Section 2: Safeguarding considerations for schools

School staff play an essential role as they are in a position to identify concerns early, provide help for children and to prevent concerns from escalating. Schools should also work with social care, the police, health services and other agencies to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Specific safeguarding issues are:

- child sexual exploitation
- neglect
- sexual abuse
- mental health and self-harming
- domestic violence
- physical abuse
- bullying, including cyber-bullying
- alcohol, drug and substance misuse
- racist and faith abuse
- harassment and discrimination
- local gangs and youth violence
- female genital mutilation
- forced marriage
- gender based violence/against women and girls
- teenage/relationship abuse, sexting
- private fostering safeguards and notification to Council
- radicalisation
- trafficking

Contexts in which safeguarding and relevant procedures should be considered include children missing from school, use of physical intervention, pupils with medical conditions, providing first aid or intimate care, educational visits, internet and e-safety, and trips outside the UK or prolonged absences where there are one or more of the above concerns.

Section 1: Definition of Safeguarding

- Protecting children and young people from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children and young people's health or development
- Ensuring that children and young people are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes

Section 6: Accountability Charter: safeguarding and complex needs

This charter incorporates the recommendations from the Improvement Board for Northamptonshire in relation to education and schools.

School role to support Council:

- Identify concerns about possible abuse and/or neglect and refer them promptly to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) or identified social worker
- Accurately record information and evidence relevant to safeguarding concerns
- Share information appropriately and in a timely way, with own designated safeguarding leads and other agencies
- Follow up written referrals with a professional discussion with a MASH officer
- Inform parents/families of referrals unless advised otherwise by safeguarding professionals
- Write reports within timescales for child protection conferences and looked after reviews
- Co-operate fully with initial enquiries and/or response team visits from the MASH, and case investigations co-ordinated by the LSCBN
- Implement recommendations from own enquiries and external agencies
- Ensure out of hours and school holiday contact arrangements are in place – where not possible to attend ensure a contribution is made
- Commission preventative and alternative provisions to reduce exclusions, and provide CPD for working with children with complex needs
- Secondary schools should have at least one pastoral support lead, primaries on a cluster basis

Council commitment to schools:

- Customer Advice Team in MASH take referral calls with access to a Senior Practitioner for advice
- MASH to provide timely communications and updates to schools on referrals, progress and outcomes
- Invites to conferences and reviews to be sent out in timely way to ensure full agency participation, information sharing, and effective safeguarding plans for children
- Build links with schools and partners through reintroduction of the duty Independent Reviewing and Conference Officer (IRCO) role
- Effective transition and communication between Council services including social care and targeted prevention teams
- Strengthened Education Entitlement team to assist tracking and liaison with schools
- Re-establish services that schools valued including “protective behaviours” training for pupils and internet and e-safety advice
- Maintain work on safeguarding audits and targeted CAF support for schools
- Training is available for designated safeguarding leads with resources to cascade safeguarding training within schools
- All looked after children and carers/foster carers will have a named education officer and access to support through the Virtual School
- Simplify communications to schools, highlighting safeguarding priorities

Safeguarding referrals and advice line: 0300 126 1000
Section 3: Statutory Duties and Working Together 2013

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on maintained schools and governing bodies to exercise their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils. The same duty applies to Academies and free schools.

The government’s “Working Together 2013” sets out statutory guidance for agencies. Schools should have in place:

1. A clear line of accountability to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
2. A senior Governing Body/Trust lead to take leadership responsibility for the organisation’s safeguarding arrangements
3. A culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, both in individual decisions and the development of services
4. Arrangements which set out clearly the processes for sharing information, with other professionals and with the Local Safeguarding Children Board Northamptonshire (LSCBN)
5. A designated professional lead for safeguarding, explicit in their job description, supporting other staff to recognise the needs of children and engage in multi-agency work
6. Safe recruitment practices for individuals who work with children, including statutory responsibilities to check staff, decisions on requesting additional checks, monitoring of volunteers and safer recruitment training for at least one member of appointment panels
7. Appropriate supervision and support for staff, including safeguarding training
8. Competent staff to carry out their safeguarding responsibilities within an environment where staff feel able to raise concerns and promote the welfare of children
9. Mandatory induction for staff, which includes familiarisation with child protection responsibilities and procedures to be followed for a child’s safety or welfare
10. All professionals should have regular reviews to improve their own practice
11. Clear policies in line with the LSCBN for dealing with allegations against people who work with children

Statutory guidance for schools and colleges, April 2014

“Keeping Children Safe in Education: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges”
“Keeping Children Safe in Education: Information for all school and college staff”

Section 4: Further safeguarding checks for schools

There are other checks that Governing Bodies and Headteachers can undertake to assure themselves of arrangements in schools. These include whether:

- Pupils are encouraged and enabled to report any concerns or complaints
- Pupils are helped to keep themselves safe, and deal sensibly with risk
- Reasonable steps are taken to ensure that pupils feel safe on the school site and can learn
- A single central record is maintained of recruitment checks for staff and all other adults who work in regular contact with children
- A designated teacher for looked after children is appointed
- The child protection policy is reviewed annually and publicly available

Section 5: Early help and early intervention

Section 10 of the Children’s Act 2004 requires each Local Authority to make arrangements to promote co-operation between the LA and relevant partners, to safeguard children and promote their well-being.

Making Children Safer – reminder of points from Northamptonshire multi-agency briefings.

- Earlier help and intervention to support families reduces the risk of harm or abuse to children
- An inter-agency assessment through a Common Assessment for Families (CAF) enables information to be shared and a plan drawn up for the child and family
- Schools should assess risk and initiate a CAF if a safeguarding referral isn’t needed, with progress tracked to ensure it is happening and prevent issues escalating
- Co-ordinating support from agencies e.g. education, health, housing, police
- Help is available:
  - Contact a CAF Co-ordinator
  - “Making Children Safer” – A Pocket Guide
  - Directory of key professionals by area of County
  - Thresholds and pathways document
  - Streamlined CAF format and training sessions
  www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/mcs

From April 2014 new Complex Case Meetings and Locality Forums will be operating.

Complex case meetings

Meetings will take place every two weeks in each district or borough – and more frequently if needed. The aim is to provide a responsive service to families and professionals. Schools can complete an online request form emailed to the appropriate address for your area, detailing the risks and issues and intended outcomes from a case discussion. Schools must have the family’s consent for case discussion.

If the concerns raised can be resolved without coming to a meeting, a CAF coordinator or Troubled Families co-ordinator will contact the schools to offer advice and to agree actions. If the outcome of a complex case meeting is a referral to a particular service, this will be made by the chair of the meeting.

Locality forums

The county’s Early Help Forums will be replaced by ten Locality Forums that will build on existing relationships between professionals. This will help us all to move to an early intervention response that addresses the needs of the local area and builds a shared understanding of the profile and emerging priorities of each local area.

Joining up resources and developing solutions to address local needs will be a key role of the new Locality Forums, which will be made up of key local stakeholders including schools, children’s centres, NCC education, GPs and school nurses.

www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/mcs