Safeguarding Policy - What is Child abuse?

**Child abuse is defined in the Children Act 1989 as;**

**…”*actual or likely harm to the child,* where harm includes both ill treatment (including sexual abuse and non-physical ill-treatment such as emotional abuse) *and the impairment of health and development,* health meaning physical or mental health, and development meaning physical, intellectual emotional, social or behavioural development.”**

Types of abuse could be neglect, physical, sexual or emotional

**Barriers to referral**

Do not let anything stop you from putting the child first: Some of the things that may stop referral are;

* Relationship with parents
* Might be wrong
* Bad management
* Too many opinions
* Abuse from parents
* False accusation
* Stigma
* Confidence
* Lack of policy/procedure
* Will I go to court?
* Effects on staff families
* I may be accused
* Scared
* Disbelief
* Consequences for child
* Future of business

If in any doubt, the guiding principle is: “**the welfare of the child is the paramount consideration.”**

**Making a referral**

If child abuse is suspected a referral must be made. Wherever possible the parent must be told of intention to refer and why.

The referral will always be made by the The Manager or **Deputy Manager** (unless absent when designated person in charge will make referral). Relevant information to safeguard the privacy of the child and family involved will only be shared with the child’s key person. Other staff may only be informed of action in the interests of the child’s own safety

**Basic principles**

You have to take your responsibility in protecting children and preventing child abuse seriously

* You may have information that others do not have
* You cannot be sure that someone else will protect the child
* Listen to what the child has to say and take this seriously
* Inaction may allow the child abuse to continue

**Only 1 in 500 child carers go to court**

Advice and concerns regarding safeguarding children should be directed to **Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children’s Board Customer Service Centre:**

**Office Hours: Tel. 01522 782111**

**Out of Hours: Tel. 01522 782333**

**Lincolnshire Police – 01780 752500**

**Ofsted: Tel. 03001231231**

**TAC/SAF coordinator**

*see the website for further contact numbers for the SAF/TAC team: http://microsites.lincolnshire.gov.uk/children/practitioners/team-around-the-child-(tac)/contacts/south-kesteven-tac-contact-details/107617.article*

Always record in writing concerns about the child’s welfare

Always record what action was taken in response to that concern

Share everything with parent/carer unless this may put the child at risk.

**TAC. (Team around the child)**

The EHA (Early Help Assessment) form is designed to be used by any agency in Lincolnshire with concerns about a child who they believe may be in need of services from another agency.

The EHA form will be used as a basis for making a referral, in terms of the type of information required. You may not have all the information asked for, but this does not matter. Do not delay this referral. The TAC co ordinator will advise you about where to send the form.

**TAC coordinator**

**Enquiries from another agency**

If anyone phones with an enquiry from another agency always ask them for a phone number and ring back to check it is a legitimate agency.

**Reporting another member of staff.**

Although very hard to do, if you feel a member of staff is abusing a child in any way please do not hesitate to report it to **The Management or Jo O’Bryan-Tear (owner).**  Staff can be held accountable for information not disclosed. Please see policy for allegations against a member of staff and the whistle blowing policy to check the procedure. Records will be kept of these allegations.

**LADO (Local Area Designated Office) referrals for allegations against professionals Tel. 01522 554674**

**Staff awareness**

To summarise, working as a professional means being open to public scrutiny. Nursery staff are the “King Pins/Eyes of the police, social workers etc.

**Physical and Behavioural Signs of Abuse**

Concerns about a child may come to the attention of staff/volunteers in a number of ways:  
• Through observation of the child. A child’s behaviour may indicate that it is likely that he/she is being abused.  
• The child may disclose abuse.  
• Information may be given by parents, other people or agencies.  
• A child may show some signs of physical injury of which there seems to be no  
satisfactory explanation.  
• Something in the behaviour of one of the workers or young person, or in the way the worker or young person relates to a child, alerts them or makes them feel uncomfortable in some way.  
• Observing one child abuse another  
The child’s attendance may have changed, (eg absence and lateness with no or very vague reason given)  
The child may appear unusually tired

There are 4 types of abuse, the main signs of each type are listed below  
  
**1. The signs of physical abuse may include:**  
• Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body  
• Bruising which reflects hand marks or fingers (from slapping or pinching)  
• Cigarette burns  
• Bite marks  
• Broken bones  
• Scalds

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate physical abuse:  
• Fear of parents being approached for an explanation  
• Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts  
• Flinching when approached or touched  
• Reluctance to get changed, for example wearing long sleeves in hot weather  
• Depression  
• Withdrawn behaviour  
• Running away from home

* Signs of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM); blood in a nappy, unexplained stomach aches and pains, genital area looks different, sudden holiday to places FGM is practiced

**2. The physical signs of emotional abuse may include:**• A failure to thrive or grow, particularly if the child puts on weight in othercircumstances, e.g. hospital or away from parents’ care.• Sudden speech disorders• Development delay, either in terms of physical or emotional progress

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate emotional abuse include:  
• Neurotic behaviour, e.g. hair twisting, rocking  
• Being unable to play  
• Fear of making mistakes  
• Self harm  
• Fear of parents being approached about their behaviour

**3. The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:**• Pain or itching in the genital/anal areas• Bruising or bleeding near genital/anal areas• Sexually transmitted diseases• Vaginal discharge or infection• Stomach pains• Discomfort when walking or sitting down

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate sexual abuse include:  
• Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour, eg becoming aggressive or withdrawn  
• Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people  
• Having nightmares  
• Running away from home  
• Sexual knowledge which is beyond their age or development level  
• Sexual drawings or language  
• Bedwetting  
• Eating problems such as overeating or anorexia  
• Self-harm or mutilation, sometimes leading to suicide attempts  
• Saying they have secrets that they can’t tell anyone about  
• Substance or drug abuse  
• Suddenly having unexplained sources of money  
• Not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)  
• Acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults

**4. The physical signs of neglect may be:**• Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children• Constantly dirty or ‘smelly’• Loss of weight, or being constantly underweight• Inappropriate dress for the conditions

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect may include:  
• Complaining of being tired all the time  
• Not requesting medical assistance and/or failing to attend appointments  
• Having few friends  
• Mentioning their being left alone or unsupervised  
 **Honour based abuse/forced Marriage**

Definition: **‘*A crime or incident, which has or may have been committed, to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community’*** Association of Chief Police Officers

Honour based abuse is a form of domestic abuse which is perpetrated in the name of so called ‘honour’.

It is often linked to family members or acquaintances who believe someone has brought shame on their family by doing something that is not in keeping with the traditional beliefs of their culture.

**Women and girls are the most common victims of honour based violence however it can also affect men and boys.**

Crimes of ‘honour’ do not always include violence. Crimes committed in the name of ‘honour’ might include:

* domestic abuse
* threats of violence
* sexual or psychological abuse
* forced marriage
* being held against your will or taken somewhere you don’t want to go
* assault

A forced marriage is one that is carried out without the consent of both people. This is very different to an arranged marriage, which both people will have agreed to. There is no religion that says it is right to force you into a marriage and you are not betraying your faith by refusing such a marriage.

Referrals of honour based abuse should be made to Lincolnshire Police 015

**Adult Behaviour - Parents**It is important for practitioners to build up a relationship with the children's parents and family to consider which situations or behaviour could indicate possible abuse or family difficulties, which may need additional support from outside agencies.

* Inappropriate sexual comments
* Inappropriate sharing of images
* Signs of alcohol and drug abuse
* Change in the presentation or behaviour of the parents
* Parents distancing themselves from the setting staff.

Parents losing interest in their child’s development and learning.

* Parents being late delivering or collecting the child.
* Other people being sent to collect the child.
* Are parents falling behind with payments.

**Adult Behaviour - Staff**Practitioners' should be aware of the adult behaviours listed below and that the 'Whistle Blowing Policy' should be followed if there are any concerns.

* Inappropriate sexual comments
* Excessive one-to-one attention beyond the requirements of their usual roles & responsibilities
* Inappropriate sharing of images
* Signs of medication and substance misuse

The Ark Nurseries will ensure that everything is in place for all of the team to be aware of safeguarding and following the appropriate policy and procedures as set out by Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children’s Board, and that they would know how to act if they had concerns regarding the behaviour of any member of the team.

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