



The Island Project

Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy & Procedures

Part 1

&

ESCALATION

POLICY & PROCESS

(DERBYSHIRE & NOTTINGHAM SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD)

This Policy should be used in conjunction with

“Specific safeguarding issues” PART 2

&

“Safe Working Practice” Policy PART 3

KCSIE updates September 2020 - Legislation

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in full by Jacqui Johnson (Director) and the Island Project Safeguarding DSL designated safeguarding lead Alison Latimer (Director)
On an annual basis.

The policy was agreed and implemented in November 2011

Revised October 2012

Reviewed and updated 28th August 2013

Reviewed and updated 27th August 2014

Reviewed and updated with current legislation 30th November 2015

Reviewed no changes January 2017 Reviewed no changes December 2017

Reviewed updated with KCSIE sept 3rd legislation 31st Aug 2018

Reviewed and updated with Nottingham Child Protection legislation 2nd Sept 2020

Reviewed – no changes Aug 2021

Signature: 

J Johnson August 2022

CONTENTS

1	(4)	Introduction
2	(5)	Statutory Framework
3	(6-7)	The Designated Child Protection Person/s
4	(8)	The Directors
5	(9)	Procedures IN BRIEF
6	(9-13)	When to be Concerned
7	(14)	Dealing with a Disclosure
8	(15)	Confidentiality
9	(16-17)	Record Keeping
10	(18-19)	Supporting students at Risk
11	(20)	Allegations Involving the Island Staff/Volunteers
Appendix 1	(21-22)	School Child Protection Procedures and the DSL role in detail
Appendix 2	(23)	Child Protection Summary Flow Chart
12	(24-26)	ESCALATION POLICY & PROCESS (DERBYSHIRE & NOTTINGHAM SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD)

1. INTRODUCTION

Safeguarding is defined as protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of health and/or development, ensuring that children grow up in the provision of safe and effective care and optimising children's life chances.

This Child Protection Policy forms part of a suite of documents and policies which relate to the safeguarding responsibilities of the Island Project.

This policy is written in conjunction with the Derbyshire safeguarding guidelines and practice, Keeping Children Safe in Education Sept 1st 2020 & Working Together to Safeguard Children.

Island Project Safeguarding DSL designated safeguarding lead is Alison Latimer (Director) & Deputy DSL is Amy Martinson /Jacqui Johnson

Purpose of a Child Protection Policy

To inform staff, parents, volunteers and visitors about the Island Project's responsibilities for safeguarding children. To enable everyone to have a clear understanding of how these responsibilities should be carried out.

Derby Safeguarding Children Board Child Protection Procedures

The school follows the procedures established by the Derby Safeguarding Children Board; a guide to procedure and practice for all agencies in Derby working with children and their families.

School Staff & Volunteers

All Island Project staff and volunteers are particularly well placed to observe outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour and failure to develop because they have daily contact with children. All our staff and volunteers will receive child protection training, so that they are knowledgeable and aware of their role in the early recognition of the signs and symptoms of abuse or neglect and of the appropriate procedures to follow.

Mission Statement

- Establish and maintain an environment where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to when they have a worry or concern.
- Establish and maintain an environment where Island Project staff and volunteers feel safe, are encouraged to talk and are listened to when they have concerns about the safety and wellbeing of a child.
- Ensure children know that there are adults in the Project whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Ensure that children who have been abused will be supported in line with a child protection plan.
- Include opportunities in the curriculum linked Activities, for children to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse.

2. STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

In order to protect children from harm the Island Project will act in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

The Children Act 1989

The Children Act 2004

Derby & Nottingham Safeguarding Children Board Child Protection Procedures (2012)

DfES Keeping children safe in education statutory guidance for schools and colleges September 2020

HM Government 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2018) requires all Educational Facilities to follow the procedures for protecting children from abuse which are established by the Derby City and Nottingham Safeguarding Children Boards. Facilities are also expected to ensure that they have appropriate procedures in place for responding to situations in which they believe that a child has been abused or are at risk of abuse - these procedures should also cover circumstances in which a member of staff is accused of, or suspected of, abuse.

DfES Keeping children safe in education statutory guidance for schools and colleges September 2020

places the following responsibilities on all schools:-

- the Island Project should be aware of and follow the procedures established by the Derby & Nottingham Safeguarding Children Boards
- Staff should be alert to signs of abuse and know to whom they should report any concerns or suspicions
- The Island Project should have procedures (of which all staff are aware) for handling suspected cases of abuse of students, including procedures to be followed if a member of staff is accused of abuse, or suspected of abuse
- A Designated Senior Person should have responsibility for co-coordinating action within the school and liaising with other agencies
- Staff with designated responsibility for Child Protection should receive appropriate training and have this updated at least every two years.

DfES guidance "Keeping children safe in education Statutory guidance for schools and colleges Sept 2020" "All parents need to understand that schools and FE colleges have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are their pupils or students, that this responsibility necessitates a child protection policy and procedures, and that a school, Educational facility or FE college may need to share information and work in partnership with other agencies when there are concerns about a child's welfare."

3. THE DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEADING (DSL)

Named staff/personnel with specific responsibility for Child Protection/SAFEGUARDING

DSL Alison Latimer
Alternative DSL Amy Martinson
Alternative DSL Jacqui Johnson

The DSL for Child Protection at The Island Project is:

1) NAME: **Alison Latimer** – Director

DEPUTY DSL should be appointed to act in the absence/unavailability of the DSL

The Deputy DSL for Child Protection at The Island Project is:

Amy Martinson – Manager

In absence of both **Jacqui Johnson**

It is the role of the Designated SAFEGUARDING LEAD for Child Protection to:

- Ensure that he/she receives refresher training at two yearly intervals to keep his or her knowledge and skills up to date
- Ensure that all staff who work with children undertake appropriate training to equip them to carry out their responsibilities for child protection effectively and that this is kept up to date by refresher training at three yearly intervals
- Ensure that newly appointed staff receive a child protection induction
- Ensure that temporary staff and volunteers are made aware of the school's arrangements for child protection
- Ensure that the project operates within the legislative framework and recommended guidance
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of the Derby & Nottingham Safeguarding Children Boards Child Protection Procedures
- Ensure that any School or placing Authority is kept fully informed of any concerns relating to their students.
- Develop effective working relationships with other agencies and services
- Decide whether to take further action about specific concerns (e.g. refer to Children, Schools and Families)
- Liaise with CSF social care teams over suspected cases of child abuse

- Ensure that accurate records relating to individual children are kept separate from the academic file in a secure place and marked 'Strictly Confidential' and that these records are passed securely should the child transfer to a new provision
- Submit reports to, ensure the Island project's attendance at Child Protection Conferences and contribute to decision making and delivery of actions planned to safeguard the child
- Ensure that the Island Project effectively monitors children about whom there are concerns, including notifying CSF of the absence of a child who is the subject of a child protection plan
- Provide guidance to parents, children and staff about obtaining suitable support

4. THE DIRECTORS & COMMISSIONING BODY

The Directors of the company and its commissioning authority's has overall responsibility for ensuring that there are sufficient measures in place to safeguard the children in this establishment.

In particular the Directors of the island project must ensure:

- Child protection policy and procedures
- Safe recruitment procedures – Single Central register of all staff and volunteers
- Appointment of a DSL who is a senior member of school leadership team
- Relevant child protection training for staff/volunteers is attended
- Safe management of allegations
- Deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements are remedied without delay
- A member of the commissioning Authority is informed and deemed responsible in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against the Directors
- Safeguarding policies and procedures are reviewed annually and information provided to the local authority about them and about how the above duties have been discharged

5. ISLAND PROJECT - PROCEDURES IN BRIEF – see appendix 1 for detailed procedures

1. If any member of staff is concerned about a child he or she must inform the Designated Person/s Named as: **Alison Latimer OR Amy Martinson OR Jacqui Johnson**
2. The member of staff must record information regarding the concerns on the same day. The recording must be a clear, precise, factual account of the observations.
3. The Designated safeguarding lead will contact the Placing Authority for the child concerned immediately and give verbal information of the concern
4. A joint decision will then be made between the Placing Authority and the DSL with actions decided. Particular attention will be paid to the delegation of responsibilities.

6. WHEN TO BE CONCERNED

All staff and volunteers should be aware that the main categories of abuse are:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

INDICATORS OF POSSIBLE SIGNIFICANT HARM:

SIGNS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE

- Unexplained injuries or burns, particularly if they are recurrent
- Injuries not typical of accidental injury
- Frequent injuries even with apparently reasonable explanations
- Improbable or conflicting explanations for injuries
- Refusal to discuss injuries
- Admission of punishment which appears excessive
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Bald patches
- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather

- Fear of returning home
- Fear of medical help / parents not seeking medical help
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Aggression towards others
- Chronic running away
- Frequently absent from school

SIGNS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE

- Probably the most difficult type of abuse to recognise. An emotionally abused child is often withdrawn, introverted and depressed.
- Admission of punishment which appears excessive
- Over-reaction to mistakes
- Sudden speech disorders
- Fear of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- Neurotic behaviour (e.g. rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking)
- Self-mutilation
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Drug/solvent abuse
- Chronic running away
- Compulsive stealing
- Scavenging for food or clothes
- Continual self-depreciation
- Air of detachment – ‘don’t care’ attitude

- Social isolation – does not join in and has few friends
- Desperate attention-seeking behaviour
- Eating problems, including over-eating or lack of appetite
- Depression, withdrawal

SIGNS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

- Demonstrate sexual knowledge or behaviour inappropriate to age/stage of development, or that is unusually explicit
- Wetting or other regressive behaviours e.g. thumb sucking
- Inexplicable changes in behaviour, such as becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- Stop enjoying previously liked activities
- Be reluctant to undress for PE
- Become fearful of, or refuse to see, certain adults for no apparent reason; show dislike of a particular baby-sitter, relative or other adult
- Draw sexually explicit pictures
- Urinary infections, bleeding or soreness in the genital or anal areas
- Soreness or bleeding in the throat
- Chronic ailments, such as stomach pains or headaches
- Take over the parental role at home; seem old beyond their years
- Develop eating disorders, such as anorexia or bulimia
- Depression, suicidal thoughts
- Poor self-image, self-harm, self-hatred
- Physical discomfort
- Use drugs or drink to excess

- Unexplained pregnancy
- Memory loss
- Frequent running away
- Restricted social activities
- Find excuses not to go home or to a particular place
- Have recurring nightmares/be afraid of the dark
- Be unable to concentrate; seem to be in a world of their own
- Have a 'friend who has a problem' and then tell about the abuse of the friend
- Sudden changes in school work habits, become truant
- Withdrawal, isolation or excessive worrying
- Outbursts of anger or irritability
- Unexplained sums of money
- Act in a sexually inappropriate/harmful or seductive way towards others

SIGNS OF NEGLECT

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Inappropriate clothing, clothing in a poor state of repair
- Frequent lateness or non-attendance at school
- Untreated medical problems
- Low self-esteem
- Poor social relationships
- Compulsive stealing
- Constant tiredness

- Emaciation
- Destructive tendencies.
- Neurotic behaviour (e.g. rocking, hair twisting, thumb sucking)
- Chronic running away
- Scavenging for food or clothes

In addition to all the above signs a child may disclose an experience in which he/she may have been harmed, or there may be any other cause to believe that a child may be suffering harm.

7. DEALING WITH A DISCLOSURE

If a child wants to confide in you, you *SHOULD*

- Be accessible and receptive;
- Listen carefully and uncritically, at the child's pace;
- Take what is said seriously;
- Reassure children that they are right to tell;
- Tell the child that you must pass this information on;
- Make sure that the child is OK ;
- Make a careful record of what was said (see *Recording*).

You should *NEVER*

- Investigate or seek to prove or disprove possible abuse;
- Make promises about confidentiality or keeping 'secrets' to children;
- Assume that someone else will take the necessary action;
- Jump to conclusions, be dismissive or react with shock, anger, horror etc;
- Speculate or accuse anybody;
- Investigate, suggest or probe for information;
- Confront another person (adult or child) allegedly involved;
- Offer opinions about what is being said or the persons allegedly involved;
- Forget to record what you have been told;
- Fail to pass this information on to the correct person (the Designated Person).

Children with communication difficulties, or who use alternative/augmentative communication systems

- While extra care may be needed to ensure that signs of abuse and neglect are interpreted correctly, any suspicions should be reported in exactly the same manner as for other children;
- Opinion and interpretation will be crucial (be prepared to be asked about the basis for it and to possibly have its validity questioned if the matter goes to court).

Support

Dealing with a disclosure from a child, and a child protection case in general, is likely to be a stressful experience. The member of staff/volunteer should, therefore, consider seeking support for him/herself and discuss this with the Designated Person.

8. CONFIDENTIALITY

Child Protection (safeguarding) raises issues of confidentiality that must be clearly understood by all staff/volunteers.

- All staff at the Island Project, both teaching and non-teaching staff, have a responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of children with other professionals, particularly the investigative agencies (Children, Schools and Families and the Police).
- If a child confides in a member of staff/volunteer and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the member of staff/volunteer tell the child in a manner appropriate to the child's age/stage of development that they cannot promise complete confidentiality – instead they must explain that they may need to pass information to other professionals to help keep the child or other children safe.
- Staff/volunteers who receive information about children and their families in the course of their work should share that information only within appropriate professional contexts.
- Professionals can only work together to safeguard children if there is an exchange of relevant information between them. It is important to share information with the placing authority relevant to the student in question.

9. RECORDS AND MONITORING

Well-kept records are essential to good child protection practice. The Island Project is clear about the need to record any concerns held about a child or children within our establishment, the status of such records and when these records, or parts thereof, should be appropriately shared with other agencies.

Recordings

- Make accurate notes as soon as possible after the conversation
- State who was present, time, date and place;
- Be written in ink and be signed by the recorder;
- Not destroy any original notes in case they are needed by a court
- Be passed to Jacqui Johnson or Alison Latimer immediately (certainly within 24 hours);
- Use the child's words wherever possible;
- Be factual/state exactly what was said;
- Record noticeable non-verbal behaviour
- Draw a diagram to indicate the position of any bruising or other injury
- Differentiate clearly between fact, opinion, interpretation, observation and/or allegation.
- Do NOT retain ANY notes yourself
- Complete a child Protection concern/disclosure form and ensure it is passed across to the Designated safeguarding lead to pass on and file in a correct manner.

What information do you need to obtain?

- **The Island Project has no investigative role** in child protection (The individual Placing authority's, Police and Children's Integrated Services will investigate possible abuse very thoroughly and in great detail, they will gather evidence and test hypotheses – leave this to them!);
- Never prompt or probe for information, your job is to listen, record and pass on;
- Ideally, you should be clear about what is being said in terms of who, what, where and when but do not probe for this information if it is not volunteered;
- The question which you should be able to answer at the end of the listening process is 'might this be a child protection matter?'
- If the answer is yes, or if you're not sure, record and pass on immediately to the Designated safeguarding lead Alison Latimer or deputy DSL Amy Martinson & Jacqui Johnson

If you do need to ask questions, what is and isn't OK?

- **Never** asked closed questions i.e. ones which children can answer yes or no to e.g. Did he touch you?
- **Never** make suggestions about whom, how or where someone is alleged to have touched, hit etc. e.g. Top or bottom, front or back?
- If we must, use only '**minimal prompts**' such as 'go on ... tell me more about that ... tell me everything that you remember about that'
- Time-scales are very important: '**When was the last time this happened?**' is an important question.

What else should we think about in relation to disclosure?

- We need to think carefully about our own body language – how we present will dictate how comfortable a child feels in telling us about something which may be extremely frightening, difficult and personal;

- Be prepared to answer the 'what happens next' question;
- We should never make face-value judgements or assumptions about individual children. For example, we 'know that [child.....] tells lies';
- Think about how you might react if a child DID approach you in school. We need to be prepared to offer a child in this position exactly what they need in terms of protection, reassurance, calmness and objectivity;

When an adult member of the school community has **any concerns** about a child's welfare they must note these concerns and again pass to the Designated safeguarding lead- Alison Latimer

All Child Protection data is kept in the child's main folder which is their confidential file in a designated and locked filing cabinet. (Office) Information will only be shared on a strict "need to know" policy hence maintaining confidentiality.

Where staff have involvement with Child Protection issues they must maintain confidentiality and not repeat information to third parties. Support can be gained from Derby Counselling Services for staff involved.

CP/ safeguarding records held by the Designated person's remain confidential whilst a child is considered to be at risk of continuing harm or where there is or has been court action. This includes parental access. It is the responsibility of the child's placing Authority to make the decision to share confidential information.

THE ISLAND PROJECT WILL NOT SHARE DETAILS WITH PARENTS/CARERS.UNLESS INSTRUCTED VIA THE CHILD'S PLACING AUTHORITY TO DO SO

10 SUPPORTING PUPILS AT RISK

The Island Project recognises that children who are abused or who witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth and to view the world in a positive way. Our Project may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children at risk. Whilst here their behaviour may still be challenging and defiant and there may even be moves to consider suspension or exclusion. We will do our utmost to work together with all relevant agencies to provide extra help and support to enable the child to retain their provision place.

It is also recognised that some children who have experienced abuse may in turn abuse others. This requires a considered, sensitive approach in order that the child can receive appropriate help and support.'

The Island Project will endeavour to support pupils through:

- (a) The curriculum and linked Projects, to encourage self-esteem and self-motivation;
- (b) The Island Project's ethos, which promotes a positive, supportive, caring and secure environment and which gives all students and adults a sense of being respected and valued;
- (c) The implementation of our behaviour management policy (required under the Code of Practice, 1993 Education Act)¹;
- (d) A consistent approach, which recognises and separates the cause of behaviour from that which the child displays. This is vital to ensure that all children are supported within the project's setting;

- (e) Regular liaison with other professionals and agencies who support the students and their families, in-line with appropriate confidentiality parameters;
- (f) A commitment to develop productive, supportive relationships with placing Authorities to ensure positive outcomes.
- (g) The development and support of a responsive and knowledgeable staff group trained to respond appropriately in child protection situations.

The Island Project recognises that, statistically, children with behavioural difficulties and disabilities are particularly vulnerable to abuse. staff who work, in any capacity, with children with profound and multiple disabilities, sensory impairment and/or emotional and behaviour problems will need to be particularly sensitive to signs of abuse.

We also recognise that in a home environment where there is domestic violence, drug or alcohol abuse, children may also be particularly vulnerable and in need of support or protection.

¹

10. ALLEGATIONS INVOLVING ISLAND PROJECT STAFF/VOLUNTEERS – PROCEDURE

Whenever it is alleged that a member of staff/volunteer has:

- Behaved in a way that has, or may have harmed a child
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against/related to a child
- Behaved toward a child in a way which indicates s/he is Unsuitable to work with children

Procedure for processing an allegation involving staff / Volunteers/ Management

1. The person receiving the allegation must take it seriously and immediately inform the Island Director/ DSL Alison Latimer or Jacqui Johnson
2. If any member of staff/volunteer has reason to suspect that another member of staff/volunteer may have abused a child at the project, or elsewhere, they must immediately inform the Director/ DSL Alison Latimer or Jacqui Johnson.
3. A written record of the allegation (on a child protection incident form) should be recorded immediately using the informant's words - including time, date and place where the alleged incident took place, what was said and anyone else present. This record should be signed and dated and immediately passed on to the DSL Alison Latimer or Deputy DSL Amy Martinson & Jacqui Johnson.
4. If the concerns involve the DSL or the Director/s, then the commissioning authorities should be contacted directly. The Directors will not investigate the allegation herself, or take written or detailed statements this matter will be investigated wholly through the safeguarding Children board Nottingham, Derbyshire or Derby City dependent on where the child involved is placed from.

Derby & Nottingham Safeguarding Children Boards Child Protection Procedures: Allegations against Those Working With Children.

- Children's Social Care 08456 058 058
- Derbyshire Police 0345 123 3333
- Derby Safeguarding Board: 01332 641172
- Children's Services Professional Consultation Line: 07812 300329 between 10am and 1pm.
- Nottingham Safeguarding Board: phone: 0115 9773180
- Nottingham Children direct Call: 0115 876 4800 / Email: candfdirect@nottinghamcity.gcsx.gov.uk

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES AND THE DSL ROLE IN DETAIL

1. What Should Staff/Volunteers Do If They Have Concerns About A Child or Young Person at The Island Project?

All Island Staff/volunteers who are concerned about a child's welfare or who believe that a child is or may be at risk of abuse should pass any information to the Designated safeguarding lead (**DSL**) this should *always* occur as soon as possible and certainly within 24 hours (see Flowchart at Appendix 1):

The Designated safeguarding lead is:

- 1) Alison Latimer (DIRECTOR)**
- 2) Amy Martinson Manager**
- 3) Jacqui Johnson (DIRECTOR)**

It is the DSL's who are responsible for taking action where the welfare or safety of children or young people is concerned. If staff are uncertain about whether their concerns are indeed 'child protection' then a discussion with their DSL/line manager will assist in determining the most appropriate next course of action:

Staff should never:

- Do nothing/assume that another agency or professional will act or is acting.
- Attempt to resolve the matter themselves.

What should the DSL consider right at the outset?

- Am I dealing with 'risk' or 'need'? (By definition, a child at risk is also a child in need. However, what is the *priority / level and immediacy* of risk / need?)
- Can the level of need identified be met:
 - In or by the Island Project and the Child's placing Authority/school or by accessing universal services/without referral to Children's Integrated Services or other targeted services
 - By working with the child, the Child's placing Authority/school and colleagues?
- Is the level of need such that a referral needs to be made to Children's Integrated Services which requests that an assessment of need be undertaken? (**Section 17 Child in Need referral**) If so the child's placing Authority/school will take on this responsibility. It is the Island Project's duty of care to pass on all details of any such concern to them.
- Is the level and/or likelihood of risk such that a child protection referral needs to be made (i.e. a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm)? (**Section 47 Child Protection referral**) If so the child's placing Authority/school will take on this responsibility. It is the Island Project's duty of care to pass on all details of any such concern to them.

2. Feedback to Staff Who Report Concerns to the DSL

Rules of confidentiality dictate that it may not always be possible or appropriate for the Designated safeguarding lead to feedback to staff who report concerns to them. Such information will be shared on a 'need to know' basis only and the Designated safeguarding lead will liaise with the child's placing authority/school and gain permission from them before any information is shared. The primary purpose of confidentiality in this context is to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.

3. Referral to Children's Integrated Services (CIS)

Where a Designated safeguarding lead considers that a referral to CIS may be required, it is then ISLANDS PROJECT'S DSL's responsibility to inform the Child's placing authority of these concerns.

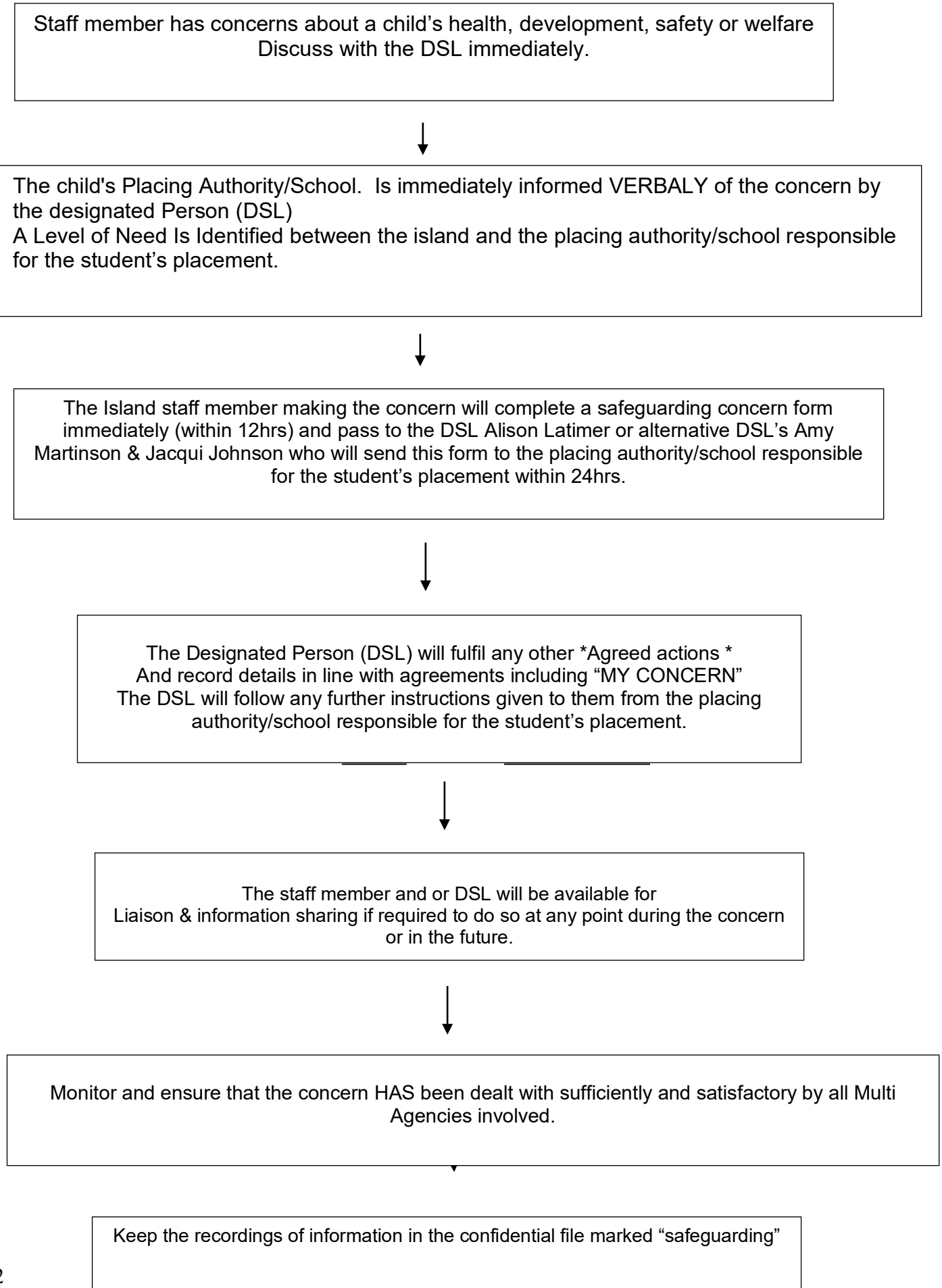
There are two thresholds for (and their criteria) and types of referral that need to be carefully considered:

- 1. Is this a Child In Need?** Under section 17 (s.17(10)) of the Children Act 1989, a child is in need if:
 - A. He is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity to achieve or maintain, a reasonable standard of health or development, without the provision of services by a local authority;*
 - B. His health or development is likely to be impaired, or further impaired, without the provision of such services;*
 - C. He is disabled.*

- 2. Is this a Child Protection (SAFEGUARDING) Matter?** Under section 47(1) of the Children Act 1989, a local authority has a duty to make enquiries where they are informed that a child who lives or is found in their area:
 - A. is the subject of an Emergency Protection Order;*
 - B. is in Police Protection; or where they have*
 - C. Reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm.*

It is the PLACING AUTHORITIES duty and responsibility to then initiate the referral. The ISLAND PROJECT will provide all evidence required to support the referral

APPENDIX 2 flow chart: PROCEDURE FOR CHILD PROTECTION/ SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS AT THE ISLAND PROJECT



ESCALATION POLICY AND PROCESS

1 Introduction

It is incumbent on all professionals to ensure that their role in respect of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is fulfilled.

The nature of multi-agency working in relation to safeguarding children means that from time to time the judgement of staff from different professional backgrounds may differ, causing potential conflict. It is important, therefore, that there are systems in place to address these potential differences.

This policy seeks to ensure that there are clear routes to escalate concerns in relation to children and young people where there are fears that they may not be effectively safeguarded.

The principles are as follows

- the welfare of the child is paramount
- differences and disagreements should be resolved at the lowest possible level
- escalation of concerns does not remove a professional's personal responsibility

2 Factors to Consider

All staff should be encouraged to explicitly explore the particular difficulties and impact of the "safeguarding" role. Often facets of the safeguarding task can be overlooked when these may have a significant affect upon the resolution of differences of opinions about what should happen in a case.

These facets include:

- Working with ambivalence, ambiguity and conflict – how is this affecting the workers involved?
- Managing power and authority issues between individual staff, agencies and with the family – what impact is this having? Do issues relating to gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality have a bearing on the case?
- The central relationship between the role of some practitioners in the direct work with the family and how this knowledge and experience affects the understanding of the case – what difficulties are arising?
- Cases are unlikely to be routine, if safeguarding concerns are beginning to be identified this is likely to raise complexities – are they clearly understood and any necessary actions taken?
- Exercise of discretion and judgement – is this being done in isolation of other information and / or liaison with other agencies? Is this appropriate to the role of the agency and to safeguard the child?
- Strong emotional issues are likely to be raised – how is this impacting upon judgement?
- Powerful value/moral dilemmas – what support is there for these to be explored and not "get in the way"?
- Much practice is "out of view" – what opportunities exist to balance the knowledge arising from direct work with families and opportunities to critically reflect upon whether the needs of the child have been objectively understood and safeguarded?

All staff involved with children should be able to address any issues in relation to action needed to safeguard and keep the child at the centre of all they do.

In multi-agency work, it is necessary for professionals to understand and respect the individual roles of all agencies. The constraints of certain roles may be the reason that matters are not taken up as expected and it is important to discuss these with the professionals concerned.

Communication is extremely important and is the key to resolving professional misunderstandings or disagreements. At no time should the safety of the child be compromised because professionals are unable to communicate appropriately. The principle is that concerns should be resolved at the lowest possible level, and at an early stage.

3 Process

“Effective problem solving occurs when both the problem and its solution are owned by all parties involved” (Morrison 2002)

Practical measures should be taken to ensure that escalation only occurs when appropriate. Multi agency problem solving is the foundation to good decisions that safeguard the child.

The following questions will be central to establishing appropriate decisions to escalate a concern and difference of opinion **both** within the same agency and between different agencies..

- **Do all parties clearly understand why there is a difference of opinion?**

There may be a number of different perspectives that are not necessarily clear from the outset. Has one professional particular expertise or experience that is informing their view? Is this clear to all parties? Is weight given to knowledge from direct work and experience.

If a shared understanding is established of **why** there is a difference of opinion then the opportunity arises to jointly work out how it can be resolved.

- **What are the specific areas of difference of opinion?**

Is this clear? What needs to be looked at by the parties involved to work out those areas where there is agreement and those areas where there remains difference?

- **Can more information clarify this for either party?**

What is known from direct information about the child or family? Has this been seen directly or reported? Has it come from just one source? What conclusions are being drawn upon from research and theory? How is this being tested?

Is it possible to get more information to clarify the opinions of the parties involved? Where might this information come from – family, other agencies, specialists? Is full picture over time apparent? Is a multi-agency meeting needed to bring together historical and current information from different agencies to decide how to proceed?

- **Reaching judgements**

If these questions and issues have been explored by those who share differences of opinions, has consideration been given to other facets of the safeguarding task set out above?

Have we done enough to safeguard this child?

If professionals involved remain of the opinion that this is not the case, what action are they now going to take and who do they raise this with?

- 4.1** If there are regular meetings in place in respect of the child or family e.g. Core Groups, Child Protection Conferences, Children in Need Reviews, any concerns in relation to the child's plan or action by any agency, should be addressed in that forum
- 4.2** Any concerns should be raised with the line manager or supervisor, named or designated person or child protection co-ordinator. Concerns should be fully recorded
- 4.3** If the concerns relate to referrals to social care or reluctance by any agency to act on concerns for a child, the concerns should be put in writing to the key worker/lead professional, named or designated safeguarding lead or child protection co-ordinator, and copied to that worker's manager
- 4.4** It is essential that where concerns are raised these are evidenced and that factual matters are clear. The named or designated safeguarding lead or safeguarding / child protection officer should make sure that the professional has worked with other professionals to ensure that all has been done to resolve differences in opinion as set out above.
Where concerns are discussed with line managers/supervisors these should always be recorded with a clear plan of action
 - If concerns are not resolved these should be discussed between the relevant manager/supervisor. This could be achieved by relevant managers attending key meetings
 - The process can be escalated if no resolution is achieved to middle and senior managers. It is essential that professionals are aware of agency structures for this to take place.
 - In addition concerns may be raised with a Child Protection Manager, who may be able to mediate, either through discussion or by extraordinary meetings being convened. This may include a decision that an initial child protection conference should be convened or a review conference brought forward.
 - Where there is no resolution, having exhausted all other possibilities, communication should take place with the Chair of the Local Safeguarding Board. This should be done via the agency representative for the Board. All staff should be aware of their representative.

It is necessary for professionals to be aware of the LSCB structure in order to facilitate this action