



Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures

Reviewed by:

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Note: All content should be read and adjusted accordingly, with extra attention paid to any *italicised text* which you may wish to add, alter or delete.

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Policy statement and principals

This policy is one of a series in Serendipity's integrated safeguarding portfolio.

The providers safeguarding arrangements are inspected by Ofsted under the judgements for the 'Effectiveness of leadership and management' and 'Personal development, behaviour and welfare'.

This policy is available on Serendipity's *website* and is included in the staff induction packs.

Our core safeguarding principles are:

- Serendipity's responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children is of paramount importance
- Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure
- Children, parents, staff and management group will be involved in policy development and review via residents meetings, staff meetings and children's meeting if there are children resident old enough to be involved.
- Policies will be reviewed at least annually unless an incident or new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim review.

Child Protection statement

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.

The procedures contained in this policy apply to all staff /volunteers and the management group and are consistent with those of the Devon safeguarding children board (DSCB).

Policy principles

- The welfare of the child is paramount
- All children, regardless of age, gender, ability, culture, race, language, religion or sexual identity, have equal rights to protection
- All staff have an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may suggest a child is at risk of harm
- Children and staff involved in child protection issues will receive appropriate support

Policy aims

- To provide all staff/volunteers/management group with the necessary information to enable them to meet their child protection responsibilities
- To ensure consistent good practice
- To demonstrate Serendipity's commitment with regard to child protection to resident children, parents and other partners

Terminology

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children refers to the process of protecting children from maltreatment, preventing the impairment of health or development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Child Protection refers to the processes undertaken to protect children who have been identified as suffering, or being at risk of suffering significant harm.

Staff refers to all those working for or on behalf of the provider, full time or part time, temporary or permanent, in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

Child includes everyone under the age of 18.

Parent refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers and adoptive parents.

Local Authority refers to the placing Authority who, if the child is subject to an Interim Care Order (ICO), also has parental responsibility for children placed at Serendipity.

Safeguarding legislation and guidance

- The **Residential Family Centres Regulations 2002, as amended**, covers the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements including child protection that family residential centres adhere to. A copy of the regulations and national minimum standards are kept in the main office.
- The statutory guidance **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015** covers the legislative requirements and expectations on individual services (including early years providers) to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It also provides the framework for DSCBs to monitor the effectiveness of local services, including safeguarding arrangements in Early Years.
- **What to do if you're worried a child is being abused 2015 - Advice for practitioners** is non statutory advice which helps practitioners (everyone who works with children) to identify abuse and neglect and take appropriate action. All staff must read this guidance and a copy can be found in each staff office.
- **The Prevent duty Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers June 2015** non statutory advice produced to help recipients understand the implications for the Prevent duty. The prevent duty is the duty to Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 on specified authorities

In the UK, more than 50,000 children are annually subject to a child protection plan. Research suggests that one child a week dies from abuse and one child in six is exposed to violence in the home. The prevalence of neglect continues to be a major concern and online abuse is increasing. The sexual exploitation of children is a growing problem and disabled children are three times more likely to be abused and neglected.

Due to their day-to-day contact with children and the families resident at Serendipity, staff are uniquely placed to observe changes in children's behaviour and the outward signs of abuse. Children or parents may also turn to a trusted adult in Serendipity when they are in distress or at risk. It is vital that all staff are alert to the signs of abuse and understand the procedures for reporting their concerns. Serendipity will always act on identified concerns.

Roles and responsibilities

Key personnel

The Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) for child protection is Darya Stramentov

tel: . **07814 519678**

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officers are Julie Jackson and all Social Workers working at Serendipity (refer to the staff contact list).

tel: . **01395 271271 / 07730 355849**

The Registered Person, Ian Jackson, can also be contacted in relation to any safeguarding concerns on 01395 271271/07519 563938

The Designated Safeguarding officer:

- has the status and authority to carry out the duties of the post, including committing resources and supporting and directing other staff
- is appropriately trained, with updates every three years
- acts as a source of support and expertise within the early years setting
- encourages a culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings
- is alert to the specific needs of children in need, those with special educational needs and young carers
- has a working knowledge of DSCB procedures
- makes staff aware of training courses and the latest policies on safeguarding
- has an understanding of locally agreed processes for providing early help and intervention
- keeps detailed written records of all concerns, ensuring that such records are stored securely and flagged on, but kept separate from, the child's general file and that all concerns are included in the final report on the family
- refers cases of suspected abuse to MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub)
- ensures that when a child leaves Serendipity that all their child protection concerns are passed to any new family placement and that the local authority is fully aware of concerns
- attends and/or contributes to child protection conferences, looked after child reviews and placement reviews, unless it is more appropriate for another member of staff to attend
- develops effective links with relevant statutory and voluntary agencies including the DSCB
- ensures that all staff sign to indicate that they have read and understood the child protection policy
- ensures that the child protection policy and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated annually, working with the management group regarding this
- liaises with the registered manager and registered provider as appropriate
- ensures the HR manager keeps a record of staff attendance at child protection training
- makes the child protection policy available publicly, on the website or by other means
- ensures parents and local authorities are aware of Serendipity's role in safeguarding and that the placing local authority will be informed of ALL incidents of suspected abuse and neglect

The deputy designated safeguarding officers:

are appropriately trained and, in the absence of the designated safeguarding officer can carry out those functions necessary to ensure the ongoing safety and protection of children. In the event of the long-term absence of the designated safeguarding officer, the deputy will assume all of the functions above.

The Registered Manager

Ensures that:

- a DSO is appointed for child protection, someone who is a member of the leadership team and who has undertaken training in inter-agency working, in addition to basic child protection training
- the DSO role is explicit in the role holder's job description
- Serendipity has a child protection policy and procedures, including a staff behaviour policy/code of conduct, that are consistent with DSCB and statutory requirements, reviewed annually and made available publicly on the website or by other means
- there are procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse made against members of staff including allegations made against the Manager and allegations against other children or parents
- safer recruitment procedures are followed which include statutory checks on staff suitability to work with children and disqualification by association regulations
- a training strategy ensures all staff, including the manager and registered person, receive information about the safeguarding arrangements, staff behaviour policy or code of conduct and the role of the DSO on induction, and appropriate child protection training, which is regularly updated in line with any requirements of the DSCB. The DSO receives refresher training at three-yearly intervals.
- that all staff, including temporary staff and volunteers are provided with the child protection policy and staff behaviour/conduct policy
- Serendipity provides a coordinated offer of early help within the remit of placement agreement and when additional needs of children are identified that these are passed to the placing local authority
- Consideration is given for older children placed at Serendipity to be taught about safeguarding, including online, appropriate to age and developmental of the children.

The registered provider nominates a member to be responsible for liaising with the local authority and other agencies in the event of an allegation being made against the registered provider or registered manager.

It is the responsibility of the registered provider to ensure that Serendipity's safeguarding, recruitment and managing allegations procedures take into account the procedures and practice of the local authority and DSCB and national guidance.

An annual survey will be submitted, as required, to the local authority (Devon Early Years and Childcare Service) about how the safeguarding requirements have been implemented. Any weaknesses will be rectified without delay.

The Registered Provider:

- ensures that the safeguarding/child protection policy and procedures are implemented and followed by all staff
- allocates sufficient time, training, support and resources, including cover arrangements when necessary, to enable the DSO and deputy to carry out their roles effectively, including the assessment of children and attendance at strategy discussions and other necessary meetings
- ensures that all staff feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and that such concerns are handled sensitively and in accordance with the whistle blowing procedures
- ensures that children are provided with opportunities to learn about safeguarding, including keeping themselves safe online

- ensure that the parents and child's wishes are taken into account when determining action to be taken or services to be provided
- liaises with the designated safeguarding officer and Local authority designated officer (LADO) in the local authority where an allegation is made against a member of staff/volunteer ensure Ofsted is informed within 14 days of the allegation
- ensures that anyone who has harmed or may pose a risk to a child is referred to the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Good practice guidelines and staff code of conduct

To meet and maintain our responsibilities towards children we need to agree standards of good practice which form a code of conduct for all staff. Good practice includes:

- treating all children with respect
- setting a good example by conducting ourselves appropriately
- involving children in decisions that affect them
- encouraging positive, respectful and safe behaviour amongst children
- being a good listener
- being alert to changes in children's behaviour and to signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation
- recognising that challenging behaviour may be an indicator of abuse
- reading and understanding the Serendipity's child protection policy, staff behaviour policy and guidance documents on wider safeguarding issues, for example bullying, behaviour, physical contact, sexual exploitation, extremism, online safety and information-sharing
- asking the child's permission, where age appropriate, and the parents if present before initiating physical contact, such as assisting with dressing, physical support or administering first aid
- maintaining appropriate standards of conversation and interaction with and between children and avoiding the use of sexualised or derogatory language
- being aware that the personal and family circumstances and lifestyles of some children lead to an increased risk of abuse
- referring all concerns about a child's safety and welfare to the DSO, or, if necessary directly to police or MASH
- following Serendipity's rules with regard to relationships with children and communication with children and families, including on social media

Abuse of position of trust

All staff are aware that inappropriate behaviour towards children is unacceptable and that their conduct towards children must be beyond reproach.

In addition, staff should understand that, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, where that person is in a position of trust, even if the relationship is consensual. This means that any sexual activity between a member of the staff and a child/young person under 18 may be a criminal offence, even if that child/young person is over the age of consent.

Children who may be particularly vulnerable

Some children may have an increased risk of abuse. It is important to understand that this increase in risk is not principally down to the child's personality, impairment or circumstances. Above all the risk is due to society's attitudes and assumptions, and also to child protection procedures that fail to acknowledge children's diverse circumstances. Many factors can contribute to an increase in risk, including prejudice and discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, communication issues and reluctance on the part of some adults to accept that abuse can occur.

There will be child protection concerns about all children placed at Serendipity. Staff must ensure that they have read the family care plan to be aware of what these concerns are.

To ensure that all resident children receive equal protection, we will give special consideration to children who are:

- disabled or have special educational needs
- young carers
- affected by parental substance misuse, domestic violence or parental mental-health needs
- asylum seekers
- living away from home
- vulnerable to being bullied, or engaging in bullying
- living in temporary accommodation
- live transient lifestyles
- living in chaotic and unsupportive home situations
- vulnerable to discrimination and maltreatment on the grounds of race, ethnicity, religion, disability or sexuality
- at risk of sexual exploitation
- do not have English as a first language
- at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM)
- at risk of forced marriage
- at risk of being drawn into extremism

This list provides examples of additionally vulnerable groups and is not exhaustive. Special consideration includes the provision of safeguarding information and resources in community languages and accessible formats for children with communication needs.

Bruising in Pre-mobile Babies

Bruising is the commonest presenting feature of physical abuse in children. The younger the child the higher the risk that the bruising is non-accidental, especially where the child is under the age of six months. Bruising in any child 'not independently mobile' should prompt suspicion of maltreatment and an enquiry to MASH.

Children with Disabilities

Statistically, children with behavioural difficulties and disabilities are most vulnerable to abuse. Staff observing or working with children with complex and multiple disabilities and/or emotional and behavioural problems should be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse

Missing children

A child going missing from Serendipity could be a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. No child should go missing from Serendipity, either on their own or with a parent. Any child that goes missing must be reported immediately to the placing local authority.

Helping children to keep themselves safe

Older children placed at Serendipity will be taught to understand and manage how to keep themselves safe from relevant risks, including when using the internet and social media. Our approach is designed to help children to think about risks they may encounter and with the support of staff, work out how those risks might be reduced or managed. Discussions about risk are empowering and enabling for all children and promote sensible behaviour rather than fear or anxiety. Children will be taught how to conduct themselves and how to behave in a responsible manner. Children and parents/carers are also reminded regularly about online safety, the risks of sharing content and images online and tackling bullying, including cyber bullying procedures.

Serendipity continually promotes an ethos of respect for children, and children will be encouraged to speak to a member of staff of their choosing about any worries they may have.

Support for those involved in a child protection issue

Child abuse is devastating for the child and can also result in distress and anxiety for any staff who become involved.

We will support children, their families, and staff by:

- taking all suspicions and disclosures seriously
- nominating a link person who will keep all parties informed and be the central point of contact
- Where a member of staff is the subject of an allegation made by a child/parent/staff member, separate link people will be nominated to avoid any conflict of interest
- responding sympathetically to any request from child or staff for time out to deal with distress or anxiety
- maintaining confidentiality and sharing information on a need-to-know basis only with relevant individuals and agencies
- storing records securely
- offering details of helplines, counselling or other avenues of external support
- following the procedures laid down in our child protection, whistleblowing, complaints and disciplinary procedures
- co-operating fully with relevant statutory agencies.

Escalation Policy (Consistent with Devon Escalation Policy).

Escalation is the course of action that should be taken by professionals where there are concerns that the child or young person's safety is compromised and the current action of other agencies does not support effective safeguarding of the child or young person.

The DSCB is clear that there must be respectful challenge whenever a professional or agency has a concern about the action or inaction of another. Agencies should not be defensive if challenged. Practitioners and managers should always be prepared to review decisions and plans with an open mind and revise decisions in the light of new information.

Problem resolution is an integral part of professional co-operation and joint working to safeguard children;

Professional disagreement requires resolution in a constructive and timely fashion

If you require support to follow the Escalation Policy, please call the Early Years Safeguarding Adviser 01392 383000.

Resolution of professional disagreements in work relating to the safety of children.

Occasionally situations arise when workers within one agency feel that the decision made by a worker from another agency on a child protection or child in need case is not a safe decision.

Disagreements could arise in a number of areas, but are most likely to arise around:

- Levels of need
- Roles and responsibilities
- The need for action
- Communication

The safety of individual children is the paramount consideration in any professional disagreement and any unresolved issues should be addressed with due consideration to the risks that might exist for the child.

All workers should feel able to challenge decision-making and to see this as their right and responsibility in order to promote the best multi-agency safeguarding practice. This policy provides workers with the means to raise concerns they have about decisions made by other professionals or agencies by:

- a) avoiding professional disputes that put children at risk or obscure the focus on the child
- b) resolving the difficulties within and between agencies quickly and openly
- c) identifying problem areas in working together where there is a lack of clarity and to promote the resolution via amendment to protocols and procedures.

Effective working together depends on an open approach and honest relationships between agencies. Problem resolution is an integral part of professional co-operation and joint working to safeguard children.

Resolution should be sought within the shortest timescale possible to ensure the child is protected. Disagreements should be resolved at the lowest possible stage however if a child is thought to be at risk of immediate harm discretion should be used as to which stage is initiated.

Stages of the policy

Stage one

Any worker who feels that a decision is not safe or is inappropriate should initially consult a one of the social workers or the manager to clarify their thinking in order to identify the problem; to be specific as to what the disagreement is about; and what they aim to achieve. They should also be able to evidence the nature and source of their concerns and should keep a record of all discussions.

Stage two

Initial attempts should be taken to resolve the problem at the lowest possible level. This would normally be between the people who disagree. It should be recognised that differences in status and/or experience may affect the confidence of some workers to pursue this unsupported. In respect to a child or young person subject to a safeguarding plan, this would involve the Local Authority Social Worker

Stage three

If the problem is not resolved at stage two, the concerned worker should speak to Serendipity's manager who should raise the concerns with the Local Authority Team Manager. The manager should also notify the Devon Safeguarding Children's Board Manager (or equivalent), who will keep a record of all on-going disagreements.

Stage four

If the problem is not resolved at stage three the manager reports to the Local Authority Area Manager. These two managers must attempt to resolve the professional differences through discussion. Devon's Safeguarding Children's Board Manager should be advised of any outcome.

Stage five

If it has not been possible to resolve the professional differences within the agencies concerned the matter should be referred to the Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, who may either seek to resolve the issue direct, or to convene a Resolution Panel. The panel must consist of LSCB representatives from three agencies (including the agencies concerned in the professional differences, where possible).

The panel will receive representations from those concerned in the professional differences and make a decision as to the next course of action, resolving the professional differences concerned.

Timescales

Some matters may be resolved very quickly, and this will be determined locally by the complexity of the issues. In all cases, the matter will be resolved as speedily as possible, and the primary focus will be on ensuring that the safety and welfare of the child concerned is assured whilst discussions take place.

Additional notes

At all stages of the process actions and decisions must be recorded in writing and shared with relevant personnel, to include the worker who raised the initial concern. In particular this must include written confirmation between the parties about an agreed outcome of the disagreement and how any outstanding issues will be pursued.

It may be useful for individuals to debrief following some disputes in order to promote continuing good working relationships.

Complaints procedure

Our complaints procedure will be followed where a child or parent/carer raises a concern about poor practice towards a child that initially does not reach the threshold for child protection action. Poor practice examples include unfairly singling out a child or attempting to humiliate them, bullying or belittling a child or discriminating against them in some way. Complaints are managed by manager. (An explanation of the complaints procedure is included in the placement Information for Parents)

Complaints from staff are dealt with under Serendipity's complaints and disciplinary and grievance procedures.

Complaints which escalate into a child protection concern will automatically be managed under Serendipity's child protection procedures

Whistle blowing if you have concerns about a colleague

Staff who are concerned about the conduct of a colleague towards a child are undoubtedly placed in a very difficult situation. They may worry that they have misunderstood the situation and they will wonder whether a report could jeopardise their colleague's career. All staff must remember that the welfare of the child is paramount. Serendipity's whistleblowing policy which can be found in the staff handbook, enables staff to raise concerns or allegations, initially in confidence and for a sensitive enquiry to take place.

Serendipity's whistle blower is Di Trigger 07766 996124 or 01404 548764

All concerns of poor practice or possible child abuse by colleagues should be reported to the DSO/Manager/Registered Provider. Complaints about the Manager/Registered Provider should be reported to our Independent Consultant. Pippa Hector 07896 255180 or John Woodhouse john@dialogueltd.co.uk

Staff may also report their concerns directly to children's social care/Local Authority Designated Officer or the police if they believe direct reporting is necessary to secure action. Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) 0345 155 1071 or DSCB 01392 386067

Allegations against staff

When an allegation is made against a member of staff, set procedures must be followed. It is rare for a child to make an entirely false or malicious allegation, although misunderstandings and misinterpretations of events do happen.

A child may also make an allegation against an innocent party because they are too afraid to name the real perpetrator. Even so, we must accept that some professionals do pose a serious risk to children and we must act on every allegation.

Staff who are the subject of an allegation have the right to have their case dealt with fairly, quickly and consistently and to be kept informed of its progress. Suspension is not the default option and alternatives to suspension will always be considered. In some cases, staff may be suspended where this is deemed to be the best way to ensure that children are protected. In the event of suspension Serendipity will provide support and a named contact for the member of staff

The full procedures for dealing with allegations against staff can be found in the Child Protection Policy under Managing Allegations. Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and Human Resources Manager can provide advice.

Staff, parents and management group are reminded that publication of material that may lead to the identification of a staff member who is the subject of an allegation is prohibited by law. Publication includes verbal conversations or writing, including content placed on social media sites

Allegations concerning staff who no longer work at Serendipity or historical allegations will be reported to the police

Staff training

It is important that all staff receive training to enable them to recognise the possible signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and to know what to do if they have a concern.

New staff and members of the management group will receive a briefing during their induction, which includes the providers safeguarding/child protection policy and staff behaviour policy, reporting and recording arrangements, and details for the DSO. All staff, including the manager/Registered Person and governors will receive training that is regularly updated and the DSO will receive training updated at least every three years, including training in inter-agency procedures.

All staff will be made aware of the increased risk to abuse of certain groups, including disabled and SEN children, looked after children and young carers

Safer recruitment

Serendipity endeavours to ensure that we do our utmost to employ safe staff by following the Regulations, as amended. Staff Recruitment policy and procedures can be found in the staff manual, a copy of which is in each staff office.

Safer recruitment means that applicants will:

- complete an application form which includes their employment history and explains any gaps in that history.
- provide two referees, including at least one who can comment on the applicant's suitability to work with children.
- provide evidence of identity and qualifications.
- if offered employment, be checked in accordance with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) regulations as appropriate to their role. This will include an enhanced DBS check and a barred list check for those engaged in Regulated Activity.
- if offered employment, provide evidence of their right to work in the UK
- be interviewed, if shortlisted.

Serendipity will also

- verify the preferred candidate's mental and physical fitness to carry out their work responsibilities
- obtain references for all shortlisted candidates, including internal candidates
- carry out additional or alternative checks for applicants who have lived or worked outside the UK

Where possible at least one member of each recruitment panel will have attended safer recruitment training.

All new members of staff will undergo an induction that includes familiarisation with the Serendipity's child protection policy and staff behaviour policy and identification of their child protection training needs.

All staff sign to confirm they have received a copy of the child protection policy and staff behaviour policy.

All relevant staff are made aware of the disqualification by association legislation under the childcare act 2006 and is part of induction as required.

Serendipity will obtain written confirmation from supply agencies or third party organisations that agency staff or other individuals who may work in Serendipity have been appropriately checked. Currently Serendipity are not employing agency staff until such procedures are in place.

Serendipity maintains a single central record of recruitment checks undertaken.

Volunteers

Serendipity does not currently use volunteers. However if in the future they are used they will undergo checks commensurate with their work in Serendipity and contact with children. Under no circumstances will a volunteer who has not been appropriately checked be left unsupervised when engaging in regulated activity.

Contractors

Serendipity checks the identity of contractors working on site and requests DBS checks and barred list checks where appropriate. Contractors who have not undergone checks will not be allowed to work unsupervised or in regulated activity.

Site security

Visitors to Serendipity including contractors, are asked to sign in. All visitors are expected to observe Serendipity's safeguarding and health and safety regulations to ensure children are kept safe. The Manager/Registered Provider will exercise professional judgement in determining whether any visitor should be escorted or supervised while on site.

Extended activities and off-site arrangements

All extended and off site activities are subject to a risk assessment to satisfy health and safety and safeguarding requirements. If other organisations provide services or activities on our site we will check that they have appropriate procedures in place, including safer recruitment procedures.

Photography and images

The vast majority of people who take or view photographs or videos of children do so for entirely innocent and legitimate reasons. Sadly, some people abuse children through taking or distributing images, so we must ensure that we have some safeguards in place.

To protect children and families we will:

- seek their consent for photographs to be taken or published (for example, on our website or in newspapers or publications)
- use only the child's first name with an image
- ensure child's are appropriately dressed
- encourage children to tell us if they are worried about any photographs that are taken of them.
- Use pictures for life story work

Online Safety

Our children, parents, volunteers and staff increasingly use electronic equipment on a daily basis to access the internet and share content and images via social networking sites such as facebook, twitter, MSN, tumblr, snapchat and instagram.

Unfortunately, some adults and young people/children will use these technologies to harm children. The harm might range from sending hurtful or abusive texts and emails, to grooming and enticing children to engage in sexually harmful conversations, webcam photography or face-to-face meetings.

Children may also be distressed or harmed by seeing and or accessing inappropriate websites that promote unhealthy lifestyles, extremist behaviour and criminal activity.

Serendipity's online safety policy, *found in the staff handbook*, explains how we try to keep children safe, protect and educate children in the safe use of technology. Cyberbullying and sexting by children will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed through our anti-bullying procedures. Serious incidents may be managed in line with our child protection procedures

Many parents and children who are resident at Serendipity own hand held devices and parents are encouraged to consider measures to keep their children safe when using the internet and social media at home and in the community. Any child using the internet within Serendipity must be directly by their parent or a member of staff and age appropriate site management in place.

A program of staff training includes online safety issues.

Staff/children and family relationships

Serendipity provides advice to staff regarding their personal online activity and has strict rules regarding online contact and electronic communication with children and families. Staff found to be

in breach of these rules may be subject to disciplinary action or child protection investigation. This forms part of our code of conduct that can be found in the Staff Handbook.

Child protection procedures

Recognising abuse

To ensure that our children are protected from harm, we need to understand what types of behaviour constitute abuse and neglect.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, for example by hitting them, or by failing to act to prevent harm, for example by leaving a small child home alone, or leaving knives or matches within reach of an unattended toddler.

Abuse may be committed by adult men or women and by other children and young people.

Four categories of abuse

Physical abuse

Physical abuse is 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. (this used to be called Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy, but is now more usually referred to as fabricated or induced illness).

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to 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 capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), 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

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect

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

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Definitions taken from *Keeping Children Safe in Education* 2015.

Bullying

While bullying between children is not a separate category of abuse and neglect, it is a very serious issue that can cause considerable anxiety and distress. At its most serious level, bullying can have a disastrous effect on a child's wellbeing and in very rare cases has been a feature in the suicide of some young people.

Indicators of abuse

Physical signs define some types of abuse, for example, bruising, bleeding or broken bones resulting from physical or sexual abuse, or injuries sustained while a child has been inadequately supervised. The identification of physical signs is complicated, as children may go to great lengths to hide injuries, often because they are ashamed or embarrassed, or their abuser has threatened further violence or trauma if they 'tell'. It is also quite difficult for anyone without medical training to categorise injuries into accidental or deliberate with any degree of certainty. For these reasons it is vital that staff are also aware of the range of behavioural indicators of abuse and report any concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

It is the responsibility of staff to report their concerns. It is not their responsibility to investigate or decide whether a child has been abused.

A child who is being abused, neglected or exploited may:

- have bruises, bleeding, burns, fractures or other injuries
- show signs of pain or discomfort
- keep arms and legs covered, even in warm weather
- be concerned about changing for PE or swimming
- look unkempt and uncared for
- change their eating habits
- have difficulty in making or sustaining friendships
- appear fearful
- be reckless with regard to their own or other's safety
- self-harm
- be frequently absent, arrive late or leave the setting for part of the day
- show signs of not wanting to go home
- display a change in behaviour – from quiet to aggressive, or happy-go-lucky to withdrawn
- challenge authority
- become disinterested in their setting
- be constantly tired or preoccupied
- be wary of physical contact
- be involved in, or particularly knowledgeable about drugs or alcohol

- display sexual knowledge or behaviour beyond that normally expected for their age
- acquire gifts such as money or a mobile phone from new 'friends'

Individual indicators will rarely, in isolation, provide conclusive evidence of abuse. They should be viewed as part of a jigsaw, and each small piece of information will help the DSO to decide how to proceed. Staff are encouraged to use Devon's Threshold Tool.

It is very important that staff report their concerns – they do not need 'absolute proof' that the child is at risk.

If you are concerned that a member of staff or adult in a position of trust poses a danger to a child or young person or that they might be abusing a child or young person you must report your concerns to the Safeguarding Designated Officer. Where those concerns relate to the Safeguarding Designated Officer however, this must be reported to the Registered Person using Serendipity's 'Whistle blowing' policy. If for whatever reason the staff member feels unable to inform the Registered Person then concerns can be reported to Local Children and Young Peoples Service – Local Authority Designated Officer.

As part of the assessment process it is important that all concerning behaviour is recorded in the daily logs. This includes all behaviours that may be indicative of neglect. Careful and accurate recording will enable Serendipity to identify patterns of concerning behaviour or neglect and evidence these in our reports.

Impact of abuse

The impact of child abuse, neglect and exploitation should not be underestimated. Many children do recover well and go on to lead healthy, happy and productive lives, although most adult survivors agree that the emotional scars remain, however well buried. For some children, full recovery is beyond their reach, and the rest of their childhood and their adulthood may be characterised by anxiety or depression, self-harm, eating disorders, alcohol and substance misuse, unequal and destructive relationships and long-term medical or psychiatric difficulties.

Taking action

Any child, in any family provider could become a victim of abuse. Because of the nature of the work done at Serendipity all children will be at risk or have suffered abuse.

Key points for staff to remember for taking action are:

- in an emergency take the action necessary to help the child, if necessary call 999.
- report your concern as soon as possible to the DSO/Manager
- immediately contact Local Authority/EDT (if out of hours by telephone)
- complete incident form and clearly record incident in logs
- do not start your own investigation
- share information on a need-to-know basis only – do not discuss the issue with colleagues, friends or family
- complete a record of concern (if disclosure)
- seek support for yourself if you are distressed.

All Adults, including the SDO, have a duty to refer all known or suspected cases of abuse to the relevant agency including MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub), Children and Young Peoples Service (CYPS) – Social Care, or the Police. Where a disclosure is made to a visiting staff member

from a different agency, e.g. Early Years Consultants, Health Visitors, it is the responsibility of that agency staff to formally report the referral to the Setting's Designated Person in the first instance. Any records made should be kept securely on the Child's Protection file.

If you are concerned about a child's welfare

There will be occasions when staff may suspect that a child may be at risk, but have no 'real' evidence. The child's behaviour may have changed, their artwork or writing could be bizarre or physical but inconclusive signs may have been noticed. In these circumstances, staff will try to give the child the opportunity to talk. The signs they have noticed may be due to a variety of factors, for example, a parent has moved out, a pet has died, a grandparent is very ill or an accident has occurred. It is fine for staff to ask the child if they are OK or if they can help in any way. Report to Serendipity DSO or Social Work staff at the earliest opportunity and to use the **Incident Form** to record these early concerns. If the child does begin to reveal that they are being harmed, staff should follow the advice below.

If a child discloses to you

It takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose that they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, particularly if the abuse is sexual; their abuser may have threatened what will happen if they tell; they may have lost all trust in adults; or they may believe, or have been told, that the abuse is their own fault. Sometimes they may not be aware that what is happening is abusive.

If a child talks to a member of staff about any risks to their safety or wellbeing, for younger children this could be through their play or conversations with their peers, key worker etc. **the staff member will need to let the child know that they must pass the information on** - staff are not allowed to keep secrets. The point at which they tell the child this is a matter for professional judgement. If they jump in immediately the child may think that they do not want to listen, if left until the very end of the conversation, the child may feel that they have been misled into revealing more than they would have otherwise.

During their conversations with the child, staff will:

- allow them to speak freely
- remain calm and not overreact – the child may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting their listener
- give reassuring nods or words of comfort – 'I'm so sorry this has happened', 'I want to help', 'This isn't your fault', 'You are doing the right thing in talking to me'
- not be afraid of silences – staff must remember how hard this must be for the child
- **under no circumstances** ask investigative questions – such as how many times this has happened, whether it happens to siblings too, or what the child's mother thinks about all this. Do remember your TED questions: Tell me.... Explain..... Describe.....
- at an appropriate time tell the child that in order to help them, the member of staff must pass the information on
- not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort. It may be anything but comforting to a child who has been abused
- avoid admonishing the child for not disclosing earlier. Saying things such as 'I do wish you had told me about this when it started' or 'I can't believe what I'm hearing' may be the staff member's way of being supportive but may be interpreted by the child to mean that they have done something wrong
- tell the child what will happen next.
- report verbally to the DSO
- write up their conversation as soon as possible on the **record of concern form** and hand it to the designated person
- seek support if they feel distressed

Notifying parents

Serendipity will normally seek to discuss any concerns about a child with their parents. This must be handled sensitively and the DSO will speak with the parent in the event of a concern, suspicion or disclosure.

However, if the DSO believes that notifying parents could increase the risk to the child or exacerbate the problem, advice will first be sought from MASH Consultation Line.

The placing local authority must also be informed of any concerns,

Enquiry to MASH

The DSO will make an enquiry to MASH if it is believed that a child is suffering or is at risk of suffering significant harm by using the DSCB threshold tool as a guide. The child (subject to their age and understanding) and the parents will be told that an enquiry is being made, unless to do so would increase the risk to the child.

Any member of staff may make a direct enquiry to MASH children's social care if they genuinely believe independent action is necessary to protect a child.

Children with sexually harmful behaviour

Children may be harmed by other children or young people. Staff will be aware of the harm caused by bullying and will use *Serendipity's* anti-bullying procedures where necessary. However, there will be occasions when a child's behaviour warrants a response under child protection rather than anti-bullying procedures. In particular, research suggests that up to 30 per cent of child sexual abuse is committed by someone under the age of 18.

The management of children and young people with sexually harmful behaviour is complex and the **Serendipity** will need to immediately work with the relevant Local Authority to reduce risks to the child and to other families. Young people who display such behaviour may be victims of abuse themselves and the child protection procedures will be followed for both victim and perpetrator. Staff, who become concerned about a child's sexual behaviour, including any known online sexual behaviour, should speak to the DSO as soon as possible.

Sexual exploitation of children

Sexual exploitation involves an individual or group of adults taking advantage of the vulnerability of an individual or groups of children or young people, and victims can be boys or girls. Children and young people are often unwittingly drawn into sexual exploitation through the offer of friendship and care, gifts, drugs and alcohol, and sometimes accommodation. Sexual exploitation is a serious crime and can have a long-lasting adverse impact on a child's physical and emotional health. It may also be linked to child trafficking.

A common feature of sexual exploitation is that the child often doesn't recognise the coercive nature of the relationship and doesn't see themselves as a victim. The child may initially resent what they perceive as interference by staff, but staff must act on their concerns, as they would for any other type of abuse.

All staff are made aware of the indicators of sexual exploitation and all concerns are reported immediately to the DSO.

Serendipity will engage, report to and work with the relevant Local Authority when and where appropriate and make an enquiry to MASH for any child that goes missing if they are not known to Children's Services.

Female Genital Mutilation

FGM is the collective name given to a range of procedures involving the partial or total removal of external female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It has no health benefits and harms girls and women in many ways. The practice, which is most commonly carried out without anaesthetic, can

cause intense pain and distress and long-term health consequences, including difficulties in childbirth.

FGM is carried out on girls of any age, from young babies to older teenagers and adult women, so school staff are trained to be aware of risk indicators. Many such procedures are carried out abroad and staff should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns expressed by female child/young person about going on a long holiday during the summer vacation period

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the practice is illegal under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003. Any person found guilty of an offence under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 is liable to a maximum penalty of 14 years imprisonment or a fine, or both.

Mandatory reporting of FGM* Duty applies to regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales. Requires these professionals to make a report to the police if, in the course of their professional duties, they: • are informed by a girl under 18 that an act of FGM has been carried out on her; or • observe physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 and have no reason to believe that the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth. *introduced in Section 5B of the FGM Act 2003, as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015

*(See DSCB guidance for further information
<http://www.devonsafeguardingchildren.org/uncategorized/female-genital-mutilation-free-online-training>)*

Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is a marriage in which a female (and sometimes a male) does not consent to the marriage but is coerced into it. Coercion may include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. It may also involve physical or sexual violence and abuse.

A forced marriage is not the same as an arranged marriage. In an arranged marriage, which is common in several cultures, the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice of whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the prospective spouses.

Children may be married at a very young age and well below the age of consent in England. Staff receive training and should be particularly alert to suspicions or concerns raised by a child about being taken abroad and not be allowed to return to England.

Since June 2014 forcing someone to marry has become a criminal offence in England and Wales under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. *(See DSCB guidance for further information)*

Radicalisation and Extremism

The government defines extremism as vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

Some children and families are at risk of being radicalised: adopting beliefs and engaging in activities which are harmful, criminal or dangerous. Islamic extremism is the most widely publicised form and providers should also remain alert to the risk of radicalisation into white supremacy extremism.

Staff receive training to help to identify signs of extremism. Opportunities are provided for children to discuss issues of religion, ethnicity and culture and the provider follows the DFE advice Promoting fundamental British Values as part of the Early Years Foundation Stage September 2014.

Further information on Preventing Radicalisation' has been included in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* in line with:

Private fostering arrangements

A private fostering arrangement occurs when someone other than a parent or a close relative cares for a child for a period of 28 days or more, with the agreement of the child's parents. It applies to children under the age of 16, or aged under 18 if the child is disabled. Children looked after by the local authority or who are placed in a residential school, children's home or hospital are not considered to be privately fostered.

Private fostering occurs in all cultures, including British culture and children may be privately fostered at any age.

Most privately fostered children remain safe and well but safeguarding concerns have been raised in some cases so it is important that Serendipity staff are alert to possible safeguarding issues, including the possibility that a child has been trafficked into the country

By law, a parent, private foster carer or other persons involved in making a private fostering arrangement must notify children's services as soon as possible.

(<http://www.devonsafeguardingchildren.org/documents/2014/04/private-fostering-leaflet.pdf>)

Confidentiality and sharing information

All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the child and staff involved but also to ensure that information being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.

Staff should only discuss concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Officer, Manager/Registered Provider (depending on who is the subject of the concern). That person will then decide who else needs to have the information and they will disseminate it on a 'need-to-know' basis.

However, following a number of cases where Designated Safeguarding Officer, Manager/Registered Person have failed to act upon concerns raised by staff, the DSCB escalation policy emphasises that **any** member of staff can contact MASH (children's social care) if they are concerned about a child.

Child protection information will be stored and handled in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. Information sharing is guided by the following principles. The information is:

- necessary and proportionate
- relevant
- adequate
- accurate
- timely
- secure

Information sharing decisions will be recorded, whether or not the decision is taken to share concerns. All records of child protection concerns and other written information will be stored in a locked facility and any electronic information will be password protected and only made available to relevant individuals.

Every effort will be made to prevent unauthorised access, and sensitive information should not routinely be stored on laptop computers or other hand held device, which, by the nature of their portability, could be lost or stolen. When it is necessary to store child protection information on portable media, such as a CD or flash drive, these items will also be kept in locked storage. Child protection information will be stored separately from the child's assessment file.

The DSO will normally obtain consent from the child and/or parents to share sensitive information within the setting or with outside agencies. Where there is good reason to do so, the DSO may share information *without* consent, and will record the reason for not obtaining consent. All information obtained in placement will form part of the family's court reports and shared with all parties to the care proceedings.

Child protection records are normally exempt from the disclosure provisions of the Data Protection Act, which means that children and parents do not have an automatic right to see them. If any member of staff receives a request from a child or parent to see child protection records, they will refer the request to the Manager/Registered provider or DSO

The Data Protection Act does not prevent providers/staff from sharing information with relevant agencies, where that information may help to protect a child.

The providers' confidentiality and information-sharing policy is available to parents and children on request.

Reporting directly to child protection agencies

Staff should follow the reporting procedures outlined in this policy. However, they may also share information directly with children's social care, police or the NSPCC if:

- the situation is an emergency and the Designated Safeguarding Officer, their deputy, the Manager/ Registered provider and the chair of committee/ proprietor are all unavailable
- they are convinced that a direct report is the only way to ensure the child's safety
- for any other reason they make a judgement that direct referral is in the best interests of the child.

Related safeguarding portfolio policies

- Staff behaviour/code of conduct
- Physical intervention and the use of reasonable force
- Behaviour
- Personal and intimate care
- Complaints procedure
- Tackling bullying
- Physical contact
- Safe working practice
- On line Safety
- Whistleblowing
- SEN
- Recruitment and selection
- Managing allegations
- Grievance and disciplinary
- Staff/pupil online communication
- Confidentiality and information sharing
- Forced marriage
- Preventing Radicalisation

Special Circumstances

(to be included as appropriate for your setting)

Looked after children

The most common reason for children becoming looked after is as a result of abuse or neglect. Serendipity ensures that staff have the necessary skills and understanding to keep looked after children safe. This includes some young mothers who are resident at Serendipity. Appropriate staff have information about a child's looked after legal status and care arrangements, including the level of authority delegated to the carer by the authority looking after the child. The DSO have details of the child's social worker and the name and contact details of the local authority's virtual head for children in care.



For Early Help, Consultation and Enquiries please contact:

Telephone: **0345 155 1071**

E-mail: mashsecure@devon.gcsx.gov.uk

Fax: 01392 448951

Enquiry Form available at:

www.devon.gov.uk/mash-enquiryform.doc

Post: **Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, P.O. Box 723, Exeter EX1 9QS**

Emergency Duty Team – out of hours

0845 6000 388

Police – non emergency – 101

Police – emergency - 999

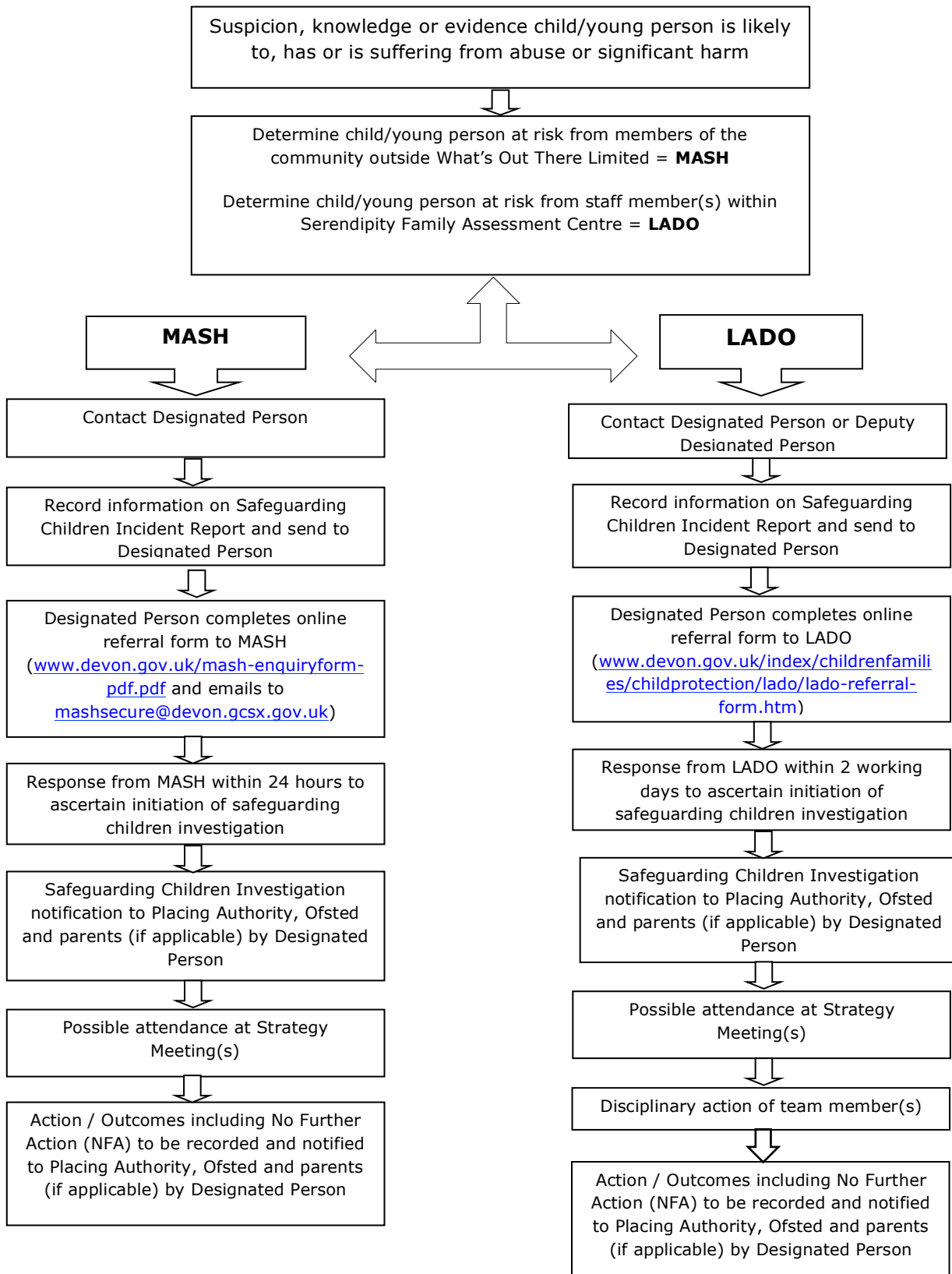
For all LADO enquiries Exeter (01392) 384964

Or

<http://www.devon.gov.uk/lado>

Adapted from the integrated safeguarding portfolio in the *Child Protection & Safeguarding Handbook for Schools* by
Ann Raymond
www.optimus-education.com

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PROCEDURAL STAGES FLOWCHART



DESIGNATED PERSON

Darya Stramentov 07814 519678

DEPUTY DESIGNATED PERSON (S)

Julie Jackson 01395 271271 / 07730 355849

Serendipity Social Workers – See contact list for details

EXTERNAL CONTACT NUMBERS AND ADDRESSES

**Devon County Council
Social Services Department
County Hall
Topsham Road
Exeter
Devon
EX2 4QD**

Tel: 01392 384964

**Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
PO Box 723
Exeter
EX1 9QS**

Tel: 0345 155 1071

Fax: 01392 448951

E-mail: mashsecure@devon.gcsx.gov.uk

LADO

Tel: 01392 384964

E-mail: ladosecure@devon.gcsx.gov.uk

Prevent

Anti-terrorist Hotline: 0800 789 321

Email: prevent@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk

Childline: 0800 1111

Appendix II

Glossary

Word	Definition
DSCB	Devon Safeguarding Children's Board
MASH	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub
MACSE	The Missing and Child Sexual Exploitation Forum
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service
DAF	Devon Assessment Framework
SRE	Sex and Relationship Education
REACH	Reducing Exploitation and Absence from Care or Home
DFE	Department of Education
SEN	Special Educational Needs
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
ICPC	Initial Child Protection Conference
EY	Early Years
KS	Key Stage
FE	Further Education
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
LADO	Local Authority Designated Officer
DSO	Designated Safeguarding officer
KCSiE	Keeping Children Safe in Education

APPENDIX III

Signed:	
Name:	
Date:	

Signed:	
Name:	
Date:	

Please sign after reading:

NAME	SIGNATURE	DATE