



# Safeguarding Policy

April 2021

## **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure all staff and partner organisations are fully aware of Fit 4 Life's commitment to protect and safeguard all children they engage and connect with. We acknowledge that working in partnership with other agencies protects children and reduces risk and so we will engage in partnership working throughout the child protection process to safeguard children.

The work of Fit 4 Life is undertaken across a variety of secondary schools and venues providing sessions for students, providing motivational talks, training sessions for groups and one to one. This safeguarding policy aims to clarify how Fit 4 Life provide the best and safest environment when working with individuals, and also in partnership with organisations such as schools, gyms, fitness clubs, local agencies such as CAHMS and churches.

This policy is also mindful of and should be read in conjunction with the following DFE, Ofsted Policies and LSCB procedures:

- Working together to Safeguard children (2018)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2020)
- Information Sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services GDPR guidelines 2018
- What to do if you think a child is being abused (2015)
- 'Prevent Duty' as outlined in the Counter Terrorism and Security Act (2015)
- Southampton LSCB reporting procedures

### **Safeguarding Commitment**

Fit 4 Life recognises that the welfare of the child/young person is paramount and takes seriously its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children and young people with whom it comes into contact. When working in schools, Fit 4 Life's staff (which includes both paid and voluntary staff) must familiarise themselves and adhere to the school's safeguarding policies and procedures as well as our own.

If a disclosure is made on school premises, Fit 4 Life staff will liaise with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead as well as the Fit 4 Life safeguarding co-ordinator. Members of school staff should be present in lessons and collective worship at all times. While they continue to have overall responsibility for safety and discipline, it is the duty of Fit 4 Life staff to support this by their safe working practices and vigilance.

Children have a right to feel secure and all children regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability, sexuality, religion, culture, language and beliefs have a right to be protected from harm. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children.

Parents, carers and children are free to talk about any concerns or worries they may have, and Fit 4 Life will support them to seek the right help. Although confidentiality will be observed wherever possible, Fit 4 Life staff have a key role in prevention of harm and an equal responsibility to act on any suspicion or disclosure that may indicate a child is at risk of harm in accordance with the guidance. Should that be a safeguarding concern then any suspicion or complaints of abuse will be managed and reported as necessary to Children's Services.

## **2. Types & Indicators of Abuse**

Our policy outlines the action to be taken if it is suspected that a child may be abused, harmed or neglected. It is recognised that a child may be abused, harmed or neglected in a family, institution or community setting by someone known to them or by a stranger. This may include someone in a position of trust.

### **How we define abuse**

There are four categories of abuse:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

**Please see the Government publication - Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2018 for further information on the categories of abuse and concerns you may have:**

**[Keeping children safe in education \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/714642/keeping-children-safe-in-education-2018.pdf)**

### **Physical 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 fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

### **Possible signs of Physical Abuse**

Hitting, squeezing, biting or twisting a child's arms or legs can cause injuries like bruises, grazes, cuts or broken bones. Sometimes someone burns a child, perhaps by holding a part of the body against something very hot or by scalding. Poisoning a child, perhaps by giving them alcohol or drugs, is also physical abuse. Older children may seek to conceal such injuries by keeping their arms and legs covered or being reluctant to change for sport. Responsible staff need to be especially concerned about:

- injuries which do not match the explanation given for them
- bruises in places where you would not normally expect to find them, in soft tissue, for example, rather than on the bony prominence
- bruises which have a distinctive shape or pattern, like hand prints, grasp or finger marks or belt marks
- burns or scalds with clear outlines
- bite marks and bruises like love-bites.
- bruising in or around the mouth.

### **Emotional Abuse**

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 or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. 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, 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.

### **Possible signs of Emotional Abuse**

This form of abuse may result in a child becoming withdrawn, nervous, and unhappy or lacking in confidence. It may result in a child being unable to make friends, perhaps because they behave aggressively or inappropriately towards other children. Emotional abuse may happen when a carer behaves in a persistently indifferent or hostile way towards a child, perhaps through bullying, rejecting, frightening, criticising or scapegoating the child. It may happen when a carer's behaviour is inconsistent so that the child never knows what reaction to expect. It may happen when carers are very possessive or over-protective. In severe cases, children may be subjected to cruel treatment and punishment, like being locked in cold, dark surroundings or being made to do endless, inappropriate household tasks. A child living with domestic violence is also suffering emotional harm. Responsible staff should be especially concerned about a child who:

- is continually depressed and withdrawn.
- runs away or who is frightened to go home.
- is reluctant to attend school.
- is persistently blamed for things that go wrong.
- is made to carry out tasks inappropriate to their age.
- is not allowed to do normal childhood activities.
- displays excessive fear of their parents or carers.

- is excessively clingy and tearful.

### **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. 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, sexual images, watching sexual activities, 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. The key elements in any definition of sexual abuse are:

- the betrayal of trust and responsibility.
- abuse of power for the purpose of the sexual gratification of the abuser.

### **Possible signs of sexual abuse**

The abuser may use different ways to persuade the child to cooperate such as bribery, threats or physical force. Sexual abuse can take different forms, from touching to intercourse, and often does not cause any outward signs of physical injury. It can happen to boys as well as girls and to children of any age, from birth to 18 years old. Sexual abuse can have long lasting effects. Some children who have been abused go on to abuse other children. Some find as they grow up that they are unable to have close relationships with other people. Others deliberately injure themselves because they feel so awful about themselves.

Be especially concerned about a child who:

- exhibits sexually explicit behaviour.
- has inappropriate sexual knowledge for his or her age.
- attempts suicide or self-inflicts injuries.
- repeatedly runs away from home.

### **Neglect**

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 affect a foetus during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment).
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers).
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

### **Possible signs of neglect**

Responsible staff should be especially concerned about a child who:

- is constantly hungry, greedy or stealing food.
- has lingering illnesses which have not been treated.
- is continually smelly, scruffy and dirty.
- is often dressed in inadequate or unsuitable clothing for the weather conditions.
- suffers repeated accidents, suggesting a lack of proper supervision.
- is constantly tired.
- does not respond when given attention or, on the other hand, craves attention and affection from any adult.

### **3. Legal background & Positions of Trust**

The Children Act 1989 defines a child as being up to the age of 18 years; it also defines significant harm and the roles and responsibilities of Children's Social Care and the Police.

Where a person aged 18 or over is in a position of trust with a child under 18, it is an offence under the Children Act 1989 for that person to engage in sexual activity with or in the presence of that child, or to cause or incite that child to engage in or watch sexual activity.

Where a person aged 18 or over is in a position of trust with a pupil who has already reached the age of 18, any attempt to engage in sexual activity with that person will be treated as a breach of trust and will be treated as gross misconduct.

Where a person aged 18 or over is in a position of trust established with a person who has only recently left the school, any attempt to engage in sexual activity with that person will be a cause for concern and may be treated as a breach of trust established in that prior relationship and could be regarded as gross misconduct.

#### **This means that staff must not:**

- Use their position to gain access to information about children/pupils for their own advantage
- Use their power to intimidate, threaten, coerce or undermine children/pupils.
- Use their status and standing to form or promote a relationship with a child or pupil of a school, which is of a sexual nature.

There are occasions when adults embark on a course of behaviour known as 'grooming' where the sole purpose is to gain the trust of the child and manipulate that relationship so sexual abuse can take place. This is an offence that Fit 4 Life or the school will take immediate action with the relevant authorities.

Any sexual behaviour by a representative of Fit 4 Life with or towards a child/pupil is both inappropriate and illegal. Children/pupils are protected by the same laws as adults in relation to non-consensual sexual behaviour. They are additionally protected by specific legal provisions regardless of whether the child or young person consents or not. This includes the prohibition on adults in a position of trust.

## **Power and positions of trust**

All adults working with pupils in education settings are in positions of trust in relation to the young people in their care. A relationship between a member of staff and a pupil cannot be a relationship between equals, therefore staff have a responsibility to ensure that an unequal balance of power is not used for personal advantage or gratification.

Although not a permanent member of staff in the schools Fit 4 Life staff visit, when working as a part of Fit 4 Life programmes in schools (or in other locations), staff will be viewed by the young people as someone in a position of power and trust like their teachers and other school staff.

School staff must always maintain appropriate professionalism and wherever possible they must avoid behaviour which might be misinterpreted by others, and report and record any incident with this potential. Fit 4 Life therefore have a similar expectation in the standard of conduct we expect from Fit 4 Life representatives and ensure they are fully aware of this best practice to prevent any misinterpretation of their actions.

All employees, freelancers, volunteers and anyone connected with Fit 4 Life must recognise their responsibilities to act in a professional and responsible manner at all times and to interact appropriately with the children and young people with whom we work.

All staff are required to read and sign a Code of Conduct when starting their employment or association with Fit 4 Life. **Please refer to our Code of Conduct for full details. A copy is at Appendix 3.**

### **Fit 4 Life representatives will endeavour to safeguard children and young people by:**

- Reading and implementing this Policy
- Reading and understanding the government guidance – Keeping Children Safe in Education (latest version September 2020 as detailed above)
- Reading and understanding the government guidance – Working together to Safeguard Children (July 2018)  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/729914/Working\\_Together\\_to\\_Safeguard\\_Children-2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/729914/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children-2018.pdf)
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with other representatives of Fit 4 Life.
- Ensuring that safeguarding information is requested from school staff at the start of the visit (or programme) to ensure that they have awareness of any relevant information relating to the young people that they will be working with.
- Sharing information about any safeguarding concerns with designated school staff.
- Disclosing information to Fit 4 Life which might affect their work with children in particular with reference to any disqualification from working with children.
- Following carefully the procedures for recruitment and selection of employees, freelancers and volunteers.

- Comply with the duty to disclose / whistle blow if they witness anything which raises concern.

#### **4. What to do if you have a concern about a child or young person**

All Fit 4 Life staff or representatives must know how and when and who to report a concern to.

##### **When working in a school or gym/ club setting:**

Each school or gym/ club will have a 'Designated Safeguarding Lead'. This person will be responsible for matters relating to safeguarding in the school or club.

If anyone representing Fit 4 Life has concerns about a young person or suspects that a young person is being abused, he/she should ask to speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and report their concerns. If this is not possible, perhaps out of hours sessions etc, then Fit 4 Life staff or representative must tell a member of the gym/club team or a relevant school staff member of staff before they leave the premises. If there is a high concern for the young person then Fit 4 Life staff can independently call Children's Services or the police in an emergency. No child should be left in a risky position without support.

Regard should be given to the confidential nature of such circumstances and concerns must not be discussed with anyone else apart from the school or club staff member to whom the referral is made.

##### **What to do if a young person makes a disclosure to Fit 4 Life either at a school or gym/club:**

It is highly unlikely that a young person in a school setting or gym session will make a disclosure to a representative of Fit 4 Life. However, should this situation occur then:

- Don't ignore them or tell them to tell someone else in the first instance – they may have been building up to telling someone for some time and chose you.
- If possible, advise them to speak to a teacher or other member of school staff in the first instance. If you ever advise a young person to do this, tell the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the school or the relevant teacher as soon as possible so that this can be followed up if necessary.
- If the young person is insistent on talking to you, at the outset you must explain to them that you cannot promise to keep what they may tell you secret. You can promise that only those who need to know will be told and that they will be the people who can help to protect the young person. Do not make any other promises – you may not be able to keep them, and trust will have been destroyed.
- Stay calm and reassuring. Listen carefully, as you will need to record in detail what has been shared but do not press for details. It is better that if further investigation is necessary that the young person has not had to repeat the details. Do not ask leading questions.
- The situation may cause you to react emotionally try not to show this to the young person.



- Tell the young person that he/she was right to tell that he/she is not to blame for what has happened. Let him/her know that you understand how difficult it is for them to talk about their experiences. Thank them for telling you.
- Many victims of child abuse say that having the first person they disclosed to being supportive was the first step in recovering from their experience. Let them know that you are going to do everything you can to help them and explain that you must now share the information with Designated Safeguarding Lead in the school or sports club, who in turn will meet with them.
- As soon as possible afterwards and on the same day, record, in writing, your conversation with the young person. Try to remember exact words and record your statements with the young person. Do not use your own words in case you have misconstrued what the young person was trying to say. If you record opinions, ensure that these cannot be confused with facts.
- Pass all this information to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the school or gym/club.

**Please refer to the Flow Diagram at Appendix 4 – reporting a concern.**

**When working in a one to one session with a young person within Fit 4 Life:**

If a young person discloses, they are being abused or you suspect they may be at risk of abuse or harm please contact Fit 4 Life and record the concern or disclosure with them. Complete the incident report form and this will be followed up and advice sought or reported to Children’s Services/MASH in Southampton. **Please refer to Appendix 1 for contact numbers.**

**What to do if you have a concern about the behaviour of a colleague, member of school staff, volunteer or other adult in your context of your work for Fit 4 Life :**

- Record in writing any concerns then contact the Fit 4 Life safeguarding officer as soon as possible (within 24 hours) and report these.

**What to do if you have an allegation of abuse made against you:**

If an allegation of abuse is made against you, it will be reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) in the Local Authority where the concern was made about you. Allegations management procedures will be followed.

**5. Safe Recruitment**

- All members and representatives of Fit 4 Life will be vetted before taking up positions where they engage with children. This will include checking their personal details, qualifications, references, eligibility to work in the UK and an enhanced DBS check.
- No member of staff will be appointed until all relevant checks have been completed.

**Please refer to our Safer Recruitment Policy for greater detail.**

## **6. Confidentiality and Information Sharing (GDPR 2018 Data Protection Act 2018)**

In the event that a child makes a disclosure of neglect or abuse to Fit 4 Life, we cannot guarantee them confidentiality, but must explain why they have to pass the information on, to whom and what will happen as a result.

This information will be kept safely and securely by the school or gym/club concerned, and Fit 4 Life will keep sensitive information encrypted and password protected as needed.

Where Fit 4 Life staff have access to confidential information about children or their parents or carers, staff must not reveal such information except to those colleagues who have a professional role in relation to the child.

Staff are likely at some point to witness actions which need to be confidential. For example, where a child is bullied by another child (or by a member of staff), this needs to be reported and dealt with in accordance with the appropriate school/club procedure. It must not be discussed outside of work, including with the child's parent or carer, nor with other colleagues except with a senior member of Fit 4 Life, school or club staff with the appropriate role and authority to deal with the matter.

However, staff have an obligation to share with their manager or the school/club's Designated Safeguarding Lead any information which gives rise to concern about the safety or welfare of a child. Staff must never promise a child that they will not act on information that they are told by the child.

Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children. **Please refer to appendix 2 for The Seven Golden Rules of Information Sharing**

### **Taking photos or images**

No images of children will be taken or stored on privately owned equipment by Fit 4 Life members. If photos are taken this will be with the explicit consent and clearance by the school. Please refer to further information regarding guidance about taking photos.

<https://ico.org.uk/for-the-public/schools/photos>

**Appendix 1: Southampton Safeguarding contacts and numbers:**

Southampton Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO):

Tel: 023 8091 5535 Mobile: 07789 616092

Email: lado@southampton.gov.uk

Southampton Safeguarding Children Partnership:

Tel: 023 8083 2995

Email: Safeguarding.PartnershipTeams@southampton.gov.uk

MASH (Southampton's Multi Safeguarding Hub)

023 80 832300

023 80833336

Out of hours team:

023 8023 3344

## Appendix 2: Seven Golden Rules for Information Sharing

In July 2018, the government published revised practice guidance "*Information sharing Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers*". Below are the 7 golden rules of information sharing that this guidance recommends in line with the new data protection laws.

1. Remember that the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), Data Protection Act 2018 and human rights law are not barriers to justified information sharing, but provide a framework to ensure that personal information about living individuals is shared appropriately.
2. Be open and honest with the individual (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
3. Seek advice from other practitioners if you are in any doubt about sharing the information concerned, without disclosing the identity of the individual where possible.
4. Where possible, share information with consent, and where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to having their information shared. Under the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 you may share information without consent if, in your judgement, there is a lawful basis to do so, such as where safety may be at risk. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case. When you are sharing or requesting personal information from someone, be clear of the basis upon which you are doing so. Where you do not have consent, be mindful that an individual might not expect information to be shared.
5. Consider safety and well-being: Base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the individual and others who may be affected by their actions.
6. Necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure: Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those individuals who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely (see principles).
7. Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

## **Appendix 3: Code of Conduct – Summary of expectations**

### **General expectations of conduct for Fit 4 Life staff and representatives**

- Relationships between staff should be characterised by fairness, openness and respect. This means valuing all contributions, acknowledging difference and working together to build an environment where continuous improvement is the foundation.
- Politeness and respect towards one another are essential requirements and where differences occur, they should be dealt with fairly and calmly.
- All staff are expected to behave professionally, thoughtfully and responsibly.
- Staff should be punctual at all times and be well prepared to carry out the tasks required of them to the best of their ability. If an absence relating to ill health occurs, this should be reported to the FIT 4 LIFE safeguarding lead as soon as it is known by the member of staff, the consultant or a(n)other that they cannot keep a school meeting or training commitment. Any concerns relating to absences will be managed as required, by Fit 4 Life.
- Staff are expected to dress appropriately for the activities they are involved in. No aspect of a member of staff's dress or appearance should be politically motivated, sexually provocative, discriminatory, insensitive or offensive.
- Confidentiality: Staff may be privy to personal information relating to children and their families during their work in schools, gym/clubs or on a one-to-one family basis. This information should not be shared other than with relevant members of staff in the school, club and/or within Fit 4 Life, only on a need-to-know basis.

### **Guidance on practical issues of conduct with children**

#### **Please ensure you do not:**

- Give your personal contact details to children/pupils at a school/club
- Make contact with children/pupils for personal reasons.
- Allow pupils to call you by a nickname (please refer to the school on use of first names if appropriate)
- Take any photos of children whilst in a school or alternative venue. You must never have images of children/pupils stored on personal cameras or home computers.
- Make images of children/pupils available on the internet, other than through the approved school network/website, or Fit 4 Life website, without permission from parents, the school's Senior Leadership Team, Club manager or Fit 4 Life Project Director.
- Have any secret social contact with children/pupils
- Make inappropriate remarks to a child/pupil (including e-mail, text message, phone or letter etc.)
- Discuss own personal relationships with or in the presence of pupils
- Discuss a child's/pupil's personal relationships
- Make (or encourage others to make) unprofessional personal comments in any form of communication (e-mail, conversations or social networking sites)

- Find yourself unexpectedly alone with a child/pupil - immediately seek out another member of staff and explain situation.

### **Physical contact**

It is not expected Fit 4 Life staff will need to have any level of physical contact with any child/pupil. However, if physical contact is made with a child/pupil, this should be in response to their needs at the time, of limited duration and appropriate. Staff should use their professional judgement at all times about the appropriateness of any physical contact. When starting at a school or gym/club please check with the organisation what policies they may have regarding physical touch.

### **In general staff must:**

- Be aware that even well-intentioned physical contact may be misconstrued by the child/pupil, an observer or by anyone to whom this action is described
- Consider alternatives where it is anticipated that a child/pupil might misinterpret any such contact, perhaps involving another member of staff in the demonstration
- Always explain to a pupil the reason why contact is necessary and what form that contact will take unless their safety is at immediate risk
- Never touch a pupil in a way which may be considered indecent
- Always be prepared to explain actions and accept that all physical contact will be open to scrutiny.

### **Child/pupil in distress**

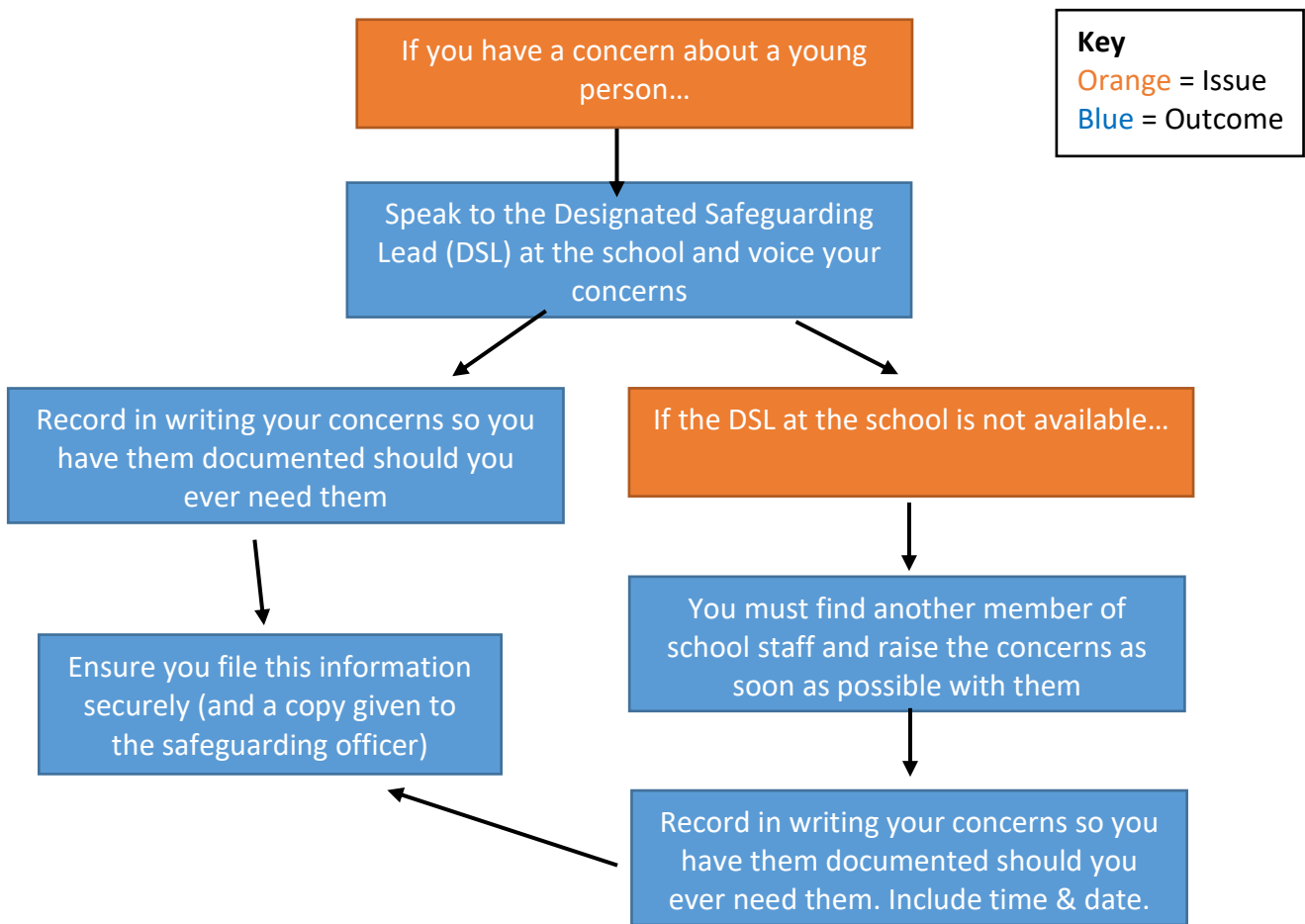
There may be occasions when a distressed pupil needs comfort and reassurance. This may include age appropriate physical contact. Staff should remain self-aware at all times in order that their contact is not threatening, intrusive or subject to misinterpretation. Fit 4 Life sets the expectation with all schools and clubs that a member of staff should be present at all times when a Fit 4 Life staff member is working with staff and pupils. Therefore, should a child become distressed Fit 4 Life staff would expect that member of staff to deal with any pupil/s in distress.

Should a young person become distressed in a one-to-one session with Fit 4 Life it may be appropriate to ask the young person if they would like to call their parent/carer into the session to comfort them, or give the young person time to work through the feelings of distress in the session and compose themselves before returning to their parent.

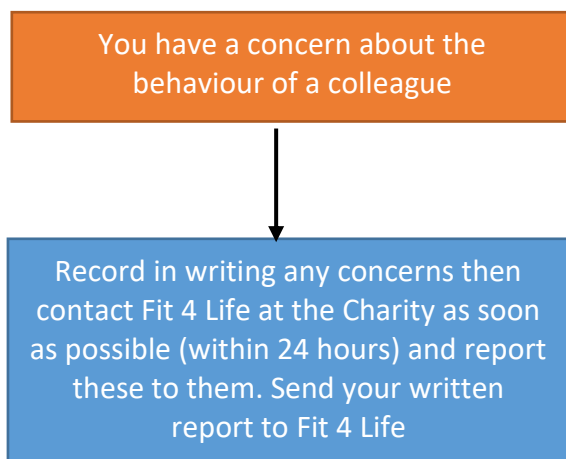
**Appendix 4**

**Recording or Reporting a Disclosure In Schools or Other Groups**

**Definition of Safeguarding:** Protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children’s health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes. Children includes everyone under the age of 18. (Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2020). **Before facilitating, staff should read the government guidance document detailed above.**



**(II) You have a concern about the behaviour of a colleague, member of school staff, volunteer or other adult in your context of your work for XX charity**



**(III) A young person makes a disclosure to you**

