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|  | **Dealing with Allegations made against another Child** |
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| **1. Purpose of this Procedure** |

The purpose of this procedure is to provide clear direction to staff that are called upon to deal with such allegations and to manage investigations and care plans which may result from them and:

* To ensure that children who attend BELS & TL, and any other children who may come to the attention of BELS & TL are protected and supported following an allegation that they may have been abused by another child or young person involved with BELS & TL.
* To ensure that there is a fair, consistent and robust response to any allegations of this nature so that the risk posed to other children by the child or young person in question is managed effectively.
* To facilitate an appropriate level of investigation into allegations.
* To ensure that BELS & TL continues to fulfil its responsibilities towards children and young people who may be subject to such investigations and need support.
* To ensure that there is an appropriate response in situations where allegations are unfounded or deemed to be malicious in origin.

This procedure applies to:

* Any member of Staff, Volunteer or Trustee to whom an allegation of abuse has been made which suggests that another child or young person is responsible.
* Anyone in a managerial position and the Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs) who may be required to deal with such allegations and manage investigations that result from them.

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| **2. Types of Abuse** |

**Physical abuse** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricated the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

**Emotional abuse** is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless and unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them, ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child’s developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying) causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

**Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child or children to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether the child is aware of what is happening or not. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts, such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

**Neglect** is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and / or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born it may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter, including exclusion from home or abandonment; failure to protect a child from physical harm or danger; failure to ensure adequate supervision, including the use of adequate care takers; or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to a child’s basic emotional needs.

There are also emerging types and methods of child abuse, including:

* Sexual exploitation.
* Female genital mutilation (FGM).
* Trafficking of children in order to exploit them sexually, financially, via domestic servitude, or via the involvement in activity such as the production and sale of illegal drugs.
* Abuse linked to beliefs such as spirit possession or witchcraft.
* Radicalisation and the encouragement or coercion to become involved in terrorist activities
* Abuse via online methods e.g. from adults seeking to develop sexual relationships with children or to use sexual or abusive images of them.
* Domestic violence (either witnessing violence between adult family members, or, in the case of older young people, being subjected to coercion or violence in an intimate. relationship in the same way as an older person).

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| **3. Ways that allegations might be made against another young person with BELS & TL** |

* A young person or parent / carer might make a direct allegation against another young person.
* A young person might express discomfort with the behaviour of another young person that falls short of a specific allegation.
* Another young person, staff member or volunteer may directly observe behaviour from one young person towards another that gives them cause for concern.
* BELS & TL may be informed by a parent or by the police or other statutory agency that a young person is the subject of an investigation.
* A young person may volunteer information to BELS & TL that they have harmed another young person or is at risk of doing so or has committed an offence against or related to a young person.

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| **4. Child Protection or Bullying?** |

It is important to distinguish between behaviour that constitutes bullying, and a child protection concern. This decision will be reached by BELS & TL’s DSOs in consultation with other staff members and management committee members. If the conclusion is that the behaviour is an example of bullying, it will be dealt with under BELS & TL’s anti-bullying policy and procedure. If the behaviour could be described as child abuse and has led to the victim possibly suffering significant harm, then it must be dealt with under child protection procedures.

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| **5. Acting on Child Protection Concerns** |

Helping a child in immediate danger or in need of emergency medical attention

* If the child is in immediate danger and is with you, remain with him / her and call the police.
* If the child is elsewhere, contact the police and explain the situation to them.
* If he / she needs emergency medical attention, call an ambulance and, while you are waiting for it to arrive, get help from your first aider.
* If the first aider is not available, use any first aid knowledge that you may have yourself to help the child.
* You also need to contact your supervisor/manager or DSOs for children to let them know what is happening.

Once any immediate danger of emergency medical need has been death with, the procedure set out below should be followed:

1. The member of staff who has been informed of the allegation or who has the concern should make notes of what they have been told or of their direct concerns using the Incident Report form provided. BELS & TL’s DSOs should be informed as soon as possible.
2. If both young people are known to BELS & TL, the DSOs will discuss the situation with parent / carers unless:
* The view is that the young person may be put in danger by the family being informed.
* Informing the family may interfere with a criminal investigation.

If either of these circumstances applies, discussions with the families should only take place after this has been agreed with the local authority children’s social care team.

1. The child who is the subject of the allegation should be informed of what has been said about them. However, if the view is that children’s social care or the police should be involved, the young person should only be informed after discussion with these agencies.
2. BELS & TL’s DSOs should refer both young people to the local authority’s children’s social care team and confirm the referral in writing within 24 hours.
3. Pending any possible assessments or investigations, any risk that may be posed to other young people by the young person who has allegedly caused harm must be carefully managed. This should be done in consultation with the local authorities and police.

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| **6. Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs)** |

**Current Designated Safeguarding Officers**

**Katherine O’Donnell**

**Gemma Pinkney**

**Deb Walters**

**0191 2635770**

**team@belsnorthtyneside.org.uk**

**Management Committee Safeguarding Representative**

**Charlotte Kennedy**

**0191 2635770**

**charlotte.e.osborne@gmail.com**

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| **7. Useful Contacts** |

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| Local Police | Emergency: 999Non-emergency: 101 |
| North Tyneside CouncilOut of Hours Early Help and Coordination | Office hours: 0345 2000 1010191 20068000191 643 8178 |
| NSPCC Helpline | 0808 800 5000 help@nspcc.org.uk |
| Childline | 0800 1111[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk) |
| Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) | [www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk) |

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| **8. Other documents in this series** |

This document is one of a series of nine that detail BELS TL strategy for protecting children and young people. The other documents are:

SG1- Safeguarding Children and Young People

SG2 - Code of Conduct for Adults working with Children and Young People

SG3 - Code of Conduct for Young People

SG4 - Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures

SG5 - Procedure for Protecting Children and Young People at possible Risk of Abuse

SG6 - Dealing with Allegations made against an Employee or Volunteer

SG8 - Guidelines for sharing Confidential Information

SG9 - Guidelines on the Storage and Retention of Records

In addition to the above this policy should be read alongside our policies and procedures on:

* Acceptable Access to and Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

e-safety Policy

* Communications Policy
* Complaints Procedure
* Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
* Equality and Diversity Policy
* GDPR Privacy Policy
* Grievance Policy and Procedure
* Health & Safety at Work Policy
* Recruitment & Selection Policy and Procedure
* Staff Induction Checklist
* Volunteer Policy and Procedure
* Whistleblowing Policy

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| **8. Document Details** |

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Updated January 2023 (change of DSOs and minor changes)

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