

Date of issue	2012	Reviewed	March 2026	Next review	March 2027	Approved by	Board of Trustees
For	Employees, volunteers, students, visitors, members, referrers						

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy



Introduction

We understand that children can be abused by adults or by other children. We are committed to creating a culture of safety, that minimises the opportunity for any form of abuse (including all forms of peer-on-peer abuse) through training, education and robust response procedures.

- Safeguarding is defined as¹:
 - Protecting children from maltreatment;
 - Preventing impairment of children's health and development;
 - Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and
 - Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
 - Child protection is part of the safeguarding process. It focuses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. This includes child protection procedures which detail how to respond to concerns about a child.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 states that organisations must:
 - Help, protect, and promote the welfare of all babies, children and young people under 18
 - Work in strong, coordinated partnerships across agencies (health, police, education, local authorities, etc.)
 - Take a child-centred, whole-family approach
 - Identify needs and risks early, ensuring coordinated help and protection
 - Recognise and respond to multiple and overlapping harms
 - Safeguard **all** children — including unborn babies, care-experienced children, and those in kinship/adoptive arrangements
 - Operate an inclusive, anti-discriminatory safeguarding system

¹ Working together to safeguard children: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (2018)

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- Under the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, Ride High has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in its care (hereinafter together referred to as “young people”) by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- Ride High’s first priority must at all times be the protection and safety of young people in its care.
- Ride High employees and volunteers have a full and active part to play in protecting young people from harm.
- It is essential that everybody understands their safeguarding responsibilities². All employees and volunteers should be able to recognise, and know how to act upon, evidence that a young person’s health is, or may be being, impaired, especially when a young person is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.
- This policy applies to all young people irrespective of race, gender, age, etc.

Objectives

The objectives of this policy are:

- To ensure Ride High employees and volunteers are aware of the need to safeguard young people and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse to other agencies.
- To develop a structured procedure that will be followed consistently by all employees and volunteers in cases of suspected abuse.
- To support the development of young people in ways that will foster security, confidence and independence.
- To ensure that all employees, volunteers and Trustees have had their suitability checked so that they are able to work with young people.
- To ensure that all parents/carers are aware of how child protection issues will be dealt with.

² Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges

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Recognising Abuse and Neglect

All employees, volunteers and Trustees should be aware that abuse, neglect and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events and may occur alongside other vulnerabilities. Staff should be alert to signs of abuse and take appropriate action in line with this policy.

The Four Categories of Abuse

- **Physical Abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Possible indicators include unexplained injuries, repeated injuries, fear of physical contact, inconsistent explanations for injuries, or reluctance to change clothing.

- **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child so as to cause severe and adverse effects on their emotional development.

Possible indicators include low self-esteem, excessive withdrawal, developmental delay, self-harm, anxiety, extreme attention-seeking behaviour or sudden changes in behaviour.

- **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.

Indicators may include sexualised behaviour, knowledge inappropriate to age, unexplained gifts, anxiety, depression, self-harm, or avoiding particular individuals.

- **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Indicators may include poor hygiene, persistent hunger, unsuitable clothing, missed medical appointments, tiredness and poor attendance.

Specific Safeguarding Concerns

- **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity in

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exchange for something the child needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator.

Signs may include unexplained gifts, going missing, older boyfriends/girlfriends, repeated sexually transmitted infections, substance misuse or changes in behaviour.

- **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)**

Child Criminal Exploitation occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into criminal activity.

This may include transporting drugs, carrying weapons, theft, violence, fraud or other criminal conduct.

- **County Lines**

County Lines is a form of Child Criminal Exploitation where organised criminal groups exploit children and vulnerable people to transport and sell drugs.

Indicators may include unexplained money, multiple mobile phones, travelling to unfamiliar areas, missing episodes, secrecy and association with older individuals.

- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

FGM is the partial or total removal of external female genitalia or other injury to female genital organs for non-medical reasons. FGM is illegal in the UK and is recognised as a serious form of child abuse.

Indicators may include discussion of a special procedure or ceremony, prolonged absence from sessions, difficulty sitting or walking, and frequent medical complaints.

It is not the responsibility of Ride High employees, volunteers or Trustees to investigate suspected or alleged abuse.

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Designated Safeguarding Lead's

Ride High has appointed Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) who have responsibility for safeguarding and child protection matters. All staff, volunteers, trustees, young people and parents/carers must know how to contact a DSL if they have concerns about a child's welfare.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Name: Clare Murray

Position: Head of Learning

Telephone: 01908 696 169 / 07507 308 943

Email: clare.murray@ridehigh.org

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Name: Hannah Thompson

Position: Children's Manager

Telephone: 01908 696 169 / 07507 308 943

Email: childrensmanager@ridehigh.org

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Name: Joanna Marfleet

Position: Volunteer Manager

Telephone: 01908 696 169 / 07507 308 943

Email: volunteermanager@ridehigh.org

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Name: Janeen Shepherd

Position: Yard Manager

Telephone: 01908 696 169 / 07507 308 943

Email: yardmanager@ridehighquestriancentre.co.uk

Contact Clare Murray or Hannah Thompson in the first instance, if either is unavailable or if the concern is being raised against them then contact Joanna Marfleet or Janeen Shepherd. If you need to contact a DSL out of office hours then call the mobile number listed – 07507 308 943 – and you will be directed to the appropriate person.

The Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) have day-to-day responsibility for child protection matters and will therefore:

- Act as a source of support, advice and expertise within Ride High for any safeguarding matters that may arise;
- Have a working knowledge of Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures if a safeguarding issue is suspected;

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- Refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the relevant investigating authorities;
- Ensure that written records of concern about a young person are kept, even if there is no need to make an immediate referral to the Milton Keynes Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub ("MASH"). These records will be kept confidentially and securely in the young person's file and a reference to the written record of concern will be added to the Child Protection Incident Book;
- Ensure that all members of the children's team have induction training covering child protection and are able to recognise and report concerns as soon as they occur;
- Undertake relevant training every two years;
- Ensure the details of all concerns are shared with the DSLs.

The Designated Trustee

Ride High has a Designated Children's Committee Member (DCCM) (Haley Nagle) with relevant knowledge of, and overall responsibility for child protection matters.

The DCCM must ensure that all these requirements are adhered to by the DSLs; the DCCM and the DSLs will discuss child protection issues generally and review safeguarding records at the monthly meeting of the Children's Committee (a sub-committee of the Board of Trustees). The DSLs, will discuss serious incidents which require immediate support with the DCCM at the time of occurrence.

If deemed appropriate, the DCCM should inform the Chair of the Children's Committee about any child protection issues that have been discussed, and confirm to the Children's Committee that it has been dealt with in accordance with this policy.

Safer Recruitment

Ride High is committed to safer recruitment practices designed to deter, identify and reject unsuitable applicants from working with children and young people.

- All employees and volunteers must complete a satisfactory enhanced DBS with Barred List check before undertaking unsupervised work with children.
- DBS checks will normally be renewed every three years.
- At least two satisfactory references will be obtained and scrutinised before appointment wherever possible.
- Any gaps in employment history will be explored and verified.
- Identity, qualifications and right-to-work documentation will be checked before appointment.
- Safeguarding responsibilities will be included in job descriptions and recruitment materials.
- Interviews will assess candidates' attitudes towards safeguarding and child welfare.

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- Trustees must complete a satisfactory enhanced DBS and Barred List check before appointment.
- All new employees and volunteers will receive safeguarding induction and training appropriate to their role.

This information, together with safeguarding training records, will be maintained within Ride High's Single Central Record.

Third Party Appointments

All third-parties appointed by Ride High to perform any part of the activity must have their own, appropriate safeguarding and protection policies and procedures in place. DBS information will be sought and retained.

Information Sharing

Information that relates to safeguarding concerns will be shared appropriately with Referrers and partner agencies. All Referrers are asked to sign to acknowledge their commitment to this and their willingness to share relevant safeguarding information with Ride High.

Procedures

What to do if you are Concerned about a Child

Information disclosed to one of Ride High's employees or volunteers (either directly or indirectly) which concerns the welfare of a young person must be taken seriously.

The flow chart in the Appendix summarises the action to be taken in the event of any concerns about a young person's welfare.

Responding to a Disclosure

Where a young person chooses to disclose information concerning abuse or neglect, employees and volunteers should:

Do

- Stay calm and listen carefully.
- Allow the young person to speak freely.
- Take what they say seriously.
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing by telling someone.
- Explain that the information cannot be kept confidential and may need to be shared to keep them safe.
- Record the disclosure using the young person's own words wherever possible.
- Report the concern immediately to a DSL.

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Do Not

- Promise confidentiality.
- Ask leading or investigative questions.
- Interrupt the young person unnecessarily.
- Express shock, anger or disbelief.
- Challenge the young person's account.
- Attempt to investigate the concern yourself.

Employees who suspect that a young person is being abused either through personal observation (e.g. a worrying change in the young person's behaviour or appearance), or through information passed to them (possibly from the young person concerned), must:

- First warn the young person that they cannot keep any information revealed by them confidential. Instead they will pass it on to a DSL in accordance with the Ride High Safeguarding Children Policy.
- Then, if the young person wishes to talk, listen to them rather than directly questioning him/her, and support and respond to the young person as much as possible.
- Write a record of concern, taking care to record all the details set out below, and sign it. Put the written record of concern in the young person's file and note the concern in the Child Protection Incident Book.
- Inform the Children's Manager who will in turn, if (s)he considers it appropriate, involve the parent/carer, contact the young person's referrer, and/or make a referral to MASH. If deemed necessary, the DSL will also inform the Designated Trustee or (if the Designated Trustee cannot be contacted) the CEO.
- Confirm any referral to MASH in writing within 48 hours using the multi-agency referral form (MARF).

[Milton Keynes Children and Families Multi-Agency Referral Form \(MARF\) - Section 1: Child/Children's details - MyCouncil \(milton-keynes.gov.uk\)](#)

- Record all and any subsequent events in the written record of concern up to the time of seeing specialist advice from MASH.

If the DSL or any other staff member has serious concerns that the young person is being abused (s)he must inform MASH. It is not Ride High's role to investigate such allegations, and inappropriate questioning in such circumstances may risk further harm to the young person or interfere with further investigations.

If the parent/carer is the possible perpetrator, **they must not be questioned**, but in all other circumstances they would usually be involved.

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If a volunteer or Trustee has any concerns about the welfare of a young person, they should raise them immediately with a DSL or the CEO.

Written Records of Concern

All written records of concern are confidential and must be stored securely online. A reference to a record of concern must be noted in the Child Protection Incident Book. Records of concern should be written as soon as possible after the observation or disclosure but in any event within 24 hours and should cover the following:

General

- Time, date and place of observation or disclosure
- Name, address and age of young person
- Name of parent/carer
- Name of Employee/Volunteer/Trustee who received the concern
- Name of any other person present at the time

What Took Place?

- Source of information (e.g. direct or indirect disclosure)
- Exact words spoken by the young person as far as possible
- Observed behaviour/physical concerns

Action Taken

- Have parents/carers been contacted?
- When was the concern reported to the DSL or/and the DCCM or Chief Executive (time and date)?
- When was MASH contacted (time and date) and who was the contact?
- Was anyone else contacted? If so, who and when?
- All referrals to the MASH will be followed up, the details will be shared with the Children's Committee

Allegations made against Ride High Employees, Trustees and Volunteers (Whistleblowing Procedure)

No Ride High employee, volunteer or Trustee must ever be alone with a young person without another employee, volunteer or Trustee being aware. If working with a young person alone (for example conducting a review), another employee, volunteer or Trustee must be informed.

All concerns about a member of staff or volunteer must be shared with the DSL and/or the Chief Executive.

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Whistleblowing

Ride High is committed to promoting a culture of openness and accountability where safeguarding concerns can be raised without fear of victimisation.

Employees, volunteers and Trustees have a duty to report concerns regarding:

- Poor safeguarding practice.
- Unsafe behaviour towards children.
- Potential abuse or neglect.
- Failure to follow safeguarding procedures.
- Conduct that may pose a risk to children or young people.

Concerns should normally be reported to the DSL, CEO or DCCM. Where the concern relates to one of these individuals, reports should be made directly to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), the Chair of Trustees or an appropriate external safeguarding agency.

Individuals who raise concerns in good faith will be supported and protected from victimisation or detrimental treatment.

If such an allegation of unacceptable behaviour or abuse is made against a Ride High employee, volunteer or Trustee by a young person or their parent/carer, the Chief Executive (or in the case of an allegation against the Chief Executive, the DCCM) must be informed immediately. The Chief Executive (or the DCCM) will immediately inform the LADO and request them to carry out an independent investigation into the allegation. Ride High will cooperate fully with any such investigation.

The employee/volunteer/Trustee will be suspended from all activities with Ride High which involve any direct contact with young people until the investigation has been completed. This is not an indication of admission that the alleged incident has taken place, but to protect the employee/volunteer/Trustee concerned as well as young people and families throughout the process.

Parent/Carer Concerns

A parent or carer who has concerns about unacceptable behaviour or possible abuse should contact a DSL in the first instance. The DSL and the DCCM will discuss the concerns with the parent/carer and make a written record of concern, and a note in the Child Protection Incident Book. The action taken will be recorded in the written record of concern and the parent/carer informed. The procedures defined in Appendix 1 or Appendix 2 will be followed if required. If the parent/carer still has concerns they should contact the Chief Executive.

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Allegations made against a child

Concerns about unacceptable behaviour or possible abuse by other young people should contact a DSL in the first instance. The DSL and the DCCM will discuss the concerns with the parent/carer and make a written record of concern, and a note in the Child Protection Incident Book. The action taken will be recorded in the written record of concern and the parent/carer informed. The procedures defined in Appendix 1 will be followed if required.

Racism and bullying

Our policies on racism and bullying by young people are set out in our Behaviour and Code of Conduct Policies. Repeated racist or bullying incidents may lead to consideration under this Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy.

Health and Safety

Our Health and Safety Policy sets out the consideration we give to protecting young people in our care:

- Within the Ride High clubroom;
- When being transported to and from the clubroom
- When undertaking field trips.

Social Networking

Guidance/protection for employees and volunteers on using social media

No employee or volunteer should interact with any member, former member or client under the age of 18 on social media (unless a family member). Therefore, no employee or volunteer should have a member, former member or client under the age of 18 (other than a family member) as a “friend” to share information with.

No employee or volunteer should post any information or comment on their own social media pages concerning a member, former member or client.

No charity member should be able to see employees’ or volunteers’ profiles on social media.

It is illegal for an adult to give their age and status as a child when using social media. Our Social Networking Policy sets out the consideration we give to protecting Ride High members when using social networking applications.

If a DSL or CEO receives a disclosure that an employee or volunteer is using social media in an inappropriate manner as detailed above they should deal with that disclosure in accordance with the Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy and/or Disciplinary Procedure.

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Photographs

Photographs and videos of young people in our care may only be taken by Ride High employees, volunteers and Trustees or their authorised agents. Unless otherwise authorised by Ride High, photographs and videos may only be taken on a camera or other device owned by Ride High. Such photographs and videos may be used on Ride High's website and/or in Ride High's printed material and by the media (including newspapers and broadcast media) for the promotion of Ride High and its activities, but may not be used for any other purpose, and only if we have received prior written permission from the young person's parents/carers.

Support for Ride High Employees

We recognise that employees and volunteers who have become involved with a young person who has, or appears to have, suffered harm may find the situation stressful and upsetting. We will support such employees and volunteers by providing the opportunity for regular supervision with their line manager (or in the case of volunteers, with the Volunteer Manager) to talk through their anxieties and to seek further support as appropriate, in accordance with our Stress Policy.

Corporate Policies and Mandatory Reading

In addition to this policy, all staff and volunteers must read and understand the following corporate safeguarding policies and procedures:

- Anti-bullying policy
- Code of conduct
- Behaviour policy
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) policy, procedure and guidance
- Non-recent abuse policy and procedure
- Safeguarding children and young people from radicalisation and extremism
- Safer recruitment policy
- Equality, diversity and inclusion policy
- Safeguarding adults at risk of abuse policy
- Social networking policy
- Confidentiality policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education – Part A (All staff)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education – Part A & B (Front line delivery only)

Training and Awareness

Employees and volunteers will receive training and regular/annual updates in child protection matters as appropriate to their roles at Ride High. Such training is designed to ensure employees are able to recognise the signs of abuse and that they know the procedures for reporting and recording their concerns.

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A copy of this policy will be shown to all employees and volunteers, and each must indicate they have read and understood it. It will also be made available to all referrers and members and/or their parents/carers and shown to all students undergoing training with Ride High.

A breach of this policy by an employee will be regarded as misconduct that could lead to disciplinary proceedings.

Safeguarding Children Policy: Response to Pandemic Addendum

1. Scope and Definitions

This addendum applies if RH is advised to reintroduce restrictive measures. Unless covered here, our normal safeguarding children policy continues to apply.

Ride High will still have regard to statutory guidance. Although operating in a different way, Ride High employees and volunteers continue to follow these important safeguarding principles:

- The best interests of children and young people must come first.
- Employees and volunteers should act on safeguarding concerns immediately.
- A designated safeguarding lead (DSL) should be available at all times.
- Children must be protected when they are online.

2. Reporting Concerns

All staff and volunteers must continue to act on any concerns they have about a child immediately. It is vitally important to do this, both for children attending the centre and those accessing Ride High online.

3. DSL Arrangements

A DSL will be available to staff at all times. Where possible, Ride High aims to have a trained DSL on site whenever children are in attendance.

4. Concerns about an Employee or Volunteer

Employees and volunteers should continue to act on any concerns they have immediately – whether those concerns are about staff/volunteers working on site or remotely.

5. Safeguarding all Children

Employees and volunteers are aware that this difficult time potentially puts children at greater risk.

Employees and volunteers will continue to be alert to any signs of abuse, or effects on young peoples' mental health, and act on concerns immediately in line with procedures set out in the safeguarding children policy.

5.1 Children Returning to Ride High Sessions

The Children's Team will do all they reasonably can to ascertain whether there have been any changes regarding welfare, health and well-being that they should be aware of before the young person returns to Ride High.

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Employees and volunteers will be alert to any new safeguarding concerns as they begin to work with the young person the information relates to.

5.2. Children at Home

Ride High will attempt to maintain contact with young people who are not yet returning to sessions on site. Employees will use Ride High phones and devices to make calls. Or, if necessary, they will use personal phones but with the number withheld.

6. Online Safety

Where employees are interacting with young people online, they will continue to follow the existing Ride High Social Networking Policy.

It is acceptable for employees and volunteers to engage with members via social media using Ride High Facebook groups. These groups are private and can only be viewed by those people deemed to be appropriate by their administrator of a DSL.

Employees will continue to be alert to the signs that a child may be at risk online, and act on any concerns immediately following the reporting procedure as set out in the safeguarding children policy.

7. Safeguarding Induction and Training

Ride High will ensure that employees and volunteers are aware of changes to our procedures. New staff and volunteers will continue to receive:

- A safeguarding induction.
- Basic safeguarding training

7.1. Train the Trainer and Everybody's Business Safeguarding Training and Refreshers.

Employees may not be able to attend training during this period. If this is the case, employees will be classed as trained. However, attendance must take place as soon as training becomes available.

The DSLs will do what they reasonably can to keep up to date with safeguarding developments and ensure these are disseminated throughout the team.

8. Keeping Records of who is in the Centre

Ride High keeps a record of which employees and volunteers are on site each day, and that appropriate checks have been carried out for them.

Ride High will continue to keep the Single Central Record up to date.

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Approval and Review

This Safeguarding Children Policy was approved at a Board Meeting of the Trustees. It will be reviewed annually, or more frequently if appropriate.

Milton Keynes Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)	01908 253169 / 01908 253170
Milton Keynes LADO	01908 254307
Children's Emergency Social Work Team Out of hours	01908 265545
National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children	0808 800 5000
Samaritans	01908 667777
Child Line	0800 1111
Thames Valley Police Family Protection Unit	01908 868392
Milton Keynes General Hospital	01908 660033
Family Counselling Service	01908 231131
Ride High Designated Trustee (Haley Nagle)	07779674992
Ride High Chief Executive (Olivia Sugdon)	01908 666434
Ride High Centre (for the DSLs)	07507 308943

References

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)

Every Child Matters: Change for Children (Dept for Education, November 2004)

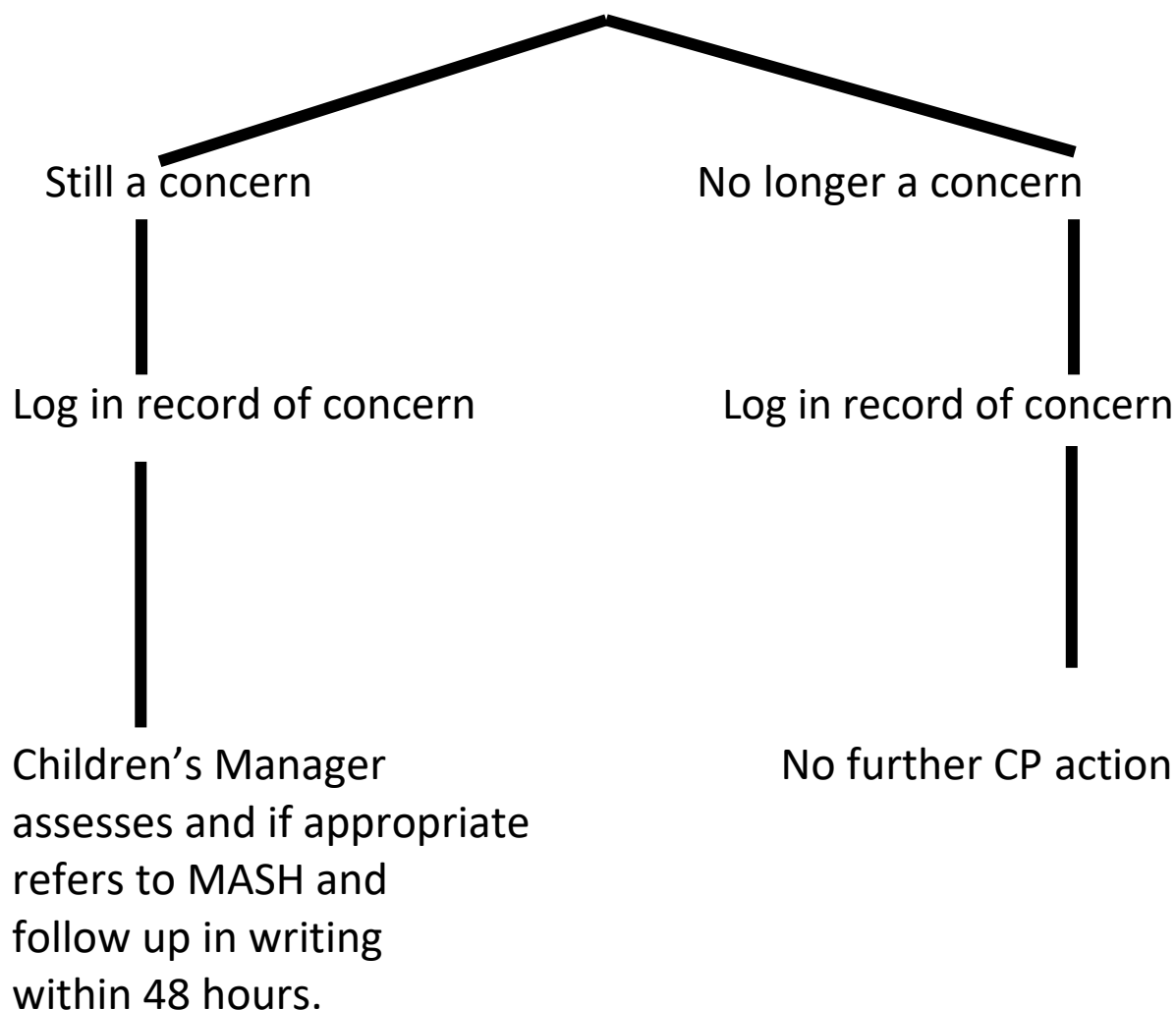
What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (HM Government) (2006)

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APPENDIX 1

Concern about young person's welfare

Discuss with a DSL and/or Designated Trustee. Write a record of concern and make note in Child Protection Incident Book



In either case, the issue should be referred to the young person's referrer, even if no further action is taken.

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APPENDIX 2

Concern about young person's welfare due to a member of staff or volunteer



Discuss with a DSL, DCCM/or CEO. Write a record of concern and make note in Child Protection Incident Book



If not already aware, the CEO and DCCM must be informed immediately



The LADO must be informed within 24 hours of the allegation being made



The LADO will determine the best course of action to be taken