

MERESIDE FARM SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Setting details

Setting Name	Mereside Farm Nursery
Designated Safeguarding Leads	Terri Carter, Christine Hewitt, Ruth Lowe, Melissa Burke
Registered Provider	Ruth Lowe
Last Reviewed	August 2018
Due for Review	August 2019

Mereside Farm Children's Nursery comes under the jurisdiction of Worcestershire in terms of Safeguarding Policy and procedure. However we use individual children's postcodes if reporting concerns to Children's social care, so would notify Solihull, Birmingham or Worcestershire dependant on this. If unsure call the area you believe to be correct and they can redirect.



- Contact the **Family Front Door** on **01905 822 666** from Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.00pm (until 4:30pm on a Friday)

Out of office hours (5.00pm to 8.30am weekdays and all day weekends and bank holidays) contact the **Emergency Duty team on 01905 768020**



Opening hours:

Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

Emergency out-of-hours:

Telephone: **0121 675 4806**

Telephone: **0121 303 1888**



To report a child or young person at risk call 0121 788 4333 (Monday to Thursday 8.45am - 5.20pm, Friday 8.45am - 4.30pm).

If you are calling out of working hours (Evenings, weekends or bank holidays) please call

0121 605 6060.

Family Front Door

01905 822666 Monday to Friday

8.30am to 5.00pm

01905 768020 Evenings and Weekends

Police 24hrs non-emergency

101

Emergency

999

NSPCC Helpline

0808 800 5000

Ofsted

0300 123 1231

Community Social Worker

Family Front Door – 01905 822666

Any allegations made about a member of staff must be passed to a DSL immediately.

The Family front door should be called on the number above and advice sought from the LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) Ofsted must be informed of all allegations against a staff member.

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' 2018 and the recommendations of Worcestershire Safeguarding Children's Board.

We fully recognise our responsibilities for safeguarding children and our policy applies to all who work in and access 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 necessary steps are taken to keep children safe and well
- Raising awareness of child protection issues and equipping children with the skills needed to keep themselves safe
- Implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and recording 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
- Mobile phone and camera 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 whilst in our care and beyond where applicable
- Be alert to any issues for concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere and ensure any key information is shared with the DSL and other professionals where relevant.
- Follow all policies and procedures of the nursery and notify the relevant person or agency without delay if concerns arise

- 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 warnings that may affect their suitability to work with children.
- Notify the Manager/deputy or owner if there is an unexplained absence on day one of the absence for all children, including those who are subject to a child protection plan; and telephone parents to enquire as to the reason for the absence. Following up with a DSL if they cannot be reached or there is a concern.
- Notify the Manager/Deputy or owner if a child makes any accusation against a member of staff, irrelevant of circumstances.

In addition Mereside Farm will:

- Ensure that the nursery implements 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
- Ensure that there is at least one member of staff who will take on the responsibilities of the DSL and that there will be DSL present at all times when children are present.
- Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on the nursery and staff for safeguarding and child protection by making the policy available to parents
- Operate safer recruitment practices through the use of interview (with practice evaluation wherever possible) checks on identification, right to work in the UK, qualifications, DBS checks and references. Also using close monitoring during the probationary period.
- Ensure that all staff have up to date knowledge of safeguarding issues, have access to training where appropriate and work alongside colleagues who are trained whilst training is pending.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand their responsibility for referring any concerns to the DSL 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 our 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;
- Ensure all staff are aware of our safeguarding policies and procedures and they are discussed at team meetings to refresh.
- Provide information which enables staff to identify signs of possible abuse and neglect in a timely way and respond appropriately.

- Ensure that staff have 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 **(Our DSL's are listed at the start of this policy)**
- 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' **Our copy is located in the office on the notice board**
- 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 Service 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 as soon as possible and always within 14 days, of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working or looking after children on the premises and 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's will:

- Attend training up to the correct level and renew this every two years.

- Liaise with local statutory children's services agencies and with the WSCB where needed
- Raise awareness of the nursery's safeguarding policies, procedures and systems, among staff, parents and carers.
- Ensure that all adults in the setting understand and are able to implement the policies and procedures.
- Support others as necessary in seeking advice and/or making a referral
- 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 nursery.
- 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 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's are, who acts in their absence and where contact details for Children's Social care are located.
- All staff will receive this policy on during their induction to inform them of safeguarding procedures and basic child protection information relating to signs and symptoms of abuse, how to manage a 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. This will be accessed as soon as available via Worcestershire.

- Those with specific responsibility for safeguarding children will undertake DSL training, updated every two years and undertake some form of training once every 12 months (In house, online attend a forum etc)

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 discussions 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 by being open and honest during induction periods, having safeguarding information on display around our building and following explaining safeguarding procedures when in use, for example phoning when children are absent.

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 recorded on a safety and welfare concern form or allegation of abuse form dependant on the nature of the disclosure.
- All records of a child protection nature will be passed to a 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.
- 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 nursery 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 nursery 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 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
- Notifying Children's Social Care Services immediately there is a significant concern
- Providing continuing support to a child about whom there have been concerns when they leave the setting by ensuring that appropriate information is forwarded confidentially to the new setting. This should be shared with the DSL or appropriate senior staff member and in a secure manner.

Supporting and Supervision of Staff

- We recognise that staff working in the nursery 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 from external agencies or regular supervision, as appropriate.
- In order to reduce the risk of allegations being made against adults in the nursery, 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 team meetings and supervisions 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 Family Front Door (01905 822 666), LADO 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 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 and the DSL should immediately advise the setting manager and the Registered Person. Worcestershire's family front door must be notified immediately followed by Ofsted. 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 Family front door 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 Family Front door (01905 822 666) and Ofsted (0300 123 1231)

- A note will be made of any actions advised by Family Front door or by Ofsted and of the date and time they are implemented
- The Registered Person may delegate responsibility for action to the nursery manager, but remains accountable for ensuring that the concern is shared **immediately** with the Family Front door and that Ofsted is notified as soon as possible and within 14 days.
- If necessary, the Family Front Door will discuss the allegation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or pass the member of staff direct to the LADO for the allegation to be discussed. If the allegation meets the threshold criteria for an independent investigation then the LADO will convene a LADO Position of Trust meeting
- A decision will be made as to whether the member of staff involved should be suspended pending the outcome of the LADO Position of Trust meeting following advice From the LADO. 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 or 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 staff member whom the allegation concerns will be considered. If they have not been suspended as yet, a decision will be made if this is still the right course of action. This may result in the closure of the setting if this person is the registered person.

- We will follow the advice of the Family Front door and LADO
- 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 LADO/Family front door.
- 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 being mindful of not sharing the reasons.
- If no further action is recommended by the Family Front door 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 we will adhere to our 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 Manager and registered person will investigate the concern thoroughly, ensuring that a written response is provided within 28 days.
- If the concern is regarding the manager it should be passed directly to the Registered person and likewise if the concern is about the registered person the concern must be passed to the manager.
- 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.

- 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, damage to property or to prevent choking (back slaps). A child will only ever be moved away from an area if needed using both hands under their armpits. No physical reprimands or punishments will ever be used.
- 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 nursery have access to safe working practice guidance to ensure they are clear about their professional boundaries.
- We do not deem it acceptable to kiss the children in our care. If children wish to kiss a staff member they will be asked to 'blow a kiss' to ensure professional boundaries are kept.
- Children can be held and comforted in an open and clear way during the nursery day as young children need to be shown affection and comfort.

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.
- Children within Mereside Farm will only have supervised access to the internet and computer games/programs specifically chosen for children.

Mobile phones, cameras and the use of images

- Personal mobile phones and devices which include a camera are not permitted to be used in the nursery in any area where children are located.
- Staff should use the nursery 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 nursery on their own devices or for personal use.
- Under no circumstances should staff post any images which include children at the nursery on social media sites.
- Photographs of children may be taken in the interests of recording development and significant events, and cameras/tablets are provided by the setting for this. These photographs will remain in the nursery or be passed on to parents and carers via our online portal or given to them physically if printed.
- 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.

Social Media

- No staff members are allowed to add/follow etc any parent or other family member of a child including the child themselves on social media. Staff should not indicate where they work on social media sites or make reference to work in anyway. This will be seen as a disciplinary issue and will be taken seriously. There may be occasions where a member of staff is friends with a parent before they attend our nursery and in this case we ask staff members to exercise caution and never make any reference to the nursery via social media or discuss this with parents within the nursery. Such friendships/social media relationships must be declared to the nursery manager and or owners.
- The nursery has a Facebook page which is solely used to promote the nursery and the activities that we do. Any pictures of children will be of them fully dressed and there will be no faces shown on any photograph and no names or other details given.

Radicalisation and extremism

At Mereside farm we recognise our responsibility to ensure that we identify children and families

accessing our nursery who may be vulnerable to radicalisation.

- We will be alert to changes in children's behaviour
- We will be alert to changes in the behaviour of parents and family members
- We will provide a safe environment where children can discuss issues that may be concerning them
- We will provide an environment where children are encouraged to develop positive character traits such as resilience, determination, self esteem and confidence.
- We will report any concerns quickly and confidentially to the Access Centre to seek further advice and the police if necessary.

We promote the fundamental British values of:

- Democracy
- The rule of Law
- Individual liberty
- Mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Peer on peer abuse

At Mereside Farm we will:

- Be alert to the behaviour of children towards each other and raise any concerns with Children's Social care to seek advice if we feel behavior is inappropriate in anyway, for example sexualized behaviour or aggression.
- Be alert to the behaviour of staff towards other staff members and ensure that if any behaviour seen is unacceptable action will be taken in the form of disciplinary action and external agencies will be involved if appropriate and necessary, e.g. police.

Grooming

At Mereside Farm we will:

- Be alert to the behaviour of adults in positions of trust who work at the nursery, the behaviour of adults who visit the nursery, for example other parents an outside services, e.g. photography etc and children's behaviour to each other.
- Adults trying to groom children will try to establish a relationship with a child and the child's family, try to gain their trust or befriend them. A trusting relationship with the family means the parents are less likely to believe potential allegations. Child groomers will look for opportunities

to have time alone with children; they might give gifts to children or money in exchange for sexual contact and grooming can take place over a long period of time.

- It is not uncommon for older children to groom younger children so we must be alert to this possibility.

Female genital mutilation

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a procedure where the female genitals are deliberately cut, injured or changed, but where there's no medical reason for this to be done.

FGM is usually carried out on young girls between infancy and the age of 15, most commonly before puberty starts. It is illegal in the UK and is child abuse.

It is very painful and can seriously harm the health of women and girls.

- **If someone is in immediate danger**, contact the police immediately by dialling 999.
- **If you're concerned that someone may be at risk**, contact the NSPCC helpline on 0800 028 3550 or fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk.

Safeguarding Procedures

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

- 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 Family Front Door BEFORE discussing concerns with parents

- The Family Front door 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 Family Front Door.
- 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 Family Front Door 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 Family Front Door, 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

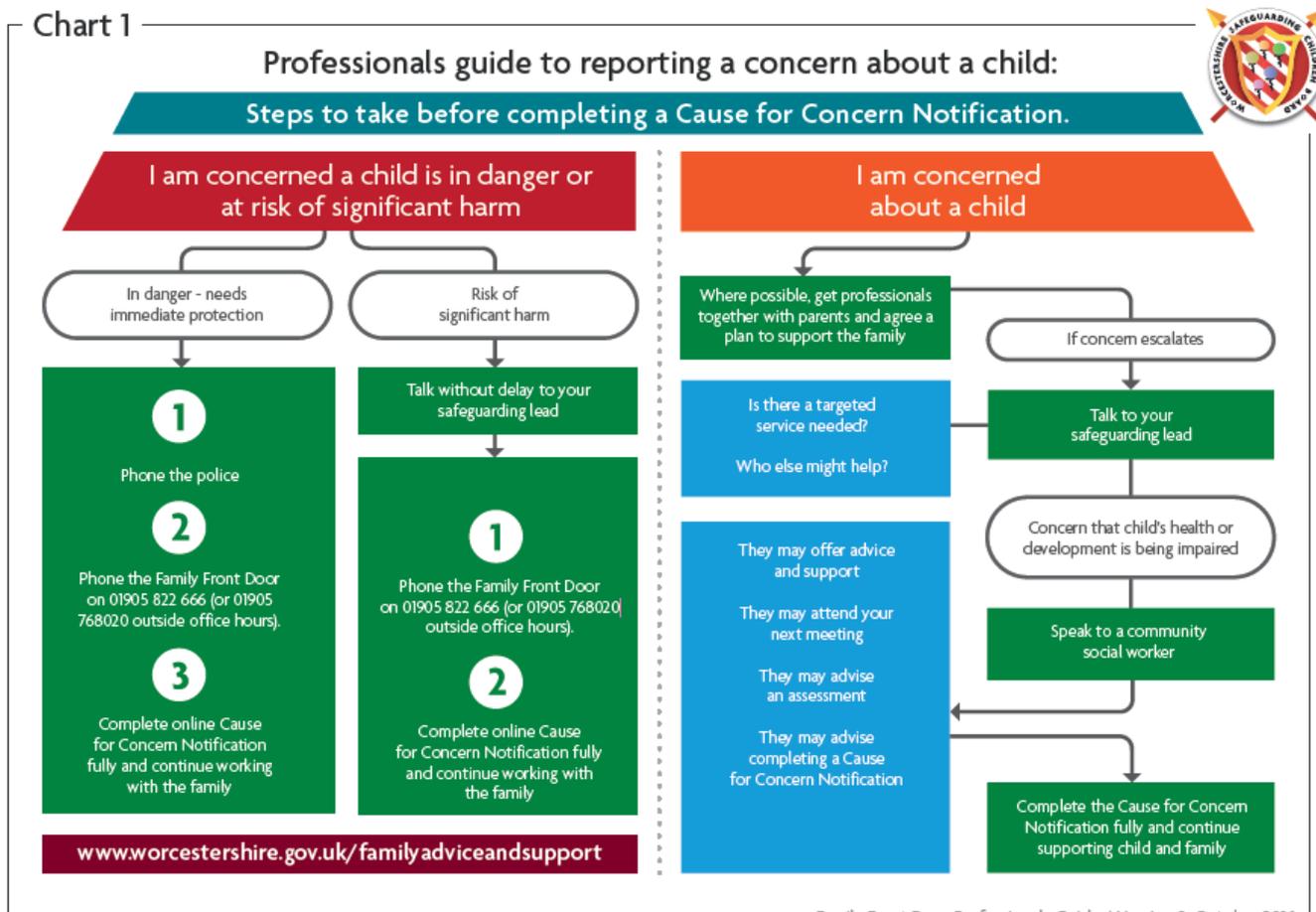
- Staff in settings are in a unique position to observe children's behaviour over time and often develop close and trusting relationships with children. If a child discloses directly to a member of staff, they will listen carefully to what is said and ask only open questions such as 'Tell me what happened.' 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

Chart 1



The following section is taken from Safeguarding and Child Protection Guidance for Private Voluntary and independent Early Years and Childcare Providers

Recognising Abuse and Neglect

Early Years providers have a duty under section 40 of the Childcare Act 2006 to comply with the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS 2017):

- Providers must be alert to any issues for concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere.
- A practitioner must be designated to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children in every setting.
- Providers must train all staff to understand their safeguarding policy and procedures and ensure that all staff have up to date knowledge of safeguarding issues.
- Providers must have regard to the Government's statutory guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015' and to the prevent duty guidance for England and Wales'
- If providers have concerns about children's safety or welfare, they must notify agencies with statutory responsibilities without delay.
- Registered providers must inform Ofsted (or their childminder agency) of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after children at the premises (whether the allegations relate to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere).

Understanding the child's world - observation and assessment

Childcare practitioners are familiar with the many factors which affect how children develop, learn and respond. They are also in a unique position to observe any changes in a child's behaviour or appearance.

There are many factors which contribute to a child's well-being, and their development, the parenting capacity of carers, and the family home environment are demonstrated to be interrelated. The Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families can:

- Enable agencies to consider contributing factors
- Support overall assessment of need when concerns arise
- Enable services to work together in support of the child, taking a common approach to assessment and service planning.

The Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families

ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK DIMENSIONS	
Child's Developmental Needs	
Health	Includes growth and development, physical and mental wellbeing
Education	Includes all aspects of a child's cognitive development from birth
Emotional and Behavioural Development	Concerns the appropriateness of response demonstrated in feelings and actions by a child, initially to parents and caregivers and, as the child grows older, to others beyond the family
Identity	Concerns the child's growing sense of self as a separate and valued person
Family and Social Relationships	Development of empathy and the capacity to 'place self in someone else's shoes'.
Social Presentation	Concerns the child's growing understanding of the way in which appearance, behaviour, and any impairment are perceived by the outside world and the impression being created
Self-care Skills	Concerns the acquisition by a child of the practical, emotional and communication competencies required for increasing independence. Includes early practical skills of dressing and feeding, opportunities to gain confidence and the practical skills to undertake activities away from the family and independent living skills as older children

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Parenting Capacity	
Basic Care	Providing for the child's physical needs, and appropriate medical and dental care
Ensuring Safety	Ensuring the child is adequately protected from harm or danger
Emotional Warmth	Ensuring the child's emotional needs are met and giving the child a sense of being specially valued and a positive sense of own racial and cultural identity
Stimulation	Promoting the child's learning and intellectual development through encouragement, cognitive stimulation and promoting social opportunities
Guidance and Boundaries	Enabling the child to regulate their own emotions and behaviour. The key parental tasks are <i>demonstrating and modelling</i> appropriate behaviour and control of emotions and interactions with others, and <i>guidance</i> which involves setting boundaries, so that the child is able to develop an internal model of moral values and conscience, and social behaviour appropriate for the society within which they will grow up.
Stability	Providing a sufficiently stable family environment to enable a child to develop and maintain a secure attachment to the primary caregiver(s) in order to ensure optimal development
Family and Environmental Factors	

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Family History and Functioning	Family history includes both genetic and psycho-social factors. Family functioning is influenced by who is living in the household and how they are related to the child; significant changes in family/household composition; history of childhood experiences of parents; chronology of significant life events and their meaning to family members; nature of family functioning, including sibling relationships and the impact on the child; parental strengths and difficulties, including those of an absent parent; the relationship between separated parents
Wider family	Those considered members of the wider family by the child and the parents
Housing	Covers basic amenities and facilities appropriate to the age and development of the child and other resident members. Accessibility and suitability to the needs of disabled family members
Employment	Employment in the household, pattern of work and any changes. Income available over a sustained period of time
Family's Social Integration	Exploration of the wider context of the local neighbourhood and community and its impact on the child and parents
Community Resources	Describes all facilities and services in a neighbourhood, including universal services of primary health care, day care and schools, places of worship, transport, shops and leisure activities

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Definitions of abuse and neglect

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm which in itself harms a child. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or more rarely by a stranger, for example via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children. When the abuser is a child it is important to remember that it is very likely that they are or have been a victim of abuse too, and these concerns should also be raised with the appropriate agencies.

- **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

- **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

- **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to

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behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

- **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers), or
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

Neglect may also include unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional needs.

Signs of possible abuse and neglect

- Bruising on parts of the body which do not usually get bruised accidentally, e.g. around the eyes, behind the ears, back of the legs, stomach, chest, cheek and mouth (especially in a young baby), etc
- Any bruising or injury to a very young, immobile baby
- Burns, scald or bite marks
- Any injuries or swellings, which do not have a plausible explanation
- Bruising or soreness to the genital area
- Faltering growth, weight loss and slow development
- Unusual lethargy
- Any sudden uncharacteristic change in behaviour, e.g. child becomes either very aggressive or withdrawn
- A child whose play and language indicates a sexual knowledge beyond his/her years
- A child who flinches away from sudden movement
- A child who gives over rehearsed answers to explain how his/her injuries were caused
- An accumulation of a number of minor injuries and/or concerns
- A child whose attendance is erratic, or suddenly ceases, without any contact from the family
- A parent's behaviour or presentation, e.g. evidence of possible alcohol or drug misuse, mental health difficulties, or domestic violence
- Arrangements for the collection of the child give rise to concern
- Hunger/thirst at the start of the day
- Lack of attention to child's basic hygiene needs
- A child who discloses something which may indicate he/she is being abused

A 'cluster' of these signs (which may occur simultaneously or over time) should increase concern – highlighting the importance of effective record keeping. (See the following section for more advice on record keeping)