

# Reporting process

## Reacting, recording, and reporting concerns

The protection and safeguarding of children is paramount and should be based on prevention and best practice.

Effective Safeguarding has minimised and will continue to minimise the opportunity for acts of child abuse or harm to children to take place. We recognise, however, that all risk cannot be removed, and child safeguarding concerns will be raised both as part of activity taking place linked to, or recognised by, our organisation.

We have therefore created the following **three stages of action** to be taken for any person involved in our organisation who may have a concern, observe a concern, or have concerns raised to them about a child's wellbeing.

**Stage 1** – React to the concern, disclosure, suspicion, or allegation in a timely and appropriate manner.

**Stage 2** – Record the relevant information.

**Stage 3** – Report the information to the appropriate person(s) and/or organisation(s).

You do not have to decide that a concern or incident is or is not child abuse or a failure to safeguard a child. You do have to refer that concern to seek advice from the appropriate agency so they can make that decision.

## In an emergency

The Manager or their representative will contact the relevant authority if they are unable to get support from either the Safeguarding Support Team or the Safety Support Team.

**When you believe a child has been harmed or may be at immediate risk of harm and you are unable to contact the Safeguarding Team then immediate contact should be made with police, Children's Social Care, Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), NSPCC Child Protection Helpline or other agencies as appropriate.**

**Take the name and contact details of the person you have spoken to and the incident/referral reference number (if applicable) so you have a record and report this to the Safeguarding Team as soon as possible e.g. next working day.**

**If the child requires emergency medical assistance call 999 for an ambulance**

Parents and guardians of the child should be advised of the actions taken **only if they are not implicated/involved in the concern.**

## When should you act?

There are several reasons why you might take action, which may include but are not limited to:

- Something a child has said or disclosed.
- Signs or suspicions of abuse
- Significant and/or unexplained changes in a child's demeanour or behaviour, including self-harm.
- Allegations made against staff or a volunteer (whether against a person as a member, or non-member of Places Leisure staff).
- Allegations made about a parent/guardian, carer or someone not involved in our organisation.
- Concerns about inappropriate behaviour toward a child.
- Allegations or observations of bullying.

## Stage 1 – React

If a child or adult shares a concern or allegation with you:

- Stay calm.
- Reassure the person reporting their concerns that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Listen carefully to what is being said.
- Ensure you don't show upset, disgust, or disbelief at what is being said.
- Be honest and explain that you cannot keep what they are saying a secret and never promise to do so.
- Keep an open mind and don't make assumptions or judgements.
- Ask open questions only if you need to clarify what is being said.
- Reassure the person you take their concerns seriously and tell them the actions that you will or will not be taking.
- Write down what has been said as soon as possible after or during the conversation as appropriate. The Places Leisure Referral Form can be used to record the information.
- Sign and date the referral form and any other paperwork referring to the concern as this could be used at a later date in criminal or care proceedings.
- Report the concern to the Places Leisure Safeguarding Team.

## Never;

- Confront the alleged abuser.
- Make promises you cannot keep.
- Ask leading\* questions or make comments or suggestions.
- Take sole responsibility for dealing with the concern.
- Delay in reporting the concerns to the Places Safeguarding Team.

\*A leading question is one which may prompt the respondent to answer in a particular way. They can lead to false or distorted information. They also create an opportunity for bias as the question will be suggestive of what answer should be given. Try and ask questions objectively to encourage a more accurate response: e.g., Has this happened before? Is anyone else involved? Where did this take place?

# SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

## Stage 2 – Record

EcoOnline should be used as the reporting system for ALL safeguarding incidents, further guidance on how to use EcoOnline to report safeguarding incidents can be found [here](#).

Your report should ideally include:

- Name, address, and date of birth of the child.
- Name, address, and contact details of the parent/guardian.
- Is the parent/guardian aware of the referral?
- Full details of the referral. Ensure the referral details are recorded verbatim i.e. always use the referrer's own words.
- Details of who the allegation is about. If possible, their full name, date of birth, address, relationship with the child concerned and their relationship or position with the organisation (if any).
- Details of any injuries, marks or bruising on the child that are visible to you. A body map template is provided for you to use
- Details of any witnesses.

Some of the above information may not be known or available to you or the organisation. You can only refer the information you have. Referrals should not be delayed to allow for searches for missing information that you may or may not be able to find. It is vitally important that all information is captured and recorded accurately as it was said to you as soon as possible.

## Stage 3 – Report

It is the duty of everyone involved in our organisation to report potential child safeguarding concerns in order to protect children, but it is only for the professionals to decide whether or not abuse has taken place.

We do not attempt to investigate allegations of potential criminal offences. In all cases where it is alleged that indecent images have been taken of a child or are in possession of someone, specific guidance as page 16 must be followed.

A parent/guardian cannot make the decision as to whether a safeguarding concern is disclosed to a statutory agency. If you are not satisfied with the response of a statutory agency when making a referral, please contact the Places Leisure Safeguarding Team. The team will support you to follow up or escalate your concerns with the agency concerned.

If the child is not considered to be at immediate risk of harm contact should be made with the Places Leisure Safeguarding Team with full details of the concern as soon as possible e.g., that, or the next, working day. The Places Leisure Safeguarding Team must always be informed of an incident or concern, regardless of the situation.

Any allegations made against a colleague of Places Leisure will be reviewed by Places Leisure's Serious Case Management Panel, which includes

representatives from our People Services Team, Safeguarding Team and Independent Safeguarding Consultant.