



DUNKIRK PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Parent Information Sheet - Safeguarding Children.

In the interest of safeguarding children, there may be occasions when the school has to consult other agencies with or without a parent's prior knowledge if there is a safeguarding concern.

The school's first concern is the child's welfare and all schools, including Dunkirk, have a legal duty to act to protect the child at all times. Under section 11, of the Children Act 2004, organisations and agencies have a duty to ensure they consider the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children when carrying out their functions and must show independent scrutiny. The statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children 2022 identifies the core legal requirements, making it clear what individuals, organisations and agencies must and should do to keep children safe.

As a school we believe:

- Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility
- Listen to, hear and act on the voice of the child
- We will hold the child at the centre of all that we do and ensure their welfare is prioritised

There are different levels of need and risk that may require support and intervention; this can be delivered by a range of partners and agencies. Such consultation may result in a formal referral (Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) which could prompt visits from social services and/or the police.

We fully understand that this can be a very distressing set of circumstances, but we can only assure you that we have a legal duty and responsibility to follow the procedures laid down by the Nottingham Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), as outlined in our school safeguarding policy. The role of school is not to make any decisions or judgements about our families but to report any safeguarding concerns to the appropriate agency.

There are many services available to support children and families. By making it simple to access the services at Nottingham City Council they can help provide the right support, at the right time, to meet the needs of Nottingham families.

### **Making a referral or a request for services**

To make either a safeguarding referral or a request for services to Nottingham City Council Children's Services Designated Safeguarding Lead staff at Dunkirk complete the Multi-Agency Request for Services Form (MARF). Once completed it is sent by secure email to [CityMASH@nottinghamcity.gov.uk](mailto:CityMASH@nottinghamcity.gov.uk) for assessment by social care.

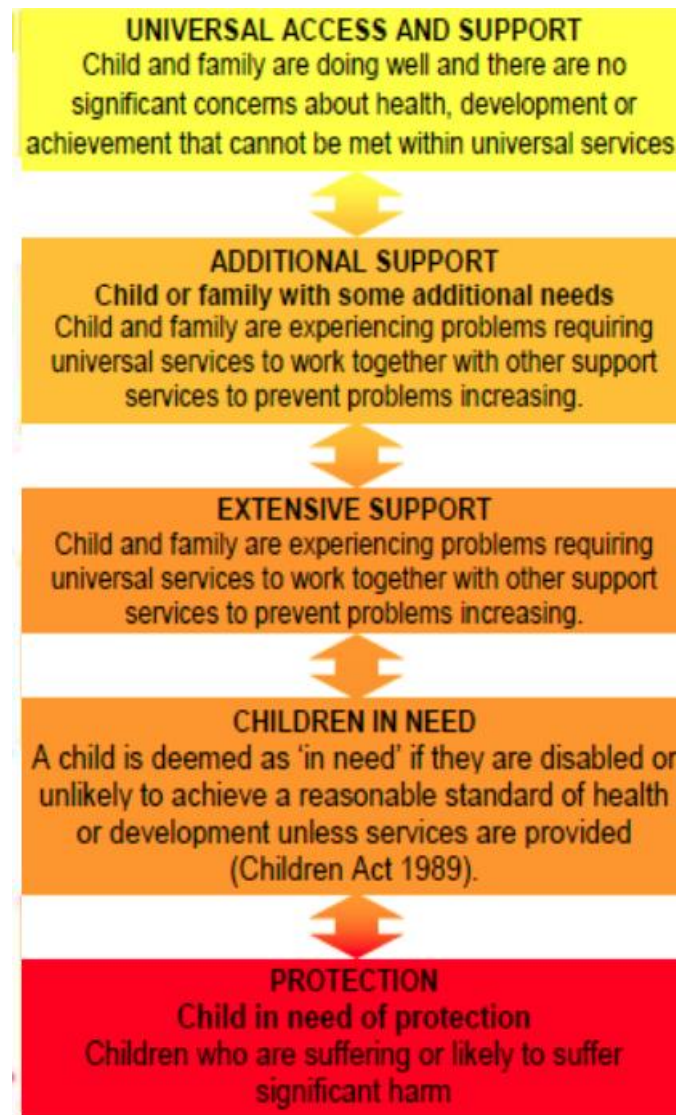
Some examples of when a referral is made (but there are other reasons too):

- Child is at immediate risk or has suffered significant harm including physical, sexual, emotional harm or neglect
- Unexplained injuries or injuries where there is an inconsistent explanation of the injury
- Under two years old and has unexplained bruising
- Under 1 year old where the parents/carers have significant substance use issues
- Where there are serious concerns regarding the risk of significant harm to an unborn baby
- Lives or has contact with adults who are known to pose a risk to children

- There is evidence of repeated domestic violence witnessed and/or experienced by child; adult mental health issues or substance use issues
- Allegations or disclosures of abuse including sexually abused or evidence of grooming
- left “home alone” and their age and vulnerability places them at risk, certainly all children “home alone” aged 5 years old and under should be referred.
- Adults who pose a risk
- Child victims of trafficking

### What does the MASH do?

When a professional, family member or member of the public is concerned about a child or young person’s welfare or safety, Social care assess and look into it. They can talk to staff at school, the child and the family. They may also contact other agencies for additional information. This is to help them make a decision about how best to support a family, based on the diagram below.



### What happens after a safeguarding concern is raised?

If the child or young person is thought to have been harmed or could be harmed in the future, we will refer them to the Nottingham City Council social care assessment team. Information will also be given to the police if it is necessary to help stop or solve a crime. If the child or young person has not been harmed but we think they or you would benefit from extra help, then their name, address, reason for the enquiry and outcome will be passed onto the most appropriate service so that you and your family get the support you need. Social care will also write to you and where appropriate the child or young person, explaining the outcome of the safeguarding concern.

## **Will I be told there is a safeguarding concern about my child?**

Yes. Usually you will be told at the time the concern is raised. If the safeguarding concern has been made by a professional, for example a social worker or a teacher, they will tell you what their concerns are and may ask your permission to contact us. However, if there is an immediate danger to a child then the professional may contact MASH first/directly to gather further advice. In some cases, the police may be called directly. See below for more detail.

## **Can information be shared without my permission?**

We expect all professionals to follow consent guidance from the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2017, the Children Act 1989 and the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Information Sharing (proceduresonline.com) To make a referral, parents/carers must give their explicit and informed consent for information to be shared with other agencies to enable holistic support and access to services. Recorded consent should be gained by the referring agency, with clarity about why and with whom information will be shared. Services cannot accept a referral without consent; unless there are safeguarding concerns whereby there is a statutory duty to intervene and seeking consent may put the child at further risk or cause a delay. In situations where there are concerns that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, information may be shared without consent.

Circumstances may include:

- Suspicion that a child will be forced into marriage or removed from the country against their will
- Suspicion that a child is at risk of female genital mutilation
- A disclosure of sexual or physical abuse putting the child at immediate risk
- Suspicion that illness is being fabricated.

## **What happens when a very serious enquiry is made?**

Partners in the MASH will share information to decide if: the child or young person has been harmed or could be harmed in the future the child or young person or you would benefit from support from other people who help children and families.

They will consider four simple questions when thinking about and working with a child and family:

1. What are we worried about – what are the complicating factors?
2. What's working well – what are the strengths?
3. What needs to happen next?
4. How worried are we? – the scaling question from 1-10

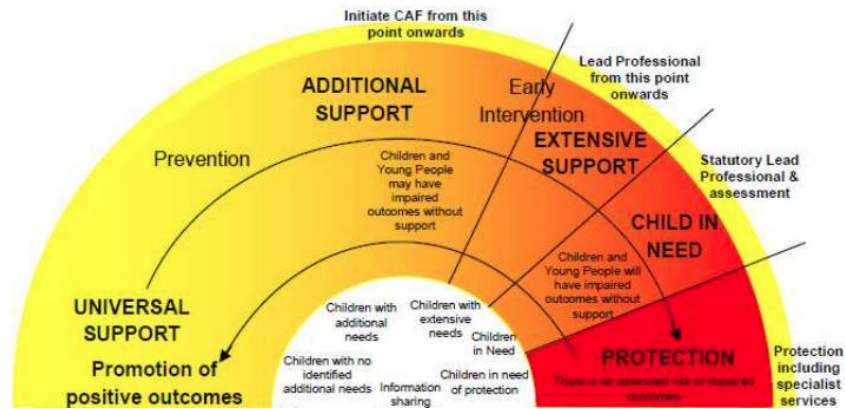
## **How will my information be used?**

Your information will only be used to decide whether: you or someone else is being harmed or may be harmed in the future you or your family would benefit from help and support a crime has been committed or could be committed in the future. Your information will be held in a safe place and will not be shared with other people unless they have a legal power to see it.

## **What happens next?**

A referral will be made to the MASH team. If consent is not given then professionals will call the MASH team, inform them of the situation and ask for further guidance, as to how a child will be safeguarded without parent consent. At all times the safety of the child is paramount.

Parents/carers will be contacted by a professional from the safeguarding team or those professionals may come straight into school/home to see the child/family. This all depends on the circumstances of the safeguarding referral. School staff are not involved at this point with the decisions as to what happens next. That decision lies with the MASH team professionals. They will decide what support is or isn't needed for each family situation.



If you have any further questions about the process then please call school on 01159153273 and ask for Mrs Hollis (Senior DSL)/Mr Parry or Mrs Jurkiw (Deputy DSLs) to call you back. These staff are all senior leaders in school but they all also teach so it may be at the end of the school day.