



SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Scope and Purpose	This document outlines the safeguarding policy and procedures, applying to all staff and students at Belfast Bible College.
Who uses the process	Monitoring staff and students within the college
Process review	This process should be reviewed following the end of each academic year
Date last reviewed	July 2021
Date next review	December 2021

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Belfast Bible College is committed to ensuring a safe and secure environment for all those who live, work, and study on our premises and those who visit or hire our premises. Belfast Bible College recognises that it has a legal duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all vulnerable groups accessing its services and facilities and a wider Public Protection Duty. The College also recognises that children and vulnerable groups may be at risk of harm from sources outside the college's control. Where signs of such harm are apparent, the college encourages these to be reported to the appropriate external agency.

1.2 Belfast Bible College is committed to a proactive approach towards achieving the outcomes referred to in paragraph 1.1 through sound procedures and good practice.

2 PURPOSE

This policy and its procedures outline the College's approach to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults while on the college's premises, to provide clear guidelines and procedures to mitigate, wherever possible, their risk of being harmed.

3 BELFAST BIBLE COLLEGE GOAL

Belfast Bible College's goal is to equip 21st century disciples through theological education that is orientated towards a lived-out faith that impacts the world.

4 LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

This policy has been developed in the context where the College is located in Northern Ireland and subject to the laws of that jurisdiction. The central legal framework in respect of the welfare of children is set out in the Children (NI) Order 1995. The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (Northern Ireland) Order 2007 (as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012)



In addition to the legislation to which the College is subject there are College regulations and procedures (available on the College website or Moodle) that include:

- Belfast Bible College Code of Conduct
- Belfast Bible College Handbook
- Belfast Bible College Data Protection Policy
- Belfast Bible College Acceptable Use of ICT Policy and Procedure (including social media policy)
- Belfast Bible College Admissions Policy

5 SCOPE

5.1 This policy, procedure and associated guidance documents apply to all College led and College premises-based activities involving children, young people under the age of 18 and vulnerable adults.

5.2 The policy applies to all those who work, visit or live on the College site. This includes:

- Staff of the College, including permanent and part-time, paid and unpaid, visiting lecturers, hostel guests and those in residence, volunteers, voluntary workers, casual workers, and contractors engaged by the College, referred to hereafter as College community
- All students and their families referred to hereafter as 'students'.
- All conference users, premises hirers (temporary or permanent), and other charity workers whose organisation(s) rent College premises, referred to hereafter as 'hirers'.
- All visitors to the College, including prospective applicants (student and staff), those visiting members of the College community or staying on the College premises for any other purpose, referred to hereafter as 'visitors.'

5.3 Students working on ministry placements outside the College that involve children/adults at risk must comply with the placement's own Safeguarding/Child Protection/Adult at risk policy.



6 DEFINITIONS

- **Child(ren):** a person/persons under the age of 18 years
- **Young People:** a person of 16 or 17 years of age.
- **An 'Adult at risk of harm'** is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:
 - a) personal characteristics AND/OR
 - b) life circumstances

Personal characteristics may include, but are not limited to, age, disability, special educational needs, illness, mental or physical frailty or impairment of, or disturbance in, the functioning of the mind or brain.

Life circumstances may include, but are not limited to, isolation, socio-economic factors and environmental living conditions.
- **An 'Adult in need of protection'** is a person aged 18 or over, whose exposure to harm through abuse, exploitation or neglect may be increased by their:
 - a) personal characteristics AND/OR
 - b) life circumstances AND
 - c) who is unable to protect their own well-being, property, assets, rights or other interests; AND
 - d) where the action or inaction of another person or persons is causing, or is likely to cause, him/her to be harmed.

In order to meet the definition of an 'adult in need of protection' either (a) or (b) must be present, in addition to both elements (c), and (d).

The decision as to whether the definition of an 'adult in need of protection' is met will demand the careful exercise of professional judgement applied on a case-by-case basis. This will take into account all the available evidence, concerns, the impact of harm, degree of risk and other matters relating to the individual and his or her circumstances. The seriousness and the degree of risk of harm are key to determining the most appropriate response and establishing whether the threshold for protective intervention has been met.



- **Physical Abuse:** is the deliberate physical injury to a child/vulnerable person or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating. For children with disabilities, it may include confinement to a room or cot, or incorrectly given drugs to control behaviour.
- **Emotional Abuse:** is persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child/vulnerable person to cause severe and persistent adverse effects that affects their self-worth. It may involve conveying to them that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only to meet the needs of another person. It may cause them to feel frightened, threatened, in danger, or be vulnerable to exploitation or corruption of the individual.
- **Sexual Abuse:** where adults use children/vulnerable persons to satisfy sexual desires. It involves forcing or enticing a child/vulnerable person, to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the individual is aware of what is happening. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving the individual in looking at, or in the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities or encouraging the individual to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- **Neglect:** is the persistent failure to meet the needs of the child's/vulnerable person's basic physical or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm. It may involve failing to provide food, shelter, clothing, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care/treatment. It may involve neglect, or unresponsive to, a child's/vulnerable person's emotional needs.

Concerns that a child/adult at risk has been harmed (or is at risk of being harmed) must be reported to the Designated Officer.



7 POLICY

7.1 Commitment to Values:

- The College is committed to providing a safe and secure environment, which supports and promotes the welfare of all staff, workers, students and their families, hirers and visitors, including children. The college employs a range of mechanisms to deliver its safeguarding agenda. These mechanisms include but are not limited to:

Robust recruitment procedures, staff recruitment, student recruitment, engagement of contractors, support services including academic and, pastoral care, proactive policies and procedures e.g. IT/Placement

- The College is committed to fostering an inclusive, caring, Christian culture that promotes equality, values diversity and seeks to maintain a professional work, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all members of the College community are respected.
- The College Code of Conduct is based upon principles that derive from the nature of the College as a Christian institution: Biblical concepts of love and respect for individuals, property and the environment. It is expected that the behaviour of all members of the College Community will reflect these concepts and that all will live in a manner that pleases God.

7.2 Legal Obligations:

The College recognises its legal duty under law designed to protect children and is committed to complying with such measures as noted in Section 4 above.

In addition, the College has numerous other policies that place specific obligations on staff and students not to engage in any behaviour, which is liable to cause harm to others. These can be found on the college website.

7.3 Risk Assessments:

The College is required to create and monitor a Safeguarding Risk Assessment to ensure that any risks to the safety are mitigated as far as reasonably possible.



Risk assessments will be required by organisers of all events, including those involving children, or adults at risk on the College premises.

7.4 College Security:

- Given the nature of the College's open site, the College is committed to implementing the best security measures it can. Residents are provided with access and must be willing to identify themselves at all times. Hirers and visitors should sign in and out in the Reception area at the start and end of their visit, and their visit is to be supervised by the relevant nominated person. Access will only to be given to visitors known to the College or overnight visitors.
- It is the responsibility of students and staff to sign in their own personal visitors at reception and to be responsible for them during their stay. Other visitors will always be the responsibility of a nominated member of the College community whilst visiting the College.
- The College uses an electronic room booking services to record conferences and events taking place and which rooms are being occupied by them. A copy of this can be accessed at Reception. Hirers should be similarly informed when the College community is in residence during their conference.

7.5 Admissions and interviewing potential students:

All interviews of children and adults at risk will be held in accordance with the college Recruitment, Selection, Admissions policy.

7.6 Ministry Placements involving working with children:

The College currently undertakes Access NI checks for first year students and makes clear to all parties that it is the responsibility of the placement to follow their own Safeguarding Procedures and obtain Access NI checks for any students whose work will involve regular contact with children. Whilst students are with the College for their study, they fall under the College's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures. On placement, where they have their own safeguarding policies, students will be expected to be inducted into the placement policies and procedures and to comply with them.



Where a safeguarding related incident occurs in the placement setting, the setting involved should implement its own safeguarding policy and procedure, liaising with the external agencies as appropriate. The setting should inform the College's Lead Safeguarding Office immediately so any parallel action required can be taken by the College e.g. under the Student Code of Conduct.

The College is required to report the incident to the Lead Operational Safeguarding Officer at the University of Cumbria immediately so any parallel action can be taken by the University as appropriate e.g. under the Student Code of Conduct.

7.7 Under 18-year-old College Casual workers:

The College shall not employ under 18-year-old Casual Workers.

7.8 Acceptable Use of ICT:

All students will be advised during Orientation of the College's Acceptable Use of ICT Policy and Procedures and the College's intolerance for any misuse that could harm others.

7.9 Photos:

The College recognises that photographing fellow members (students/staff) of the College community has the potential to lead to harm. Once taken the photograph is the property and responsibility of the photographer. Permission to take photographs or video the College Campus should be requested from the Communications Manager. The risk of potential harm (even inadvertently) should be considered before consent is sought for photographs to be taken or used. . (see 8.1k)

7.10 Health and Safety:

This is covered by the College Health and Safety policy documents.



8 PREVENTION PROCEDURES:

8.1 The College recognises that there are a number of activities undertaken on the premises or undertaken by College students off site that bring children into contact with College staff, students, hirers and visitors. The following are identified as activities which present key risks which will be managed as follows:

a. Threat Credibility: Christian communities are, by their nature, trusting communities. Its members find it hard to believe that child abuse could take place in a Christian environment. Parents will instinctively feel it is safe to let their children roam with more freedom than they would grant them in another environment. Parents will instinctively trust other Christian adults to look after their children and Christian adults will instinctively offer to do so. To meet this challenge, the Designated Safeguarding Officer will ensure that the issue of Safeguarding is highlighted with the wider College, and that reminders are given as pertinent throughout the year.

b. Parents: During orientation, the parents of children (who are or may be on campus) are to be provided with this policy which outlines their responsibilities to keep their children safe on the college campus, and while they are resident in this country. These include:

- Parents are responsible for the safety of their own children at all times while on site.
- Children under 18 years of age must never go into a bedroom which is not used by a member of their family.
- Children under 14 years of age should always be in sight of their parents or under delegated supervision.
- There are some unsafe areas in the college campus where children are encouraged not to play (e.g. river bank, kitchen), however this is not intended to be all encompassing as parents (or those with parental responsibility) must take responsibility to ensure the safety of the child/ren.

c. Site Security: Reception shall ensure that any visitors accompanied by children shall be reminded that the child must remain in sight of their parent at all times during the visit.



d. Ministry Placements involving working with children: [See here](#)

e. Children of Staff or Students living on site: At the beginning of the Academic Year it is the responsibility of the Operations Manager to remind parents of their parental responsibility under the terms of this policy. [See here](#)

f. Children accompanying an adult visitor. [See here.](#)

g. College events that include children: The College has undertaken a Risk Assessment for College organised events that include child participants.

h. Conferences that include child (or young people) delegates: Hirers must take their own child protection steps in accordance with legal guidelines.

- It is the responsibility of the Conference Manager to ensure that all hirers are aware of the terms and conditions of their hire under the College Lettings Policy and produce a copy of their own Safeguarding Policy or choose to comply with the College's own Safeguarding Policy.
- Hirers are also required to carry out their own risk assessment and the College offers a pro forma and a guidance sheet for this process. Once completed, the risk assessment pro forma must be approved by Personnel and Operations Coordinator before the activity is undertaken. A pro forma Risk Assessment form is attached to this policy. The Conference manager should, as far as reasonably possible, monitor compliance during their stay.
- Hirers given the same information as for Parents. [See here](#)

i. Acceptable Use of ICT: The Communications Manager will monitor adherence to the College Acceptable Use of ICT Policy and Procedure and therefore be alerted to any potential Safeguarding concerns when they occur.

j. Contractors: The Operations Manager must consider Safeguarding when allowing visits by contactors e.g. window cleaners and plumbers, to access areas where children and vulnerable adults are living.

k. Photos: Safeguarding must be considered when photos are taken for college publicity and when handling and sharing newsletters from alumni. The College has identified specific risks and protocols must be followed to mitigate them:



i. Photographing children can lead to harm for the following reasons:

- children may be identifiable when a photograph is shared with personal information.
- there can be direct and indirect risks to children and young people when photographs are shared on websites and in publications with personal information.
- innocent images of children can be used by others for unlawful reasons.
- adaptation or copying of images can also lead to inappropriate use.

It is the policy of the College not to take or use images of under 18's for any reason. The only exception is applicants who are under 18 supplying their passport photo for the purposes of applying to the College.

Photographing children is NOT advised and students are advised not to take photographs of children during placement.

ii. Photographing students and most especially posting the photo on social media may cause harm to a student in the future if they later work in a sensitive country. The Placement handbook reminds placements of this risk but it is also the responsibility of such students to highlight this risk to their placement.

iii. Protocols regarding the Staff and/or Student photos displayed are:

- Staff and Students who may work in sensitive countries are asked to inform the Communications Manager that their image must be used with caution.

iv. Consent for use of the photos containing a student or staff member is sought at the start of their time at the College as part of the staff induction or student registration.

For any other individuals in photographs eg: visiting speakers or guests at a conference, the College reserves the right to use their image, as they are at a public campus, unless they notify the Communication Manager that they don't want their image to be used.

The College does keep photos stored for historical archive purposes but will only use those images publicly while that person is recently connected to the College (usually one year). It should be noted that Social Media posts are available forever.



I. Children/young people as Research Subjects: Research involving human participants must be approved by the BBC Ethics Committee, who will ensure that the provisions of this policy are adhered to. This includes research by undergraduate and post-graduate students, and staff.

9 RECOGNISING SIGNS OF ABUSE

9.1 When children or vulnerable people are suffering from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or may be experiencing neglect, this may be demonstrated through the things they say (direct or indirect disclosure) or through changes in their appearance or their behaviour. Such changes may manifest themselves as:

- Physical: Unexplained or hidden injuries, lack of medical attention.
- Emotional: Reverting to younger behaviour, nervousness, sudden underachievement, or seeking more attention than usual.
- Sexual: Preoccupation with sexual matters, sexually provocative with adults, nightmares, secretive relationships with adults or children.
- Neglect: Looking ill cared for and unhappy, withdrawn or aggressive, lingering injuries
- Health problems

10. REPORTING INCIDENCES AND RAISING CONCERNS:

10.1 Any member of the College community who has concerns that a child, young person or adult at risk is being or has been harmed should contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer. They should not delay, not act alone or confront anyone concerned and under no circumstances start to investigate if sexual abuse is suspected or disclosed, alleged or suspected, but they should speak with the Designated Safeguarding Officer immediately. All complaints, allegations or concerns will be taken seriously and staff and students are encouraged to report concerns at the earliest opportunity.



10.2 It is not the responsibility of individual members of staff to investigate or make judgments on suspected instances of risks of harm to the welfare of a child or vulnerable adult. That is a matter for the relevant external agencies, or, in appropriate cases, the College through the actions described in Safeguarding Procedures. The Designated Safeguarding Officer will take the matter forward as appropriate. If the situation requires an immediate emergency response, then the appropriate 999 call should be made then reporting implemented.

10.3 In the case of suspected abuse of a child (despite the natural inclination to do so), it is very important to NOT discuss the situation with the child's parents at this stage. The Professionals (Social Services and/or the Police) will advise when/if it is safe to do so. Where emergency medical attention is necessary it should be sought immediately.

10.4 The Designated Safeguarding Officer will only discuss the situation on a need to know basis, which may include the line manager, the Principal and the Pastoral Care Coordinator (who may be approached to arrange support for any of those involved)

10.5 A written record of all conversations and actions should be kept. A general principle for processing information is that information is only shared with the consent of the subject of the information. In some circumstances however, it will not be appropriate to seek consent before sharing information with others and / or information can be shared where consent has been refused. The exception to this is where to do so would:

- a. Place the child, an adult or others at increased risk of Significant Harm;
- b. Undermine the prevention, detection or prosecution of a serious crime (i.e. any crime that causes or is likely to cause significant harm to a child or to an adult) including where seeking consent might lead to interference with any potential investigation.

10.6 The College strongly urges anyone who is confronted with an individual who comes to them with an accusation of sexual assault or sexual violence being committed against them to immediately contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

10.7 Allegations of abuse by any member of the College community will be taken very seriously. If found guilty, this would amount to gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal



without notice (staff) or in the case of a student, termination of registration according to the terms of the 'College code of conduct, Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedures' which states

“Safeguarding of Children and Adults at risk is of the utmost importance to the College. Care must be taken with regard to the presence of children on campus so as to protect their safety at all times. It is the responsibility of students to make themselves aware of the College’s Safeguarding Policy and general expectations about community living and as stated in the College Handbook. Any concerns regarding Safeguarding should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer immediately.”.

10.8 Use of the Staff Disciplinary Procedures does not affect an employee’s right to make a claim to an employment tribunal within three months of them being found guilty of such a misdemeanour.

10.9 All parties involved in a complaint (including any witnesses who may be interviewed as part of any investigation) should maintain the confidentiality of the process. Failure on the part of any member of College staff to do so will be regarded as a failure to fulfil the responsibilities of their position. All steps will be taken to maintain confidentiality as far as is consistent with progressing the complaint. Those involved in advising complainants, where possible, should seek the consent of the individual for the onward disclosure of relevant information to those with a clear need to know. Where such consent is not forthcoming, the person entrusted with the information should make it clear that, in exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to disclose the information, taking account of the duty of care that may be owed to the individual and/or others.

10.10 When a criminal offence may have been committed, the relevant disciplinary procedure may not be appropriate. These cases will include, but not be limited to, serious assault or threat of serious assault. Student members can seek advice from their tutor, the Pastoral Care Team, their Programme Leader or speak directly with the Principal and/or approach the Police directly; and staff members can speak directly with the Principal and/or approach the Police directly.



10.11 If a complainant is deemed to have known or could reasonably have been expected to know that a complaint was unfounded, the allegation of abuse may be judged vexatious or malicious, and disciplinary action may be taken against them. In the case of a student this would be dealt with by referral to the Student Code of Conduct disciplinary procedure, and staff through the Staff disciplinary procedure (staff handbook). No action will be taken if a complaint, which proves to be unfounded, is judged to have been made in good faith.

11. DATA PROTECTION

11.1 Written records of any safeguarding concerns will be retained for as long as is necessary for the purpose for which it was obtained or as legally required or lawfully permitted.

11.2 Such written records will be held centrally and separately from a member of staff's or student's personal records.

11.3 All such records are kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. See the College Data Protection Policy for details.

11.4 In line with the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998, anyone for whom the College holds records is entitled to a copy of all their personal data held by us. An exception would be if the release of the information would interfere with the prevention, detection or investigation of a crime. All requests should be made through the Academic Administration Office.

12 RESPONSIBILITIES, POLICY APPROVAL AND REVIEW

12.1 Availability

This document, as well as all other policy, procedure and guidance documents relating to students studying at the College, will be available to all, monitored regularly, reviewed, and evaluated periodically.



12.2 Lines of Responsibility

Those in positions of authority, such as the Members of the Board, the Principal, the Management Team, the Designated Safeguarding Officer, have formal responsibilities under this Policy and are expected to familiarise themselves with this Policy on appointment.

12.3. Responsibilities

Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)

The Designated Safeguarding Officer's role is to:

- Liaise with College management regarding safeguarding policy, procedures.
- Liaise with and understand the roles and responsibilities of all the appropriate investigating agencies
- Review this policy and related procedures annually
- Oversee and monitor the security of record keeping
- Develop and monitor a Safeguarding Action Plan including reporting incidents of concern.
- Ensure that safeguarding measures are implemented at all college events that may involve children, young people or adults at risk.
- Ensure the College community receive training on safeguarding as required.

All staff and students

All staff, students and college community are expected to familiarise themselves with this Policy. They also have a personal responsibility for complying with this Policy and must comply with and demonstrate active commitment to this Policy by:

- Reporting any suspicions of harm being done to any child, young person or Adult at risk to the Designated Safeguarding Officer. It is the responsibility of ALL staff working in the College to record and report abuse and incidents of concern in line with our procedures. This responsibility extends to all staff, not just those specifically working with children, young people and adults at risk .

Therefore, it is the responsibility of all staff to:

- Treat children and adults at risk with dignity and respect at all times;



- Adopt child protection and adults at risk guidelines including the code of behaviour for staff
- Act upon any concern, no matter how small or trivial it may seem, in accordance with the College procedures
- Promote safe practice and challenge poor and unsafe behaviour
- Ensure all health and safety procedures are adhered to.

12.4 Approval & Review

The Management Team will annually review and approve this policy.

The overall responsibility for achieving the objectives of this policy and ensuring its compliance rests with the Board, who are also responsible for its final annual review and monitoring.

The Principal also has responsibility for overseeing any complaints brought under the terms of the policy and ensuring that decision-making complies with all relevant regulatory bodies.

13. POLICY COMMUNICATION

13.1 All policy documents concerning students, which are mentioned in this policy, can be found by students in Moodle or on the college website. All policy documents concerning staff, which are mentioned in this policy, can be found by staff handbook.

13.2 The 'Staff Disciplinary Procedure' can be found in the Staff Handbook Appendices, which is obtainable from the Operation Manager.

13.3 Every effort will be made to respond to any request to provide this policy in a different format.

13.4 This policy will be included in staff and student induction.



14 APPENDIX:

- SAFEGUARDING REPORTING FORM
- GUIDANCE ON HANDLING DISCLOSURE OR ALLEGATION OF SEXUAL ABUSE OF A CHILD
- SAFEGUARDING REPORTING FLOWCHART



<p>Safeguarding Reporting form</p> <p>For use by staff with any safeguarding concerns and/or DSO.</p> <p>This confidential form should be kept in a secure location.</p>			
Report Completed By:			
Position:		Date:	
Information about child/young person/vulnerable adult			
Name			
Address:			
Date of Birth			
Name of Parent/carer			
Parent/Carer Address			
Incident date and time:			
<p>Details of Concern or allegation</p> <p>Detail exactly what the child said and what you said: (Remember do not lead the child – record actual details. Continue on separate sheet if necessary)</p>			
Action taken so far:			
Designated officer informed?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		



External Agencies contacted	
Police	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Details of advice received:	
Branch Contacted:	
Name:	
Contact no:	
Social Services	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Details of advice received:	
Branch Contacted:	
Name:	
Contact no:	
Other Agencies as advised by above	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Details of advice received:	
Branch Contacted:	
Name:	
Contact no:	

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Remember to maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis – only if it will protect the child. Do not discuss the incident with anyone other than those who need to know.



GUIDANCE ON HANDLING DISCLOSURE OR ALLEGATION OF SEXUAL ABUSE OF A CHILD OR Adult at risk

The following is a summary for reference only

- Be careful not to promise anything, e.g. that you will not tell anyone else.
- Look at the person directly as you listen
- Listen with care, and treat with respect what is being said
- Be aware that they may have been threatened
- Do not press for information
- Reassure the person that they are right to tell and that you believe them
- Don't promise confidentiality
- Let them know what you are going to do next, who you are going to tell, and why, and roughly what will happen
- Finish on a positive note
- As soon as possible, make notes of exactly what has been said and the date and time.

WHAT TO DO:

- Contact the College Designated Safeguarding Officer, immediately.

Complete the relevant report

- The Designated Safeguarding Officer will contact relevant bodies for advice in cases of deliberate injury or where concerned about the persons' safety. The parents or responsible person should not be informed.



- Where emergency medical attention is necessary it should be sought immediately. The doctor should be informed of any suspicions of abuse.
- In other non-emergency circumstances where children are concerned, speak with the parent/ carer and suggest medical attention / help is sought, not mentioning any allegations or suspicions. The doctor or health professionals will initiate further action if necessary.
- Where the parent/ carer is unwilling to seek help, the Designated Safeguarding Officer may volunteer to go with them. If still unwilling and in cases of real concern social services should be contacted.

DO NOT

- Speak to the parents/ carer about any suspicions, disclosures or allegations.
- Under no circumstances attempt to carry out any investigation into the allegations or suspicions of sexual abuse.
- It is the responsibility of the person reporting an allegation to ensure that action is taken and procedures followed.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?

- Professional involvement will usually follow this course: a strategy discussion involving social services, police child protection team, other significant professionals and the person suspecting abuse or to whom the child had talked.
- A decision will be taken as to whether an investigation is warranted, if so this will be planned.
- The investigation may include: An informal talk with the child/ A formal police interview (with / without social services)/ A video recorded interview following disclosure/ Medical examination/ Preliminary family assessment.



- If there is sufficient concern a child protection conference will be held to decide the best course of action to protect the child and help the family. There may be criminal prosecution of the abuser.

In cases of ALLEGATIONS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE AND NEGLECT:

- Contact social services for advice in cases of deliberate injury or where concerned about the child's safety. The parents should not be informed.
- Where emergency medical attention is necessary it should be sought immediately. The doctor should be informed of any suspicions of abuse.
- In other non-emergency circumstances where children are concerned, speak with the parent/ carer and suggest medical attention / help is sought, not mentioning any allegations or suspicions. The doctor or health professionals will initiate further action if necessary.
- Where the parent/ carer is unwilling to seek help, the designated person may volunteer to go with them. If still unwilling and in cases of real concern social services should be contacted.



SAFEGUARDING REPORTING PROCEDURE

