

COVID-19: Integration of Child Protection in Return to School

Template for Child Protection Referral Pathway between Schools and Child Protection Authorities and Other Services

This guidance document was developed by UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office, with UNICEF NYHQ support and with inputs from the Global Education Cluster and the Child Protection Area of Responsibility.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on children, adolescents and their families. Sadly, during containment measures, children's mental health may have been impacted and they may have been exposed to violence, abuse and exploitation. Further, children in households affected by the financial impact of containment measures may be at risk of exploitation and harmful traditional practices. These impacts of COVID-19 might affect both school attendance and school attainment in the short- and long-term.

As schools reopen, teachers and other school personnel can play a key role in protecting and supporting their students. Teachers and other trusted school personnel may be the first contact for children outside of their family after months of home confinement, allowing children the opportunity to report concerns related to abuse and violence. This may be the first time that students who are suffering abuse and harm can be identified.

This document is a template referral pathway between education institutions and child protection authorities and other key services. It provides a broad, step by step process for schools to follow when: 1) there is suspicion that a student (child or adolescent) has experienced child abuse (violence, exploitation or neglect); or 2) there is a disclosure that a student has suffered child abuse, wherever that abuse has taken place.

This referral pathway is intended to complement [COVID-19: Integration of Child Protection in Return to School - Tips for Teachers and School Management](#) and [Messages for Children and Adolescents Return to School](#), as well as school child protection policies and training for teachers and school personnel on child protection.¹

The tool can be used at national level to develop a standard referral pathway for implementation by schools and/or by schools themselves. Effective use of this tool requires **adaptation** to each country, local and school context, to the national child protection system and education system and to the existing legal and policy framework, as well as the capacity of schools and the wider systems and available services. Generic terminology and titles/names have been used in this template – these should be replaced with the relevant terms for the context.

¹ A mapping by UNICEF in 2012 (*Child Protection in Educational Settings: Findings from Six Countries in East Asia and the Pacific Strengthening Child Protection Systems Series: No 2*) revealed that 'many teachers and other education staff are not sure what child protection entails, what constitutes child maltreatment, how to recognize when a child is at risk or has been maltreated, how to prevent its occurrence, and how to respond to and refer such cases. They are also unclear as to their own roles and responsibilities in such instances'.

Pre-requirements for use of this tool

To use or adapt the tool it is important to:

- ✓ Be knowledgeable of national and local laws, regulations and policies concerning protection and safeguarding of children in school, mandatory reporting, obligations of school personnel and any other relevant considerations;
- ✓ Understand existing referral procedures in place, if any. This is especially important for referral procedures to child protection authorities;
- ✓ Be familiar with the school structure (i.e., school staff, reporting and supervision lines, and roles and responsibilities at each level); and
- ✓ Be aware of services available in the school (such as counseling and other forms of mental health and psychosocial support for children, caregivers and staff).

The referral pathway should be **one part of the school's comprehensive child protection policy and procedures**. (See [Annex 2: Resources](#) for examples of school safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures).

When establishing the referral pathway:

- ✓ Appoint and ensure training for the Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point(s). The focal point(s) should be fully aware of the school's policy and procedures, trained on how to handle and refer cases and how to provide psychological first aid.
- ✓ Map relevant available local services, such as child protection/social welfare, health, police and mental health services.
- ✓ Contact relevant referral services and establish a focal point(s) within these services. Agree on the referral pathway with these services. Develop a form for referrals (see [Annex 1a Forms: Sample referral form to external services](#), which can be adapted to the local context). Develop a form for recording informed consent or assent. (see [Annex 1b Forms: Sample consent form for referral to external services](#), which can be adapted to the local context).
- ✓ Where possible, work closely with the relevant child protection authority to establish the referral pathway and map available local services.
- ✓ Raise awareness about the Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point(s) and referral pathway within the school, amongst staff, students and parents/caregivers.
- ✓ The school management and the school governing body should be engaged and must be clear on their responsibilities for the implementation of the referral pathway.

Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point(s) vary from country to country. In some countries, full-time Child Protection/Safeguarding personnel are appointed. In others, existing staff may be assigned and trained to take on this role. In Cambodia, the 'Child Protection in School Policy' foresees the creation of child protection focal groups at school level, responsible for accepting complaints and addressing concerns and problems.

Regardless of the approach, it is good practice to have in place one primary and one secondary focal point that are responsible for receiving and handling disclosures or suspicions of child abuse and well-being concerns, in case of absence of the primary focal point, to act in case the primary focal point is implicated in a disclosure or suspicion of abuse and to share responsibilities for awareness raising and training.

SECTION 1: STEPS IN THE REFERRAL PATHWAY

**For the purpose of the following narrative description, the term 'abuse' includes physical, sexual and emotional violence and abuse, exploitation and neglect.*

Child abuse can take place in a variety of different settings, such as in the home and family, in alternative care, in the community and online. It can also take place in and around schools, on the way to and from school, including on school transport, and during extra-curricular activities, such as sports, clubs and overnight camps.

Abuse can be perpetrated by adults or peers, known or not known to the child, including teachers, other school staff, parents and students, as well as by external contractors, visitors, volunteers, other persons in the child community and by online perpetrators.

For types and indications of potential abuse, please see [COVID-19: Integration of Child Protection in Return to School - Tips for Teachers and School Management](#).

DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE

Child abuse may be disclosed at school:

- by the student who is suffering abuse;
- by another student who has witnessed or been told about the abuse of another student;
- by a teacher, school staff (including consultants, volunteers, administrative personnel and others) or a student who has witnessed or been told about the abuse of a student;
- by another person who knows the child (e.g., family members of a student or family members of school staff) and has witnessed or has been told about the abuse of a student.

ACTION

- The disclosure of abuse should be made to the school's Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point.
- If the disclosure is made to another person, including a teacher, this person shall report to the school Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point without delay/ [or add a timeline, e.g., within 24 hours].

SUSPICION OF ABUSE

Teachers, school staff, other students or another person who knows the child may also report suspicions or concerns that a student is being abused.

ACTION

- Suspicions must be reported directly to the school Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point without delay.
- If a suspicion is reported to another person at the school, they must inform the school Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point without delay/ [or add a timeline, e.g., within 24 hours].
- If the person suspecting abuse is a teacher, the teacher must remain vigilant to and monitor possible indicators of abuse, including physical, medical, educational or emotional signs, reporting additional observations that may indicate abuse to the Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point.
- The teacher can also offer opportunities for the child to discuss individually about issues that may arise and concerns the child expresses (while ensuring confidentiality regarding their suspicions).
- If child abuse or additional relevant information is disclosed, the teacher must report immediately to the Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point.

NOTE: If the **disclosure or suspicion** of abuse relates to a Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point, then the report shall either be made to the *other* designated focal point or to the head of the school or head of the school governing body, which will ensure that the referral pathway is followed.

NOTE: If the **disclosure or suspicion** of abuse relates to the head of the school, the Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point shall take direct action and also alert the school governing body, which will ensure that the referral pathway is followed.

INITIAL SUPPORT FOR THE STUDENT

Initial support is provided by the Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point or the teacher or staff member to whom the disclosure has been made.

ACTION

- During disclosure, the person to whom the student is sharing information shall listen respectfully, carefully, with empathy and with no judgement to what the student is saying and shall avoid interrupting.
- The person will provide immediate emotional and practical support as needed and as appropriate to the student's age and gender. This may include psychological first aid and provision of critical information concerning services available.
 - See [COVID-19: Integration of Child Protection in Return to School - Tips for Teachers and School Management](#).
- The person shall not make promises that cannot be kept, e.g. promising not to tell anyone else.
- The person will also inform the student as to whom he/she needs to share the information that has been shared (e.g., the school Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point or referral services).

ASSESSMENT

Following a disclosure or report of a suspicion of abuse, a decision will be taken on next steps.

ACTION

- The Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point will assess the situation (together with the teacher who made the report, where relevant) to determine whether there are reasonable grounds for concern about the protection, welfare or well-being of the student.
- In undertaking the assessment, and depending on the nature of the concern, consideration should be given to the situation and well-being of other students who are siblings of or living in the same household as the student.

NOTE: the role of the Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point is not to undertake an investigation or determine whether child abuse has taken place but to make a decision as to the response based on the information provided and to provide support. It is the role of the relevant child protection and law enforcement authorities to undertake this investigation and make this determination.

RESPONSE

Based on the assessment, the Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point will decide on the response.

ACTION - OPTIONS

- **REFERRAL** - Where there are **concerns about abuse** of the student, a **referral shall be made without delay** to external services.
- **(Non-protection) REFERRAL** - Where there are reasonable **concerns about the student's well-being** (e.g., mental health issues) but there are **no concerns about abuse**, the Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point will make a determination as to the **most appropriate internal or external referral/action**.
- **MONITOR** - Where the suspicions do **not amount to a reasonable concern of abuse nor a reasonable concern for the student's well-being**, but there are **continuing concerns**, the Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point and teacher may decide to **monitor** the situation.
- **NO ACTION/NO FURTHER ACTION** - Where the assessment determines there are **no concerns regarding abuse nor for the well-being** of the child, **no further action will be taken**.

Emergency external referral - When an urgent response is required, for instance when the child needs medical attention within a certain timeframe due to severe injuries or sexual assault or when the child has nowhere to safe to stay that night, the student shall be immediately referred to relevant external services **in parallel with the assessment above and with the process below.**

ACTION – REFERRAL OF THE CHILD

SECURE INFORMED CONSENT OR ASSENT FOR REFERRAL

[NOTE: Informed consent² or informed assent,³ and informing the child’s parents/caregivers will be subject to the laws and policies of the country, including related to mandatory reporting⁴. The following sets out good practice but needs to be contextualized accordingly.]

- If a referral and/or sharing of information with external services is assessed as necessary, the Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point shall: i) inform the student; and ii) inform the parents/caregivers, if this does not place the student at risk (e.g., because the alleged perpetrator is a parent/caregiver).
 - It is best practice that the Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point keeps the student and their parents/caregivers updated on what information is being shared and why.
- To make the referral and share information, the Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point shall obtain: i) the informed assent or consent of the student; and ii) the informed consent of the student’s parents/caregivers, if this does not put the student at risk (e.g., because the alleged perpetrator is a parent/caregiver).
- To be able to provide **informed** assent and consent, students and their parents/caregivers shall be provided with information in a manner that takes into consideration their age, language and disabilities, to ensure they are able to understand the situation and the options.
- **Informed consent/assent of the student is not required to make a referral if:**
 - The student is a child (e.g., under 18 years) and is suffering significant harm or is at risk of suffering significant harm;
 - The student requires urgent medical attention; or
 - The student is too young or lacks the maturity or ability to provide informed consent or assent. Even where informed consent/assent is not required, every effort shall be made to ensure the student understands what is happening.
- **Informed consent/assent of the parents/caregivers is not required to make a referral, if:**
 - The alleged perpetrator is a parent/caregiver;
 - The student is a child (e.g., under 18 years) and is suffering significant harm or is at risk of suffering significant harm; or
 - Obtaining consent from the parents/caregivers would likely expose the child to risk of harm.

REFERRAL TO EXTERNAL SERVICES – ABUSE

- **CHILD PROTECTION AUTHORITY** - The case shall be referred to the ‘child protection authority legally mandated to make decisions in the best interest of the child’ [Note: the relevant name of the authority in the country/province should be added here and to below references to the ‘child protection authority’].
 - The child protection authority deploys the ‘social worker’ [Note: the relevant name of the front line worker in the country/province should be added here and for below references to the

² **Informed consent** - voluntary agreement of an individual who has the capacity to take a decision, who understands what they are being asked to agree to, and who exercises free choice. When obtaining informed consent, practitioners must share, in a child-friendly manner, information on: services and options available, potential risks and benefits, personal information to be collected and how it will be used, and confidentiality and its limits. Informed consent is usually not sought from children under the age of 15. (Source: *Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, 2019*)

³ **Informed assent** - the expressed willingness to participate in services. Informed assent is sought from children who are by nature or law are too young to give consent, but who are old enough to understand and agree to participate in services. When obtaining informed assent, practitioners must share, in a child-friendly manner, information on: services and options available, potential risks and benefits, personal information to be collected and how it will be used, and confidentiality and its limits. (Source: *Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, 2019*). Children aged 7 and above are usually considered to be able to provide informed assent.

⁴ In countries which have **mandatory reporting**, referrals to services **must be made in cases of child abuse regardless of informed consent or assent of the child or the parents/caregivers.**

- ‘social worker’] to undertake an assessment⁵ and decide on the type of response required, including referral to medical services and to the police, where this has not already taken place.
- The social worker will maintain overall responsibility over the case.
- The school Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point and social worker will continue to stay in touch and collaborate with each other to support the student.
- If the social worker decides that no further action is required, he/she will inform the Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point.
- **MEDICAL SERVICES** - In all cases of sexual violence and in the case of severe physical injuries, the Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point shall refer the student for medical attention immediately. A referral may also be made for non-urgent medical attention.
- **POLICE** - The Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point shall also inform the police when a crime has been committed or when there is an immediate safety and security risk to the student.

Accompanying the student - If the Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point has assessed that it is necessary to refer the case to external services because of a disclosure or reasonable suspicion of abuse, he/she will accompany the student/family to the service. If it is not possible for the Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point to accompany the student to the service, the social worker should go to the school and accompany the child to the appropriate service, or visit the family to support the child.

REFERRAL TO SERVICES – OTHER WELL-BEING CONCERNS

- If the concern does not amount to abuse but there are concerns about the well-being of the child, the Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point will consider whether early help or other forms of mental health and psychosocial support are needed. Possible actions include:
 - Referral to the child protection authority or agency;⁶
 - Referral to relevant external support services (e.g., counselling) – either Government or non-governmental organization (NGO) services;
 - Referral to support provided in the school (e.g., school counsellor); and/or
 - Follow-up/ meetings with parents/caregivers.

NOTE: The Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point shall inform the school head of cases of abuse and referrals to external services, unless the school head is implicated in the case, in which case the school governing body shall be informed.

ACTION - RESPONSE TO THE ALLEGED PERPETRATOR

The process of taking internal school action against the alleged perpetrator, to ensure students are safeguarded **is additional to the referral to and investigation and decisions made about the management of the case by the child protection authority and/or police:**

- If the disclosure/suspicion relates to a **staff member of the school**, the Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point shall refer the incident to school senior management (e.g., school head). The school management will take appropriate disciplinary measures with regards the alleged perpetrator, in accordance with the school child protection policy, procedures and regulations, and in line with national legislation.
- If the disclosure/suspicion relates to a **student at the school**, the Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point shall refer the incident to school senior management (e.g., school head). The school management will take appropriate disciplinary measures with regards the alleged perpetrator, in accordance with the school child protection policy, procedures and regulations, and in line with national legislation. The parents/caregivers of the alleged perpetrator shall be informed, unless this will place the alleged victim at risk.
- If the disclosure/suspicion of abuse relates to a **person who is not a member of staff but is associated or contracted by the school (e.g. a volunteer, a contractor etc)**, the Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point shall refer the incident to school senior management (e.g., school principal). The school management will take appropriate action, in accordance with the school child protection policy, procedures and regulations, and in line with national legislation, including measures

⁵ In some countries or contexts government social welfare services may be very weak. Collaboration with other child protection partners external to the school, including civil society, may be useful in such contexts.

⁶ Ibid.

to ensure students are protected from further harm, for example, by imposing a ban from the school premises.

- If the disclosure/suspicion of abuse relates to a **family member, no action is taken with regards to the perpetrator by the school** beyond referral to the child protection authority and/or the police, and support to the student, in accordance with the school child protection policy, procedures and regulations, and in line with national legislation.
- If the disclosure/suspicion regarding a **family member** does not amount to abuse, the Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point may, after assessment, provide support to the family or support the family to access services.
- If the disclosure/suspicion of abuse relates to an alleged perpetrator, who is not a family member and has no association with the school, **no action is taken with regards to the perpetrator by the school** beyond referral to the child protection authority and/or the police, and support to the student (and the family) based on the school child protection policy, procedures and regulations, and in line with national legislation.

In taking decisions throughout the process, the **best interest of the child shall be a primary consideration**. [Note: this follows the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child– this should be amended if national legislation cites the best interests as ‘the primary consideration’ or ‘a paramount consideration’].⁷ This involves identification and assessment of the child’s circumstances and the actions that would best ensure the well-being and safety of that specific child. In addition, in making decisions, the Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point **must give the views and wishes of the child due weight**, taking into consideration their age and maturity. To enable children to express their views and wishes they must be provided with sufficient information and in a form that they can understand.

MONITORING

Monitoring of cases is a continuous process to ensure the well-being of the student.

ACTION

- The Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point shall continue to monitor the case, unless and until it is determined that no action or further action is required.
- As the case progresses or where new information or new concerns arise, the Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point shall undertake another assessment(s) to determine the appropriate (additional) response and referral.

DOCUMENTATION

Documentation of the case shall happen all along the referral pathway.

ACTION

- The Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point shall make a confidentially secured written record of a disclosure or suspicion brought to his/her attention.
- The Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point (with support of the staff involved in the response) shall, in particular, record the assessment of the case, each action taken and recommendations made.
- This record shall be kept up to date, including with notes and observations made during the monitoring of the case.
- This written report should describe the incident, visible or behavioural signs of harm, changes noticed in the student’s behaviour, and anything the student or the person reporting the alleged abuse said or disclosed.
- The Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point is responsible to ensure that the soft and/or hard copy of the report is stored safely (if in hard copy, it has to be placed in a locked drawer and if in soft copy, the document should be password-protected) so that confidentiality can be fully maintained.

⁷ For further information and guidance on the best interests of the child see – UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, [General comment No.14 \(2013\) on the right of the child to have his or her best interests taken as a primary considerations \(art.3, para 1\)](#), CRC/C/GC/14, 2013; and the [Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action](#) 2019.

Confidentiality

- The school's child protection procedure must set out the standards for ensuring confidentiality and privacy of child protection incidents and all documentation and communications related to it. These standards should be made clear to all school personnel.
- Standards should govern:
 - Safe storage of information and strict data procedures on who is able to access this information;
 - Non-disclosure of confidential details by school personnel with a person other than the relevant focal point(s) within the school (or referral bodies in the case of the Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point);
 - Transfer of relevant information if the child moves schools; and
 - Transfer of relevant information to referral bodies.
- Where abuse is reported by another student, the importance of not speaking about this with other students should be explained to them in a child-friendly and accessible way.

SECTION 2: KEY CHILD PROTECTION ROLES IN SCHOOLS

School and school management

- Protects its students and ensures child protection and safeguarding are a critical priority for the school.
- Creates safe environments in school for children and adolescents, where students feel confident to approach school staff if they have a problem or concern.
- Establishes child protection policies and procedures to keep students safe and respond to child protection concerns, including:
 - Child safeguarding / child protection school policy;
 - Code of conduct for school staff, which includes zero tolerance of violence and abuse;
 - Safe recruitment standards and procedures to ensure that school staff, including consultants and volunteers, do not pose a risk to children;
 - Child-friendly and clear reporting mechanisms, that are accessible, safe, confidential and address barriers to reporting;
 - Child-friendly referral pathway, adapted to the context, outlining what type of cases need to be referred, who and where to refer them, and any follow-up action to be taken;
 - Data protection standards and procedures.
- Appoints a Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point(s) – it is recommended to appoint a primary and a secondary focal point. In a large school, a child protection/safeguarding team is recommended. These should be dedicated recruited staff or school personnel who are trusted by students, and where possible should include at least one female focal point.
- Ensures Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point(s)/team is provided with the necessary training and with regular opportunities to update their knowledge.
- [With the child protection authority] maps/identifies available support services in the area.
- [With the child protection authority] ensures school reporting and referral mechanisms are functional.
- Ensures that school staff are aware and kept updated on the school child protection policy and procedures and their roles and responsibilities.
- Ensures that all school staff are made aware of who is responsible for which protection/safeguarding roles. Plans for contingency arrangements should staff become unavailable also should be developed (e.g., due to an emergency).
- Ensures teachers and school staff are sensitized and confident on: 1) how to recognize signs of abuse; 2) how to report; 3) how to respond to child protection concerns; and 4) how to provide psychological first aid.
- Ensures all students, their families and all school staff are informed about how and where to report child protection concerns, who the child protection/safeguarding focal point is and how to contact him/her, and that reports are confidential and will not affect the school's/teacher's treatment of the child.
- Ensures changes to policies, procedures and focal points are communicated in a timely manner to staff, students and parents/caregivers.
- Ensures all students and all age groups are made aware of their rights to be safe from violence and abuse, their responsibility to not commit it, and about safe behaviour both online and offline.
- Outlines in the school child protection policy how to respond when allegations of abuse are made against school staff or students and ensures disciplinary procedures are taken for school staff and students in relation to violence or other inappropriate behaviours towards students.
- Collaborates with social workers on child protection concerns/cases.
- Communicates with students' families as needed.

Child Protection/ Safeguarding Focal Point(s) (and team)

- Works with the school management to ensure child protection and safeguarding is at the heart of the school, that the school is a safe place to learn, and that the school child protection policy and related documents and procedures are regularly updated.
- Raises awareness on violence and abuse against children and encourages students, teachers and families to report child protection concerns and incidents.
- Works with the school management and school staff to ensure all staff are aware and understand the school's child protection policy, major child protection concerns, and the reporting mechanism and pathway.
- Works with school management to ensure all school staff are able to recognize the signs of possible abuse and to respond to and report potential child protection concerns.

- Briefs/trains school staff to ensure they are able to recognize signs of abuse and are aware of the child protection policy. The focal point should also ensure that staff are able to provide a first response to children disclosing abuse and to survivors of abuse or violence.
- Ensures children, families and school staff are aware of the reporting mechanism, on where and how to report child protection concerns, and on confidentiality.
- Is always available to children, adolescents and adults to listen and discuss safeguarding concerns.
- Provides support to teachers and school staff to accomplish their safeguarding duties.
- Immediately takes action when he/she receives a child protection concern.
- Guides and supports students, school staff or family members who report abuse.
- Follows up on the initial report received on the suspected abuse, providing greater clarity or detail.
- Is responsible for the detailed written documentation/registration of each child protection case and of each action taken to respond to it, and for documenting the reasons behind these actions. He/she is also responsible for documenting in written form all follow-up actions and/or recommendations made to the school.
- Explains to the person making the report and to the survivor of violence/abuse all steps and processes, including those regarding the recording and sharing of information, and confidentiality.
- Provides advice on the response to safeguarding concerns he/she receives from children or adults.
- Is responsible for keeping the written records of all safeguarding concerns and for keeping them confidential in line with the data protection protocol/procedures.
- Keeps updated on available referral services outside the school and on their contact details.
- Assesses the need for external referral and manages referrals to external services (social workers when appropriate and in some cases health sector or police).
- Provides initial support to the survivor and explains to him/her (and family where appropriate) the next steps.
- Collaborates and keeps in touch with external services (e.g., social workers) when the child is referred to them.
- Liaises with the school senior management to keep them informed of child protection issues, including in case of police investigations and if a concern involves a school staff as perpetrator.
- Supports the children or adults who have raised the child protection concerns as needed.

Teacher (and other school staff)

- Provides an environment in which students are safe to learn.
- Ensures non-violent discipline in classrooms.
- Keeps vigilant and stops abuse when it occurs among students.
- Keeps vigilant and monitors absenteeism and timely alerts the school management.
- Keeps alert to physical, emotional or behavioural signs of students, which may indicate that a child/adolescent may be experiencing risks to their well-being, including distress and abuse or violence.
- Listens to students and provides a safe space to talk, in a child-centred and age-appropriate manner.
- If he/she suspects violence, asks the student about it in a confidential, empathetic and non-judgmental way.
- Immediately takes action on child protection concerns, both in case of suspicion or of disclosure. Takes note of what he/she observes regarding the alleged victim or what he/she learns from him/her or from the person reporting the alleged abuse, and immediately reports to the Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point.
- If unsure, follows the school child protection policy and speaks to the Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point.
- Provides initial support to students who are victims of violence in a way that is age-appropriate, gender-sensitive and child-centred (e.g., psychological first aid).
- Informs the student about the reason why information needs to be shared with others, the implications of information sharing, the process and the next steps.
- Supports the Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point and social workers following reporting and/or referrals.
- Receives safeguarding and child protection training and updates, as required.
- Keeps him/herself aware of the school child protection policy, reporting process and focal point contact along with the role they might be expected to play. Keeps aware of what to do if a student discloses abuse.

Annex 1a FORMS: Sample Referral Form to External Services (*for adaptation)

For the purpose of the referral, the term 'abuse' includes physical, sexual and emotional violence and abuse, exploitation and neglect.

1. Referral to: (circle/underline as appropriate)

a. Child protection authority

b. Medical services

c. Police

d. Other support services - specify: _____

2. Child

First name:

Surname:

Date of birth (or approximate age if date of birth not known):

Gender:

Usual address:

Current location if different from the usual address:

3. School

School name:

School address:

School head:

Contact details of the school head:

Child Safeguarding/Protection focal point:

Contact details of the Child Safeguarding/Protection focal point:

4. Parent/Caregiver

Name(s):

Address:

Contact details:

5. Referral (please circle as a appropriate)

Child abuse referral

(Go to section 6 and 7)

Child well-being referral

(Go to section 8)

6. Alleged child abuse

Be as clear and specific as possible, based on the information you have received on the incident, disclosure or suspicion of child abuse, including type of abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect), what has happened, where, when and who was involved

7. Alleged perpetrator (in cases of child abuse) (Complete the below information as far as known. Where you do not have this information, write NOT KNOWN)

Name:

Gender:

Is the alleged perpetrator under the age of 18 years – yes/no:

Usual address:

Current location if different from the usual address:

Contact details:

8. Child well-being referral

Be as specific and clear as possible as to the reason for the referral

9. Additional information

a. Has the child provided informed consent or informed assent for the referral? Yes/No.

If No, please explain why:

b. Has the parent/caregiver provided informed consent for the referral? Yes/No.

If No, please explain why:

c. Indicate if the child has been referred to another service/agency and when:

d. Indicate if the child has received or needs a medical intervention and when:

e. Describe any other actions taken to date:

f. Indicate the child's current mental and physical health and whether the child in a safe place:

10. Referral made by:

Name:

Position:

Address:

Contact details:

Date:

Signature:

11. Referral made to:

Name:

Position:

Agency/Organisation:

Address:

Contact details:

Date:

Signature:

Annex 1ab FORMS: Sample Consent Form for Referral to External Services (*for adaptation)

1. Child (Completed by the Child Safeguarding/Protection focal point)

First name: _____ Surname: _____
Date of birth (or approximate age if date of birth not known): _____ Gender: _____
Usual address: _____
Current location if different from the usual address: _____

2. School (Completed by the Child Safeguarding/Protection focal point)

School name: _____
School address: _____

Child Safeguarding/Protection focal point: _____
Contact details of the Child Safeguarding/Protection focal point: _____

3. Assent/Consent (Completed by the Student)

I _____ (name)

have been informed on

and freely assent/ consent [circle as appropriate] to a referral being made to support services.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

4. Consent of the Parent/Caregiver (Completed by the Parent/Caregiver)

I/We _____ (names)

have been informed about the situation of my/our child and the options available and consent to a referral being made to support services.

Date: _____

Signature(s): _____

5. Certified by (Completed by the Child Protection/Safeguarding focal point)

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Annex 2: Resources/Examples

National Education Policies on Child Protection/ Child Safeguarding in Schools

- [Example of a Ministry of Education national child protection policy in Child Protection in Educational Settings: Findings from six countries in East Asia and the Pacific, UNICEF EAPRO, 2012 \(page 39\)](#)
- [Vanuatu Ministry of Education and Training Child safeguarding policy, 2017, Government of Vanuatu](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges, 2020, Department of Education, UK](#)

School Child Protection or Safeguarding Policies and/or Procedures

- [Example of a school child protection policy in Child Protection in Educational Settings: Findings from six countries in East Asia and the Pacific, UNICEF EAPRO, 2012 \(page 39\)](#)
- [Child Protection Policy template \(School\), Child Matters, New Zealand](#)
- [Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017, Department of Education and Skills, Ireland](#)

Referral forms from schools to external services

- [Vanuatu Child Safeguarding Reporting Form, Vanuatu](#)
- [Referral form for teachers for Psychosocial Support Services, South Sudan](#)
- [Sample urgent action referral card](#) (humanitarian settings)

Training for school staff

- [Online training for safer recruitment and designated safeguarding leads, NSPCC](#)
- Queensland University of Technology, 'Child Protection for Teachers', online course on [Future Learn](#), upcoming in September 2020

Self-assessment tools for schools⁸

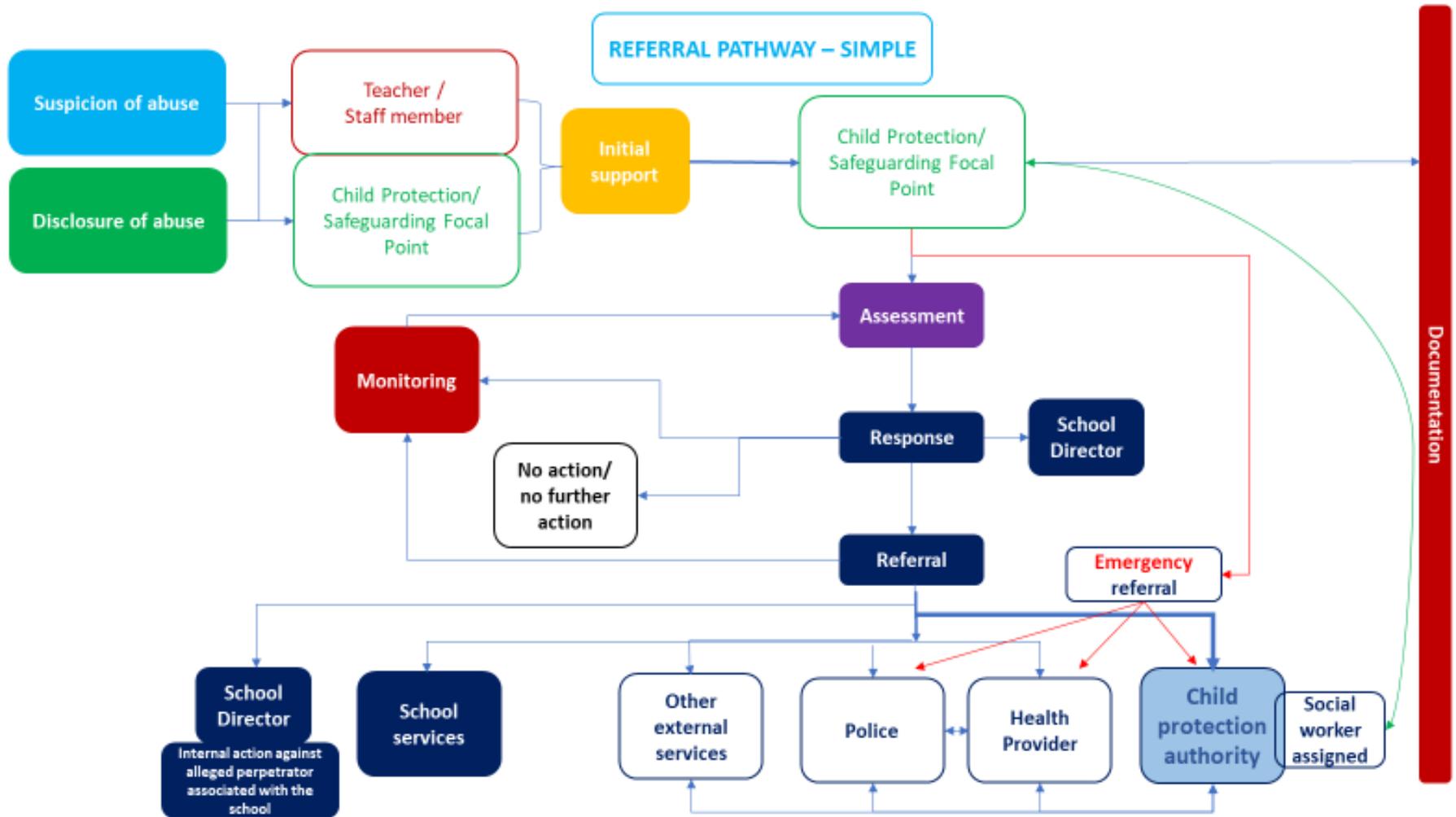
- [Example of a school 'self audit' tool on child protection in Child Protection in Educational Settings: Findings from six countries in East Asia and the Pacific, UNICEF EAPRO, 2012 \(page 41\)](#)
- [Safeguarding in Education Self-Assessment Tool for schools \(ESAT\), NSPCC](#)

Other

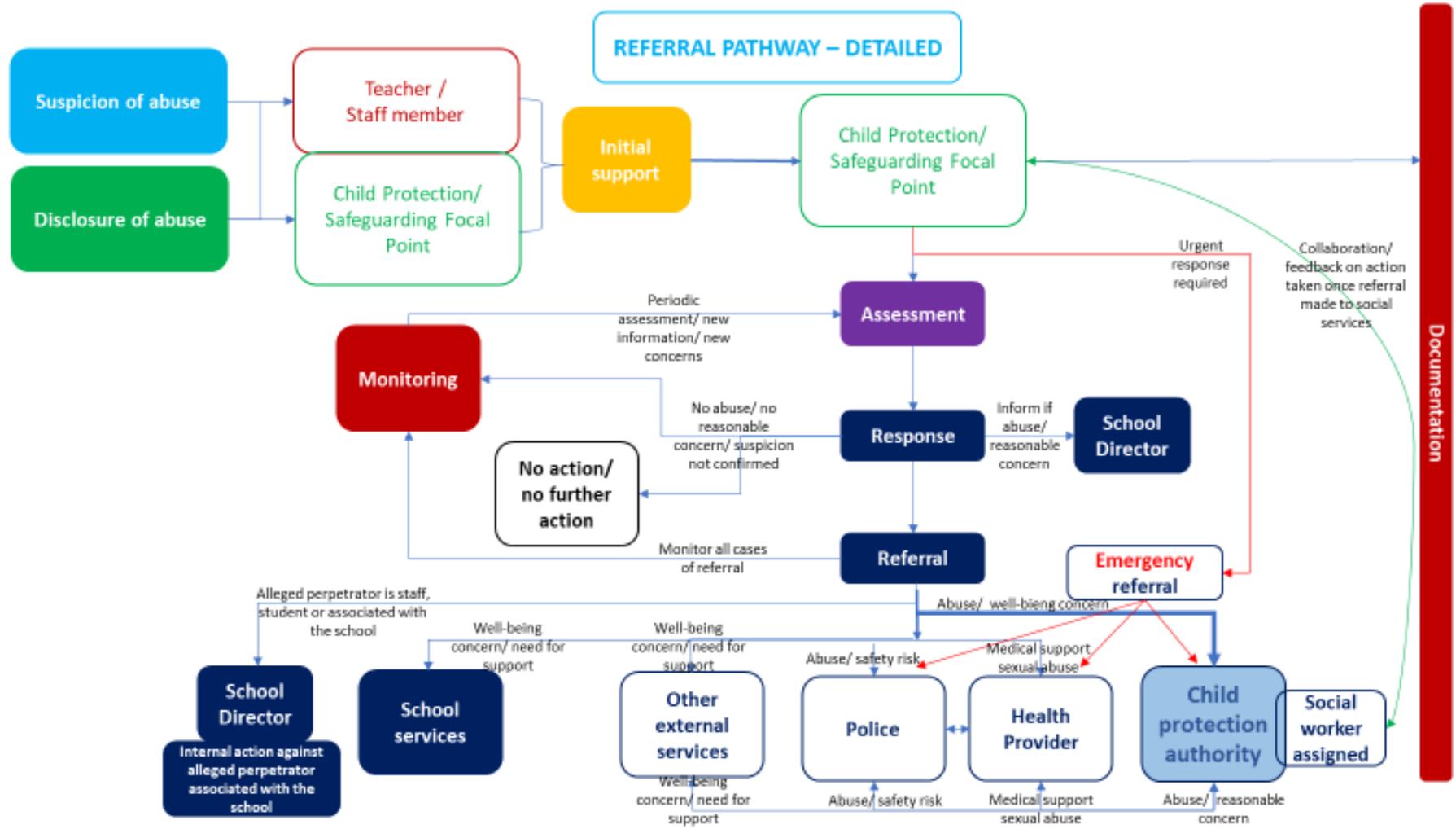
- [United Nations Children's Fund, 'Child Protection in Educational Settings: Findings from six countries in East Asia and the Pacific', Bangkok, 2012](#)
- [School-based violence prevention: a practical handbook, WHO, 2019](#)

⁸ Tools to support school assess their current safeguarding and child protection arrangements, identify areas for development and make any changes necessary.

Annex 3a: Referral Pathway Simple

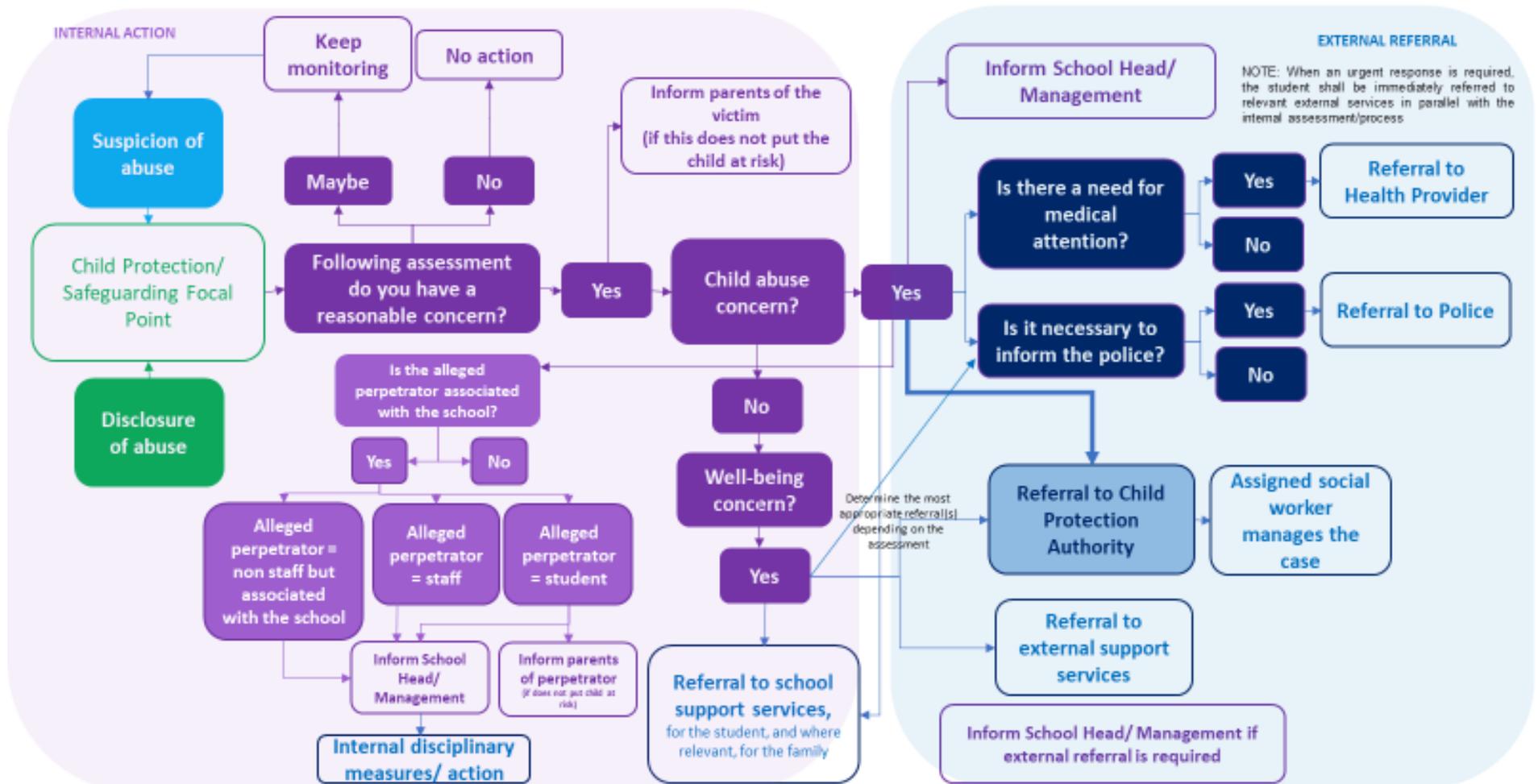


Annex 3a: Referral Pathway Detailed



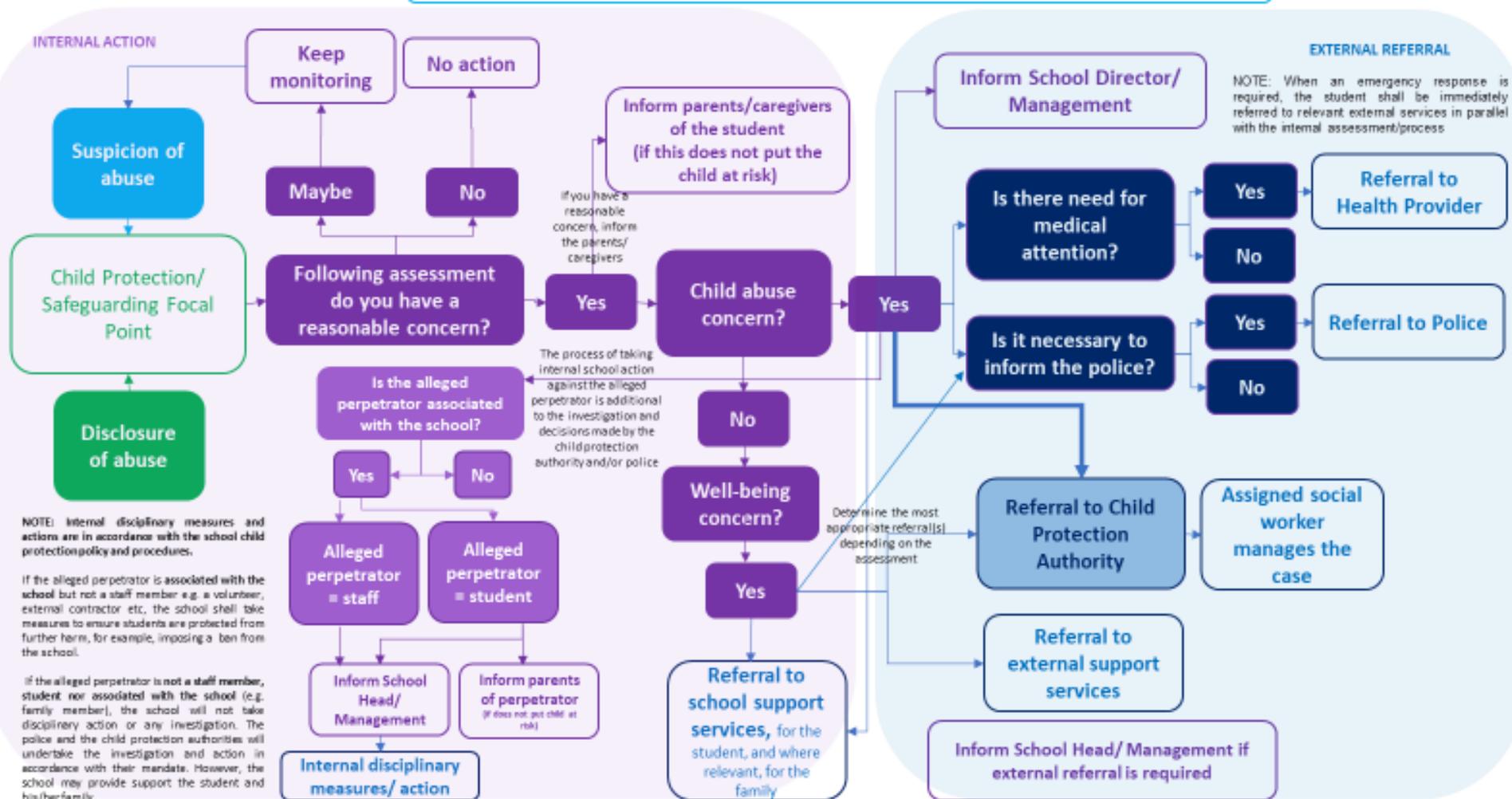
Annex 3a: Decision Tree Simple

DECISION TREE FOR CHILD PROTECTION/ SAFEGUARDING FOCAL POINT SIMPLE



Annex 3a: Decision Tree Simple

DECISION TREE FOR CHILD PROTECTION/ SAFEGUARDING FOCAL POINT DETAILED



Annex 4: Bibliography

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- Child and Families Directorate, *National guidance for child protection in Scotland*, [available here](#)
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- Child Matters. *Child Protection Policy template (School)*
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- United Nations Children's Fund. 2012. *Child Protection in Educational Settings: Findings from Six Countries in East Asia and the Pacific Strengthening Child Protection Systems Series: No 2*, UNICEF EAPRO, Bangkok, [available here](#)
- United Nations Children's Fund. 2019. *Safe to Learn. Global Programmatic Framework: From Call to Action to Programme Responses* (draft)
- Vanuatu Ministry of Education and Training. 2017. *Child safeguarding policy*. Government of Vanuatu, [available here](#)