

Child Protection Policy for Childminders

This is a sample policy for guidance, produced by Bristol Childminding Support Team. Policies should be written by the childminder to reflect the actual practice within the childminder's own setting.

My responsibility

It is my responsibility as a registered childminder to ensure the safety and welfare of all children in my care. My professional responsibility with regard to Child Protection is laid out in the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage 2017. I am the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for my setting

I must also have regard for the government, source document Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018, which explains responsibilities and how agencies should work together to safeguard children.

If I have concerns about a child, I will follow the child protection procedures outlined in the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership website and the statutory government guidance in Working Together to Safeguard Children.

My training

I attended initial Child Protection training as part of my course to become a registered childminder. Within six months of registering with Ofsted, I will attend/attended the single-agency, KBSP safeguarding training (organised by BCC Childminding Support Team). Thereafter, as the Designated Safeguarding Lead for my setting, I keep my knowledge of child protection issues up to date, either by repeating that single-agency training for childminders every three years or by attending at least one advanced, child protection course per year.

I most recently attended a training session

on.....(course title) on..... (date).

I am familiar with the Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership website (previously the BSCB website) which gives information on the signs and symptoms of abuse and how to respond. I am aware that information on signs, symptoms can also be found in the government booklet 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' March 2015 and on the NSPCC website.

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 use an Accident and Incident Book as a matter of course to log pre-existing injuries. I would record any concerns, 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 am required to make a referral, called a 'request for help', to First Response Tel 9036444

4. I would normally seek consent from parents to make a referral/request for help to First Response, 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 First Response unless I had concerns about the child's safety or the safety of my minded children or my own family.

My procedure - injury to a non-mobile* baby

Bruising in a baby who has no independent mobility is very uncommon. It may be an indicator of a serious medical condition or physical abuse. Severe child abuse is six times more common in babies under one than in older children. Early years practitioners must follow the KBSP 'Multi-agency Guidance on Non-mobile Babies'.

If a non-mobile baby has an injury, however seemingly minor and however plausible the parent or carer's explanation, I must contact the **on-call Community Paediatrician (Tel.0117-9230000)** without delay to request advice on whether or not an examination is required. The Community Paediatrician will need to know the baby's name, date of birth, parent's contact details and the explanation which the parent has given for the injury (I will not offer any suggestion to the parent as to how the injury might have occurred). If the Community Paediatrician deems that an examination is required, I will explain to the parent that someone with parental responsibility must give their consent to, and attend, the examination. I will discuss with the parent how they will get the child to the medical examination and the following day I will check that the baby was taken to the examination. If a parent refuses to take the baby for an examination I must inform the Community Paediatrician and First Response.

After consulting with the Community Paediatrician and facilitating an examination (if needed), I must contact First Response to provide information about the injury. First Response will carry out Social Care checks. The Community Paediatrician will liaise with Social Care about any findings.

If a baby has bleeding from the nose, mouth, ear, or any other **serious injury I will call 999** for an ambulance. After arranging the emergency response, I will seek an explanation from the parent and record this and the description of the injury. I will advise the on-call Community Paediatrician (Tel 9230000) that an ambulance was called and First Response, so that Social Care checks can be made.

While **accidental** injury can occasionally occur in **mobile** babies it is still relatively rare (although not as rare as for non-mobile babies), therefore I am aware of the higher degree of risk of child-abuse to babies, whether mobile or non-mobile. If I am in any doubt about the plausibility of the explanation for an injury to a **mobile** baby, or if I am concerned about the severity of the injury, I will consult with the on-call Community Paediatrician or with First Response.

Babies who are starting to roll or are sitting up (but cannot crawl) are classed as 'non-mobile'. In other words, a non-mobile baby is a baby who is **not yet pulling to stand, crawling, cruising around furniture, or toddling. Once a baby is bum-shuffling, commando crawling, pulling to stand, cruising etc, they are classed as 'mobile'.*

Asking for advice as a solo DSL

If I am unsure as to whether or not I need to make a child protection referral I can ask for advice from the Families in Focus Social Worker for my area (see telephone numbers in the grid at end of this policy). While I am seeking professional advice I would not mention the child's name.

The Families in Focus Social Worker might advise a request for 'early help' or a child protection referral. Both a request for early help and a child protection referral are requested through First Response.

Using the advice of the Families in Focus Social worker to reflect, I keep in mind that I am the DSL for my setting and, ultimately, I have the responsibility to decide whether or not to share information and make a referral

Early Help

I am aware that providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Children may need early help/ early intervention for any of the following reasons which are listed in Working Together to Safeguard Children, page 14.

- 'disabled and has specific additional needs
- special educational needs
- young carer
- signs of being drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour
- frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home

- risk of modern slavery, trafficking, or exploitation
- risk of being radicalised or exploited
- family drug and alcohol misuse, mental health issues, domestic abuse
- misusing drugs or alcohol
- returned home to their family from care
- privately fostered
- a parent/carer in custody'

Children's mental health

Although I know only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem, 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 mental health problem or be at risk of developing one. 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)

I know that if I am concerned about a child's mental health, with parental consent I can consult with the Childminder SENCO to discuss appropriate referral to, for example, Children's Centre Family Support, a Specialist Children's Centre Inclusion Practitioner (SCCIP), or Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS).

Responding to different types of abuse

FGM

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.

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 would seek to support a victim on their own terms. I can signpost a parent to services which are listed on the Bristol City Council website <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/crime-emergencies/abuse-violence>

I must also consider the impact of domestic abuse on the child and respond appropriately. To support my decision-making I can take advice from a Families in Focus Social Worker and use the Threshold Guidance and Matrices <https://bristolsafeguarding.org/children-home/professionals/policies/#ThresholdGuidance>

- I can make a request for help from Families in Focus (via First Response and with the parent's consent).
- 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.

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 (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.

LADO Tel: 0117 9037795

Ofsted link [Report-a-serious-childcare-incident](#)

Note: if a childminder is unsure if an allegation or an incident meets the threshold to be reported, it is possible to consult with the LADO on this.

Enhanced Provision childminders must also inform Dawn Butler, Early Years Manager. Tel: 07827 306287

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.

Childminders may wish here to refer to a separate policy on the use of mobile phones and other electronic gadgets in their work.

Childminders can use the Data Protection Policy to explain responsibilities under GDPR

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 had been convicted of a serious offence, such as those that are listed in the statutory guidance document 'Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006'

Visitors

While I am childminding, I may have visitors such as another childminder, keeping the benefits to the children in mind. Although it is not mandatory, I keep a record of visitors to my home during childminding hours, noting the length and purpose of the visit.

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.

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 inform **both First Response Tel 0117 9036444** and the local Prevent Team, also called the **South West Counter- terrorism Team (SWCT) Tel 0117 9455536** or channelsw@avonandsomerset.pnn.police.uk

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.

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 at some level of concern about childcare practice, whistleblowing is necessary to ensure the well-being of a child/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 **child abuse** 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. N.B. When an allegation is reported to the LADO; Ofsted (and the police if necessary) undertakes the actual investigation.*

Covid, the pandemic and safeguarding.

Many factors during the pandemic have increased the pressures on families and associated risk of harm to children: lockdown restrictions on social contact with social isolation; financial and job insecurity and associated poverty; lack of physical space at home; additional domestic pressures, such as from home-schooling; bereavement; reliance on substance misuse as a coping mechanism; increased domestic friction and abuse. As well as the increased risk of harm there may be less protective oversight by, and contact with, concerned adults (extended family members and professionals) while children remain at home and not seen at school or in the community.

- I am aware that sometimes missing attendance, can be indicative of a safeguarding concern. If children are not accessing their childcare I will endeavour to keep in contact with parents and children (phone and internet).
- 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.
- I will signpost parents to information, resources and support either on online or in the community to mitigate frustrations and risks, including online safety resources.
- While children are unable to attend my setting, I will exercise some 'professional curiosity', without being intrusive.

Childminder assistants: suitability and induction

If I work with an assistant, that assistant must have an Enhanced DBS check and Children's Social Care check which are scrutinised by Ofsted. Ofsted takes the decision on the suitability of anyone working with a childminder. If I recruit an assistant/student placement who is not a member of my household, in addition to the Ofsted scrutiny, 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 noting the DBS check.

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. *The self-declaration form proforma can be found on the Bristol Early Years website in the childminders' section.*

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.

*Childminders with assistants can consider having a separate staff behaviour/code of conduct policy laying down the expectations of conduct which relate directly to safeguarding, such as above. Other expectations of conduct may not relate so directly to safeguarding, such as dress code or the use of appropriate language, or appropriate liaison with parents and so on. Other expectations of the assistant, such as the lunch time arrangements or the no-smoking policy may be covered elsewhere, such as in the employment contract. Childminders can take advice on matters of employment from ACAS and should there be any need for disciplinary procedures, can use the ACAS helpline <https://www.employment-advice-bureau.org/employers/> It is good practice to get an assistant to sign a **Confidentiality Agreement**. You can find a template for this in the childminders' section of the Bristol Early Years website.*

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.

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)

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 policy reviewed.....

If you have concerns about a child...

If a child is at immediate risk call the POLICE	POLICE 999			
To make an URGENT referral, i.e. a child is likely to suffer or is suffering significant harm, call First Response	FIRST RESPONSE 0117 9036444 <small>(Out of Hours Emergency Duty Team 01454 615 165)</small>			
To make a NON-URGENT referral, contact FIRST RESPONSE using the online form (must have parental/carers consent).	FIRST RESPONSE https://www2.bristol.gov.uk/form/child-or-young-person-request-support-or-report-concern			
To raise concerns and ask for advice about extremism (also contact First Response).	PREVENT DUTY 01278 647466 channelsw@avonandsomerset.pnn.police.uk			
For advice and guidance about whether to make a referral.	Families in Focus (N) 0117 3521499 Families in Focus (E/C) 0117 3576460 Families in Focus (S) 0117 9037770			
For information, advice and guidance in relation to safeguarding policy and procedures.	Schools Safeguarding Advisors <table border="1"><tr><td data-bbox="639 1591 837 1711">North Lesley O'Hagan 0117 9223786 07901102652</td><td data-bbox="873 1591 1071 1711">East/Central Henry Chan 0117 9224282 07464989157</td><td data-bbox="1094 1591 1299 1711">South Helen Macdonald 0117 9222710 07464 989 158</td></tr></table>	North Lesley O'Hagan 0117 9223786 07901102652	East/Central Henry Chan 0117 9224282 07464989157	South Helen Macdonald 0117 9222710 07464 989 158
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If you have concerns about a professional working with a child...

To raise concerns and ask for guidance in relation to the conduct of someone who works with children	Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Nicola Laird 0117 9037795
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