

Safeguarding students

It can help to keep in mind the three steps outlined below – but as mentioned previously, follow your school's child protection procedures.

RECEIVE

- listen, do not look shocked or disbelieving;
- do not be judgemental;
- take what they are saying seriously and believe them;
- do not make the child or young person feel bad, for example, by saying things like "You should have told me earlier".

REASSURE

- stay calm, tell them that they have done the right thing in telling you;
- acknowledge how hard it must have been to tell you;
- tell them that they are not to blame;
- empathise – but don't tell them how they should be feeling;
- don't promise confidentiality – explain that only those that need to know will be told (i.e. the designated staff member for child protection);
- be honest about what you can and cannot do.

RESPOND

- do not interrogate – let them tell you as far as possible;
- do not ask probing questions or suggest answers – it's not your job to find out "who, where, when?", etc;
- refer your concern on to your school's designated senior manager for child protection – in line with your child protection procedures;

- record the date, time and any information given to you; always use the words said to you; never interpret what was said or put it in your own words. (This information could be used as evidence);
- record what you did next and with whom you shared the information – ensure that all this is in line with your school's child protection procedures;
- do not criticise or judge the abuser – the child or young person may have feelings for him or her; remember abuse often happens by someone known and trusted by the child or young person;
- try to follow things through yourself so they do not need to repeat their story to other staff – again, only if this is in line with your child protection procedures;
- explain what will happen next – for example, the designated officer will be informed, and they may want to speak to the child/young person further. If it is safe, the non-abusing parent or carer might also be informed (but always take great care where there is domestic abuse) – the Police and children's social care services might also be informed;
- get support for yourself. It can be distressing dealing with this type of information.

Adapted by Women's Aid for their Expect Respect Educational Toolkit from 'Standing By', Cheshire County Council

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Whatever you do, make sure it is in line with your school's child protection policies and procedures. They may differ from what is written above. If in doubt, speak to your designated senior manager for Child Protection, local children's social care services, or the NSPCC.

Early intervention of teenage relationship abuse

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) may be appropriate to identify the additional needs of a young person at an early stage. Early intervention will send clear messages that abusive relationships are unacceptable, promote a safe school environment and prevent escalation of abuse. School staff have a responsibility to recognise conduct that is serious and/or criminal and to refer to appropriate services as outlined under the local safeguarding children procedures and criminal law.

Safeguard students

Schools have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002. School staff who identify children and young people experiencing or witnessing relationship abuse need to refer them on to other statutory services to ensure they are safe and properly protected from harm.

There will need to be a co-ordinated response from children's social care services, police, youth offending teams and health services. Criminal justice agencies and children's services should work together to ensure the best outcomes for young people.

Young people suspected of being in an abusive relationship

Young people who are suspected of being in an abusive relationship need to be referred to a statutory agency in accordance with local child protection procedures. All school staff should refer to the designated child protection lead senior manager (see flow-charts on pp.13-17). For more information about this process see the Government's inter-agency guidance, *Working together to safeguard children (2010)*, which sets out the roles and responsibilities of agencies and professionals where there are concerns about the safety and welfare of a child or children. It is available at www.publications.education.gov.uk

Young people identified as being abusive to others

Young people identified as being abusive to others may also have underlying unmet needs which require addressing by school or staff in other settings. These needs should be considered separately from those of the person being abused. Concerns about the young person who is being abusive to others may need to be discussed with the designated child protection senior manager. Local agencies should follow the appropriate child protection procedures, including a plan of action to address the identified needs and where necessary convene a child protection conference in respect of the young person who is being abusive. The young person will also need to be held responsible for their abusive actions and, where appropriate, criminal justice agencies will need to be involved. Child welfare and criminal justice agencies should work together.

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Criminal offence

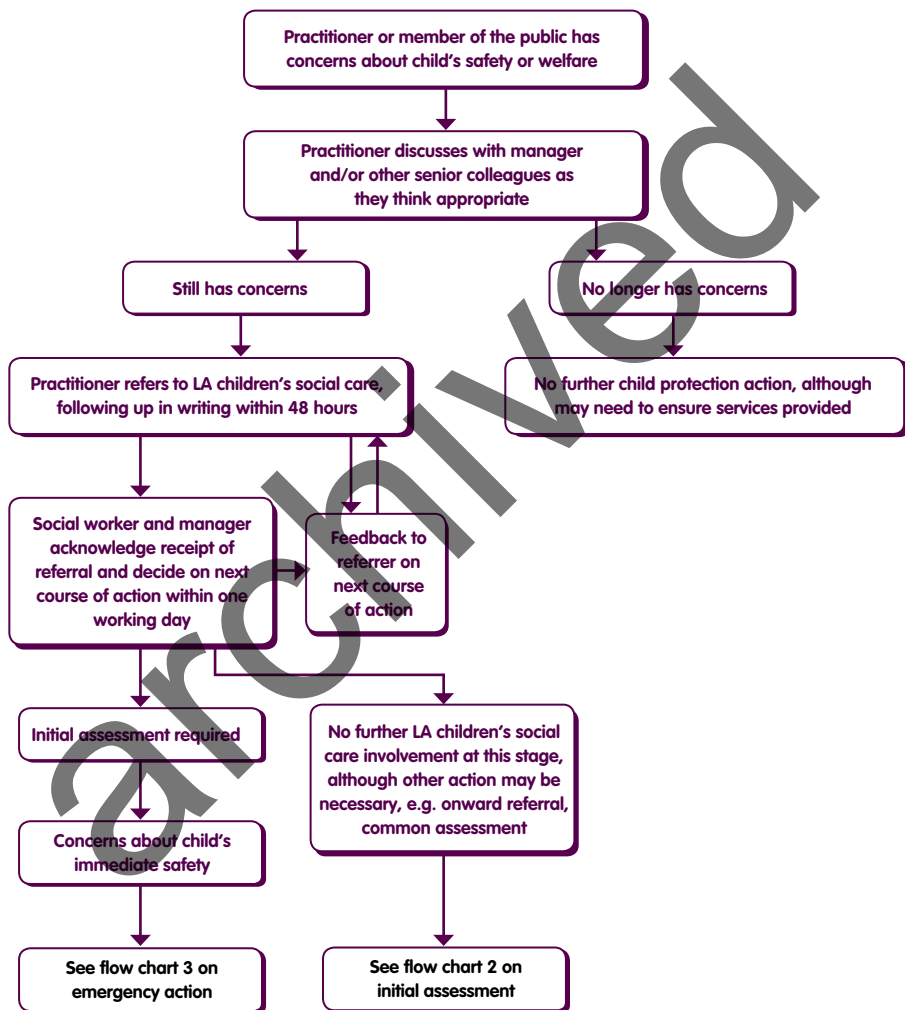
Young people may experience forms of abuse that are criminal and in these cases the Police need to be involved.

School sanctions

For abusive conduct which is not deemed to be a child protection issue or a criminal matter, for example, use of language or 'name calling', interventions should include sanctions. The focus should be on positive action to promote respectful relationships.

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Flow chart 1 – Referral



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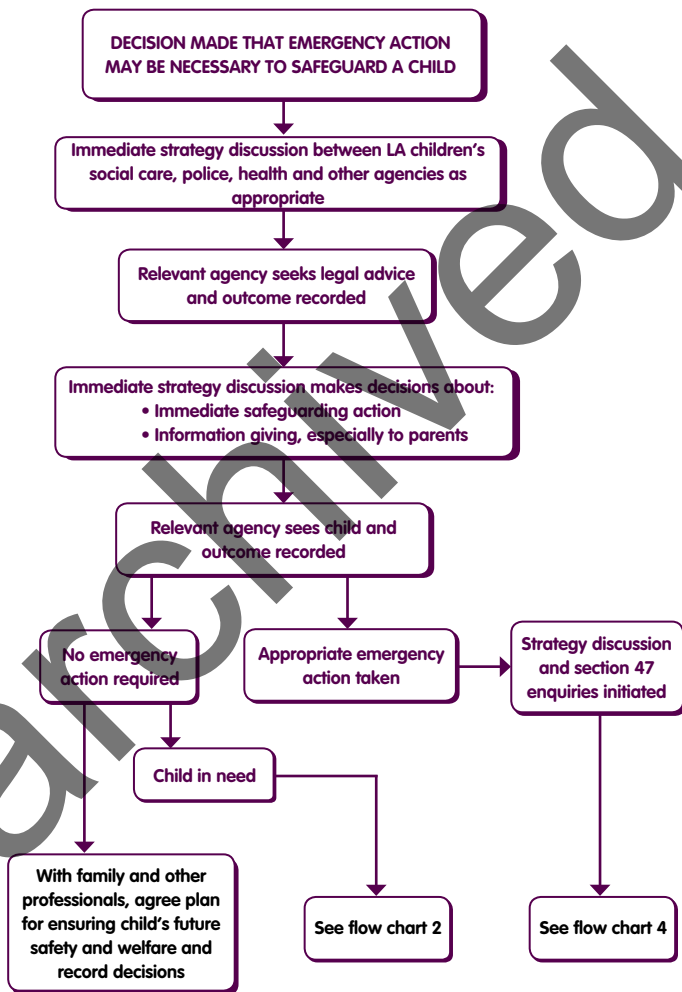
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Flow chart 2 – What happens following initial assessment?



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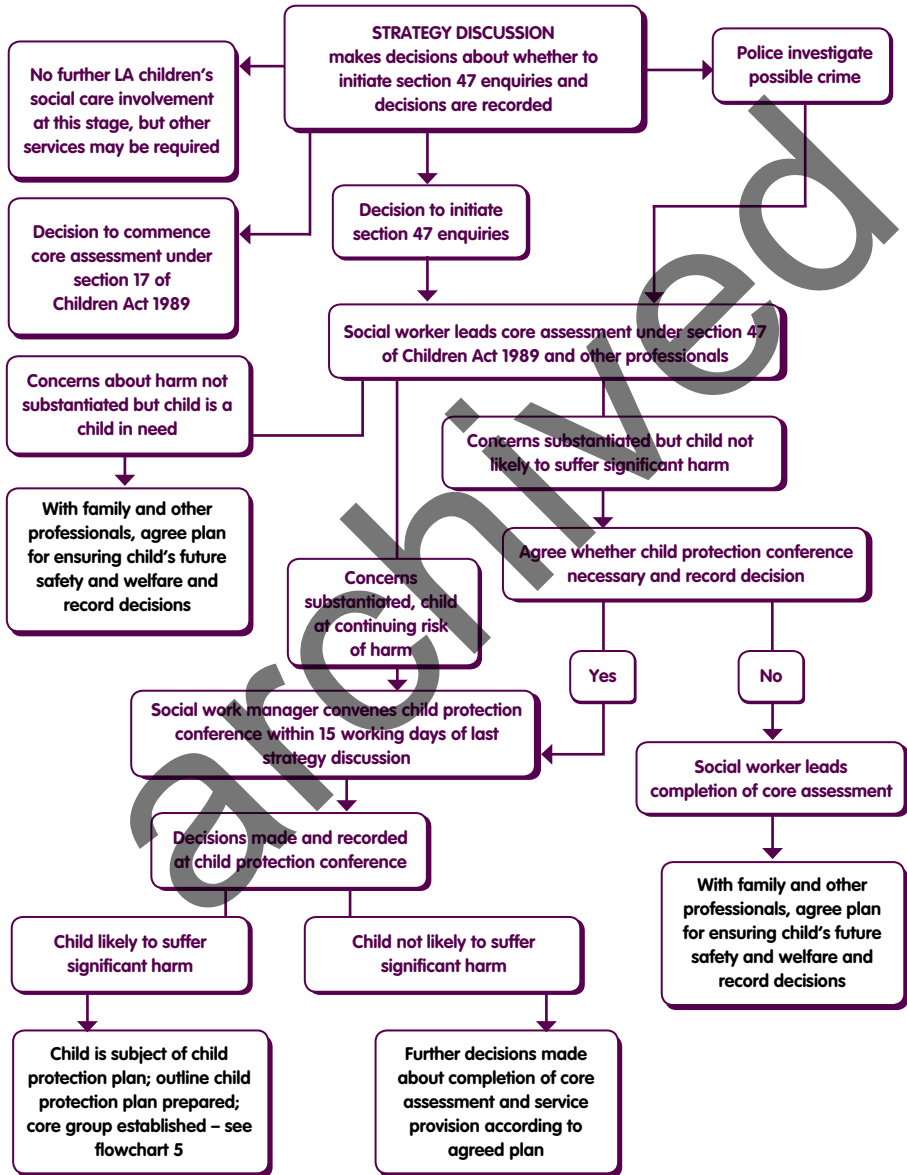
Flow chart 3 – Urgent action to safeguard children



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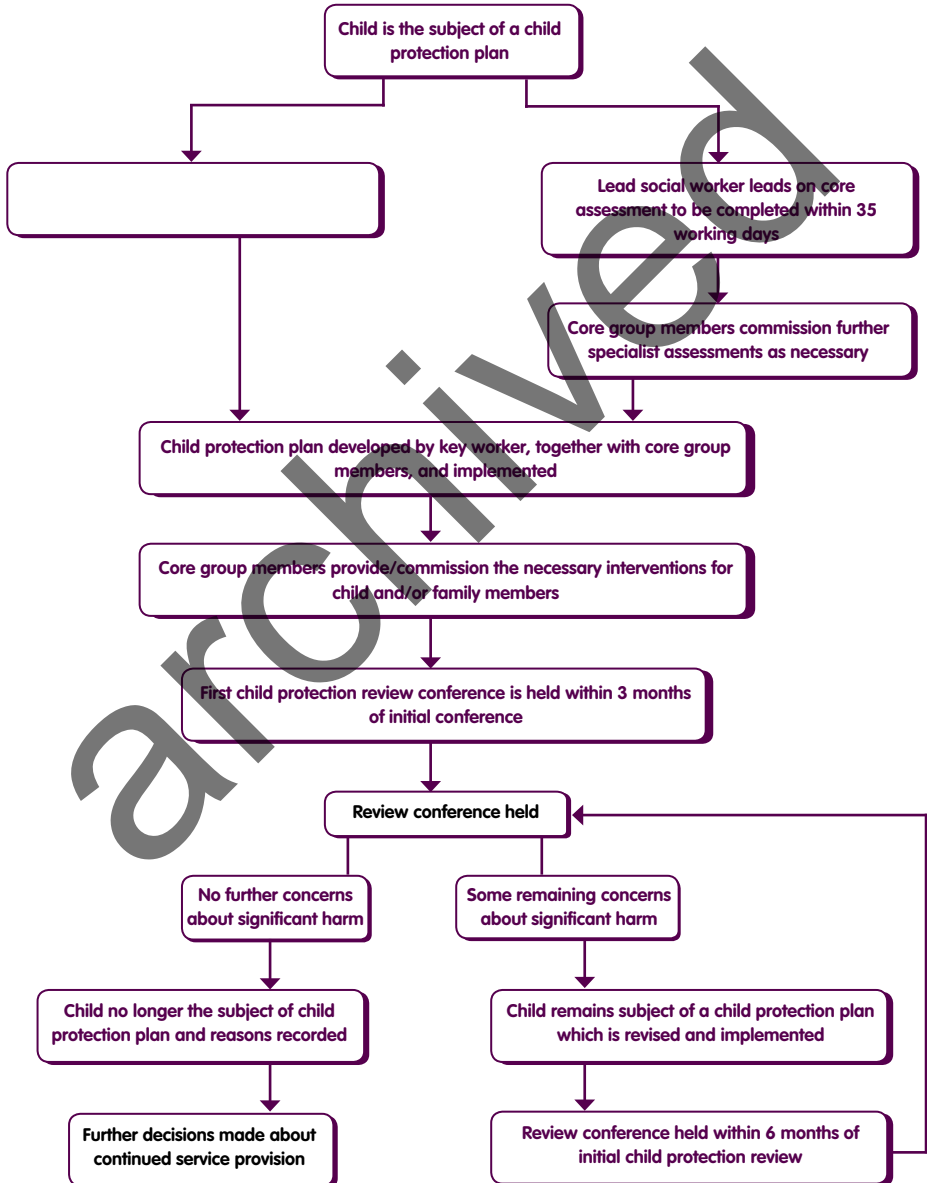
Flow chart 4 – What happens after the strategy discussion?



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Flow chart 5 – What happens after the child protection conference, including the review process?



Education information and resources

HM Government (2010) *Working Together to Safeguard Children*. **HM Government (2006)** *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused*

<http://publications.education.gov.uk>

Women's Aid and Home Office (2010) **Expect Respect: A Toolkit for Addressing Teenage Relationship Abuse in Key Stages 3, 4 and 5**

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications

Against Violence and Abuse (AVA)

This organisation works to improve the safety of women, children and young people experiencing relationship abuse. They run training courses for school staff and all professionals working on these issues.

www.avaproject.org.uk

Challenging Violence, Changing Lives, Womankind Worldwide

24 secondary school lesson plans aims to raise awareness and transform attitudes to stop violence against women.

The lesson plans consider gender equality and sexual bullying. Free of charge.

www.womankind.org.uk

www.respect4us.org.uk

Expect Respect Educational Toolkit, Women's Aid

The Expect Respect Educational Toolkit consists of one easy to use 'Core' lesson for each year group from reception to year 13. Free of charge.

www.womensaid.org.uk

www.thehideout.org.uk

Westminster Domestic Violence Prevention Pack for Schools, Westminster Domestic Violence Forum

A pack and supporting video for schools on issues around domestic violence

www.westminsterdomesticviolenceforum.org.uk

Spiralling, National Youth Theatre and Safer Bristol

DVD and lesson plans about how relationships can become increasingly controlling and abusive.

www.bristol.gov.uk

Respect, Zero tolerance Charitable trust

For primary and secondary schools, this challenges the notion that abuse is inevitably part of our lives and offers positive choices to develop healthy relationships.

www.zerotolerance.org.uk

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Education information and resources

Women's Rights, Amnesty International UK

Information, facts and activities themed around six topics including domestic violence, rape and campaigns to stop gender violence. Free of charge.

www.amnesty.org.uk/uploads/documents/doc_19116.pdf

Bwise2 Sexual Exploitation, Barnardo's

This preventative education programme is based on the real-life experiences of children and young people who have been supported by a specialist Barnardo's service.

www.barnardos.org.uk/books_and_tools_tools_for_professionals.htm#bwise2

Respect Not Fear

Nottingham domestic violence forum website for young people about relationships and domestic violence.

www.respectnotfear.co.uk

National Union of Teachers

The NUT has produced national guidelines on domestic abuse for teachers called 'Silence is not always golden'.

www.teachers.org.uk/node/652

Support services for young people

Women's Aid

Women's Aid is a national charity working to end domestic violence against women and children. They support a network of over 500 domestic and sexual violence services across the UK.

www.womensaid.org.uk
www.thehideout.org.uk (a dedicated website for young people experiencing domestic violence)

Refuge

Refuge is a charity that offers help and advice to women and young girls in abusive relationships.

www.refuge.org.uk

The National Domestic Violence Helpline

The Freephone 24 Hour National Domestic Violence Helpline, run in partnership between Women's Aid and Refuge, is a national service for women experiencing domestic violence, and for their family, friends, colleagues and others calling on their behalf.

T: 0808 2000 247
www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk

Rape Crisis

Offers a range of specialist services for women and girls who have been raped or experienced another form of sexual violence – whether as adults, teenagers or children.

T: 0808 802 9999
www.rapecrisis.org.uk

Respect

A charity that runs support services and programmes for those who inflict domestic violence, and an advice line for men who are victims of domestic violence.

T: 0845 122 8609
www.respectphoneline.org.uk

Men's Advice Line

Also run by Respect, this is a helpline for male victims of domestic violence.

T: 0808 801 0327
www.mensadvice.org.uk

Broken Rainbow

A national charity that provides support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans-people experiencing relationship abuse, including a national helpline.

T: 0300 999 LGBT (5428)
www.broken-rainbow.org.uk

Victim Support

A national charity that can help young people if they have been a victim of abuse or violence.

T: 0845 30 30 900
www.victimsupport.org

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With thanks to:

Jo Sharpen

Hannah Wharf

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