



Safeguarding Young Children and Child Protection Procedure

Practitioners have a duty to protect and promote the welfare of children. Due to the many hours of care we are providing, staff will often be the first people to sense that there is a problem. They may well be the first people in whom children confide about abuse.

This statement lays out the procedures that will be followed if we have any reason to believe that a child in our care is subject to welfare issues including physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect.

Our prime responsibility is the welfare and well-being of all children in our care. As such we believe we have a duty to the children, parents and staff to act quickly and responsibly in any instance that may come to our attention. All staff will work as part of a multi-agency team where needed in the best interests of the child.

The primary concern will be the child. Children whose condition or behaviour has given cause for concern will be listened to, reassured and helped to understand that they are respected and valued, and in no way at fault.

Recording suspicions of abuse and disclosures

If a child starts to talk to an adult about potential abuse it is important not to promise the child complete confidentiality. It is vital that the child is allowed to talk openly and disclosure is not forced or words put into the child's mouth. As soon as possible after the disclosure it is vital details are logged down accurately by completing a Safeguarding and Promoting Children's Welfare – Written Observation form, which details

- Child's name
- Age of the child and Date of Birth
- Date and time of the observation
- Observation regarding Child Protection, Development, Behaviour or Health
- Set the Scene
- Observation – ensuring that only the factual information and exact words or actions used are recorded
- Name of the person to whom the concern was reported, with date; and the names of any other person present at the time.
- Any further details as necessary

These records are signed by the person reporting this, the Designated Safeguarding Co-ordinator; it is then dated and kept in a separate confidential file in a locked cabinet situated in the office.

Should a staff member complete a Safeguarding Form, a discussion will take place with the Designated Child Protection Co-ordinator (DSCO), Donna Hubbard and the Operations Director, Jo Brock to establish the most appropriate course of action.

In the event that staff do not feel that appropriate action has been taken they are able to contact the LA agencies direct – all contact numbers are detailed in the safeguarding policy, within this document and displayed in each of the rooms.



Parents

Parents are normally the first point of contact. If a suspicion of abuse is recorded, parents are informed at the same time as the report is made, except where the guidance of the LSCB does not allow this. This will usually be the case where the parent or family member is the likely abuser, or where a child may be endangered by this disclosure. In these cases the investigating officers will inform parents.

It may be thought necessary that through discussions with all concerned the matter needs to be raised with the LSCB, Ofsted or an Early Intervention Single Assessment (EISA) needs to be initiated. Staff involved may be asked to supply details of any information/concerns they have with regard to a child. The nursery expects all members of staff to co-operate with the LSCB and Ofsted in any way necessary to ensure the safety of the children.

Staff must not make any comments either publicly or in private about a parent's or staff's supposed or actual behaviour.

The nursery takes every step in its power to build up trusting and supportive relations among families, staff and volunteers within the nursery. Staff at The Ark will continue to welcome the child and the family whilst enquiries are being made in relation to abuse in the home situation. Parents and families will be treated with respect in a non-judgmental manner whilst any external investigations are carried out in the best interests of the child.

Confidential records kept on a child are shared with the child's parents or those who have parental responsibility for the child, only if appropriate under the guidance of the LSCB with the proviso that the care and safety of the child is paramount. We will do all in our power to support and work with the child's family.

Staff Allegations

If an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteer, we will adhere to the following procedure:

The allegation should be verbally reported to the senior manager on duty. If this person is the subject of the allegation, then this should be reported to the next most senior person at that time.

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) will then be informed immediately in order for this to be investigated by the appropriate bodies promptly:

- The LADO will be informed immediately for advice and guidance
- A full investigation will be carried out by the appropriate professionals (LADO, Ofsted, LSCB) to determine how this will be handled
- The nursery will follow all instructions from the LADO, Ofsted, LSCB and ask all staff members to do the same and co-operate where required
- Support will be provided to all those involved in an allegation throughout the external investigation in line with LADO support and advice
- The nursery reserves the right to suspend any member of staff during an investigation
- All enquiries/external investigations/interviews will be documented and kept in a locked file in the office
- Unfounded allegations will result in all rights being re-instated

- Founded allegations will be passed on to the relevant organisation (police) and will result in the termination of employment. Ofsted will be notified immediately of this decision. The nursery will also notify the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to ensure their records are updated
- All records will be kept until the person reaches normal retirement age or for 10 years if that is longer. This will ensure accurate information is available for references and future DBS checks and avoids any unnecessary re-investigation
- The nursery retains the right to dismiss any member of staff in connection with founded allegations following an inquiry
- Counselling will be available for any member of the nursery who is affected by an allegation, their colleagues in the nursery and the parents.

The Local Authority Designated Officer's responsibility is to:

- liaise with senior managers in organisations in respect of allegations made against people who work with children
- have management oversight of individual cases
- provide advice, guidance and support to employers / organisations
- liaise with the police, children's social care, CPS and other agencies
- ensure that allegations are investigated quickly, thoroughly and consistently

First-Day Calling Procedure

In the event that a child does not arrive at nursery and we do not receive notification from their parent/carer that they will be absent from nursery, we follow our First-Day Calling Procedure.

- 1.) If the child has a regular time of arrival (e.g. Funded started time) then practitioners should check with the Admin team within the first half hour of the child not arriving, to see if any messages have been passed on. In the instance where a child does not have regular arrival time, the Team Leader/Deputy Team Leader will decide when would be a reasonable time to declare the child absent.
- 2.) After 45 minutes from the child's normal arrival time, the Team Leader/Deputy Team Leader will call Parent/Carer 1 and Parent/Carer 2.
- 3.) After 1 hour from the child's normal arrival time, if there has been no response to the first call made then the Team Leader/Deputy Team Leader will try calling Parent/Carer 1 and Parent/Carer 2 again.
- 4.) If after 1hr 30 minutes from the child's normal arrival time, there has been no response from the parent/carers, then the Designated Safeguarding Lead should be notified.
- 5.) A risk assessment should then be completed and further action deemed appropriate will be taken.
- 6.) Emergency contacts may be contacted. If no response from the emergency contacts, we will consider
 - a. Contacting any other agencies that may be involved with the family to ascertain if they have any information which may be helpful, and contact MAST to see if there is an incident that they may be aware of.
 - b. If possible, and appropriate, the DSL and Team Leader / Deputy Team Leader may conduct a home visit.



Assessing the risk:

No apparent risk: It is likely for this child to be absent from nursery without informing beforehand and there have been previous patterns of behaviour. For example, it may be well known that the child goes on holiday at this time of year and parents/carers always fail to inform us. In this instance, we would continue to make enquiries at the child's whereabouts but we would not necessarily notify police at this time.

Low or medium risk: The risk of harm to the child is assessed as a possible but minimal risk or the risk of harm to the child is assessed as likely but not serious. For example, the absent child may not have any additional vulnerability but we have minimal contact information and making parental contact always proves difficult. In this instance, we would contact the police on 101 and make the relevant referral.

High risk: The risk of serious harm to the child is assessed as very likely. This would be relevant for a child who has already been deemed vulnerable. This may be due to risk of neglect or physical, emotional or sexual abuse. We would also consider child sexual exploitation and prevent, in addition to protected characteristics; mental health, force marriage, honour based violence, trafficking, and female genital mutilation. It may also be deemed high risk if a child is absent and the lack of ability to make contact with parents is highly unusual. In this instance, we would assume a need for immediate response and contact the police on 999.

In all instances, the chronologies will be used to document any/all conversations, actions and decisions.

When reporting any information to the police, the following key information will be shared:

- Name/Gender of the child and any aliases with correct spellings
- Child's date of birth
- Description of child
- Home addresses (and any other addresses that may be relevant)
- When the child was last seen
- If the child has been absent without notice before
- If the child/parent/carer has any illnesses, or is taking any medication
- If there are any issues in the household with drug or alcohol misuse
- Any known locations of where they may be with or contacts that we have concerns about



Confidentiality

All suspicions, enquiries and external investigations are kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. Any information is shared under the guidance of the LSCB.

Ofsted	0300 123 1231
Local Safeguarding Children's Board	01422 393296 www.calderdale-scb.org.uk
Local Authority Designated Officer	01422 394088 07769 886090 Cheryl.baxter@calderdale.gcsx.gov.uk
The Emergency Duty Team	01422 288000
LA Prevent Co-ordinator – Arellys Gomez-Reve	07702 656834 Arellys.Gomez-Reve@calderdale.gcsx.gov.uk
MAST	01422 393336 01422 392875 (fax) MAST@calderdale.gcsx.gov.uk
Out of hours call	0845 111 1137
Police Safeguarding Unit	01422 337041