



November 23

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy for Childminders

My responsibility

It is my responsibility as a registered childminder to ensure the safety and promote the welfare of all children in my care. In order to fulfil my responsibility effectively, I will make sure my approach is child centred; therefore, I will consider, at all times, what is in the best interest of the child. I understand that I have a pivotal role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information, and taking prompt action, if children and families are to receive the right help at the right time.

My training

I have a Cache Level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce (Early Learning and Childcare)

I have a Level 3 Paediatric First Aid Certificate

I have a Level 3 Safeguarding children certificate

I have a certificate of achievement in GDPR

My child protection procedure

1. I am aware of the signs and symptoms of child abuse: physical, emotional, and sexual, and those of neglect. I would discuss any concerns with parents at the earliest opportunity if I should:

- notice any significant changes in a child's behaviour or deterioration in a child's well-being
- notice any unexplained bruises or marks
- find that a child's comments gave me cause for concern
- have any reason to suspect abuse or neglect.

I would refer any injury or mark caused by so-called 'disciplining' or 'chastising' a child to First Response.

2. I record accident and incidents in my daily diary and will make a note of any pre-existing injuries. I would record any concerns, including nappy rash*, worrying marks or comments by a child and make a note of the resulting discussion with the parent (this would establish an 'individual safeguarding file' on a child)

3. If, after this discussion with the parents I remain concerned, I will be required to contact Childrens Services and report the matter.

4. I would normally seek consent from parents to make a referral/request for help but parental permission can be by-passed when there are safeguarding concerns. If consent was denied, I would make a note of the reason for by-passing consent.

5. I would always inform parents that I am going to make a referral to Children's services unless I had concerns about the child's safety or the safety of my minded children or my own family.



Responding to allegations

Should there be any allegations of serious harm or abuse about me, or about any person living, working or looking after children alongside me, I must inform the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** within a day, and also inform Ofsted as soon as practicable, but at the latest within fourteen days.

In addition to responding appropriately to allegations, I am aware that I must also inform the LADO within a day if I, or any member of my household or anyone working with the children

- has behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child
- has possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child, or has
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he may pose a risk of harm to children
- behaved in a way that indicates that they may not be suitable to work with children (this could include behaviour outside of the childminding setting)
- If there are concerns about the person's behaviour (assistants or co-childminders) towards their own child/ren or child/ren unrelated to their employment or voluntary work
- Any issues of a safeguarding nature in the assistants or co-childminders personal life that may have an impact on their suitability
- When an allegation is made about abuse that took place some time ago and the accused person may still be working with or have contact with children (non-recent abuse.)
(*Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018*)

In addition to contacting the LADO and informing Ofsted, I would prioritise the children in my care, which is to consider if there is a child or children at risk. If there was a child at risk, I would follow the Child Protection Procedures and contact First Response.

The Herefordshire LADO is Terry Pilliner who can be contacted as follows:

Email: LADO@herefordshire.gov.uk

or tpilliner@herefordshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01432 261739

~Child Welfare – MASH **01432 260800**.

Disqualification

I am aware that I must inform Ofsted within 14 days if ever I became disqualified from providing childcare as a result of a serious conviction, or disqualified by association because a member of my household has been convicted of a serious offence, such as those that are listed in the statutory guidance document '*Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006*' All assistants will be required to fill out a '*disqualifications by association*' form before they start at my setting, and will be required to inform me if there are any updates that I am required to know.

The use of mobile phones and cameras

While I am caring for children phone calls are kept as brief as possible so as not to detract from the quality of supervision of the children.

I am aware that phone cameras, and photographs in general, can be used inappropriately and I will supervise or veto, if necessary, the use of any mobile phone or camera within the vicinity of my minded children, whether within my home or while on outings.

I seek permission from parents to take photographs of their children's learning journey and make it clear how I take and share those photographs with parents, whether by mobile phone or by camera.

Electronic devices are PIN protected

E safety

I am aware of my responsibility to safeguard children and practitioners online. With internet enabled devices being a part of everyday life for children, early years settings provide a vital foundation for online safety education in today's digital age.

I will refer to 'Safeguarding children and protecting professionals in early years settings: online safety considerations' to provide a greater awareness for how E safety will be promoted for all (Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage, 2021).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-protecting-professionals-in-early-years-settings-online-safety-considerations>

Visitors

While I am childminding, I may have visitors, such as another childminder, keeping the benefits to the children in mind.

If any tradesperson or casual caller has to come into the house when my minded children are present, I will check their identity. I will never leave minded children unsupervised with a visitor.

Children's mental health

I am aware that children's behaviour reflects their state of mind – behaviour is a form of communication. Mental health problems in some cases can be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation (*Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 point 180*). I know that where children have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood (*Working Together to Safeguard Children, page 15*). As the DSL for my setting, if I am concerned that the cause of a child's distress may be as a result of abuse, then I would follow the child protection procedures.

I know that only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis, however, as a practitioner I am well placed to observe children on a day-to-day basis and identify those whose behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a social, emotional or mental health need.

I know that if I am concerned about a child's ongoing social, emotional or mental health needs, with parental consent I can consult with the Childminder SENCO to discuss appropriate referral to, for example, a Specialist Children's Centre Inclusion Practitioner (SCCIP), or an Educational Psychologist.

Responding to different types of abuse

Children missing education

"Children missing from school can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues including neglect or exploitation" (*Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022, 174*). This would also include children who were in receipt of the Free Early Educational Entitlement, two-year-old funding or entitled to Enhanced provision care.

Within the context of private childcare, while there is no obligation for children to attend, nevertheless I am aware that sometimes missing attendance could be indicative of a safeguarding concern. If there is an unexplained or uncharacteristic absence, I will exercise some 'professional curiosity', without being intrusive.

- I will endeavour to keep in contact with parents and children (phone and email).
- If I could not contact the parents, depending on the extent of my concern, I would consider contacting the parent's emergency contact.
- I would consider contacting Children's services for some advice about how to respond, if I was worried about a child who was not attending my setting. If children are already known to be vulnerable and have a Social Worker/ Placement Officer I would let the professional know of any concerns, including non-attendance.

"Children missing in education can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, 'honour'- based abuse or risk of forced marriage" (*Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022, 143*).

Cuckooing

I have an awareness for the criminal practice for cuckooing, the exploitation risk of vulnerable adults.

Cuckooing is where a criminal (or abuser), or someone connected with them, befriends an individual who lives on their own. The criminal then moves in and uses the property to operate unlawfully or carry out an abusive activity. The person being cuckooed is often lonely, isolated, and vulnerable. I am aware that Cuckooing can affect the victim's ability to parent and to meet a child's needs.

Domestic Abuse

I am aware that domestic abuse can involve any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, or violence between family members. Children who witness domestic violence and abuse (even if they are not physically present) may feel fear, guilt, shame, sleep disturbances, sadness, depression, and anger (at both the abuser for the violence and at the other parent for being unable to protect them).

I am aware that the younger the child, the higher the risk to their safety, including to an unborn child. I am aware that domestic abuse can often go hand in hand with other forms of child abuse. I am aware that domestic abuse can be triggered by pregnancy and there is, in fact, an increased risk of violence after partners separate. I am aware that domestic abuse can affect the victim's ability to parent and to meet a child's needs.

I know that any conversations with a parent who is experiencing coercive behaviour, should be held in private with that parent alone. I need to think about the safety of the victim and child and bear in mind that an abuser may not seem abusive to me.

- I can make a request for help from Children's services
- if there is serious physical violence or if a child is at risk of physical violence by being in the line of fire or if they seek to protect the adult victim; I would make a child protection referral to First Response
- I would call 999 if there is immediate danger.

Extra-familial abuse / contextual safeguarding

I am aware that abuse of older children can take place in contexts beyond the home and family. Extra-familial abuse is sometimes referred to as 'contextual safeguarding' and can include child sexual exploitation (CSE), for example, encouraging a child to share an image of themselves undressed ('sexting'); and/or child criminal exploitation (CCE) of children, for example, 'county lines' when a criminal gang use children to store, supply and sell drugs and money. Children can be exploited by adult males or females, as individuals or in groups. They may also be exploited by other children, who themselves may be experiencing exploitation – where this is the case, it is important that the child perpetrator is also recognised as a victim.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Further information on signs of a child's involvement in sexual exploitation is available in Home Office guidance: [Child sexual exploitation: definition and guide for practitioners - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612212/Child_sexual_exploitation_definition_and_guide_for_practitioners_-_GOV.UK.pdf)

County lines

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line". This activity can happen locally as well as across the UK - no specified distance of travel is required. Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including any type of schools. Children are also increasingly being targeted and recruited online using social media. Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs can manufacture drug debts which need to be worked off or threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network.

Further information on the signs of a child's involvement in county lines is available in guidance published by the Home Office and The Children's Society. County Lines Toolkit For Professionals [Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: County Lines guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612212/Child_sexual_exploitation_definition_and_guide_for_practitioners_-_GOV.UK.pdf)

(Extracted from: Keeping children safe in education 2022, Annex B: Further information)

FGM

Female circumcision is illegal in the UK, and it is an offence to take UK nationals abroad to aid, abet or carry out FGM. I have a statutory responsibility to safeguard children from being abused through FGM. If I am concerned that a girl is at risk of FGM this is a child protection issue and must be documented and reported to First Response and or the police.

Some warning signs that may indicate a girl is at risk of FGM include:

- Parents requesting an extended leave from school on top of school holidays
- If a girl comes from a country that has high prevalence of FGM
- Mother and other siblings have already undergone FGM
- Child may indicate that they are going for a special event.

If I have suspicions that a girl may have been subjected to FGM or that she is at risk of being subjected to FGM either in this country or abroad, I should make a referral to First Response. I am aware that a 'known' case of FGM must be reported to the police as a crime, using Tel 101.

Grooming

I am aware of the kinds of inappropriate adult behaviour towards children which are the indicators of sexual abuse in a perpetrator, and to which I must respond appropriately and promptly.

Honour Based Violence/Abuse

I am aware of Honour based violence, and how this is a collection of practices, which are used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. Such violence can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code.

It can be distinguished from other forms of violence, as it is as it is often committed with some degree of approval and/or collusion from family and/or community members. Women, men and younger members of the family can all be involved in the abuse. Honour'-based abuse includes Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage.

The Prevent Duty

Childminders and assistants should be aware of the Prevent Duty which is a safeguarding responsibility on all childcare providers and schools, to protect children/teenagers from being radicalised into a criminal act of violence, or from being affected by the radicalisation of those around them (such as being taken by a parent to Syria). As with managing other safeguarding risks, there isn't a single way of identifying an individual who is being radicalised, but causes of concern could be, for example: someone who is viewing extreme, violent propaganda online, or expressing extremist views which may lead to an act of terrorism.

It is my responsibility to know how to refer someone who may be vulnerable to radicalisation, or the effect of radicalisation, and know how to respond. I will be alert to changes in children's behaviour or circumstances which could indicate that they may need help or protection. I understand that extremist ideology, leading to acts of violence, can be promoted by far-right ideologies, as well as from ISIL (also known as ISIS or Da'eesh).

If I observe any behaviour of concern I would raise the matter with, school, Children's services and the police.

In respect of the Prevent Duty and in keeping with the ethos of the EYFS, I will promote British Values, which are: democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs.

I will promote British Values in an age-appropriate way, ensuring that children: learn right from wrong; mix and share with other children; value other's views; know about similarities and differences between themselves and others; and can question or challenge negative attitudes and stereotypes in others.

Childminder assistants: suitability and induction

If I work with an assistant, that assistant must have an Ofsted, Enhanced DBS. I must also inform Ofsted [Childminders: report new adults in the home - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk) and receive 'a letter of suitability', following the DBS and Social Care check.

If I recruit an assistant/student placement who is not a member of my household, in addition to the Ofsted checks on suitability, I myself will also vet the assistant by gathering: references; the person's right to work in the UK; employment history; record of qualification; information about health; and by noting the DBS outcome.

Before recruiting an assistant, I explain my responsibility with regard to 'disqualification by association' and ask the assistant to sign a self-declaration about not only their own suitability but also the suitability of anyone they live with. I should make it clear to assistants that they should inform me of any change in their circumstances with regard to convictions while they are working with me.

When assistants start work, I have an induction process covering the policies and procedures of my setting, including a 'staff behaviour policy/code of conduct' which describes my expectations of the assistant with regard to: supervision of the assistant; confidentiality with regard to the minded children and their families and also to my own family; taking photographs of children; the use of mobile phones within my setting; electronic safety (esafety) within my setting; and the appropriate use of social networking sites.

Low-level concerns. In accordance with *Keeping Children in Safe in Education 2022*, my Staff Behaviour Policy/Code of Conduct should include how I respond to low-level concerns about my staff/assistants. I record low-level concerns. I should identify inappropriate behaviour early and deal with it, to minimize the risk of abuse. I will be clear about professional boundaries and the values of my setting at the outset.

Low-level concerns are concerns which are below the harm threshold: not serious enough to refer to the LADO, but which cause unease or nagging doubt. A low-level concern does not mean that it is insignificant, for example, the use of inappropriate language; having favourites; humiliating a child, commenting about work on Facebook. I know I can contact the LADO for advice about whether or not a low-level concern meets the threshold to be reported to the LADO.

If I suspected that a minded child in my setting (or indeed any child) had been abused by an assistant, I should inform the LADO (see telephone number at the end of this policy)

My DSL responsibility to assistants

I understand that I have the lead responsibility for safeguarding within my childminding setting. When working with any assistant (including family members) I must ensure that they have an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues and understand the procedure to be followed in the event of any concern being raised. I understand that I should provide supervision to my assistant, ensuring that there is opportunity to raise any issues or concerns about children's well-being.

Assistants and whistleblowing

At induction I make it clear to my assistant that they can bring their concerns or grievances to me in the first instance (an assistant can use the ACAS helpline <https://www.employment-advice-bureau.org/employees/> for grievances about employment conditions), but if the assistant **had a serious concern about the quality of early years practice** within my setting they should know that they can phone the **Ofsted CIE line** Tel: 0300 123 4666 or email their concern to enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

If an assistant ever thought that I (the childminder) was being **abusive** to a child, they should phone **the LADO** (see telephone number on grid at end of policy). It depends on the threshold of the concern whether Ofsted or the LADO is contacted: if an assistant was unsure as to whether or not their concern met the threshold for the LADO, in other words, whether or not it was an 'allegation', then the assistant can consult with the LADO about this.

Date this policy was reviewed.....November 2023.....

Advice about whistle-blowing childminder-colleagues

From time-to-time childminders may be uncomfortable about the quality of care provided by a colleague-childminder. It is best for childminders to be professional and upfront with each other and to try and support the development of good practice through discussion. Childminding Support Workers and Lead Teachers have a 'support and challenge' function, but if they have not witnessed an actual incident there are issues of confidentiality, so it tends to be better that the childminder talks directly to their colleague-childminder.

Understandably childminders are reluctant to report a colleague to Ofsted, however when there is harm or potential harm, whistleblowing is necessary to ensure the well-being of a child or children. The CIE Ofsted line Tel: 0300 123 4666 or enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk can be used to report serious concerns about childcare practice.

At the level of harm or potential harm, concerns should be reported to the LADO. If in doubt about what would constitute an allegation of abuse, contact the LADO anyway for advice on thresholds.