



# Child Protection Policy

## Policy

The Beehive Montessori School is committed to the protection of children from all forms of abuse – including sexual, emotional, psychological, physical abuse and neglect. This commitment includes prevention, early detection, intervention and promoting protective behaviours for all students.

Beehive is committed to ensuring a respectful learning environment that is safe, positive and supportive for all students. The Beehive Montessori School implements the National Child Safe Organisation Principles through its Child Safe Organisation Framework to underpin all Beehive's policies, procedures, practices and strategies to ensure the provision of an environment where children feel respected, valued, supported and safe from harm.



**The Beehive Montessori School Inc.**

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## Background

Children may be exposed to risk of emotional or physical harm while in the care of the School including classroom and grounds or in the School environment, online or on excursion or other related activities.

The School has a duty to take all reasonable care to prevent and detect abuse of children while in the care of the School. The School also has a duty to take all reasonable care to respond to indicators of abuse occurring outside the school, as part of the community of adults helping to keep children safe.

## Implementation

### *Mandatory and other reporting of child abuse<sup>1</sup>*

1. School teachers registered with the Teacher Registration Board of WA including the Principal, (and school psychologists from 1 May 2024), are required by law to make a mandatory report of child sexual abuse when a belief, based on reasonable grounds, is formed that sexual abuse is occurring or has occurred. This mandatory report **must be made** directly to the Department of Communities-Child Protection and Family Support (CPFS) (not to the Principal) whether it occurs while in the care of the School or otherwise.
2. Once they have fulfilled their mandatory reporting obligations, all School teachers shall inform the Principal or the Chair of the Board, that a mandatory report has been made.
3. Staff and volunteers who are not mandatory reporters (i.e. who are not teachers or other professions required to make mandatory reports) must report reasonable beliefs of child sexual abuse within the School community directly to the Principal or the Chair of the Beehive Montessori School Board.
4. Although it is not mandatory to report other (non- sexual) forms of child abuse, the School supports all School staff and members of the School community to report to the Principal any other forms of child abuse or neglect.
5. In cases where a former student (still under the age of 18), or the parent or guardian of a former student, makes an allegation about child sexual abuse at the School occurring before 2009, the CPFS shall be informed immediately. An allegation involving a former student who is now aged 18 or over is reportable to the Police. In either case, the Principal shall submit a critical incident report to the Director General, Department of Education, the Ombudman WA under the Reportable Conduct Scheme (if the allegation involves a current employees of the School), and may also be required to notify the Teacher Registration Board of WA if the allegation involves a teacher.

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<sup>1</sup> Refer to attached *Reporting Flow Chart for Reporting of Abuse and Neglect (not Sexual Abuse)*; *Reporting Flow Chart for Reporting of Sexual Abuse (For Mandatory Reporters)*; *Reporting Flow Chart for Reporting of Sexual Abuse (Non-Mandatory Reporters)*; and *Appendix 1: Indicators of Child Abuse and Neglect and Appendix 2 Grooming*

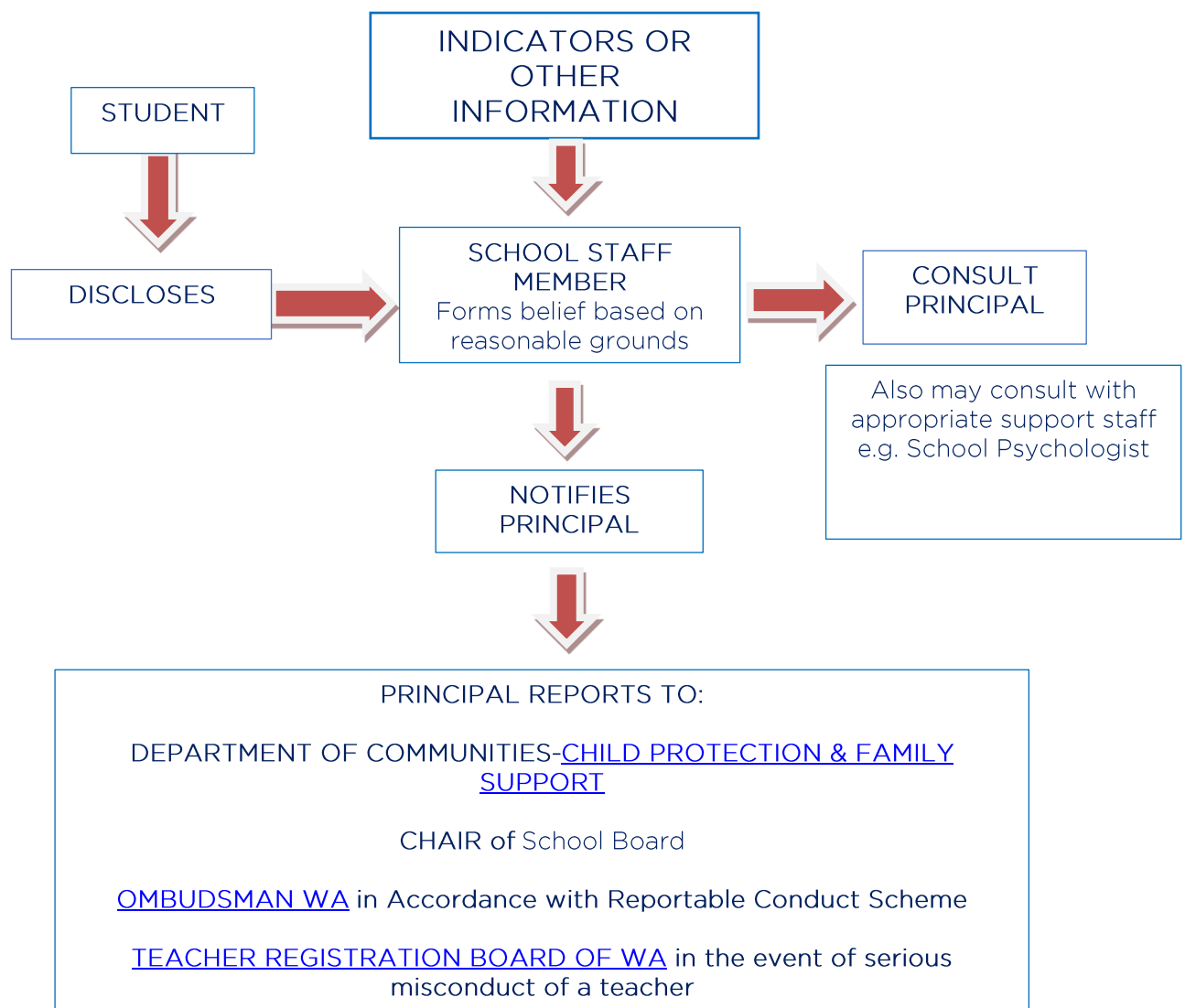
### *General*

6. The School shall take all reasonable steps that it can to:
  - 6.1. take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;
  - 6.2. empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;
  - 6.3. foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children;
  - 6.4. provide an environment that enables all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children;
  - 6.5. provide an environment which prevents, or reduces the risk of, child abuse;
  - 6.6. minimise harm to a victim of child abuse;
  - 6.7. minimise any harm to the School community, caused by incident(s) of child abuse; and
  - 6.8. empower and enable children to detect and avoid or respond to potential abuse.
7. The School shall –
  - 7.1. ensure that current Working With Children Checks and Police Clearances are maintained in School staff and volunteers' files;
  - 7.2. be vigilant in recruitment and screening of staff and volunteers for suitability to safely work with children;
  - 7.3. ensure that all staff comply with the Staff Code of Conduct; and
  - 7.4. ensure that one-on-one activities are conducted in open spaces in view of others.
  - 7.5. cooperate in the Multi-Agency Protocol for Education Options for Young People Charged with Harmful Sexual Behaviours and implements a risk assessment and management plan for any such young person enrolled at the School. This Protocol, is provided to the Principal if applicable.
  - 7.6. respond appropriately to complaints and allegations of grooming and child abuse in the best interests of students and in accordance with policies and procedures, including information about the services which may be available; and information is sought and complied with as to when, what and by whom information may be shared.
8. The School's teachers, including the Principal and other teaching staff shall –
  - 8.1. be trained in protective behaviours and warning signs of possible abuse and neglect;
  - 8.2. be trained on child abuse, indicators, and reporting procedures in accordance with the Related Documents and Resources referred to in this Policy with statutory and regulatory obligations prevailing in the event of any inconsistency with this Policy;
  - 8.3. teach students about protective behaviours as appropriate at each age level; and
  - 8.4. ensure that content being accessed on computers by students and staff is appropriate.
9. The Principal shall –
  - 8.1. oversee the implementation of this Child Protection Policy;
  - 8.2. ensure that School staff are provided with regular training to support them in matters of child protection;
  - 8.3. ensure that all School staff are aware of and compliant with legislation for the prevention of child abuse and mandatory reporting processes;

- 8.4 ensure that all allegations of child abuse are investigated appropriately and thoroughly, with due consideration to privacy and with the assistance and support of relevant specialist agencies such as the Police and CPFS; and
- 8.5 brief the Board to the extent that it is appropriate to do so, on any allegation, or incident, of child abuse.

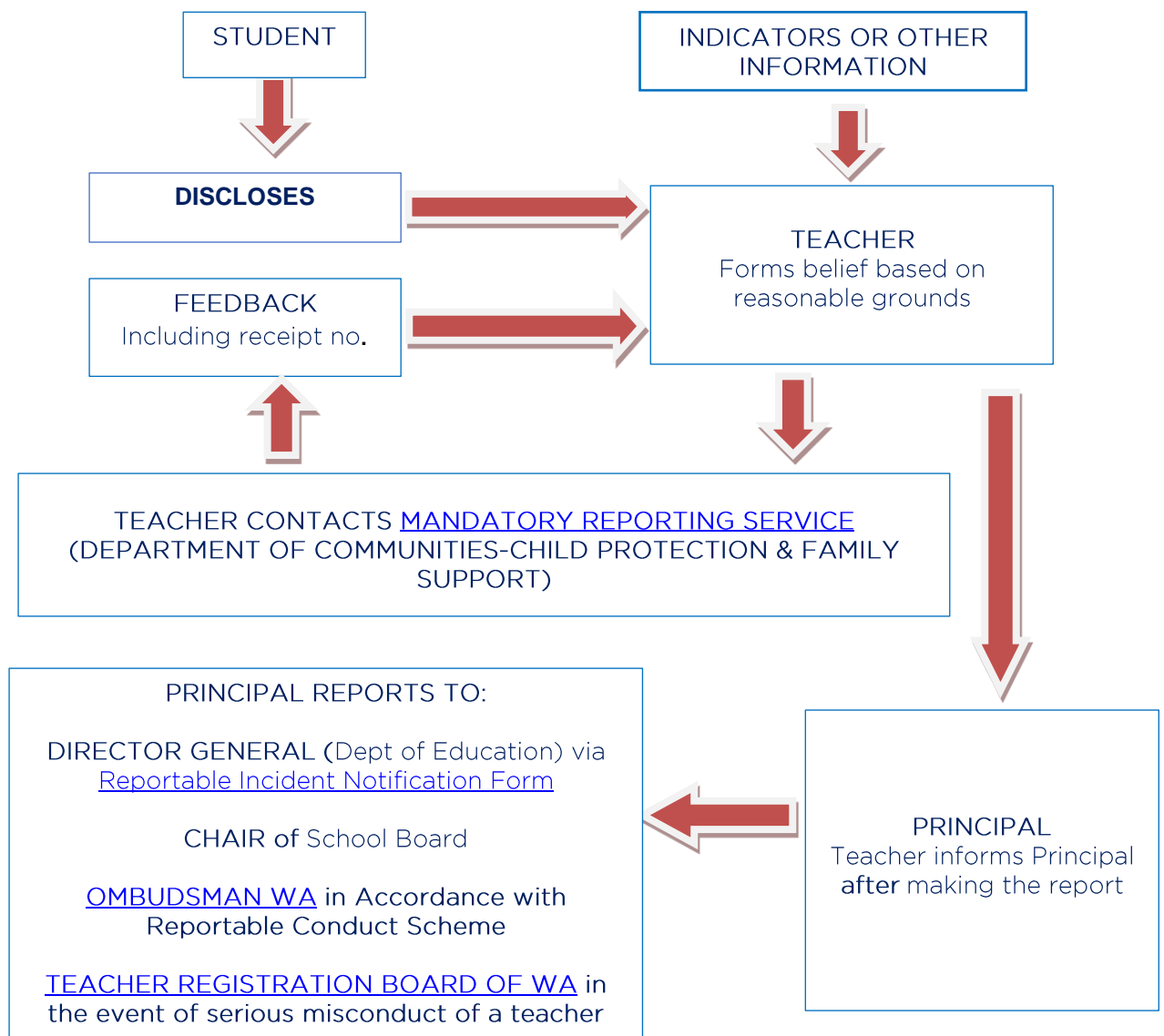
## Reporting Flow Chart for Reporting of Abuse and Neglect (not Sexual Abuse)<sup>2</sup>

(Non-Mandatory Report)



<sup>2</sup> Reporting Flow Chart for Reporting of Abuse and Neglect (not Sexual Abuse) from AISWA Child Protection Policy Guidelines

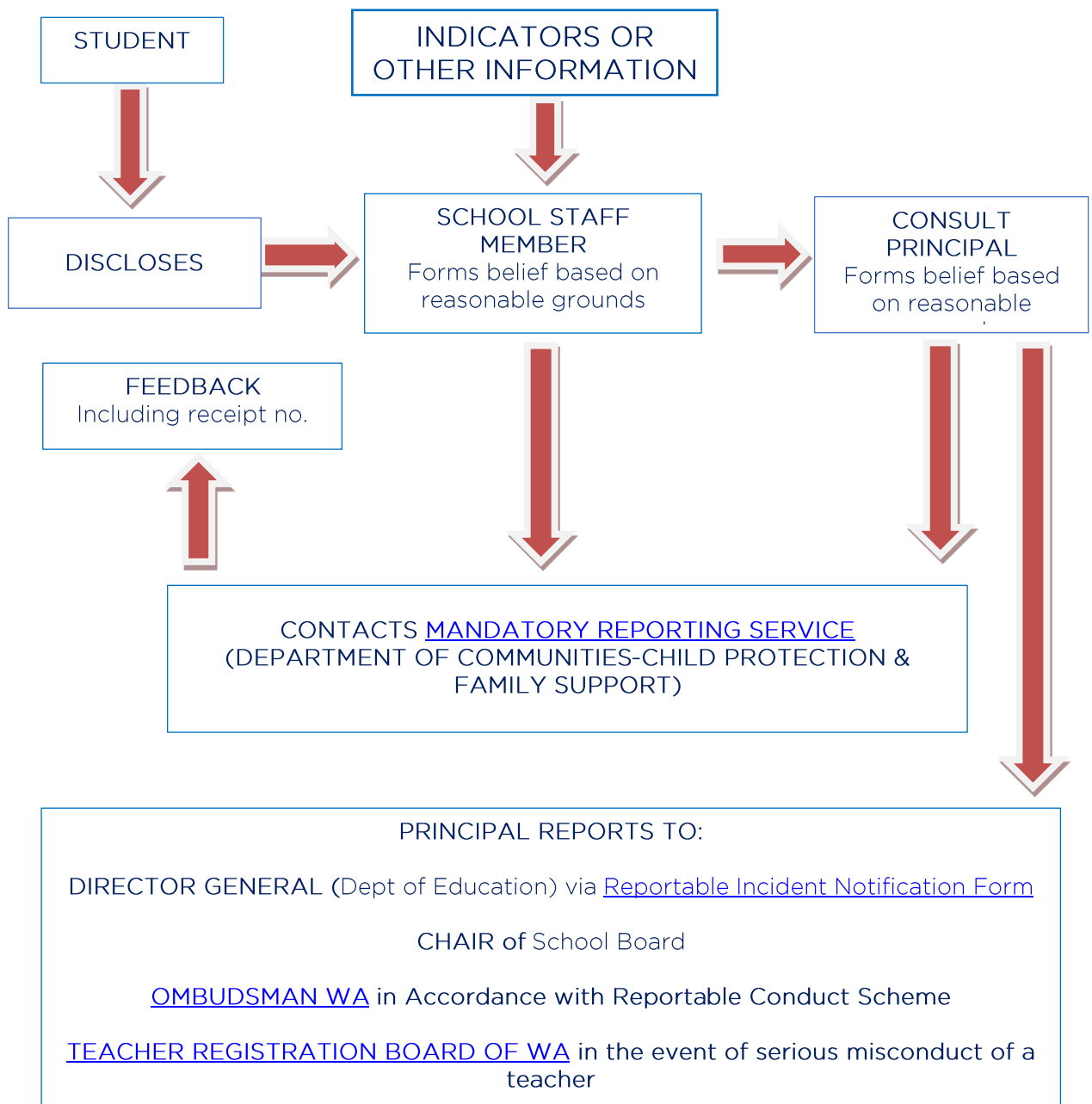
Reporting Flow Chart for Reporting of Sexual Abuse<sup>3</sup>  
(For Mandatory Reporters)



**Please note** that once a teacher has formed a belief based on reasonable grounds, they are required to make the report to CPFS not the Principal. Prior to forming a belief, the teacher may, if they wish, consult with colleagues with specialist knowledge, for example the Principal or School Psychologist.

<sup>3</sup> *Reporting Flow Chart for Reporting of Sexual Abuse (For Mandatory Reporters) from AISWA Child Protection Policy Guidelines*

Reporting Flow Chart for Reporting of Sexual Abuse<sup>4</sup>  
(For Non-Mandatory Reporters)



<sup>4</sup> Reporting Flow Chart for Reporting of Sexual Abuse (Non-Mandatory Reporters) based on AISWA's Child Protection Policy Guidelines

## Related Documents and Resources

[Children and Community Services Act 2004](#)

[Department of Communities-Child Protection and Family Support - Western Australia - CPFS Home](#)

[Director General \(Dept of Education\) via Reportable Incident Notification Form](#)

[Ombudsman WA](#)

[Teacher Registration Board of WA](#)

[Identifying Child Abuse and Neglect](#)

[Mandatory Reporting Service](#)

[Child Protection - Policies - The Department of Education](#)

[Working with Children Check - Western Australia](#)

Appendices 1 & 2 re: warning signs and grooming (see next page)

[Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia \(AISWA\) Policies and Procedures Guidelines for Schools – Chapter 11: Child Protection](#)

Privacy Policy

Staff Code of Conduct

[Royal Commission's Creating Child Safe Institutions](#)

[National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#)

[Beehive Montessori School Child Safe Organisation](#)

Beehive Montessori School Child Protection Advice brochure

[Traffic Lights - Sexual Behaviours in Children and Young People](#)

[Beehive's Communication Pathway](#)

Phone numbers:

CPFS 1800 273 889

Mandatory Reporting Service 1800 273 889

*Approved 12/6/23 by the Board Policy Committee. Next review due 12/6/24*

## Appendix 1: Indicators of Child Abuse and Neglect<sup>5</sup>

Four forms of child abuse are covered by WA law and defined by the Department of Communities:

1. *Physical abuse occurs when a child is severely and/or persistently hurt or injured by an adult or a child's caregiver.*
2. *Sexual abuse, occurs when a child is exposed to, or involved in, sexual activity that is inappropriate to the child's age and developmental level, and includes sexual behavior in circumstances where:*
  - a. *the child is subject to bribery, coercion, a threat, exploitation or violence;*
  - b. *the child has less power than another person involved in the behaviour; or*
  - c. *there is a significant disparity in the developmental function or maturity of the child and another person involved in the behaviour.*
3. *Emotional abuse includes:*
  - a. *psychological abuse; and*
  - b. *being exposed to an act of family and domestic violence.*
4. *Neglect is when children do not receive adequate food or shelter, medical treatment, supervision, care or nurturance to such an extent that their development is damaged or they are injured. Neglect may be acute, episodic or chronic.*

Students frequently show indicators from more than one category of abuse; and the examples listed below are not necessarily exclusive to a single category of abuse. Any of these indicators may suggest that a student is being abused, neglected or at risk of harm; however, indicators should be considered in the context of the student's age, medical and developmental history, and capabilities. In addition, mental illness, substance abuse and domestic violence within families must also be considered.

### *Physical Abuse*

- Broken bones or unexplained bruises, burns, or welts in various stages of healing.
- The child or young person is unable to explain an injury, or explanations given are inconsistent, vague or bizarre.
- Direct admissions from the parents that they are concerned that they might harm their child.
- Family history of violence.
- Marked delay between injury and obtaining medical assistance.
- Parent who shows little concern about the welfare of their child or the treatment and care of the injury.
- Repeated presentations of the child to health services with injuries, ingestions or minor complaints (this could also be an indicator of Factitious Disorder by proxy, a rare expression of physical and emotional abuse).

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<sup>5</sup> *Department of Communities-Child Protection and Family Support - Western Australia - Child abuse and neglect*



- The child or young person is unusually frightened of a parent or carer or is afraid to go home.
- The child or young person reports intentional injury by their parent or carer.
- Arms and legs are kept covered by inappropriate clothing in warm conditions.
- Ingestion of poisonous substances including alcohol or drugs.
- Avoidance of physical contact by the child (particularly with a parent or carer).

#### ***Sexual Abuse***

- Sexualised behaviours inappropriate to their age (including sexually touching other children and themselves) knowledge of sexual behaviour inappropriate to their years.
- Disclosure of abuse either directly or indirectly through drawings, play or writing.
- Pain or bleeding in the anal or genital area with redness or swelling.
- Fear of being alone with a particular person.
- Child or young person implies that he/she is required to keep secrets.
- Presence of sexually transmitted disease.
- Sudden unexplained fears.
- Enuresis and/or encopresis (bed-wetting and bed soiling).

#### ***Emotional or Psychological Abuse***

- The parent or carer constantly criticises, threatens, belittles, insults, or rejects the child or young person with no evidence of love, support, or guidance.
- The child or young person exhibits extremes in behaviour.
- Delayed physical, emotional, or intellectual development.
- Compulsive lying and stealing.
- High levels of anxiety.
- Lack of trust in people.
- Feelings of worthlessness about life and themselves.
- Eating hungrily or hardly at all.
- Uncharacteristic seeking of attention or affection.
- Reluctance to go home.
- Rocking, sucking thumbs or self-harming behaviour.
- Fearfulness when approached by a person known to them.

#### ***Neglect***

- Signs of malnutrition, begging, stealing or hoarding food.
- Poor hygiene: matted hair, dirty skin or severe body odour.
- Unattended physical or medical problems.
- The child or young person states that no one is home to provide care (inadequate supervision, failure to ensure safety).
- Child or young person appears constantly tired.
- Frequent lateness to school or absence from school.
- Inappropriate clothing, especially inadequate clothing in winter.
- Alcohol and/or drug abuse present in the household.
- Frequent illness, low grade infections or sores.
- Hunger

## **Appendix 2: Grooming**

Grooming is defined as the use of a variety of manipulative and controlling techniques with a vulnerable subject in order to establish trust or normalize sexually harmful behavior with the overall aim of facilitating exploitation and/or avoiding exposure.

A child abuser usually spends time grooming the child with the child being made to feel that they are in some way complicit. Grooming is the process by which a person prepares a child, significant adults and the environment for the abuse of this child. Recognising the grooming process is one of the best ways of preventing child abuse.

Grooming behaviour may involve nurturance (care-giving) and attachment (care-seeking) motivations, as well as sexual motivations. A child abuser may also spend time grooming children online with the intention to meet them in real life.

The abuser may be drawn to a particular child because of perceived vulnerabilities in the child (e.g. loneliness, emotional neediness, problems at home, peer isolation, low confidence, low self-esteem), or to meet the abuser's own emotional needs. Particularly in the early stages, these behaviours may appear ambiguous to both the victim and observers, however behaviours such as developing 'special' relationships, giving gifts or privileges, being overly familiar or affectionate, seeking to spend time with children outside the work role, or arranging to spend time alone with children, it should be seen as a violation of professional boundaries and cause for concern.