



Usutu Forest School

UFS Student Safeguarding Policy

The Student Safeguarding Committee for Usutu Forest School is:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|---|-----------------|
| • Whole School Safety | - | Mr W. Sparham |
| • Pre-Primary | - | Mrs S. Bird |
| • Junior-Primary | - | Mrs T. Allman |
| • Intermediate School | - | Mrs H. de Koker |
| • Senior Primary | - | Mrs T. Davidson |
| • Form 1 - 4 | - | Ms. T. Zwane |
| • AS & A-level | - | Mrs D. Naylor |
| • DSL | - | Mr. G. Allman |

1. Introduction & Rationale

Usutu Forest School recognises its duty and responsibilities to promote the protection, welfare and safeguarding interests of all students. The school recognises that effective student protection requires sound procedures, and a workforce that is competent and confident in responding to student protection situations.

Usutu Forest School is a listening school where the child's voice is heard and all students are encouraged to be open about their concerns and doubts.

This document provides the basis for good practice within the school for safeguarding students to enable every student to be healthy and stay safe.

2. Underpinning values

Usutu Forest School is committed to the following:

All students' welfare is paramount. Each student has a right to be protected from harm and exploitation and to have their welfare safeguarded with the school providing a safe environment in which students can learn.

Each student is unique. It is imperative that students receive the right help at the right time to address risks and prevent issues escalating.

Key Points:

- Students, parents and other carers should be aware of their responsibilities and their rights, together with advice about the power of professionals to intervene in their family circumstances.

- Each student has a right to be consulted about actions taken by others on his/her behalf. The concerns of students and their families should be listened to and due consideration given to their understanding, wishes and feelings.
- Individual family members must be involved in decisions affecting them. They must be treated with courtesy and respect and with due regard given to working with them in a spirit of partnership in safeguarding students' welfare
- Open-mindedness and honesty must guide each stage of assessment and of operational practice. The strengths of individual family members, as well as their needs, should be given due consideration.
- Personal information is confidential. It is only shared with the permission of the individual concerned, or unless the disclosure of confidential personal information is necessary in order to protect a student. In all circumstances, information must be confined to those people directly involved in the professional network of each individual student and on a strict "need to know" basis.
- Professionals should be aware of the effects of outside intervention upon students, upon family life and the impact and implications of what they say and do.
- Explanations by professionals to students, their families and other carers should be plainly stated and jargon-free. Unavoidable technical and professional terminology should be explained in simple terms.
- Early intervention in providing support services is an important principle of practice in inter-agency arrangements for safeguarding the welfare of students.
- If the issue is with an Embassy student we will contact the CLO (Community Liaison Officer) or the appropriate person, at the relevant embassy.

3. When is it a Student Safeguarding Matter?

If any member of staff has significant concerns about a student, they should make them known to a member of the Student Safeguarding Committee. These concerns may include:

Physical abuse: (See Appendix I)

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

Emotional abuse: (See Appendix I)

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a student such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the student's emotional development.

Bullying: (See Anti-bullying Policy)

Bullying cannot be excused as 'banter' or as part of 'growing up'. If an instance of bullying involves significant harm or the threat of significant harm, it is a Child Protection/Student Safeguarding issue.

Neglect: (See Appendix I)

Is the persistent failure to meet a student's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the student's health or development? Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Sexual abuse (See Appendix I)

Involves forcing or enticing a student or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the student is aware of what is happening. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other students.

4. Referral guidelines**Students Requiring Protection**

It should be considered a safeguarding matter if:

- A student is at risk or suffering significant harm.
- A student is suffering the effects of significant harm.
- Serious health problems are evident.

If this is a safeguarding matter, this must be discussed with one of the Student Safeguarding Teachers and will need to be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

It is the '**significant harm**' threshold that justifies statutory intervention into family life, in this case, immediate referral to an appropriate agency. A professional making a student protection referral must therefore provide information that clearly outlines that a student is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

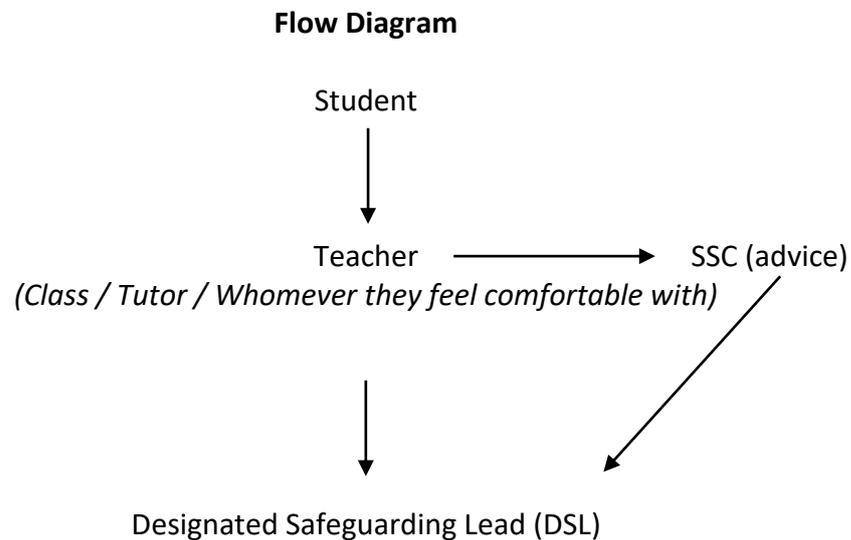
It is not possible to rely on one absolute criterion when judging what constitutes significant harm. Consideration of the severity of ill treatment may include the extent of the harm suffered, the context within which it occurred and its duration.

Significant harm may also arise from a combination of significant events that are both acute and long standing and which may impair the student's physical, psychological and social development.

In order to both understand and establish significant harm, it is necessary to consider the family context, within their wider social and cultural environment. It is also necessary to consider any special needs, e.g. medical condition (including FGM), communication difficulties or disability that may affect the student's development and care within the family. The nature of harm, in terms of ill treatment or failure to provide adequate care, also needs consideration; alongside the impact on the student's health and development and the adequacy of care provided.

5. Making referrals / student raising concern

A written record of concerns should be made using the school's internal recording form (See Appendix III).



6. Confidentiality

You can never guarantee confidentiality to a student as some kinds of information may need to be shared with others.

Professionals can only work together to safeguard students if there is an exchange of relevant information between them.

Wherever possible, consent should be obtained before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances this may not be possible.

If a student reports abuse from another student or students, staff must follow the same procedures in this section.

Listening to and talking with students

If a student chooses to disclose, you MUST:

- Report the incident to the SST as soon as practically possible;
- Be accessible and receptive;
- Listen carefully and uncritically at the student's pace;
- Take what is said seriously;
- Reassure the student that they are right to tell;

- Tell the student that you must pass this information on;
- Make a careful record of what was said verbatim, as far as possible and as soon as possible
- Avoid leading questions
- Use open questions “tell me, explain to me, describe to me” [TED]

You must NEVER:

- Take photographs or examine an injury or ask them to show or indicate to you any injury
- Investigate or probe aiming to prove or disprove possible abuse;
- Make promises to students about confidentiality or keeping ‘secrets’;
- Assume that someone else will take the necessary action;
- Jump to conclusions or react with shock, anger or horror;
- Speculate or accuse anybody;
- Confront another person (adult or student) allegedly involved;
- Offer opinions about what is being said or about the persons allegedly involved;
- Forget to record what you have been told;
- Fail to pass the information on to the correct person;
- Ask a student to sign a written copy of the disclosure.

For students with communication difficulties or who use alternative/augmented communication systems, you may need to take extra care to ensure that signs of abuse and neglect are identified and interpreted correctly, but concerns should be reported in exactly the same manner as for other students.

7. Record keeping

Well maintained records are essential in situations where it is suspected or believed that a student may be at risk from harm.

Records should:

- State who was present, time, date and place and the length of time spent with the student;
- Use the student’s words wherever possible;
- Be factual/state exactly what was said;
- State what action was taken at the time or any inaction (what you witnessed but did not act upon)
- Differentiate clearly between fact, opinion, interpretation, observation and/or allegation;
- Be written in ink and signed by the recorder;

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will review the handling, efficiency of dealing with, and recording of all student protection related matters annually.

The school will store Student Safeguarding Reports in a ‘double locked’ secure place.

Records may be kept until the individual has reached 25 years of age.

8. Protecting yourself against allegations of abuse

You must keep your personal contact with students under review and minimise the risk of any situation arising in which misunderstandings can occur. The following sensible precautions should be taken when working alone with individual or small groups of students:

- Work in a room where there is a glass panel in the door or, preferably, leave the door open
- Make sure that other adults visit the room occasionally.
- Do not give out personal mobile phone numbers or private e-mail/social network addresses
- Do not give students lifts in your car. If a student needs to be taken somewhere, the school will arrange transport.
- Do not arrange to meet students outside of school hours or outside arranged school events
- Do not chat or 'friend' school students on social websites e.g. Facebook or Twitter
- Do not use the same cloakrooms.

Any use of physical restraint against students must be reasonable in the circumstances and must always be documented. If it is necessary to use physical restraint to prevent a student from injury to themselves or others, parents must be informed. Students will not be punished by any form of hitting, slapping, shaking or other degrading treatment.

9. Allegations of abuse against a professional

Students can be the victims of abuse by those who work with them in any setting. All allegations of abuse of students carried out by any staff member or volunteer will be taken seriously.

If an allegation is received by the Principal, s/he needs to consider whether the professional has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a student, or may have harmed a student;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a student;
- Behaved towards a student or students in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with students

Allegations of abuse made against staff, whether historical or contemporary, should be dealt with by the Executive Principal.

10. Recruitment, Supervision and Training for Staff

When recruiting new members of staff the school follows the guidance given in the "[Keeping children safe in education September 2019](#)" guidelines.

The following checks are undertaken:

- Verification of employment history through CVs and standardised application forms
- ICPC checks (International Child Protection Certificate) are undertaken
- Police checks/ certificates of good conduct from every country worked or lived in
- All references are taken up and qualifications are verified with issuing institutions

Newly appointed staff will be required to complete the 'Child Protection Awareness in Education' programme (unless they already have an up-to-date Level 2 Child Protection Certificate as a minimum certification) and to read the School's Student Safeguarding Policy as part of their induction programme. All staff are required to read the policy annually and to have an up-to-date certification in Child Protection, which is recorded on staff records.

Student Safeguarding Teachers and the Executive Team will receive Level 3 training every three years.

The School will extend level 2 training to other members of staff as appropriate. In addition, the School will run basic safety awareness sessions for staff who join the School throughout the year on a termly basis.

11. E-Safety

The growth of different electronic media in everyday life and an ever developing variety of devices including PC's, laptops, tablets, mobile phones and webcams place an additional risk on our students. Internet chat rooms, discussion forums or social networks can all be used as a means of contacting students and young people with a view to grooming them for inappropriate or abusive relationships. The anonymity of the internet allows adults, often pretending to be students, to have conversations with students and in some cases arrange to meet them.

Access to abusive images is not a 'victimless' act as it has already involved the abuse of children. The internet has become a significant tool in the distribution of indecent photographs of children and should be a concern to all those working with children at this school.

Students can engage in or be a target of bullying using a range of methods including text and instant messaging to reach their target. Mobile phones are also used to capture violent assaults of other students for circulation (e.g. happy slapping).

Protection is Prevention

- Software is in place to minimise access and to identify any person accessing inappropriate sites or information using the school network.
- Students are encouraged to discuss openly their use of technology and anything that makes them feel uncomfortable. (If this results in student protection concerns the schools designated student protection officer should be informed immediately).
- Students should not give out their personal details, phone numbers, schools, home address or computer passwords.
- Students must adhere to the school policy on internet use, mobile phones and mobile technology.

12. Resources

Safeguarding is important to all members of staff. The Executive Team ensures that sufficient resources are made available to enable the necessary tasks to be carried out properly including attending meetings, collating and writing assessment reports, and staff training.

Safeguarding awareness will be addressed through the curriculum as appropriate to ensure all students understand what is meant by safeguarding and how they can be safe.

13. Review

An annual review of this policy is undertaken by the Executive Team.

Appendix I: DEFINITIONS

Abuse and neglect:

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a student. Somebody may abuse or neglect a student by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Students may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults or another student or students.

It can occur where parents/guardians fail to meet the basic physical and/or psychological needs likely to result in the serious impairment of the student's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of material substance abuse. Once a student is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food
- Provide adequate Clothing or shelter
- Protect a student from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a student's basic emotional needs.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a student. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a student. Physical injury is where there is reasonable suspicion that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented. Indicators that a student at risk of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) or has already suffered FGM should also be taken heed of.

Signs or symptoms which may indicate physical abuse:

- Bruising, Inconsistent account of how bruising or injuries occurred
- Bald patches
- Burns or scalds
- Fear of going home or parents being contacted
- Fear of medical help
- Inexplicable fear of adults or over-compliance
- Violence or aggression towards others including bullying

Emotional abuse

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

Aspects of psychological and emotional abuse include:

- Hostile rejecting/degrading (eg taunts)
- Terrorising (eg threats or acts that induce fear)
- Actively isolating (eg locking a student in a room for extended periods of time)
- Exploiting/corrupting (eg teaching a student to steal)
- Denying emotional responsiveness (eg denying affection and expressions of love)

Signs or symptoms which may indicate psychological abuse:

- Rocking, banging head, regression
- Self-mutilation, drug or solvent abuse
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Running away, compulsive stealing
- Masturbation
- Eating disorders
- Soiling, smearing faeces, enuresis
- Sudden speech disorders, selective mutism
- Over-reaction to mistakes, continual self-deprecation
- Delayed physical/mental/emotional development

A crisis can be the result of one incident or the progression and climax of years of torment and hiding.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a student to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the student is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts (masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching the outside of clothing). They may include non-contact activities, such as involving the student in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging a student to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other students or young people.

It may involve:

- Sexual grooming or exploitation
- Inappropriate exposure to sexual acts or materials
- Passive use of students and young persons as sexual stimuli for adults;
- The student and young person may be subjected to exhibitionist activities, voyeurism or be coerced into posing for pornographic materials
- Inappropriate sexual contact or acts between older individuals and the student/young person
- Intercourse as a result of rape, assault and coercion

Signs or symptoms which may indicate sexual abuse:

**Please note- most frequently there are no signs of this type of abuse*

- Sexually explicit play or behaviour or age inappropriate behaviour
- Anal or vaginal discharge, soreness or scratching
- Persistent complaints of stomach disorders or pains
- Eating disorders
- Attention-seeking behaviour including sexual harassment or molestation
- Regressive behaviour
- Enuresis, soiling
- Frequent or open masturbation, touching others inappropriately
- Reluctance to undress for PE or swimming
- Bruises, scratches in genital area
- Lack of trust of a familiar or particular adult
- Unusually compliant

The concept of significant harm

Some students are in need because they are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. There are no absolute criteria on which to rely when judging what constitutes significant harm. Consideration of the severity of ill-treatment may include the degree and the extent of physical harm, the duration and frequency of abuse and neglect, the extent of premeditation, and the presence or degree of threat, coercion, sadism, and bizarre or unusual elements. Each of these elements has been associated with more severe effects on the student, and/or

relatively greater difficulty in helping the student overcome the adverse impact of the maltreatment. Sometimes, a single traumatic event may constitute significant harm, e.g. a violent assault, suffocation or poisoning. More often, significant harm is a compilation of significant events, both acute and longstanding, which interrupt, change or damage the student's physical and psychological development. Some students live in family and social circumstances where their health and development may be neglected. For them, it is the corrosiveness of long-term emotional, physical or sexual abuse that causes impairment to the extent of constituting significant harm. In each case, it is necessary to consider any maltreatment alongside the family's strengths and supports.

Procedure advice for Student Safeguarding

- 1. The 'paper trail' is most important, as evidence is needed to take action. For the school, this means that we require evidence in order to take any cases forward to the youth lawyers and courts in Eswatini.**
- 2. Any concerns must not be discussed generally. If you have a concern (remember, your instinct and the 'warning bell'), please speak to a member of the SST team or fill in a green form privately.**
- 3. Respecting the student's rights to confidentiality, if there is an incident involving a student, the only people that need to know are people directly involved with the student in that situation. Other people who may need to know something as a consequence to the situation, only need to know that there has been a situation, they do not need to know the reason why.**
- 4. If filling in a green form, do not discuss (before or after completion) it, or fill this out in an area where other people can witness this. Worst case scenario – the person witnessing you filling in this form could be the perpetrator and you are letting them know your suspicions are aroused.**
- 5. Please remember that it should only be facts on the form, opinions are not evidence and are not admissible in a court. Any notes or further evidence that you have should be attached to the form.**
- 6. Include on the form any action taken at the time and any inaction also (i.e. what you witnessed but did not act upon)**
- 7. When a green form has been completed, please hand this directly to a SST within 24 hours. Any follow up to the form will be carried out by the SST team as necessary and your role in the matter is complete. Further evidence or concerns need to be filled in on another form. However, without the forms, we cannot take action. It is far better to have a stack of forms as evidence than nothing at all.**
- 8. Please remember that any queries or information being sent about a student via email should be marked 'CONFIDENTIAL'. If our practice is seen not to be doing this, we are breaching human rights.**
- 9. The SST team will take responsibility for contacting outside agencies or the Eswatini authorities. You must not contact them directly on student safeguarding matters.**

Appendix III

RECORD OF CONCERN

(Hand this form into the SST within 24 hours of completion)

Student's name: _____ Class: _____

Date and time of concern:

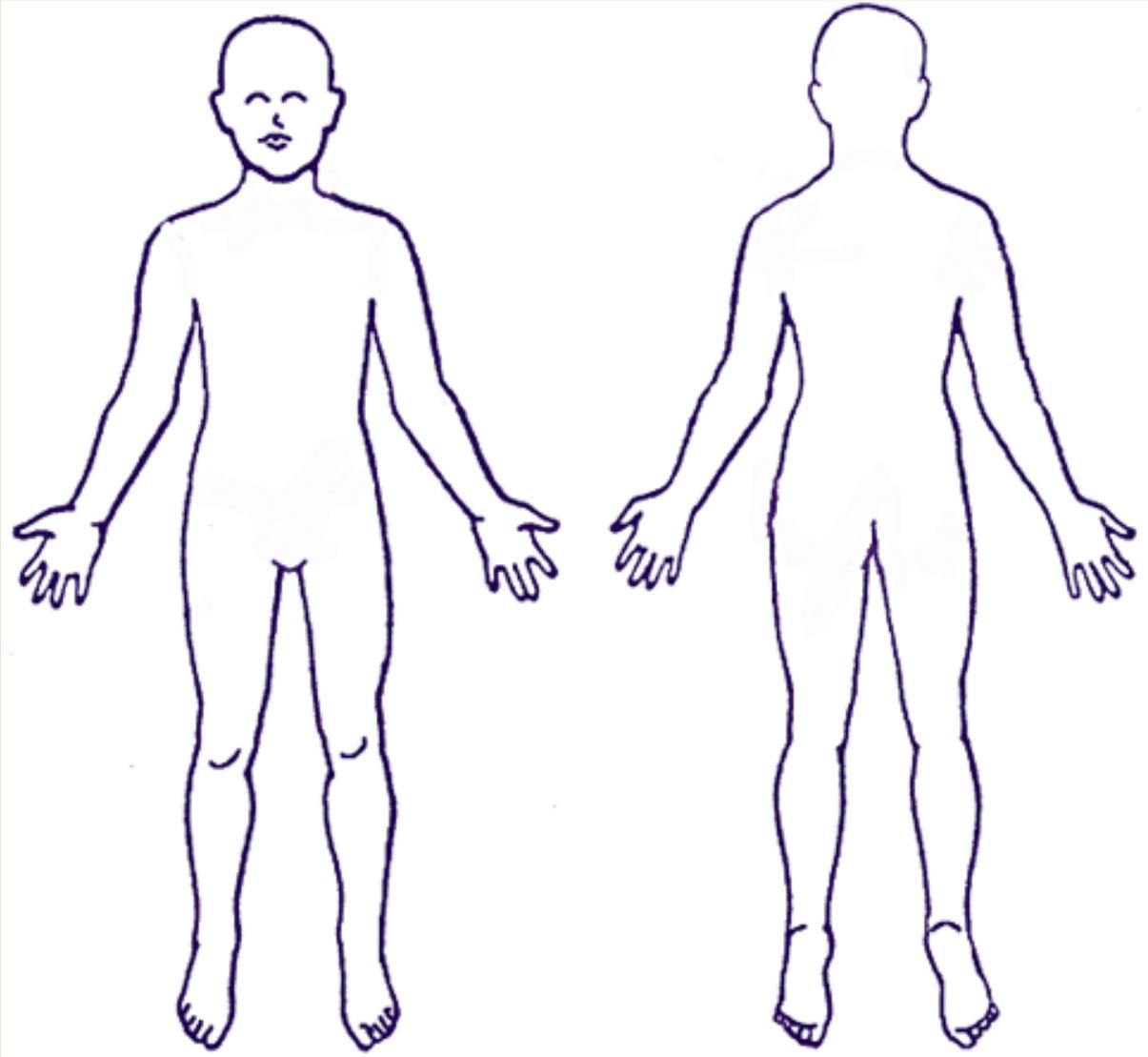
Your account of the concern: (what was said, observed, reported and by whom)

Your response: (what did you do/say following the concern) *Remember to ask open questions do not promise to keep secrets but make it clear that you will only tell the people who need to know.*

Additional information: (context of concern/disclosure/details of any physical signs)

Please indicate any markings on body outline below:

Remember: do not ask to see any physical signs or marks nor ask them where they were hurt or how they were hurt. Only indicate visible marks injuries which were freely indicated to you by the student or stated to you spontaneously.



[Large empty green box for recording content]

Your name:

Your signature:

Your position in school:

Date and time of this recording:

(School use only)

SST Name: Date:

Appendix IV

Student Safeguarding Record

(Completed by DSL)

Record of Concern	date received:	date discussed:
Student's Name: _____ Year group: _____ Class/form teacher: _____ Gender: _____		
Student's DOB:		
Record of initial discussion:	Date of referral:	Reported by:
Who has the information been shared with?		
Initial action points	Agreed timeline	Action by?
Report on action taken: include professional agencies known to be involved with the family; the extent to which both the student	Date	Action by?

<i>and the family are aware of the steps already taken; if parents have been informed; time and date and record of the meeting</i>		
Further action points	Date	Action by?

This confidential document must be kept with the Record of Concern