

Children and young people have a fundamental right to be protected from harm.

Families have a right to expect schools to provide a safe and secure environment.

All schools have a legal duty to work with other agencies, for example Social Care and the Police, to safeguard children's welfare.

This leaflet will explain to you what that means in practice. It also tells you where you can get more information or help.

Your school has a senior member of staff who is responsible for child protection matters affecting pupils at the school (the 'Designated Safeguarding Lead').

It also has procedures which explain how your school deals with child protection concerns, plus other safeguarding policies including how to manage allegations against staff and also a staff code of conduct.

You can ask for copies of these documents from the school office.



Schools must follow:

- the law and guidance from the Department for Education
- the Pan-Dorset Inter-Agency Safeguarding Procedures
- their own safeguarding policies

If the school is worried about whether a pupil is suffering harm, they must refer this on to a social worker.

The school will normally let the pupil's parent(s) or carer(s) know when they refer but they should not contact parents if they think, or are not sure, that this could put a child or any other person at increased risk of harm. They will usually take advice from social workers about when to speak to parents.

When a school refers a child protection concern to a social worker, they must share all relevant information about the pupil.

The Data Protection Act allows schools to share personal information with other agencies when there are child protection concerns about a child or young person.

What happens if a social worker is involved.....

The social work manager, usually in consultation with other agencies, will decide what should happen next.

They may decide that no further action is needed by them but suggest that the school or other agencies do an assessment using the Common Assessment Framework or provide services to support the child.

They may decide that the referral needs looking into further. What action is taken will depend on the circumstances.

One of the following may be appropriate:

- An assessment.
- Child protection enquiries. These include assessing the risks to the child, based upon research, information shared and talking to those concerned.

If there is an allegation about harm to a child by a member of school staff a discussion will take place between the school (usually the Headteacher) and the local authority to decide what should happen next. In some cases this might mean action by social workers and/or the police.

If you do not think the school has properly responded to an allegation about harm to a child by a member of staff you can complain to governors or refer to Social Care or Safeguarding Standards Team.

For more information...

- Look at your school's child protection policy
- Look at your school's staff Code of Conduct and policy for managing allegations against members of staff
- Look at the Pan-Dorset Inter-Agency Safeguarding Procedures on the internet at: www.dorsetlscb.co.uk
- Look at the Common Assessment Framework guidance at: <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/caf>
- Look at the Government guidance "What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused" (2006) at: <http://publications.dcsf.gov.uk/>
- Children and young people can contact Childline for free 24-hour telephone support on 0800 1111 or at www.childline.org.uk

If you have a concern about a child, please tell somebody who can help:

Dorset Children's Services Social Care

Bridport: 01308 422234
Christchurch: 01202 474106
Dorchester: 01305 221450
Ferndown: 01202 877445
North Dorset: 01258 472652
Purbeck: 01929 553456
Weymouth & Portland: 01305 760139

Out of Hours: 01202 657279

Safeguarding and Standards Team

01305 221122

sasteam@dorsetcc.gcsx.gov.uk

Dorset Police

Emergency: 999

Non-Emergency: 101

This leaflet is produced by the Dorset Safeguarding Children Board

If you would like this information in an alternative format, please contact the DSCB on telephone 01305 221196 or email at info@dorsetlscb.co.uk

To access this and more information online, please visit our website at: www.dorsetlscb.co.uk

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Dorset Safeguarding Children Board

Child protection and your school



Information for parents and young people

"Safeguarding is everybody's business"