



Safeguarding Escalation Policy – Resolving Professional Differences

Signed: October 2022

Next Review date: November 2024

Safeguarding Statement

“Greenvale School is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for students, staff and visitors, and to promoting a climate where children and adults will feel confident about sharing any concerns which they may have about their own safety or the well-being of others.”

Having different professional perspectives within safeguarding practice is a sign of a healthy and well-functioning partnership. These differences of opinion are usually resolved by discussion and negotiation between the professionals concerned. It is essential that where differences of opinion arise they do not adversely affect the outcomes for children and young people, and are resolved in a constructive and timely manner.

Differences could arise in a number of areas of multi-agency working as well as within single agency working. Differences are most likely to arise in relation to;

- Criteria for referrals
- Outcomes of assessments
- Roles and responsibilities of workers
- Service provision
- Timeliness of interventions
- Information sharing and communication

If you have difference of opinion with another professional, remember:

- Professional differences and disagreements can help us find better ways improve outcomes for children and young people
- All professionals are responsible for their own cases, and their actions in relation to case work
- Differences and disagreements should be resolved as simply and quickly as possible, in the first instance by individual practitioners and /or their line managers
- All practitioners should respect the views of others whatever the level of experience. Remember that challenging more senior or experienced practitioners can be hard
- Expect to be challenged; working together effectively depends on an open approach and honest relationships between agencies
- Professional differences are reduced by clarity about roles and responsibilities and the ability to discuss and share problems in networking forums

This policy considers where there is:

1. Disagreement internally within the school as to the need for a referral
2. Disagreement about the MASH's or Children's Social Care's decision to accept a referral
3. Concerns about the progress of a Child in Need/ Child Protection Plan
4. Disagreement about the need to put into place a Child Protection Plan at Case Conference or to remove a child from a plan

(The school will also consult the LSCB's Resolving Professional Differences Policy in conjunction with this policy)

Acronyms

MASH – Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (for Under 18)

CWD – Children with Disabilities

SCAIT - Social Care Advice and Information Team (for Over 18)

AWLD – Adults with Learning Disabilities

1. Disagreement internally within the school as to the need for a referral

1.1 In situations where the Designated Safeguarding Lead **does not** believe there is a need to make a referral to MASH/CWD and this decision **is questioned** by a member of staff, then MASH/CWD should always be contacted and the information/concerns shared.

1.2 Guidance on the need for a referral can be sought from the Lewisham LADO.

1.3 *It is important to remember Keeping Children Safe in Education (DFE Sept 2016) makes it clear that any member of staff can make a referral to The Police/Children's Social Care.*

2. Disagreement about a decision to accept a referral

What to do if a member of staff does not agree with the MASH/CSC decision:

2.1 If you have been told that your referral does not meet the level 4 of the MASH levels of need framework. If you do not agree with the decision of MASH/CWD not to accept a Child in Need or Child Protection Referral **you have a responsibility to escalate your concerns:**

2.2 Have you completed the multi-agency referral form? This is the required 'on-line submission' to support your initial telephone contact. This form provides holistic information that will provide a greater context to your referral and will enable MASH/CWD to have all the information they need to make an informed judgement as to whether it meets the 'threshold'. This is particularly important if there are historic concerns related to the family. Are there any other agencies/schools that support your concerns/referral?

2.3 When summarising your concerns always provide a chronology of key events. Draw upon the MASH levels of need framework matching and evidencing your written concerns to the criteria. Draw upon the statutory definitions of section 17 or section 47 assessments (child in need and child protection)

2.4 Take the following steps when escalating your concerns to MASH/CWD

- a. Ask to speak to the social worker who has made the decision. This request should not be refused by the MASH officer receiving the call/referral
- b. If there is no agreement, ask to speak to a Team Leader.
- c. If there is no agreement put your concerns in writing to the Service Manager:
- d. Seek advice from the Lewisham LADO.
- e. You should escalate your concerns further to the Assistant Director of Children's Social Care and if needed to the Director of Children's Social Care if you believe a child is at risk and a referral is not being accepted or a section 17 Child in Need Assessment is required.

You should always be told the outcome of a referral and receive an explanation as to why a referral is not being accepted.

2.5 Schools have a responsibility to work with other agencies to provide Early Help and carry out Early Help Assessments. For children with additional or unmet needs that require a multi-agency coordinated

approach and plan, an **Early Help Assessment** should be drawn up to provide early intervention where a child does not meet the thresholds for statutory assessment by Children’s Social Care. Given their knowledge and relationship with the family, schools are well placed to initiate **Early Help Assessments** or support other agencies to do so. If a parent does not agree to an **Early Help Assessment**, consider the impact on the child. Professional meetings and co-ordinated interventions may still be possible. However, the lack of parental engagement may well lead to the need for a Child in Need/Child Protection Referral. The **Early Intervention Team** and **Targeted Family Support** are available to support schools to provide Early Help and initiate Early Help Assessments.

3. Concerns about the progress of a Child in Need/ Child Protection Plan

What to do if there are concerns about children on CP or CIN plans:

3.1 You may have significant concerns about a child subject to a ‘Child Protection Plan’ or ‘Child in Need Plan,’ believing that there is no progress with the case or it has deteriorated significantly. You may feel the child should be moved from Child in Need to Child Protection, or additional services and interventions are required or even that the child should be removed from the home.

3.2 Share your concerns verbally and in writing with the social worker. You should also escalate your concerns when you feel you are ‘not being heard’ or when you disagree with the decisions made. Invite the social worker to bring forward the next Core Group Meeting.

3.3 Escalate your concerns to the Social Workers Team Leader and seek advice from the Lewisham LADO. Escalate your concerns to the Service Manager, Assistant Director and Director of Children’s Social Care.

3.4 Whilst it is important to share your concerns at Core Group Meetings and Case Conferences, do not delay sharing your concerns until these opportunities arise.

4. Disagreement about the need to put into place a Child Protection Plan at Case Conference or to remove a child from a plan

What to do if there are disagreements about the need for or removing from a CP plan:

4.1 Ask for your concerns to be captured in the minutes.

4.2 Ask for a clarification of the reasons underpinning the decision.

4.3 If you still disagree with the decision write to the Independent Chair detailing your concerns.

4.4 You should escalate your concerns beyond the Independent Chair if your concerns remain unresolved and you believe the child is at risk of significant harm.

Agencies have a responsibility to consider Care Proceeding to remove a child from the home when there is insufficient progress and a child remains at risk.

Signed.....

Dated

Key contacts / Websites Contacts

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO):

Eleanor Hargadon-Lowe, London Borough of Lewisham, 1st Floor Laurence House, 1 Catford Road, SE6 4RU

There is also a Deputy LADO system, as such you may speak with and be supported by a member of the team.

LADO Voicemail service: 020 8314 7280. Please note this is a manned voicemail, so please leave a clear message and the LADO or Deputy LADO will respond to you as soon as possible within 24 hours.

lewishamLADO@lewisham.gov.uk

Lewisham Safeguarding Children Partnership

Address: Child Development Centre, 3rd Floor, Laurence House, Catford, SE6 4RU

tel: 0208 314 3396

web: <https://www.safeguardinglewisham.org.uk/lscb>

email: SafeguardingBoard@lewisham.gov.uk

E-Safety Lead Officer: Aaron Collins/Ashleigh Cannon

MASH: 0208 314 6660

Out of hours Lewisham Local Authority: 0208 314 6000

AWLD and transitions

Tel: 0208 314 8319

Email: linda.smith@lewisham.gov.uk

SCAIT

<https://lewisham.gov.uk/organizations/adult-social-care-enquiries>

Tel: [0208 314 7777](tel:02083147777)

Email: SCAIT@lewisham.gov.uk

NSPCC whistleblowing Helpline 08000280285

Websites:

Teacher Prohibition Orders Guidance and Hearing Outcomes:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/teacher-misconduct>

Teacher Status Check (information for employers):

<https://www.gov.uk/teacher-status-checks-information-for-employers>:

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, update service and DBS referrals:

<https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check/contact-disclosure-and-barring-service>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-referrals-form-and-guidance>

<https://www.gov.uk/dbs-update-service>

DfE Safeguarding:<http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/safeguardingchildren>

Ofsted FAQ: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/schools/for-schools/safeguarding-children>

NSPCC: <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

Barnardos: <http://www.barnardos.org.uk/>

Mental Capacity Act: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/making-decisions-for-someone-else/mental-capacity-act/>

Advice on statutory guidance to schools: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-policies-for-schools>

DfE Safeguarding Guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/childrens-services/safeguarding-children>

DfE Guidance to schools:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/departmental-advice-schools>

KCSiE:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/912593/Keeping children safe in education part 1 Sep 2020.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/912593/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_part_1_Sep_2020.pdf)