

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Policy statement

My first responsibility and priority is towards the children in my care. I am the lead officer for safeguarding for my setting. If I have any cause for concern I will report it to the relevant authorities. This policy is in line with the West Yorkshire Interagency Consortium Safeguarding Procedures which are on line at www.proceduresonline.com/westyorksbc. I also have a copy of the HM government guide 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused'. I understand that child abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional, neglect or a mixture of these. I must notify Ofsted of any allegations of abuse, which are alleged to have taken place whilst the child is in my care, including allegations against me, members of my family, or other adults or children in my home who have had contact with minded children.

Policy procedure

I keep up to date with child protection issues and relevant legislation by taking regular training courses and by reading appropriate publications through my membership of Pacey (professional association of childcare and early years) and Under 5 (Preschool Learning Alliance) and Ofsted newsletters. This helps me be aware of the signs of abuse or neglect and what to do if I have a concern. I have a copy of the HM Government publication 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' which I have read and understood.

I follow procedures outlined in my confidentiality policy. I work together with parents to ensure the care of their child is consistent (working with parents policy). Children will only be released from my care to the parent/carer or to someone named and authorised by them. A password may be used to confirm identity if the person collecting the child is not previously known to me. Parents must notify me of any concerns they have about their child and any accidents, incidents or injuries affecting the child, which I will record and ask parents to sign.

Unless I believe that it would put the child at risk of further harm, I will discuss concerns with a child's parents if I notice:

Significant changes in behaviour
Unexpected bruising or marks
Any comments made which give me cause for concern
Deterioration in general well being which causes concern.

More detailed signs and symptoms maybe as follows:

Physical abuse
Unexplained recurrent injuries
Wearing heavy clothing to cover injuries, particularly during hot weather
Refusal to undress for PE at school

Bald patches of hair
Repeated running away from home
Fear of medical examination
Fear of physical contact, shrinking back if approached or touched

Emotional abuse
Delayed development
Sudden speech problems such as stammering
Low self-esteem
Fear of any new situation
Neurotic behaviour (continual rocking, hair twisting)
Extremes of withdrawal or aggression

Sexual abuse
Sexual knowledge or behaviour inappropriate to a child's age
Medical problems such as chronic itching, pain in genital areas
Personality changes
Inability to concentrate
Depression
Lack of trust or fear of someone they know well
Regression - bedwetting, soiling underwear, younger behaviour patterns

Neglect
Constant hunger
Poor personal hygiene
Poor state of clothing
Constant tiredness
Underweight/untreated medical problems
No social relationships
Stealing food
Destructive tendencies

If a child tells me that they or another child is being abused, I will:

Show that I have heard what they are saying and that I take their allegations seriously
Encourage the child to talk, but I will not prompt them or ask them leading questions. I will not interrupt when a child is recalling significant events and will not make a child repeat their account.

Explain what actions I must take in a way that is appropriate to the age and understanding of the child.

Write down what I have been told using exact words where possible.

Make a note of the date, time, place and people who were present at the discussion.

Then report my concerns immediately to the duty social worker who has the experience and responsibility to make an assessment of the situation.

I will implement local procedures by calling Social Care Direct without delay to minimise any risk to the child. I will then follow up by letter within 48 hours. If an allegation is made against me or any adult working or living on the childminding premises, I will report it to Ofsted and Social Care Direct, following local safeguarding

children's board procedures. I will also contact Pacey's safeguarding children service for advice and support.

In all instances, I will record:

The child's full name and address

The date and time of the record

Factual details of the concern, for example bruising, what the child said, who was present

Details of any previous concerns

Details of any explanations from the parents

Any action taken such as speaking to parents

It is not my responsibility to attempt to investigate the situation myself.

Telephone numbers:

Social Care Direct (MASH - Multi agency safeguarding hub, customer contact centre)

0345 8503503

Ofsted 0300 1231231

Police 0845 6060606

Pacey 0300 0030005

Pacey (legal advice) 0808 1780332

NSPCC (24 hour helpline) 0808 8005000

Local early years team 01924 305630

LADO 01977 727037

I will also be vigilant for signs an abuser may display. I will be concerned about the behaviour of an adult or young person if they:

Refuse to allow a child sufficient privacy or to make their own decisions on personal matters

Insist on physical affection such as kissing, hugging or wrestling even when the child clearly does not want it

Are overly interested in the sexual development of a child or teenager

Insist on time alone with a child with no interruptions

Spend most of their spare time with children and have little interest in spending time with people their own age

Regularly offer to baby-sit children for free or take children on overnight outings alone

Buy children expensive gifts or give them money for no apparent reason

Frequently walk in on children/teenagers in the bathroom

Treat a particular child as a favourite, making them feel 'special' compared with others in the family

Pick on a particular child

If I have concerns about a member of staff, I will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer who will support me and if necessary, involve other agencies to ensure that risk can be assessed and arrangements made to protect children. Other agencies may include the police, Ofsted or other professional bodies if relevant. The LADO is an advisory role and does not undertake investigations.

If a member of staff is concerned about another staff member, they should contact Ofsted.

INTERNET SAFETY

I will alert children within my care of the potential dangers in the use of the internet, telling them of potential threats relating to online child grooming, cyber bullying and the accessing of material on websites designed specifically for persons over the age of 18.

Where I allow children in my care to access the internet in my home, I will ensure that the computer is kept in a communal room. I will also make it clear that I will monitor the history of websites, which have been searched to ensure that they do not contain any unsuitable images of material. Where necessary, I will deploy parental control tools to limit duration of access and where necessary prohibit use by an individual child.

Where I have more serious concerns, I will bring them to the attention of parents and/or the appropriate authorities.

Internet usage will only be permitted when the parent/guardian authorises such use.

MOBILES PHONES AND ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT

Staff

Staff members place their personal mobile phones in a drawer on arriving at the setting and are not used during working hours (they may be checked during break times). A mobile phone for staff use is available for when staff are taking children to and from school or on outings for emergencies. The safety of the children in my care is paramount. Casual or inappropriate use of mobile phones by staff may pose a risk, if staff are distracted from caring for children. A camera is available for all members of staff to use for observations and evidence of development and learning. No other photographic equipment will be used by staff.

Children

Children are not allowed to bring any device which may be used to take photographs.

Reviewed September 2014
Mrs Beverley Flockton
Auntie Bev's Childminding