

21. Child protection and safeguarding – A quick guide for staff

Recognise:

Any child, in any family, in any school, could become a victim of abuse. Staff should always maintain an attitude of “It could happen here!”

Neglect	Emotional	Physical	Sexual
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tired/listless Unkempt Poor hygiene Untreated medical conditions Medical appointments missed Constantly hungry or stealing food Over eats when food is available Poor growth Poor/late attendance Being regularly left alone or unsupervised Dressed inappropriately for the weather condition Having few friends and/or being withdrawn Ill equipped for school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failure to thrive Attention seeking Over ready to relate to others Low self esteem Apathy Depression/self harm Drink/drug/solvent abuse Persistently being over protective Constantly shouting at, threatening or demeaning a child Withholding love and affection Regularly humiliating a child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unexplained injuries Injuries on certain parts of the body Injuries in various stages of healing Injuries that reflect an article used Flinching when approached Reluctant to change Crying/ instability Afraid of home Behavioural extremes Apathy/depression Wanting arms and legs covered even in very hot weather 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age inappropriate sexual behaviour/knowledge/promiscuity Wary of adults/ running away from home Eating disorders/depression/ self harm Unexplained gifts/ money Stomach pains when walking or sitting Bedwetting Recurrent genital discharge Sexually transmitted diseases

Further information about the four categories of abuse can be found in our school’s Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and in Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 1/Annex A/Annex B.

Respond:

Staff members may notice small changes in appearance, behaviour or welfare of a child, as illustrated in the above table. Staff should respond accordingly to help the child in their care as soon as possible, i.e. providing child with something to eat, comforting that child, taking time to talk with them. Staff should take action in recording and reporting concerns as detailed below.

In situations of a disclosure by a child, we recognise that it takes a lot of courage for a child to disclose they are being abused. They may feel ashamed, guilty or scared, their abuser may have threatened that something will happen if they tell, they may have lost all trust in adults or believe that what has happened is their fault. Sometimes they may not be aware that what is happening is abuse.

During a disclosure from a pupil, staff will:

- **listen** to what the child has to say and allow them to speak freely.
- **remain calm** and not overact or act shocked or disgusted – the pupil may stop talking if they feel they are upsetting the listener.
- **reassure** the child that it is not their fault and that they have done the right thing in telling someone.
- **not be afraid of silences** – staff must remember how difficult it is for the pupil and allow them time to talk.
- take what the child is disclosing **seriously**.
- **ask open questions** and avoid asking leading questions. (Use **TED** – Tell me.... Explain... Describe....)
- avoid jumping to conclusions, speculation or make accusations.
- **not automatically offer any physical touch as comfort. It may not be comforting to a child who is being abused.**
- avoid saying things such as ‘I do wish you had told me about it when it started’ may be the staff member’s way of being supportive but may be interpreted by the child to mean they have done something wrong.
- **tell the child what will happen next, that they cannot keep secrets and that information will be shared to ensure the right level of support is given.**
- Recognise that it is **not your job to investigate**. However, it is **important to ascertain relevant information**.

Record:

All concerns, however small, must be recorded and shared with the DSL as this information could provide the ‘missing piece’ of the bigger picture of the lived experience for the child, e.g. Child A did not have breakfast this morning and I have noticed that their uniform has been dirty and unwashed for the last few days and face and hands unwashed. I have noticed a change in Child B’s behaviour today, they are very withdrawn and quiet which is unusual.

Staff members **MUST** be responsible for ensuring they have access to the electronic safeguarding system and request further support/training if necessary.

FLOW CHART A: First Federation Trust Responding and Recording Procedure

1. In the instance of a concern being noticed, consider the indicators of abuse and how you can support that child now. In the instance of a disclosure by a pupil, offer reassurance, listen and take seriously what is being said. Never promise to keep secrets or be persuaded by the child, young person or their family not to take action. Recognise that it is not your job to investigate. However, it is important to ascertain relevant information. Ask open questions (Use **TED** -Tell, Explain, Describe to me...). Explain you will need to pass this information on to an appropriate adult, i.e. DSL/DDSL, to help that child get the support they need.



2. Write up the concern/conversation as soon as possible onto the schools electronic safeguarding system. Staff should make this a matter of priority. A clear and comprehensive summary of the concern should be made. In a situation of a disclosure, staff should record details of what the child said in their own words, where the disclosure was made and who was present. (If the electronic safeguarding system is unavailable, staff should use a paper ‘Expression of Concern’ form, appendix 22 of Safeguarding Policy).



3. In some cases, a body map will need to be completed as appropriate, i.e. bruises/physical marks.



5. Staff may also discuss their concerns in person with the DSL. If staff have a serious safeguarding concern, they should speak with the DSL **immediately**. All paper records should be handed to DSL.

Confidentiality:

- All staff will understand that child protection issues warrant a high level of confidentiality, not only out of respect for the pupil and staff involved but also to ensure that information being released into the public domain does not compromise evidence.
- Data Protection Act 2018 is not a barrier to sharing information where the failure to do so would place a child at risk of harm.
- All staff must be aware that they cannot promise a child to keep secrets which might compromise the child’s safety or wellbeing
- However, we also recognise that all matters relating to child protection are personal to children and families. Therefore, in this respect they are confidential and the Headteacher or DSLs will only disclose information about a child to other members of staff on a need-to-know basis