners should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a *TELLING* school. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

This policy is written with reference to the DFE guidance ‘Preventing and tackling bullying – advice for school leaders, staff and governing bodies.’

**What is Bullying?**

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

* Emotional being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
* Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
* Racist racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
* Sexual unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
* Homophobic because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
* Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
* Cyber all areas of internet, such as email & internet chat room misuse

Mobile threats by text messaging & calls

Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera & video facilities

**Why is it important to respond to bullying?**

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. EveryBody has the right to be treated with respect. Learners who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

Schools have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

**Purpose of the Anti-bullying Policy**

* To provide a recognised definition of and common types of bullying including reasons why bullying may occur;
* To detail how PRISM works to prevent, monitor and appropriately respond to incidents of bullying, including how the whole school community is involved in keeping the profile of anti-bullying high;
* To provide guidance for staff when dealing with incidents of bullying, including the use of sanctions in line with PRISM’s Behaviour Policy, supporting victims and procedures for recording and reporting.

PRISM’s Anti-bullying policy covers the bullying of school staff, by learners, parents or other staff as well as the bullying of learners.

**Where bullying can take place**

Bullying can take place:

* between learners, between learners and staff, between staff, between parents and staff;
* by individuals or groups;
* Face-to-face, indirectly or using a range of cyber-bullying methods.

Bullying can take place in and out of school. Head teachers are permitted by law to take ‘reasonable’ action to regulate the behaviour of learners when off-site. School staff may impose disciplinary sanctions for inappropriate behaviour, including bullying that takes place out of school.

While at PRISM, as far as is possible, learners are under constant supervision. Staff must always be vigilant in identifying and dealing with any incidents of bullying as they occur. When planning patterns of supervision including locations of supervisory staff, arrangements for break-times and timetabling for different groups, consideration must be given to the prevention of bullying occurrences.

**Identifying and reporting bullying.**

A learner or parent may raise a bullying concern or report an incident that they have experienced or witnessed. Staff may themselves observe an incident or suspect that bullying is taking place. The following may indicate that bullying is present:

Victims’ attendance may be poor. They may be more anxious and insecure that others, having fewer friends and often feeling unhappy and lonely. Victims can suffer from low self-esteem and negative self-images, looking upon themselves as failures – feeling stupid, ashamed and unattractive. Victims may present a variety of symptoms to health professionals, including fits, faints, vomiting, limb pains, paralysis, hyperventilation, visual symptoms, headaches, stomach aches, bed wetting, sleeping difficulties and sadness. Being bullied may lead to depression or, in the most serious cases, attempted suicide. It may lead to anxiety, depression, loneliness and lack of trust.

During induction, learner are made aware of a number of ways in which they can report a bullying incident or concern in confidence, including those that allow them to do this in anonymity from other students:

* learner can speak directly to any member of staff – this can happen at any time and structured youth-work that takes place every break-time provides regular informal opportunities for this to happen;
* Learners can use drop-in or pre-arranged appointments with the Health Worker to raise concerns;
* Senior management operate an open-door policy for any learners who wish to talk about a bullying (or any other) concern;
* Learners may slip a note under the door of the staff office to alert staff of a concern - this will be followed up at the earliest possible opportunity and always the same day.

Parents and carers are encouraged to report any bullying concerns by telephone. PRISM staff has a responsibility to respond promptly and sensitively, keeping parents informed of progress made and action taken.

If learner and parents/carers are not satisfied with the way a bullying concern has been handled they may wish to make an informal or formal complaint using the PRISM Independent School Complaints Procedure, which is available on request.

Where a member of staff wishes to report a bullying incident between learners and staff, parents and staff, or between staff, they should in the first instance speak with their line manager or a member of senior staff. For further support, a member of staff may wish to contact their trade union or professional association for support and advice.

**Sanctions relating to bullying and behaviour**

Bullying in any form will not be tolerated. This is made clear during induction where all new learners sign a behaviour contract agreeing that they will ‘not bullying or intimidate anyone else’. Staff will challenge learners on all bullying behaviour whether it is low-level or overt. PRISM’s Behaviour Policy outlines the specific strategies in place for dealing with misbehaviour and bullying. Parents will be informed if their son/daughter is engaging in bullying behaviour.

Sanctions must be applied fairly, proportionately, consistently and reasonably, taking into account any special educational needs the learner may have. Where bullying persists, senior staff will become involved and a 3-way meeting between the learner, parent and referring school will take place. A fixed-term exclusion for the bully may be appropriate and occasionally, where strategies do not resolve the problem, permanent exclusion may be justified in the most serious and persistent cases, particularly where violence is involved.

All strategies used should make it clear to the perpetrator that what he/she has done is unacceptable, deter them from repeating that behaviour, and signal to other learners that the behaviour is unacceptable and deter them from doing it.

**Support for victims**

Bullying victims are always listened to, and there it is appropriate and possible to do so (i.e. if the information shared does not indicate that a learners’ safety is at risk), confidence should be respected. Consideration is given to the need to support a victim and take steps to help re-build their confidence. This may include removing a bully from the victim’s group (or site if appropriate) and providing one-to-one sessions, team building or peer mentoring activities. Victims’ parents will be informed and updated regarding steps taken and sanctions imposed. Where a victim has been provoked to react angrily or aggressively towards a bully, special sensitivity and full consideration of the situation must be used when deciding on appropriate consequences for their actions.

Recording bullying incidents

Staff must record all incidents of bullying using the behaviour report on the database. All records should include:

* A clear indication that the behaviour is bullying;
* The date of the incident;
* Identification of the ‘type’ of bullying and reason for it (i.e. name-calling, homophobic);
* Details of the incident;
* Action taken (including sanctions for the perpetrator and support for the victim);
* Indication of whether situation was resolved or is ongoing;
* Details of any follow-up required.

Any serious disciplinary incidents or those resulting in injury should also be recorded in the Incident Book or Accident Records. Further details are available in the ‘Incident Reporting Policy’.

**Monitoring and Review of incidents**

Senior management will monitor behaviour records to identify, respond to and report (to the Local Authority) any developing trends in bullying behaviour. Information from these records will also enable senior staff to determine the effectiveness of the policy and this will feed into its review.

**Maintaining a high Anti-bullying profile**

The profile of Anti-bullying will be kept high through a number of strategies:

* During the entrance interview, the anti-bullying ethos is made explicit and learners agree not to engage in bullying or intimidation;
* Issues surrounding bullying are raised and addressed within the PSD and PSHE curriculum that all learners access and through specific lesson on anti-bullying.
* Staff challenges all bullying, however low-level and opportunities arising from this are used to discuss anti-bullying issues;
* learners are encouraged to discuss any bullying concerns with staff, either formally or informally at any time;
* Visual information on anti-bullying including where help and advice can be obtained is displayed on each site;
* Anti-bullying week is utilised as an opportunity to raise the profile with specific activities taking place;
* Learners’ views on bullying are sought during youth forum;
* New staff read the anti-bullying Policy during their induction;
* PRISM staffs discuss bullying concerns and complaints with parents and carers and seek their support in upholding the Anti-bullying Policy;
* Bullying issues are discussed during the weekly staff team meetings;
* Staff training on recognising and dealing with bullying behaviour takes place during staff away-days and training weekends.

**Outcomes**

1. The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologies. Other consequences may take place.
2. In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion will be considered in discussion with referring agency.
3. If possible, the learners will be reconciled.
4. After the incident/incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case with be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

**Prevention**

PRISM Independent School will use a variety of methods for helping learners to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, there may include:

* Writing a set of project/group rules
* Signing a behaviour contract
* Make sure that information is available and accessible for learners
* Build in sessions for learners to promote anti-bullying and to understand the implications of bullying e.g. writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying; making up role-plays and discussing how to cope/manage situations; having discussions about bullying and why it matters

**Review of Anti-bullying procedures and policy**

A full review of the Anti-bullying procedures and policy will take place at least every 2 years. This will involve the whole school community (parents, learners, and staff). Information gathered over the previous two years, through behaviour records, youth forum feedback, PSD and PSHE lessons, parental comments will be combined with specific feedback and input gathered at the point of review. Anti-bullying week (each November) is a good opportunity to carry out this process, when the profile of Anti-bullying is already high in the media and through activities within the PRISM Curriculum.

**HELP ORGANISATIONS:**

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) 08088005793

Children’s Legal Centre 08453454345

KIDSCAPE Parents Helpline (Mon-Fri, 10-4) 08451205204

Parentline Plus 08088002222

Bully Online [www.bully.co.uk](http://www.bully.co.uk)

Acknowledgements:

[www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)