
Independent Chair: John Goldup

**FAO: Head Teachers/
Designated Safeguarding Leads**

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Dear Colleague

Safeguarding Referrals

There have been a small number of incidents recently in which there have been worrying delays in schools referring disclosures of potential abuse, both physical and sexual, to children's social care for investigation. On occasions schools have undertaken some initial investigation themselves, sharing disclosures with parents when this has been inappropriate and could have placed children at further risk.

While of course these incidents have only arisen in a small number of schools, I am writing to all schools in the Borough to make sure that everybody is clear about the importance of urgency in making safeguarding referrals. The 'thresholds document' published by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), '[Are you worried about a child? How to access early help and thresholds for referral to social care](#)', does emphasise that as part of making a referral, schools and others should discuss their concerns with the child or young person's parents or carers and seek their consent to share information. However, the crucial rider to this is that you should not do so if you have reasonable cause to believe that this would place the child at risk of significant harm. If a child is at risk of significant harm, information can be shared even if the parent refuses consent. When a disclosure relates to alleged abuse within the family, including the extended family, for example, it is really important not to share the disclosure with family members before making a referral. In any situation where you have reason for concern about potential abuse, you should make a referral without delay to children's social care via a Multi-Agency Referral Form ([Multi-Agency Referral Form \(MARF\)](#)) to Redbridge CPAT (Child Protection and Assessment Team) on 0208 708 3885 – email CPAT.referrals@redbridge.gov.uk.

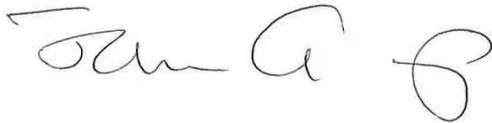
I appreciate that whether or not to seek parental/carer consent to sharing information will not always be an easy decision to make. If you are unsure, please do contact CPAT for advice and support on 020 8708 3885 (office hours) or 020 8708 5897 out of hours (Emergency Duty Team). I would also stress that if it is appropriate to seek consent, that should not be confused with investigating or asking questions about the disclosure. The responsibility for investigating

potential abuse rests firmly with the Council's Child Protection and Assessment Team. Schools and other professionals will of course often have information and knowledge which it will be really important to contribute to that investigation, and will very often be vital partners in any plan to ensure the child or young person is effectively protected from abuse.

The [LSCB Training Programme 2018 – 2019](#) includes a half day multi-agency course on '[Understanding Thresholds](#)', which explores many of these issues. You may like to note that the course is next running on 20 June 2018. The flyer, which contains full information, is available on the [LSCB website](#) and nominations can be made using the on-line [Training Nomination Form](#).

I know that every school in Redbridge is deeply committed to the effective safeguarding of children and young people, and am particularly pleased that schools are actively and well represented on the LSCB. If you would like more information about the work of the LSCB, do get in touch with Lesley Perry, Board Business Manager, on 020 8708 5282 or at Lesley.Perry@redbridge.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Goldup', written in a cursive style.

John Goldup
Independent Chair Redbridge LSCB