

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

### Contents

School Definition.....	2
Safeguarding Statement .....	2
Role of designated teacher .....	3
Guidelines .....	4
Recognizing signs of abuse .....	4
Physical Abuse.....	4
Emotional Abuse .....	5
Neglect .....	5
Sexual Abuse .....	6
What to do with concerns?.....	6
Allegations made against volunteers .....	7
Safe recruitment .....	8
Good practice.....	9
Outings & Trips.....	10
Use of premises by other organizations .....	10
Safeguarding training for volunteers .....	10
Child protection procedures .....	11
Safe working practices for the protection of staff and children.....	12
Introduction .....	12
Duty of Care .....	12
Confidentiality.....	12
Behaviour .....	12
Dress and appearance.....	12
Gifts.....	12
Infatuations.....	13
Social contact .....	13

Physical contact .....	13
Showers and Changing.....	13
Behaviour Management .....	13
Sexual contact with young people.....	14
One to one situations.....	14
Transporting Children/Educational Visits .....	14
First Aid and Administration of Medication.....	14
Intimate care.....	14
Photography, videos .....	15
Sharing concerns and recording incidents.....	15
Appendix A: The flow chart of actions in case of a child abuse allegation .....	16
Appendix B: IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST.....	17

## School Definition

- Reading Ukrainian School is a supplementary Saturday school run under the umbrella of the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain, Reading Branch (AUGB – Reading). The school is run by volunteers comprising teachers, teaching assistants and administrators.
- At present the school has no employees who work under a contract of employment.
- The school is located at the **Reading Ukrainian Community Centre (RUCC)**, 21 Sidmouth St, Reading, RG1 4QZ, which is owned and managed by The Association of Ukrainians in GB.

## Safeguarding Statement

1. **Reading Ukrainian School recognizes their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within the legal framework of the Children Acts 1989 and 2004.**
2. We are aware that many children and young people are the victims of different kinds of abuse and that they can be subjected to social factors that have an adverse impact upon their lives – including domestic violence, substance misuse, bullying, child prostitution and ritualistic abuse. We aim to create a safe environment within which children and young people can thrive and adults can work with the security of clear guidance.

3. Under the terms of the Children Act 2004 anyone under the age of 19 is considered to be a child/young person.
4. **These guidelines** are for the use of all School volunteers, visitors and school committee members. We will make them available to the parents and carers of the children and young people who attend our school. Through them, we will endeavor to ensure that:
  - a. Children and young people are listened to, valued and respected
  - b. Volunteers are aware of the need to be alert to the signs of abuse and know what to do with their concerns
  - c. All volunteers are subject to rigorous recruitment procedures
  - d. All volunteers are given appropriate support and training.

### Role of designated teacher

- a. The school has a child protection designated teacher (officer).
- b. Volunteers and any members Parents' committee should be aware of who this person is and what their role is.
- c. The school should make arrangements in place for when the designated officer is absent.
- d. The designated officer should act as a source of advice and coordinate action within the school over child protection issues.
- e. In order to be effective, the designated person should attend appropriate child protection training.
- f. The designated teacher should be the first person whom volunteers report cases to and it is the responsibility of the designated teacher to discuss the situation with the relevant agencies, such as Children and Families (Children's Service) or Police.
- g. The designated teacher should also deal with allegations made against any volunteers.
- h. The designated teacher should ensure that any volunteers receive appropriate child protection training.

## Guidelines

**These guidelines are divided into the following sections:**

- a. Recognizing signs of abuse
- b. What to do with your concerns
- c. Allegations made against volunteers
- d. Safe recruitment
- e. Good practice
- f. Safeguarding children
- g. Contacts.

### Recognizing signs of abuse

It can often be difficult to recognize abuse. The signs listed in these guidelines are only indicators and many can have reasonable explanations. Children may behave strangely or seem unhappy for many reasons, as they move through the stages of childhood or their families experience changes. It is nevertheless important to know what could indicate that abuse is taking place and to be alert to the need to consult further.

Someone can abuse a child by actively inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse can take place within a family, in an institutional or community setting, by telephone or on the Internet. Abuse can be carried out by someone known to a child or by a complete stranger. If you are worried about a child it is important that you keep a written record of any physical or behavioural signs and symptoms. In this way you can monitor whether or not a pattern emerges and provide evidence to any investigation if required.

### Physical Abuse

Physical abuse can involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, and suffocating. It can also result when a parent or carer deliberately causes the ill health of a child in order to seek attention; this is called fabricated illness, or Munchhausen's Syndrome by Proxy.

#### *Symptoms that indicate physical abuse include:*

- Bruising in or around the mouth, on the back, buttocks or rectal area
- Finger mark bruising or grasp marks on the limbs or chest of a small child
- Bites
- Burn and scald marks; small round burns that could be caused by a cigarette

- Fractures to arms, legs or ribs in a small child
- Large numbers of scars of different sizes or ages.

### Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse happens when a child's need for love, security, praise and recognition is not met. It usually co-exists with other forms of abuse. Emotionally abusive behaviour occurs if a parent, carer or authority figure is consistently hostile, rejecting, threatening or undermining. It can also result when children are prevented from social contact with others, or if developmentally inappropriate expectations are imposed upon them. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of someone else.

#### *Symptoms that indicate emotional abuse include:*

- Excessively clingy or attention-seeking behaviour
- Very low self-esteem or excessive self-criticism
- Excessively withdrawn behaviour or fearfulness; a 'frozen watchfulness'
- Despondency
- Lack of appropriate boundaries with strangers; too eager to please
- Eating disorders.

### Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, causing damage to their health and development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing, failing to protect a child from harm or danger, or failing to access appropriate medical care and treatment when necessary. It can exist in isolation or in combination with other forms of abuse.

#### *Symptoms of physical and emotional neglect can include:*

- Inadequate supervision; being left alone for long periods of time
- Lack of stimulation, social contact or education
- Inadequate nutrition, leading to ill-health
- Constant hunger; stealing or gorging food
- Failure to seek or to follow medical advice such that a child's life or development is endangered
- Inappropriate clothing for conditions.

## Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. This may include physical contact, both penetrative and non-penetrative, or involve no contact, such as watching sexual activities or looking at pornographic material. Encouraging children to act in sexually inappropriate ways is also abusive. Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, any sexual activity – contact or non-contact – with a child under the age of 13, is a crime.

### *Symptoms of sexual abuse include:*

- Allegations or disclosure
- Genital soreness, injuries or discomfort
- Sexually transmitted diseases; urinary infections
- Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters; inappropriately sexualized play, words or drawing
- A child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
- Repeated sleep disturbances through nightmares and/or wetting

Older children and young people may additionally exhibit:

- Depression
- Drug and/or alcohol abuse
- Eating disorders; obsessive behaviours
- Self-mutilation; suicide attempts
- School/peer/relationship problems.

## What to do with concerns?

In the event that a child makes an allegation or disclosure of abuse against an adult or another child or young person, it is important that you:

- Listen to them and/or closely observe their presentation and behaviour;
- Let them know that you take what they are saying seriously;
- Do not attempt to question or interview them yourself;
- Let them know that you will need to tell someone else in order to help him or her.
- Do not promise to keep what they tell you secret;
- Inform your designated child protection officer as soon as possible;

- Make a written record of the incident or events

Sometimes you may just feel concerned about a child but do not know whether to share your concerns or not. In this situation you should always raise your concerns with your **designated child protection officer**, who will help you to decide what to do.

The responsibility for investigating allegations of abuse, whether they result from the disclosure of a child or the concerns of an adult, lies with social workers where the child normally lives and the **Police Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT)**. It is the responsibility of the designated child protection officer to make a referral to these agencies, but if you judge the situation to be an emergency and/or you require urgent advice in the absence of the designated officer, you must report your concerns directly, using the contact listed at the back of these guidelines.

The Children's Service also employs **Child Protection Advisors (CPAs)**, who you can contact in office hours for further specialist guidance.

The Duty social worker or CPA will advise you when or whether to inform the child's parents or carers about any concerns. If they decide to pursue a child protection investigation, you should:

- Work closely and collaboratively with all professionals involved in the investigation, in order to keep the child safe;
- Attend a child protection conference if you are invited. You will be asked to provide information about your involvement with the child, which is why it is important to keep records of your concerns;
- Attend any subsequent child protection review conferences.

### Allegations made against volunteers

We are aware of the possibility that allegations of abuse may be made against volunteers. They can be made by children and young people and they can be made by other concerned adults. Allegations can be made for a variety of reasons. Some of the most common are:

- Abuse has actually taken place;
- Something happens to a child that reminds them of an event that happened in the past – the child is unable to recognize that the situation and the people are different;

- Children can misinterpret your language or your actions because they are reminded of something else;
- Some children know how powerful an allegation can be; if they are angry with you about something they can make an allegation as a way of hitting out;
- An allegation can be a way of seeking attention.

All allegations should be brought to the notice of the designated child protection officer immediately. In cases where the allegation is made against this person, the complainant should approach **the Association of Ukrainians in GB - Reading Branch**, the relevant bodies who designate the Head teacher.

The following action should be taken:

- Make sure that the child in question is safe and away from the alleged abuser;
- Contact the Children's Service Referral & Assessment Team relevant to where the child lives
- Contact the parents or carers of the child if advised to do so by the social worker/officer in charge of allegations;
- Irrespective of any investigation by social workers or the police, you should follow the appropriate disciplinary procedure; the volunteer will either be asked to carry out other duties away from the school setting or be suspended pending the completion of the investigation.
- Consider whether the person has access to children anywhere else and whether those organizations or groups need to be informed;
- Act upon the decisions made in any strategy meeting.

All incidents should be investigated internally after any external investigation has finished, to review organisational practice and put in place any additional measures to prevent a similar thing happening again.

### Safe recruitment

The application of rigorous procedures for the recruitment of any volunteers who come into contact with children, both directly and indirectly, can reduce the likelihood of allegations of abuse being made that are founded.

As an absolute minimum, the following standards should be followed:



- All prospective volunteers should complete an application form which asks for details of their previous employment and for the names of two referees;
- All prospective volunteers will be asked to have a new Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS ) check before they start employment where the assessed level of risk deems it necessary. Anyone who refuses to disclose any criminal record should not be employed; for those volunteers who have recently arrived to UK and are foreign nationals, should have appropriate check as necessary.
- All volunteers will be asked to take safeguarding in education training before they start working with children.
- All volunteers should be interviewed to establish previous experience of working in an environment where there is contact with children and perceptions of acceptable behaviour;
- All appointments to work with children should be subject to an agreed probationary period;
- New volunteers should be clear about their responsibilities and wherever possible, work to an agreed job description;
- These guidelines should be available to everyone and fully discussed as part of an induction process.

### Good practice

Every organisation working with children should have a designated child protection officer who must undergo child protection training. It is the responsibility of this person to make themselves available for consultation by staff, volunteers, visitors, children and their families;

- All volunteers are responsible for children while on these premises and must make sure that health and safety guidelines are adhered to;
- All volunteers working with children should receive supervision from a more experienced staff member and must attend basic child protection training;
- No member of staff should be left alone with a child where they cannot be observed by others;
- Under no circumstances should visitors be allowed to wander around the premises unaccompanied when children and young people are present;

- Volunteers should be alert to strangers frequently waiting outside a venue with no apparent purpose. Children should not be collected by people other than their parents unless notification has been received;
- If a child is not collected after a session it is reasonable to wait approximately half an hour for a parent or carer to arrive. If the parent or carer or other identified persons cannot be contacted, staff should contact the relevant Children & Families Duty Team or the police and request assistance.

### Outings & Trips

- All vehicles hired for outings must be insured, roadworthy and fitted with seatbelts;
- All drivers should travel with at least one escort. Drivers and escorts should have up to date DBS checks and been subject to appropriate recruitment procedures.
- All drivers and escorts should agree to abide by these guidelines;
- Roll call will be taken at the start of a journey and again before commencing the return journey; if travelling in more than one vehicle, children will be encouraged to travel in the same vehicle there and back;
- Volunteers accompanying trips will carry the contact numbers for the home organization and emergency services in the event of an alert being necessary;
- If a child goes missing while on a trip, staff should instigate an immediate search.
- If the child cannot be found within half an hour, the appropriate security staff and the police should be notified;
- If, having notified security staff and the police, the child cannot be found, the parents/carers of the child will be notified immediately;
- The care of the remaining children is paramount. It is imperative that they return to the home site as quickly as possible, while a senior staff member remains at the visit site to co-ordinate contact between security staff and the child's parents/carers.

### Use of premises by other organizations

In the event that a room or rooms on the premises are used by other organizations, we will ensure that children and young people are supervised at all times.

### Safeguarding training for volunteers

All volunteers are required to have an up-to-date safeguarding in education training, at least at level 1. The training should be refreshed every 2 (two) years and the price for the training shall be

reimbursed from the school budget. The Head teacher is responsible for maintaining training records.

## Child protection procedures

All child protection concerns should be acted upon immediately. If you are concerned that a child might be at risk or is actually suffering abuse, you should tell **the designated child protection officer** within Reading Ukrainian school.

Your designated officer is: **Mrs Ira Shymkova (Deputy Head Teacher)**

Officer e-mail: [shimkovai@ukr.net](mailto:shimkovai@ukr.net)

Officer tel: 07925776906

If the designated officer is not available, speak to a Head teacher, Dr Alexandra Sevko.

**In an emergency situation, contact Social Services or the police directly:**

- In office hours, either: **Child Protection Unit at the relevant borough** in which the child lives
  - or: Children's Social Services at the relevant borough in which the child lives
  - or **NSPCC Helpline** 0808 800 5000
- **Children's Single Point of Access in Reading is another point of direct contact**
  - 0118 937 3641 (Office hours only)
  - 01344 786543 (Out of Hours Emergency Duty Team)
  - E-mail [cspoa@brighterfuturesforchildren.org](mailto:cspoa@brighterfuturesforchildren.org)
  - Website Children's Single Point of Access Referral Form  
[www.reading.gov.uk/childrensreferralform](http://www.reading.gov.uk/childrensreferralform)
  - More information about reporting children safety concerns in the Reading borough can be found here:  
<http://servicesguide.reading.gov.uk/kb5/reading/directory/service.page?id=wW27ndtyj50>

## Safe working practices for the protection of staff and children

### Introduction

Following current legislation and national guidance this document has been produced to ensure that young people are safeguarded and to reduce the risk of staff being falsely accused of improper or unprofessional conduct. It applies to all adults working in a paid or unpaid capacity in the Reading Ukrainian School.

### Duty of Care

Teachers and other staff (volunteers, committee members and others) have a duty to keep children and young people safe and to protect them from physical and emotional harm and should always act in the child's best interests.

### Confidentiality

Staff members are expected to treat information about children and young people in a discreet and confidential manner. However, there are some circumstances in which information must be shared, for example when abuse is alleged or suspected. In such cases, information should be passed to the designated child protection officer of the school.

### Behaviour

All staff should adopt high standards of personal conduct and not behave in a manner, which would lead people to question their suitability to work with children. For example, staff should not

- discuss their own personal relationships with or in the presence of pupils
- discuss a pupil's personal issues in inappropriate settings
- make sexual remarks to a pupil (including email, text messages, letter etc)
- make comments which scapegoat, demean or humiliate pupils

### Dress and appearance

Staff should ensure they are dressed appropriately. They should wear clothing that is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing or which may place staff vulnerable to criticism or allegation.

### Gifts

There are occasions when children or parents wish to offer teachers small tokens of appreciation eg at Christmas or as a thank you, which is acceptable.

It is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or of any significant value.

Similarly, it is inadvisable to give such personal gifts to pupils, although small gifts, as part of an agreed reward system are acceptable.

### Infatuations

Staff should report to the Head teacher any indications that suggest a pupil may be infatuated with a member of staff.

### Social contact

Friendships/social contact between families of staff and pupils is acceptable. However, staff should not establish or seek individual social contact with pupils. Staff should not give their personal details such as telephone numbers, home or email address to pupils, unless this is agreed by the Headteacher.

### Physical contact

There are occasions when it is appropriate for staff to have physical contact with pupils but it is crucial that they only do so in ways appropriate to their role, and taking into consideration a pupil's age, stage of development and gender.

There may be occasions when a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance and this may include age-appropriate physical contact.

Staff must never indulge in horseplay, tickling or fun fights.

Schools should ensure that they have a system in place for recording serious incidents.

### Showers and Changing

Young people are entitled to respect and privacy when changing clothes. Staff should avoid remaining in the room unless pupil needs require it. The supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the young people concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.

### Behaviour Management

All pupils and teachers have a right to be treated with respect and dignity. Corporal punishment is unlawful in all schools. Staff should not use any form of degrading treatment to punish a pupil and should not use demeaning or insensitive comments towards a pupil.

Parents should be kept informed of any sanctions.

In all cases where physical intervention is deemed necessary, the incident and subsequent action should be recorded and reported.

## Sexual contact with young people

Any sexual behaviour by a member of staff with or towards a child or young person is both inappropriate and illegal. Children and young people are protected by the same laws as adults in relation to non-consensual sexual behaviour but additionally protected by specific legal provisions regardless of whether the child or young person consents or not.

## One to one situations

Staff working in one to one situations with children and young people may be more vulnerable to allegations. Teachers and others should recognise this possibility and plan and conduct such meetings accordingly. Every attempt should be made to ensure the safety and security of both staff and pupils are met. Staff should ensure there is visual access and/or an open door on one to one situations and inform other staff of the meeting beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by.

## Transporting Children/Educational Visits

In certain situations staff or volunteers may agree to transport children for out of school activities. Parents will be notified about trips and will be asked to give written consent for the children to participate.

The school will ensure that transport arrangements meet all legal requirements and that the vehicle is roadworthy and appropriately insured. Staff/volunteers should be made aware that the safety and welfare of the children is their responsibility until this is safely passed over to a parent/carer.

Where out of school activities include overnight stays, careful consideration needs to be given to sleeping arrangements and pupils and parents should be informed of these prior to the start of the trip.

## First Aid and Administration of Medication

All schools must have trained first aiders/appointed persons who should receive appropriate training before administering first aid or medication.

In circumstances where a pupil needs medication during school hours, a written health care plan should be drawn up with the parent/carer and pupil to ensure the safety and protection of pupils and staff.

## Intimate care

All children have a right to safety, privacy and dignity when contact of an intimate nature is required (eg assisting with toileting).

A care plan should be drawn up and agreed with parents for all children who require intimate care on a regular basis.

### Photography, videos

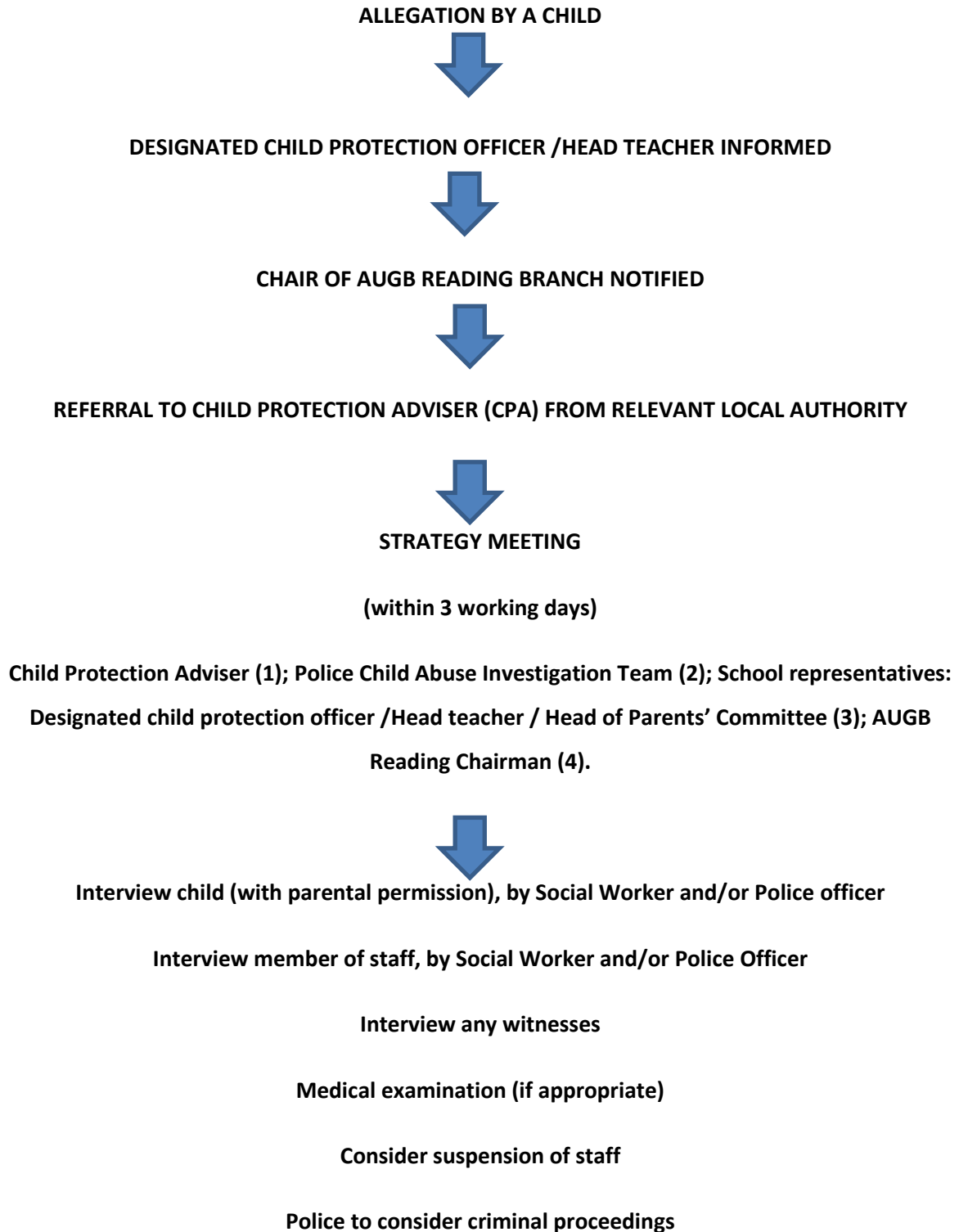
Many school activities involve recording images for publicity or to celebrate achievement.

Parents/carers will be asked at the beginning of the academic year to indicate they are giving permission for their child/ren to be photographed. Parents will also be asked to give a written undertaking that any images (photographic or video) taken by them will not be used inappropriately.

### Sharing concerns and recording incidents

All staff should be aware of the school's child protection procedures, including procedures for dealing with allegations against staff. All staff and volunteers should know who the designated member of staff for child protection is and take responsibility for recording and passing concerns to the relevant officer.

Appendix A: The flow chart of actions in case of a child abuse allegation





## Appendix B: IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

These child protection procedures will only be effective if all staff and volunteers in the organisation own and understand them. This checklist is designed to help go through that process:

- Identify designated child protection officer (CPO)
- Add CPO name and contact details to procedure
- Ensure the designated child protection officer attends training on child protection and updates that training regularly
- Ensure all volunteers have an up-to-date safeguarding training
- Ensure all volunteers have a copy of child protection procedures
- Ensure that all volunteers know what to do if they have concerns about a child
- Ensure all volunteers that has contact with children has Enhanced DBS check before they start work OR that they are supervised by a volunteer with valid DBS check.
- Ensure that the premises conforms to health and safety guidelines

**The revised Policy takes effect as of October 18, 2023. It has been distributed to the teaching team, shared with all parents, and posted on the school's website on the same date.**

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Ph.D., FIBMSc,

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