## Safeguarding children and vulnerable people

In this section we will discuss how to safeguard children and vulnerable people and what you should do if you have concerns. The take away message you are responsible for reporting any concerns no matter how small to someone as soon as you can.

**Safeguarding definition**

* Safeguarding is a term, which is broader than ‘child protection’ and relates to the action taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. Gov.uk (2017). Our job is to ensure all children we come into contact with are children that can grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care. Therefore, we must take action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

**Shared responsibility**

Safeguarding children and vulnerable people is a shared responsibility therefore we all have duty to make sure that if we suspect a child (any child you come into contact with) or person is not being safeguarded we report it to the right people as soon as possible.

* We have a duty to protect all children that we come into contact with
* This includes all children we see not just the children we work with

**Examples of concern to report**

* Protecting children from maltreatment
* Protecting children from abuse and or neglect
* Preventing impairment of children’s health wellbeing and development
* Other SG issues include but are not limited to bullying, radicalisation, sexual exploitation, grooming, allegations against staff, incidents of self-harm, forced marriage, and Female Genital Mutilation.

**Who are the right people to report to (in no particular order)**

* Designated safeguarding lead in HeadStart and in school
* Programme consultant
* Senior team in HeadStart
* Class teacher
* Class teaching assistant
* SENCo
* Senior Leadership team in school or nursery (Head teacher, assistant head)

Do not report the issue to your family or other members of the school or public, you could be held liable for breaching child confidentiality and data protection.

**What to do if you witness a child or vulnerable person not being safeguarded.**

* Fill in the incident form and inform admin and your supervisor or one of the people listed above ASAP (within 12 hours)
* Be sure to use observable factual information (less subjective and more objective)
* Inform the child, parent, school that you will have to let someone know what has happened.
* Do not promise them anything or promise to keep the concern a secret.

**What to do if a person (child or adult) tells you about a safeguarding incident**

* Listen to what they say and do not interrupt them
* Keep facial expressions and sympathy statements to a minimum and do not over react to what they say
* Make sure to thank them for telling you and use non-judgmental language
* Tell them that you will need to report what they have said
* Write down what they said as soon as you can (make sure to date and sign the incident form)
* Tick the safeguarding incident box
* Report the incident by telling one of the people listed above what has happened. Give them a copy of the SG form you have filled out.
* Email and call the DSL in both HS and the school to inform of the situation.

**Under no circumstances is it acceptable or appropriate to discuss the SG concern with parents or non-essential people. This is a breach in the child data protection act and confidentiality act. If this happens, you may be suspended without pay pending an investigation and your contract terminated.**

**Designated Safeguarding leads in HeadStart**

Report your concerns to these people or ask general safeguarding advice

* Naomi Hantschar
* Cynthia Ewers-Cobb
* Charlotte Cooper

Make sure you have copies of safeguarding and incident forms with you at all times. It is a good idea to have spare copies in your programme folder.

**Safeguarding Scenarios**

**Beth, Aged 8**

Beth is known for being an inquisitive and chatty member of the class. Recently, however, you have noticed a complete change in her behaviour. For the last couple of weeks, Beth has been much quieter and withdrawn. You also notice that although it is a very hot summer and Beth wore dresses a few weeks ago, she has recently been consistently wearing clothes that cover her whole body.

**Safeguarding Issue?**

This has the potential to be a safeguarding issue.

Here, you have no evidence that Beth is at risk of harm. However, as her teaching assistant, you know the child well. You have your suspicions that Beth’s drastic change in personality may be a result of physical abuse occurring. This is coupled with the fact that Beth is standing out wearing what is considered winter uniform in hot temperatures when a few weeks before she was wearing summer dresses.

### HeadStart Speech & Behaviour Clinic-Safeguarding Form

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date | Specialist |
|  |  |

|  |
| --- |
| Describe what you saw/ were told |
|  |

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| --- |
| What did you say/do? |
|  |

|  |
| --- |
| Who have you informed/ what are the next steps? |
|  |

Print name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date:\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_\_