

ECEY5011 Safeguarding Portfolio

It is paramount that every adult who has any contact with children is aware of their responsibility and role in safeguarding and protecting children.

“Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone’s responsibility” (Department for Education, 2023, p.6).

Children are vulnerable as they are dependent on adults to make decisions that protect them from abuse or harm and ensure their health and wellbeing. If the adults around children are not able to adequately meet their needs and care for them or choose to abuse them, it is vital that other adults recognise this and take action to protect the child.

Keeping children safe in education (2023) and *the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework* (2023) both state that all adults who work with children should be knowledgeable about the potential signs and symptoms of child abuse.

In Case Study 2, Ben’s class teacher noticed his deterioration in appearance and hygiene, as well as suspecting that Ben was hungry and not being adequately fed at home. Ben’s teacher noticed signs of neglect. According to the NSPCC (2024), Neglect is the most common form of child abuse, which is the ongoing failure to meet a child’s basic needs, such as being adequately fed, clothed, sheltered, supervised and their medical and wellbeing needs being met. Ben’s teacher did not just notice that Ben was unkept and hungry once, but over the period of a month. Ben’s teacher must keep an accurate record of everything that has concerned them. Anything Ben says should be accurately recorded too. It is important that Ben’s teacher keeps accurate records, detailing exactly what they observed or exactly what Ben has said, rather than making assumptions and drawing conclusions, as this information is important, especially when considered with other information that others who have contact with Ben may provide.

The teacher must follow the setting’s Safeguarding and child protection policy, and refer their concerns immediately to the setting’s Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Every setting must have a Designated Safeguarding Lead, as stipulated in the *Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework* (2023), *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2023) and *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (2023). The role of a Designated Safeguarding Lead is to take lead responsibility in a setting for safeguarding and child protection. Safeguarding is proactive and involves taking steps to keep all children safe. Child protection is reactive, and involves taking action to protect a child. Designated Safeguarding Leads ensure that all staff are trained to recognise the signs of abuse, and understand how to report this using the setting’s preferred procedures.

Many settings use online systems, such as CPOMS to instantly record safeguarding concerns electronically, and share these with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Electronic systems share information quickly with the DSL, and create an accurate record of concerns, that can easily be viewed and collate patterns of concerns.

However, systems like CPOMS are dependent on a practitioner having a device with internet access readily available, and the time to type out the details of their concern.

Paper based systems may be more convenient at the point of recording the concern on a pre-printed form, but then the practitioner will need to leave the classroom and find the DSL to pass on their concern, and later, the details will need to be compiled somewhere in a central file.

If a practitioner speaks to the DSL in person, an accurate written record will need to be made later, which may be less accurate, as details may be remembered differently.

Whichever system is adopted by a setting as part of their safeguarding and child protection policy, it is imperative that practitioners record their concerns accurately, and Designated Safeguarding Leads then use this information to inform the decisions they make about what action to take.

Safeguarding concerns must be recorded securely, taking into account the General Data Protection Regulation (2018).

All staff must report any concerns that they have, and not assume that someone else will do this, or make assumptions that abuse could not be happening. *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (2023) states that all staff should maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' (Department for Education, 2023, p16).

Section 175 of the Education Act (2002) placed a statutory duty on schools to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Designated Safeguarding Lead's need to decide if they should approach the parent or carer about their concern, or if this may place a child in more danger. Settings try to work in partnership with parents/carers. The Department for Education (2023) states that Designated Safeguarding Leads should "promote supportive engagement with parents and/or carers in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children (Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2023, p.165). If a Designated Safeguarding Lead suspects that a child may be at risk of immediate harm, they must ring the police, who under Section 46 of the Children Act (1989) may use their statutory child protection powers.

In the case of Ben, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should firstly ensure that Ben's basic needs are met and ensure that Ben has eaten and has clean clothes. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should sensitively speak to Ben's mom to try to ascertain the circumstances. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should consider the potential causes for this recent neglect. Previously, there were no concerns about Ben's home life. Mom may be absent from home or experiencing poor physical or mental health. Mom may be experiencing domestic violence, or economic abuse, causing her to be unable or unwilling to buy food. The families financial circumstances may have suddenly changed, through loss of employment, issues claiming benefits, or family breakdown. Mom, or another adult, may be misusing alcohol or drugs, or have a gambling addiction, which is causing financial hardship. Mom may need additional support. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should initiate Early Help. Early Help is support that is given as soon as an unmet need is identified. Early Help is provided by multi-agencies and is coordinated by a lead practitioner. A Team Around the Family (TAF) meeting is held in order for all necessary agencies to meet and plan how best to support a family.

Ben's family may need support by being referred to a food bank, or assisted to claim benefits, or even referral for mental health services or Alcoholics Anonymous. The

Team Around the Child will determine what support is required.

If a family do not engage with support, it may be necessary to make a referral to the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership, under Section 47 of the Children Act (1989). An Initial Child Protection Conference will then be held for relevant professionals to share information and formulate a plan. The Child Protection Conference must take place within 15 working days.

All relevant professionals must share information with each other in order to allow judgements to be made about the likelihood of a child experiencing harm and how best to protect them from harm. Multiagency working is outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (2023), Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023). Serious Case Reviews have been held after previous failings to safeguard and protect children. Lord Laming's Report (2009) followed the tragic death of Victoria Climbié, and influenced the Green Paper; Every Child Matters, and the Education Act of 2004. When different agencies do not work together and share information, there is potential for abuse to go undetected and for children to suffer harm.

References

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