

Safeguarding Children – guidelines for preventing & reporting abuse

Understanding abuse:

Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. A child maybe abused in a family, institutional or community setting. There four official types of abuse physical, sexual, emotional or neglect however in a faith community spiritual abuse can also occur. Examples of this may be when pressure is placed on children to make decisions that are not appropriate to their age or developmental stage or by creating an environment in which children are discouraged from asking questions or holding alternative views.

If a worker has safeguarding concerns in relation to a child or young person (anyone under the age of eighteen) they must contact the Designated Person for Safeguarding (DPS) listed in our policy.

If a child or young person talks about harm or abuse they are suffering the worker must:

- Create a safe environment in which the young person can share their concerns
- React calmly and not show shock, alarm or disapproval
- Listen carefully to what the child has to say, allowing them time to say what they want.
- Only ask questions to establish whether there is a cause for concern and to ensure a clear and accurate understanding. Ensure only open questions are used and as soon as you believe there is a cause for concern stop questioning.

You can use the **TED** approach: **T**ell me about... **E**xplain to me.... **D**escribe to me....

- Accept what the child is saying and take what they say seriously. Explain that you will have to tell someone who will know what to do next.
- Provide reassurance that they have done the right thing and that they are not to blame for what has happened
- Make notes regarding your conversation as soon as possible afterwards, using the child's words where possible

The worker must not promise or lead a child to believe that anything they have said will be kept confidential

The worker must not act against an accused person, investigate or decide whether abuse is taking place.

It is the workers responsibility to:

RECOGNISE, RESPOND, RECORD AND REPORT

Report of any concern must be made within 24 hours to the DPS.

If the child is in imminent danger of harm the DPS must be informed immediately. Only in this situation if the DPS is not contactable should the worker make a referral to the police or social services themselves.

It is the DPS responsibility to REVIEW AND REFER

The DPS must review the report and any other relevant information and then decide (often in liaison with others) as to what action should follow. Any referral to Social Services should take place as soon as possible, preferably within 24 hours of receiving the report.

The DPS, Safeguarding Trustee and the Minister(s) may need to then offer support to all parties affected and review and reflect on safeguarding procedures.

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