

MERESIDE FARM SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Mereside Farm Nursery 2015

Setting details

Setting Name	Mereside Farm Nursery
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Terri Carter
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead	Christine Hewitt
Registered Provider	Ruth Lowe
Last Reviewed	January 2015
Due for Review	January 2016

External contacts

The telephone number for the Access Centre is:
01905 768 054 Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.00pm
01905 768 020 Evenings and Weekends

Police 24hrs non-emergency	101
Emergency	999
NSPCC Helpline	0808 800 5000
Ofsted	0300 123 1231

Contact with Children's Social care is based on the child's address so we may need to contact Solihull or Birmingham (or another area) We can call based on our records of the address but if unsure ring Worcestershire and ask which area you need to contact.

Solihull – 0121 788 4333 or 0121 605 6060 (Out of hours)

Birmingham – 0121 303 1888 or 0121 675 4806 (Out of hours)

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Introduction

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, the Childcare Act 2006, and in line with 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2013 and the recommendations of Worcestershire Safeguarding Children's Board.

We fully recognise our responsibilities for safeguarding children and our policy applies to all adults in the setting.

The main aims of Mereside Farm's policy and procedures are:

- Ensuring that we establish and maintain an environment where children feel safe, secure, valued, respected and listened to, and in which they can learn and develop
- Ensuring that all steps are taken to keep children safe and well
- Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep them safe
- Developing and then implementing procedures for identifying and reporting concerns
- Supporting children who have been identified as in need of early help or are at risk of harm

Related policies

- Health & Safety Policy
- Safer Recruitment and Selection of Staff
- Complaints Policy and Procedure
- Medicines policy

(This list is not exhaustive, other policies may be related)

Responsibilities

At Mereside Farm all adults will:

- Take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well
- Be alert to any issues for concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere
- Follow the policies and procedures of the setting and notify the relevant person or agency without delay if concerns arise

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- Keep appropriate records, even where immediate referral is not necessary, and keep these separate from the child's ordinary file in a secure place
- Disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands or warning that may affect their suitability to work with children
- Notify the Manager if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a child who is subject to a child protection plan;

In addition Mereside Farm will:

- Ensure that the setting implements a policy and procedures to safeguard children, which is in line with guidance from Worcestershire Safeguarding Children's Board (WSCB), and review these at least annually
- Nominate a member of the committee or board to be responsible for safeguarding children and liaise with the DSL and or Manager in matters relating to safeguarding.
- Ensure that there is a member of staff who will take on the responsibilities of the DSL if they are absent, (Deputy DSL)
- Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the setting and staff for safeguarding and child protection by making the policy available to parents
- Operate safer recruitment practice; ensuring that at least one member on every recruitment panel has completed safer recruitment training.
- Ensure that all staff have up to date knowledge of safeguarding issues
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibility for referring any concerns to the DSL or manager and are aware that they may raise concerns directly with Children's Social Care Services if they believe their concerns have not been listened to or acted upon.
- Ensure that the duty of care towards its children and staff is promoted by raising awareness of illegal, unsafe and unwise behaviour and assist adults in the setting to monitor their own standards and practice;
- Train all staff to understand the setting's safeguarding policies and procedures
- Provide training which enables staff to identify signs of possible abuse and neglect in a timely way and respond appropriately.
- Ensure that staff have regular supervision meetings to support their role
- Nominate a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and ensure that they have the knowledge and skills to perform their role

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- Ensure that all adults in the setting have access to a copy of the Worcestershire County Council (WCC) publication '*Safeguarding and Child Protection Guidance for Early Years and Childcare Providers*' (the 'Yellow Folder')
- Notify Children's Social Care (or the police in an emergency) without delay if they have concerns about a child.
- Be aware of and follow procedures set out by the Local Authority and the WSCB where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer, including making a referral to the DBS if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns, or would have been had they not resigned;
- Notify Ofsted within 14 days, of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working or looking after children on the premises, any action taken
- Ensure the suitability of adults who have contact with children and not allow people whose suitability has not been checked to have unsupervised contact with children being cared for
- Obtain an enhanced criminal records disclosure for every person over 16 who works with children and/or works or lives on the premises
- Record information about staff qualifications, identity checks and vetting processes
- Notify Ofsted of any significant event which is likely to affect the suitability of any person who is in regular contact with children on the premises Give Ofsted within 14 days the following information about themselves or any person who lives or is employed in the same household:
 - *Details of any order, determination, conviction, or other ground for disqualification from registration under regulations made under section 75 of the Childcare Act 2006;*
 - *The date of the order, determination or conviction, or the date when the other ground for disqualification arose;*
 - *The body or court which made the order, determination or conviction, and the sentence (if any) imposed; and*
 - *A certified copy of the relevant order (in relation to an order or conviction).*

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL will:

- Attend training up to targeted level two and renew this every two years.
- Liaise with local statutory children's services agencies and with the WSCB

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- Raise awareness of the settings safeguarding policies, procedures and systems, among staff and parents and carers.
- Ensure that all adults in the setting understand and are able to implement the setting's policies and procedures
- Support others as necessary in seeking advice and/or making a referral to the Access Centre of the Early help Hub
- Support staff in understanding their role in the absence of the DSL
- Support staff in protecting themselves from allegations
- Ensure policies and procedures are reviewed at least annually
- Keep up to date with current safeguarding and child protection legislation
- Ensure that consistent and effective record keeping systems are in place and guidelines followed throughout the setting
- Ensure that a system is in place to review incidents and observations to identify patterns of concern and the need to make a referral to Children's Services
- Share child protection information with the DSL of any receiving setting or school when children leave the setting.
- Develop effective links with relevant agencies and other professionals and co-operate as required with their enquiries regarding safeguarding matters including co-operation with serious case reviews, attendance at strategy meetings, initial and review child protection conferences, core group and child in need review meetings;
- Contributing to assessments and providing reports to initial and review conferences which have been shared with parents first.

Training

- When staff, (including volunteers) join our setting they will be informed of the safeguarding arrangements in place. They will be given a copy of this policy and the setting's code of conduct and will have access to a copy of 'Safeguarding and Child Protection Guidance for Private, Voluntary and Independent Early Years and Childcare Providers'. They will be told who the DSL is and who acts in their absence.
- All staff will receive induction in safeguarding children. The induction programme will include basic child protection information relating to signs and symptoms of abuse, how to manage a

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disclosure from a child, when and how to record a concern about the welfare of a child, who to report concerns to, and advice on safe working practice.

- All staff will receive training in child protection and safe working practice, at the 'universal' level, updated every three years, in line with WSCB guidance.
- Those with specific responsibility for safeguarding children will undertake 'targeted level 2' training, updated every two years.

Information Sharing & Confidentiality

At Mereside Farm we recognise that all matters relating to child protection are confidential and the Manager or DSL will only disclose information about a child to other members of staff on a need to know basis. However, we also recognise our professional responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children, and we will not promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child's safety or well-being.

Communication with Parents

- We recognise that good communication with parents is crucial in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children effectively. We will always undertake appropriate discussion with parents prior to involvement of another agency **unless to do so would place the child or an adult at further risk of harm or would impede a criminal investigation.**
- We will ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibilities placed on the setting and staff to safeguard children and their duty to co-operate with other agencies in this respect.

Record Keeping

- Any person in the setting receiving a disclosure of abuse from a child or young person, or noticing signs or symptoms of possible abuse, will make notes as soon as possible (within the hour, if possible) writing down exactly what was said, using the child's own words as far as possible. All notes will be timed, dated and signed, with name printed alongside the signature. Concerns will be recorded using the setting's safeguarding children recording system.
- All records of a child protection nature will be passed to the DSL including case conference or core group minutes and written records of any concerns. Child protection records are kept securely and transferred in a safe and timely manner when a child moves setting.

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- The DSL will maintain and regularly audit the setting's child protection records and ensure that each stand-alone file includes a chronology of significant events.

Supporting Children

We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. We acknowledge that settings may be the only stable, secure and predictable element in the lives of children who have been abused or who are at risk of harm, and we are aware that research shows that their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn.

The setting will endeavour to support all children by:

- Encouraging self-esteem and self-assertiveness, as well as promoting respectful relationships, challenging bullying and humiliating behaviour
- Promoting a positive, supportive and secure environment giving children a sense of being valued
- Consistently applying strategies to which are aimed at supporting vulnerable children, and supporting children in understanding that some behaviour is unacceptable but that they are valued and not to be blamed for any abuse which has occurred
- Liaising with other agencies that support the child such as Children's Social Care Services
- The use of Early Help Services, through the Early Help Hub, when appropriate
- Notifying Children's Social Care Services immediately there is a significant concern
- Providing continuing support to a child about whom there have been concerns who leaves the setting by ensuring that appropriate information is forwarded under confidential cover to the child's new setting.

Supporting and Supervision of Staff

- We recognise that staff working in the setting who have become involved with a child who has suffered harm, or appears to be likely to suffer harm, may find the situation stressful and upsetting. We will support such staff by providing an opportunity to talk through their anxieties with and to seek further support such as counselling or regular supervision, as appropriate.
- In order to reduce the risk of allegations being made against adults in the setting, and ensure that they are competent, confident and safe to work with children, they will be made aware of safer working practice guidance and will be given opportunities in training to develop their understanding of what constitutes safe and unsafe behaviour.

Procedure to be followed if an allegation against a member of staff is received

Staff must never investigate an allegation of abuse but must always follow the advice of the Access Centre or other statutory body

When a safeguarding concern involves the behaviour of someone living working or looking after children on the premises, whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere this is the **provider's** responsibility (EYFS 2014, s 3.8), and they must inform Ofsted.

- An allegation may be made by a child, a parent/carer, a member of staff or from an outside agency, and may be verbal or written but should be treated with equal concern
- Confirmation of the allegation in writing will be sought from the person making the allegation, but **action should not be delayed whilst awaiting written confirmation**
- The allegation will be recorded confidentially and stored securely
- The recipient of the allegation will immediately inform the DSL (or deputy DSL
- 0 and the DSL should immediately advise the setting manager and ensure the Registered Person is informed. If the allegation is against the DSL or manager, the member of staff in receipt of the allegation will notify this person's line manager. If the allegation is against the Registered Person the DSL will inform the Access Centre immediately and notify Ofsted

Where the Registered Person is both the manager and the DSL, the person in receipt of the allegation must immediately inform the Access Centre and Ofsted.

- A note will be made of any actions advised by Children's Services Access Centre or by Ofsted and of the date and time they are implemented
- The Registered Person may delegate responsibility for action to the setting manager, but remains accountable for ensuring that the concern is shared **immediately** with the Access Centre, and that Ofsted is notified as soon as possible and within 14 days
- If necessary, the Access Centre will discuss the allegation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). If the allegation meets the threshold criteria for an independent investigation then the LADO will convene a LADO Position of Trust meeting

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- A risk assessment will be carried out as to whether the member of staff involved should be suspended pending the outcome of the LADO Position of Trust meeting. This meeting will determine whether enquiries and assessments by Social Care services are required, whether a police investigation is required, and whether there are implications regarding the alleged perpetrator's suitability to work with/have access to children at the setting

N.B. If an allegation is made directly to the police or Children's Services the Registered Person may be unaware of the allegation until informed of the LADO Position of Trust meeting.

If as a result of the LADO Position of Trust meeting Children's Services Social Care and/or the police decide to carry out an investigation, suspension of the alleged perpetrator will be reconsidered. A risk assessment will be carried out to determine whether the alleged perpetrator should be suspended during the investigation. This may result in the closure of the setting

- We will follow the advice of the Access Centre
- The allegation will be handled in confidence, and not discussed amongst the staff **or with the member of staff involved**, unless advised to do so by the Access Centre
- If an allegation is contained within a wider, more general complaint, the complaint will be recorded following the setting's usual complaints procedure but with care to keep the detail of the allegation itself confidential
- We may need to provide information to support the possible investigation by Social Care or the Police e.g. registers, staff rotas
- Parents/carers will be informed of any allegation involving their child unless by doing so this could put the child or adult in further danger
- We will make alternative staffing arrangements, if the member of staff is suspended, to ensure staffing ratios are met and inform parents/carers about any changes to staff deployment
- If no further action is recommended by the Access Centre or LADO Position of Trust meeting we may still proceed with disciplinary procedures
- If we have concerns about the suitability of the member of staff to continue to work with children there is a statutory duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)
- In all cases where an allegation against a member of staff is made, we will review all policies and procedure and address identified training/supervision needs
- Records of allegations will be retained until the alleged perpetrator reaches normal retirement age, or for 10 years if that is longer.

Whistleblowing

- Our aim is to establish an internal procedure that will enable all adults in the setting to raise serious concerns about any aspect of practice in confidence without fear of reprisal. This will ensure that the setting continues to work within best practice to safeguard children and young people.
- Concerns may be in relation to the actions/behaviours of other staff, students or volunteers, or about something that is perceived as:
 - unlawful
 - failing to comply with the settings policies and procedures
 - poor practice
 - improper conduct.
- Staff should raise concerns with the Manager or Registered Person.
- Concerns should be raised in writing and should include:
 - reference to the fact that it is a whistleblowing disclosure
 - the background and history of the concerns
 - names, address and places (where possible)
 - the reason why the worker is concerned about the situation
- Staff who feel unable to put concerns in writing should speak with the Manager or Registered Person or discuss with their line manager during supervision. Staff may also share concerns directly with Ofsted or the Access Centre where appropriate.

Investigating the concern

- The action taken will depend upon the nature of the concern. All matters raised (with the exception of allegations of abuse against a member of staff/volunteer or unlawful activity) will be investigated internally.
- Some concerns may be resolved by an agreed action or an explanation regarding the concern, without the need for a further investigation.
- The appropriate person/s will investigate the concern thoroughly, ensuring that a written response is provided within 28 days.
- If a malicious allegation is found to have been made it may result in disciplinary action.

Confidentiality

- The setting will do its best to protect the identity of the whistle blower. However, if the concern raised needs to be investigated by an external agency the setting cannot guarantee their anonymity.

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- At any time when dealing with a whistle blowing concern, this policy may be superseded and the Safeguarding/Child Protection Procedure, Management of Allegation Procedure or Complaints Procedure will be followed.

Positive Physical Intervention

- Staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, and that at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury or damage to property.
- We understand that physical intervention of a nature that causes injury or distress to a child may be considered under management of allegations or disciplinary procedures.
- We recognise that touch is appropriate in the context of working with children and all adults in the setting have been given safe working practice guidance to ensure they are clear about their professional boundaries.

E-safety

- Children and young people may expose themselves to danger, whether knowingly or unknowingly, when using the internet and other technologies. Additionally, some young people may find themselves involved in activities which are inappropriate or possibly illegal.
- We therefore, recognise our responsibility to raise staff awareness of these issues and educate our children, teaching them the appropriate actions and critical thinking skills to enable them to remain both safe and legal when using the internet and related technologies.

Mobile phones, cameras and the use of images

- Personal mobile phones and devices which include a camera are not used in the setting.
- Staff should use the setting's number as an emergency contact number.
- Staff, children parents or visitors are not permitted to use mobile phones and camera devices in any areas where children are present. All staff including agency staff will have an allocated locker for mobile phones and other personal belongings to be locked away during working hours.
- Staff must not take or store photographs of children in the setting on their own devices or for personal use.

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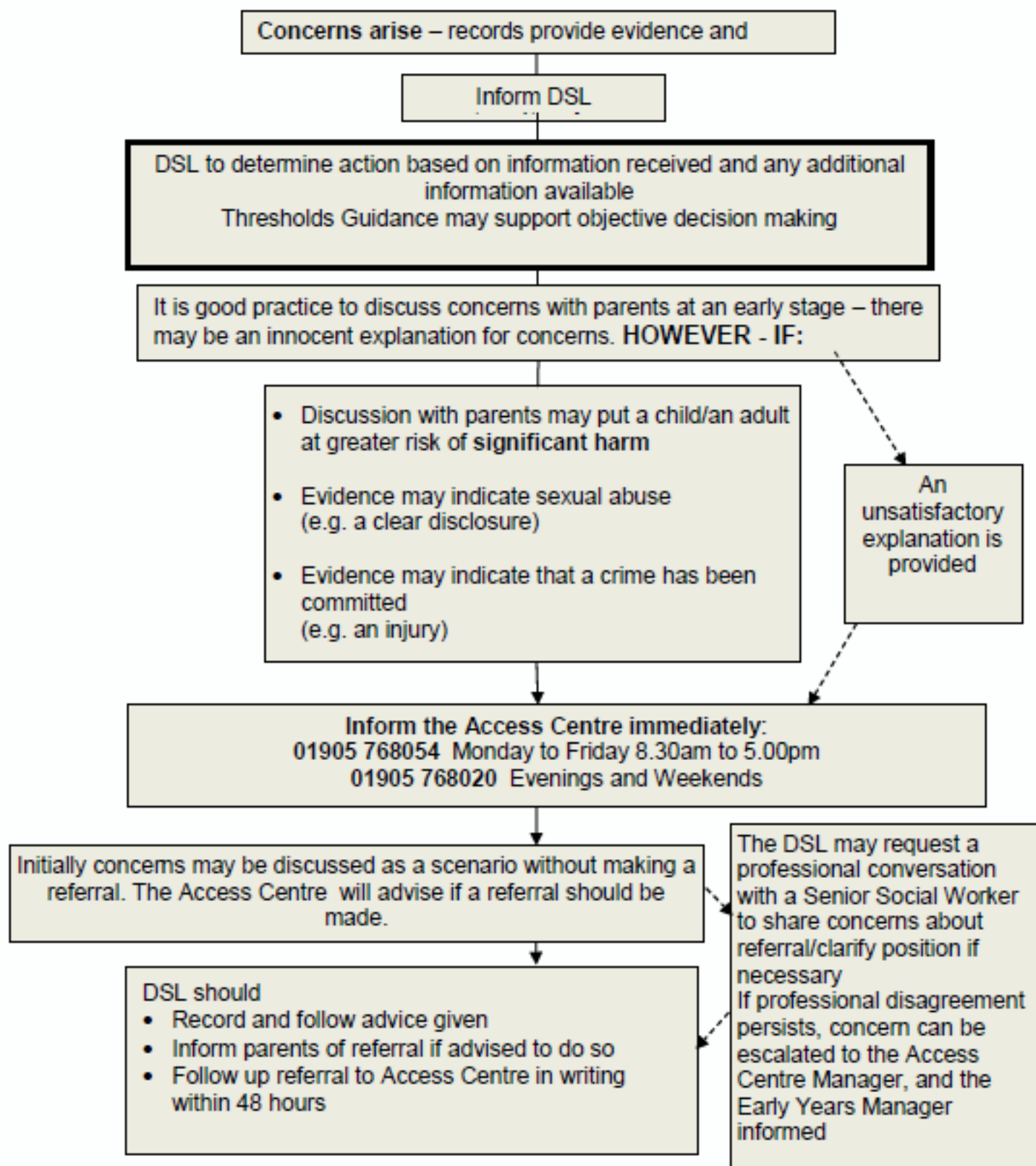
- Under no circumstances should staff post any images which include children at the setting on social media sites.
- Photographs of children may be taken in the interests of recording development and significant events, and cameras are provided by the setting for this. These photographs will remain in the setting or be passed on to parents and carers.
- Consent is always sought when photographing children and additional consideration given to photographing vulnerable children, particularly Looked After Children or those known to be fleeing domestic violence. Consent must be sought from those with parental responsibility (this may include the Local Authority in the case of Looked After Children)
- Permission will be sought if including images of children on our website. In doing so we will consider the risks, will not include vulnerable children and children will always be appropriately clothed.
- Sometimes children and family members will want to take photographs of children for example at special events. On these occasions we will remind parents of our policies and ask them in particular not to post photographs of children other than their own on the internet.

See Safeguarding/Child protection procedure flow chart on the next page.

Safeguarding/child protection procedure (group settings)

We follow the procedure in this flow chart, which has been adapted from 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused – Summary' (DFES 2006) to include guidance from Worcestershire County Council Children's Services.

Referring Concerns to the Access Centre



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Notification (verbal or written) about abuse of a child may be received from another child, parent/carer, member of staff or from an outside agency. The alleged perpetrator may be an adult or child and regardless of whether they are at the setting or not, procedures must be followed.

If the alleged perpetrator is a child in the setting, that child's own safeguarding needs must also be considered.

Steps to be taken:

- If a member of staff believes a child may be at risk of significant harm, e.g. because a child has disclosed possible abuse or displays an injury without a plausible explanation, they must inform the DSL immediately and record their concern
- All personal and sensitive information must be recorded and handled in confidence
- The DSL will gather any additional information available and immediately follow the flowchart to determine action.

The DSL will consider any factors which may affect judgement, and seek advice from the Access Centre (including how and/or if to share information with parents/carers). The child's welfare is always paramount

- If a referral to Children's Social Care is required it will be necessary to share the following information:
 - The name, address, date of birth, ethnic origin and gender of the child
 - If applicable, any disability or special need that the child may have
 - The name of the person with parental responsibility for the child, and any restrictions to legal contact with the child
 - The names and dates of birth of siblings or other children in the household (if known)
 - The names and contact telephone numbers of parents and other carers or close family members if known
 - The name, address and telephone number of the child's GP and Health Visitor if available
 - The nature of the injuries observed, the reason for concerns and any risk indicators (e.g. domestic abuse)
 - Information about other services providing support and the child's thoughts/wishes and feelings
 - The name of the person who has raised the concern and exactly what the concern is
 - The parents'/carers'/child's first language

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- When making the referral it is usually good practice to discuss concerns with the parents/carer first. However, **if it is believed that:**
 - Discussion with parents may put the child/an adult at greater risk of harm
 - Evidence may indicate sexual abuse (e.g. a clear disclosure)
 - Evidence may indicate that a crime has been committed (e.g. an injury)
 - Evidence of Aggravating Factors (domestic abuse, substance misuse or parental mental ill health – the toxic trio)

Staff will ALWAYS SEEK ADVICE from the Access Centre BEFORE discussing concerns with parents

- The Access Centre will advise staff what information should be shared with the parents/carers, if any, at this stage. The setting will at all times follow instructions from the Access Centre
- A telephone referral should be followed up in writing within 48 hours
- If staff have general concerns about a child's welfare e.g. have logged several minor concerns over a period of time, or have observed that a child's demeanour has changed without a plausible explanation, staff will discuss their concerns with the DSL. The DSL may:
 - Contact the Access Centre for further advice
 - Recommend discussion with parents/carers
 - Consider Early Help
 - Suggest signposting to Children's Centre services
 - Continue to monitor the situation
- Effective record keeping must be maintained by all staff at all times
- Within 24 hours following a referral to the Access Centre, the referrer should expect to receive feedback about the course of action to be taken. The DSL should document this and follow any instructions from the Access Centre.
- N.B. All staff have a duty to escalate significant concerns (e.g. directly to the Provider or to Children's Services Access Centre) if their concerns about a child or member of staff are not shared by the DSL or the setting manager.

Managing a Disclosure

- Staff in settings are in a unique position to observe children's behaviour over time and often develop close and trusting relationships with children. If a child discloses directly to a member

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of staff, they will listen carefully to what is said and ask only open questions such as 'Tell me what happened.' They will not ask closed questions or ask a child to repeat the disclosure to another staff member, and they will not begin an investigation.

- They will report immediately to the DSL and complete a hand-written record as soon after the disclosure as possible, using the child's words as far as possible and using body maps to record any observed injuries.
- Where a child discloses safeguarding allegations against another child, the DSL will seek advice from the Access Centre before commencing an investigation or contacting parents.

Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and children's welfare is paramount