CHILD AND VULNERABLE ADULT SAFEGUARDING AND PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Revised November 2022

Produced by the Middletown Centre for Autism.

The Middletown Centre for Autism Safeguarding Protocol is drawn up in the context of the aims of Middletown Centre for Autism to support the promotion of excellence in the development and co-ordination of education services to children and young people with autism.

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The Centre has a link to its Child Protection and Safeguarding statement on the front page of its website.

Middletown Centre Child Protection and Safeguarding Statement - Middletown Centre For Autism (middletownautism.com)

November 2022

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Middletown Centre for Autism's Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Team is:

- Designated Liaison Person (DLP) for Child Protection in ROI –

  Claire Smyton (claire.smyton@middletownautism.com Tel: 0044 28 37515750) and

   Tara Vernon (tara.vernon@middletownautism.com Tel: 0044 28 37515750)

- Designated Teachers for Child Protection in NI –

  Jill McCanney (jill.mccanney@middletownautism.com) Tel: 0044 28 37515750)

  Helen Forde (helen.forde@middletownautism.com Tel: 0044 28 37515750)

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CHILD AND VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

This Safeguarding Protocol is a working document to incorporate the policy and procedures as set out in the Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Procedures (revised December 2022). All members of staff should refer to this document and be familiar with the content. Our guiding principles apply to all paid staff, volunteers, committee/board members and students on work placement within our organisation. All committee/board members, staff, volunteers, and students must sign up to and abide by these guiding principles and our child safeguarding procedures.

CONTEXT

Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and Procedures (revised November 2022). is set within the context of:

- The Middletown Centre for Autism Learning Support and Assessment policy

- The Children (NI) Order 1995

- The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003

- Department of Education Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017 (Republic of Ireland)

- Children First Act 2015,

- Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2017)

- Tusla's Child Safeguarding: A Guide for Policy, Procedure and Practice.

- Education and Libraries (NI) Order 2003

- Sexual Offences (NI) Order 2008

- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups (NI) Order 2007

- Safeguarding Board (NI) Act 2011

- Children's Services Co-operation Act 2015

- Public Services Ombudsman (NI) Act 2016

- Addressing Bullying in Schools (NI) Act 2016

- Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (NI) 2021.

- Department for Education Circulars- https://www.eani.org.uk/school-management/safeguarding-and-child-protection/resources/de-circulars

- Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools - A Guide for Schools | Department of Education (education-ni.gov.uk)

In addition to the procedures listed in our risk assessment below, the following procedures support our intention to safeguard children while they are availing of our service:

- Procedure for the management of allegations of abuse or misconduct against workers/volunteers of a child availing of our service.

- Procedure for the safe recruitment and selection of workers and volunteers to work with children.

- Procedure for provision of and access to child safeguarding training and information, including the identification of the occurrence of harm.

- Procedure for the reporting of child protection or welfare concerns to Tusla (ROI) and Gateway (NI).

- Procedure for maintaining a list of the persons (if any) in the relevant service who are mandated persons.

- Procedure for appointing a relevant person.

As noted, in all contact with children and young people staff in Middletown Centre for Autism follow the guidelines and procedures described in:

- The Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI) publication 'Safeguarding and Protection in Schools - 2017'- Updated 2022.

- The Department of Education and Skills Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017.

Procedures for Middletown Centre for Autism Staff

If there is a concern about Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection, there are two routes for procedures:

1. When working in schools MCA staff must seek out the DT of the school and report any incidents or disclosures to them.

2. When working 'out of school' contexts MCA staff must inform Middletown Centre for Autism's DT or in their absence the deputy DT.

The link to our child protection and safeguarding leaflets for both NI and ROI are listed below:
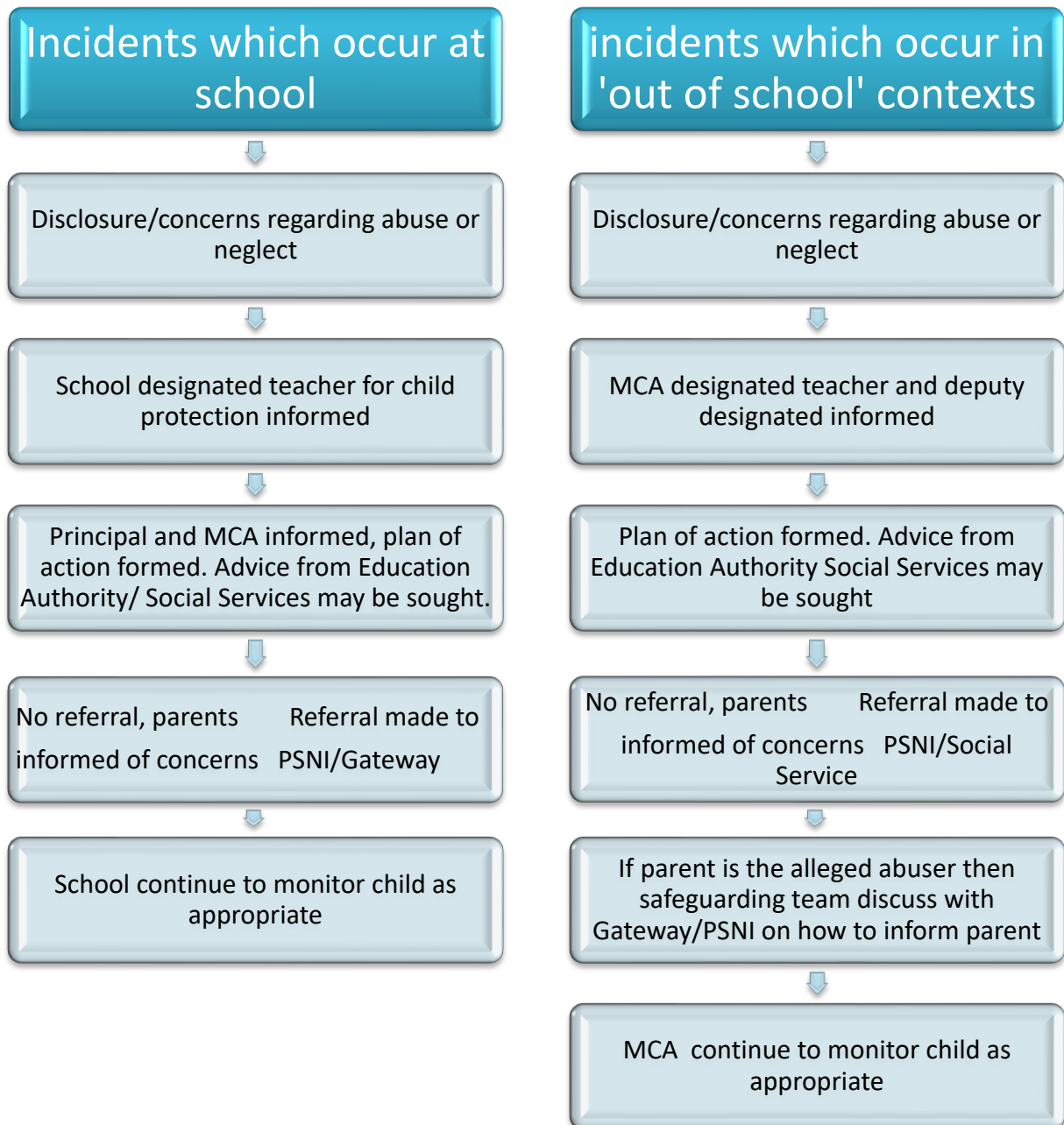
https://www.middletownautism.com/files/shares/Child_Protection_Leaflet_NI_2021_22.pdf

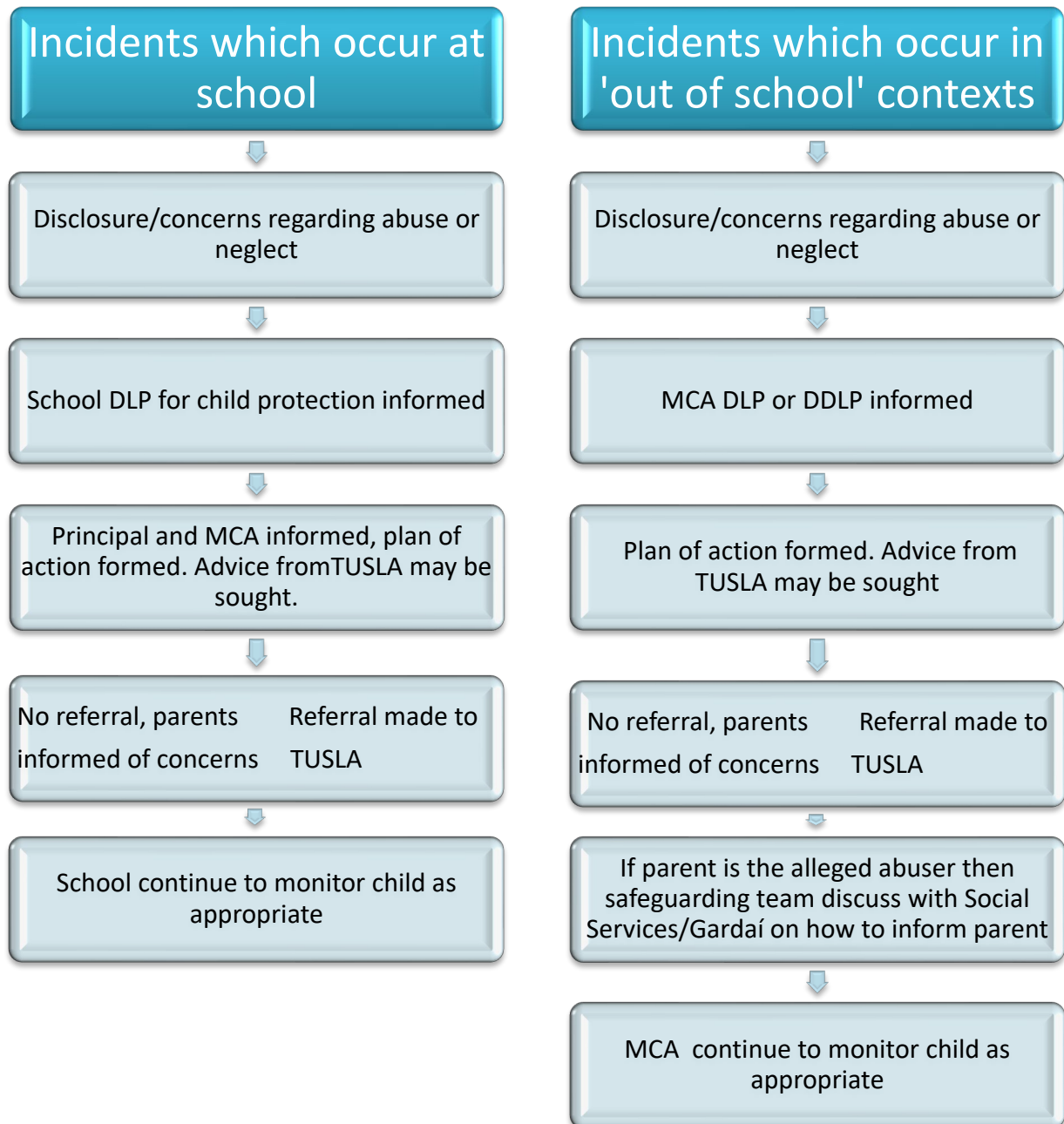https://www.middletownautism.com/files/shares/Child_Protection_Leaflet_ROI_2021_22.pdf

https://www.middletownautism.com/files/shares/Safeguarding_Vulnerable_Adults_Leaflet_NI_2021_22.pdf

https://www.middletownautism.com/files/shares/Safeguarding_Vulnerable_Adults_Leaflet_ROI_2021_22.pdf

MCA Process of Child Protection in Northern Ireland

Incidents which occur at school

Disclosure/concerns regarding abuse or neglect

⬇

School designated teacher for child protection informed

⬇

Principal and MCA informed, plan of action formed. Advice from Education Authority/ Social Services may be sought.

⬇

No referral, parents informed of concerns   Referral made to PSNI/Gateway

⬇

School continue to monitor child as appropriate

incidents which occur in 'out of school' contexts

Disclosure/concerns regarding abuse or neglect

⬇

MCA designated teacher and deputy designated informed

⬇

Plan of action formed. Advice from Education Authority Social Services may be sought

⬇

No referral, parents informed of concerns   Referral made to PSNI/Social Service

⬇

If parent is the alleged abuser then safeguarding team discuss with Gateway/PSNI on how to inform parent

⬇

MCA continue to monitor child as appropriate

MCA Process of Child Protection in Republic of Ireland

Incidents which occur at school

↓

Disclosure/concerns regarding abuse or neglect

↓

School DLP for child protection informed

↓

Principal and MCA informed, plan of action formed. Advice fromTUSLA may be sought.

↓

No referral, parents informed of concerns | Referral made to TUSLA

↓

School continue to monitor child as appropriate

Incidents which occur in 'out of school' contexts

↓

Disclosure/concerns regarding abuse or neglect

↓

MCA DLP or DDLP informed

↓

Plan of action formed. Advice from TUSLA may be sought

↓

No referral, parents informed of concerns | Referral made to TUSLA

↓

If parent is the alleged abuser then safeguarding team discuss with Social Services/Gardaí on how to inform parent

↓

MCA continue to monitor child as appropriate

CHILD AND VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF POSSIBLE ABUSE

This is not a definitive list any signs or symptoms raising concern should be reported.

SEXUAL – involves forcing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities.

Young people may:

• Be chronically depressed

• Be suicidal

• Use drugs or drink to excess

• Self-harm

• Become anorexic or bulimic

• Run away frequently

• Be inappropriately seductive towards adults and/or peers

• Be fearful about certain people like relatives or friends

• Not be allowed to go out socially or have friends around

• Find excuses not to go home or to a particular place

• Be unable to concentrate or seem to be in a world of their own

• Have a "friend who has a problem" and tell about friend's abuse

• Have chronic ailments such as stomach pains and headaches

• Exhibit sudden changes in schoolwork habits or truant

• Be withdrawn, isolated or excessively worried

• Have outbursts of anger or irritability

• Be reluctant to participate in PE or Games

• Repeat obscene words or phrases

• Talk or write about sexual matters

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)

SBNI defines Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) as "a form of sexual abuse in which a person(s) exploits, coerces and/or manipulates a child or young person into engaging in some form of sexual activity in return for something the child needs or desires and/or for the gain of the person(s) perpetrating or facilitating the abuse".

Possible indicators of child sexual exploitation include being seen with older men; truancy; addiction to cigarettes, drugs and alcohol; alienation from friends; teenage pregnancy.

PHYSICAL - involves the deliberate physical injury to a child or young person or the neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering.

Young people may:

• Have unexplained or recurrent injuries, burns or bald patches

• Give improbable excuses to explain injuries

• Refuse to discuss injuries

• Have untreated injuries

• Keep arms and legs covered in hot weather

• Be reluctant to receive medical help

• Be frightened of physical contact

• Be reluctant to participate in PE or Games

• Admit to punishment which appears excessive

• Be frightened of parents being contacted

• Be frightened to go home

• Self-harm

• Be aggressive towards others

• Run away from home

• Play truant from school

EMOTIONAL – involves the persistent emotional ill treatment or rejection of a child or young person such as causes severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

Young people may:

- Over-react to mistakes

- Develop sudden speech disorders

- Become aggressive

- Become passive

- Be attention seeking

- Be extremely frightened of parents being contacted.

- Steal compulsively

- Be extremely frightened of new situations

- Be excessively dependent

- Be involved in drug or solvent abuse

NEGLECT – involves the persistent failure to meet a child or young person's physical, emotional, or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm.

Young people may:

- Be noticeably hungry

- Be noticeably tired

- Wear dirty clothes

- Have poor personal hygiene

- Have no social relationships

- Have untreated medical problems

- Be frequently absent

- Be frequently late

RISK OF SIGNIFICANT HARM – involves a child or young person whose own behaviour, such as consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs places the child at risk of significant harm.

We have carried out an assessment of any potential for harm to a child or young person while availing of our services including the area of online safety when accessing the internet. Below is a list of the areas of risk identified and the list of procedures for managing these risks.

Risk Identified

Risk Identified	Procedure in place to manage identified risk
Staff working directly and indirectly in schools, homes and in the community with children and young people who are both classified as vulnerable	- All staff and Board of Directors are vetted through Access NI or An Garda Siochana. - All staff and Board of Directors are provided with a copy of the Centre's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and corresponding child protection summary leaflets relevant to the geographical area they are working in. - All staff and Board of Directors attend a child protection and safeguarding training presentation on all the Centre's procedures and protocol including the appropriate pathways to follow should they have a child protection/safeguarding concern. Training presentations on child protection and safeguarding are reviewed in line with any amendments and updates to procedures from both Departments of Education and from the Gateway Team in NI and Tusla in RoI. - Schools and parents/guardians are provided with a copy of the Centre's leaflet of child protection and safeguarding procedures which details person to contact should a concern be raised. - Designated staff for child protection are in place for both NI and RoI. The Designated Teacher for Northern Ireland is Lorraine Scott. The Deputy Designated teacher for NI is Helen Forde. The Designated Liaison Officer for RoI is Claire Smyton. Deputy Designated Liaison Officer for RoI is Tara Vernon. Staff always remain visible to other staff members when working directly with a child/young person.
Work in Schools – Direct working with a child/young person and at times with other children/young people in school **Home Visits –** Direct working with a	A copy of the school's child protection and safeguarding policy is requested. A copy of the Centre's child protection and safeguarding policy is provided to the school. Staff always remain visible to parent/guardian/responsible adult when working directly with a child young person. A copy of the Centre's child protection and safeguarding policy is provided to the parent/carer of referral. **Referenced Legislation and Documentation** **Republic of Ireland** Risk of harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) to a child by a member of staff/volunteer (from things they have done e.g. hurt a child, or failed to do e.g. not reporting a concern). The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and RF/CSSCU/005 Version 12.4 – November 2021.

child/young person and at times other siblings.	Risk of harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) to a child caused by a lack of supervision.
	Risk of harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) to a child by a visitor to the service (contractors, parents, volunteers, etc.)
	Northern Ireland
	The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and RF/CSSCU/005 version 12.4 – 30 November 2021.
	Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools - A Guide for Schools | Department of Education (education-ni.gov.uk)
	https://www.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-08/Circular%20202007%20Child%20Protection%20Record%20Keeping%20in%20Schools.PDF
	https://www.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-10/Circular%202017-04.pdf
	https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Circular%202022%2002%20Children%20Who%20Display%20Harmful%20Sexual%20Behaviour.PDF
	https://www.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-10/cpsss_circular_2015_13.pdf
	https://www.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-10/cpsss_circular_2014_27.pdf
	https://www.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-10/cpsss_circular_2012_19.pdf
	https://www.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-10/cpsss_circular_1999_10_0.pdf
Direct work with child or young person in an environment outside of school and home.	**Community Visits –** 2 staff will be present on all community visits. If a parent/guardian can attend 1 staff member is acceptable.
	A risk assessment is completed prior to each community visit listing the venue and record of any possible risks with mitigations listed.
	Referenced Legislation and Documentation
	Republic of Ireland
	Risk of harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) to a child on outings by a member of staff/volunteer/stranger/peer
	Northern Ireland
	As above under Northern Ireland.
Use of IT resources to correspond and use	Online safety –
	• IT policy is shared with all staff along with regular training from our IT officer on safety measures when accessing the internet.

software with children and young people.	- Use of emails – staff can correspond directly with a referral where there is a specific reason to do so, with the parent/guardian's permission and by copying the parent/guardian into each email. - If internet access is required to use software on Centre iPad's, the IT policy and procedures are followed. Only devices provided by the Centre are permitted to be used in the undertaking of Centre business. - All Centre devices are encrypted. **Reference Legislation and Documentation** **Republic of Ireland** Risk of harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) to a child from the use/misuse of digital images/unauthorised photography. Risk of harm (as defined in the Children First Act 2015) through access to ICT (e.g. social media or web access, electronic contact, etc). **Northern Ireland** The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and RF/CSSCU/005 Version 12.4 – 30 November 2021. Safeguarding and Child Protection in Schools - A Guide for Schools | Department of Education (education-ni.gov.uk) https://www.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-10/cpsss_circular_2007_01.pdf https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/updated-circular-further-guidance-schools-supporting-remote-learning https://www.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-10/Circular%202016%2027.pdf https://www.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-10/Circular%202016%2026.pdf https://www.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-10/cpsss_circular_2013_25.pdf https://www.eani.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-10/cpsss_circular_2011_22.pdf