

Safeguarding: Practice, legislation and the multidisciplinary team

ECEY5011/C part 2

Casy study 2

Ben is a 6 year old boy in your year 1 class. He has a brother in year 4, as his teacher, you have known him to be a quiet boy but eager to please and is progressing with his learning. During this last month, you have noticed that Ben is coming to school with dirty clothes on, often unwashed and hasn't been brushing his hair or teeth. You have also so noticed that he seems to be very hungry, always taking more than one piece of fruit at snack time and eating it quickly. Yesterday you caught him going through another child's sandwich box and taking his sandwiches. When you asked him about it, he got upset but told you that mommy didn't go shopping that week. Consider how you might deal with this situation with regards to recognising and reporting concerns.

A: Recognising and recording

Ben hasn't always been the most confident child in the class, he is encouraged to engage as much as possible and is doing well and making progression in his learning and he is more than capable of meeting his expected learning goals. Ben has a small friendship group and particularly gets on well with two other boys in class, although he will work well with other children when he is paired up with them.

However, we are approaching the end of the spring term and over the last month, there is a noticeable difference in Ben's personality and his schoolwork is becoming affected by this change, as he seems to be lacking in concentration and looks tired. Ben is arriving at school most days wearing unwashed uniform and his clothes are starting to smell like they are unwashed, his hair is constantly unbrushed and when talking to Ben I can smell his breath, so he cannot be regularly brushing his teeth. I have started to become concerned about Ben's hygiene, also I have become aware for sure that Ben is hungry and is missing meals at home, I was under suspicion of this during the morning breaktimes, Ben has stopped playing and would be sitting next to the fruit bowl eating quite a few pieces of fruit, this has been going on for just over two weeks.

When I first started to notice that Ben's hygiene was starting to deteriorate, I spoke to the DSL (Designated safeguarding lead) as I started to have concerns for Ben's Welfare, I also mentioned that I suspected that Ben was missing meals, maybe not having breakfast in the mornings as he was constantly eating fruit from the snack

bowl and would occasionally ask for fruit when he first arrived in school. I was told by the DSL to build a picture by documenting and recording my concerns onto COMS, with the guidance of the DSL. As the DSL and I, were both aware that Ben had an older brother in year 4, she said she would go and chat with his class teacher to see he was also displaying signs of being hungry. The year 4 class teacher said "he would sometime stake an extra piece of fruit but said she hadn't been worried about any concerns but would start to monitor any concerns and behaviours ".I made sure that there was fruit that Ben was able to access, whenever he wanted some, also I spoke to the kitchen staff as Ben had free school meals that he had a slightly bigger portion to his peers, also asking the lunch time supervisors to monitor what he was eating. I would ask the children what they had for breakfast in the mornings and when it was Ben's turn, he would say "he had toast or other times he would say, I forgot to have breakfast because we were running late today". I recorded on CPOMS, how much fruit Ben was eating and the concerns about his hygiene. This morning, Ben asked to go to the toilet, we were in our morning phonics lesson and I had noticed that Ben seemed to be gone for a long time, I went out to the corridor to find him and found him taking sandwiches out of another child's lunchbox when Ben saw me he started to cry, I asked Ben what was the matter and asked him was he was taking his friend's lunch . Ben told me "He was hungry because mommy couldn't go shopping this week", Today is Monday and as Ben was taking another child's lunch, I was concerned with how many meals Ben had missed over the weekend. I placed the sandwiches back into the lunch box and as the TA was watching the class, I took Ben to the kitchen and got him some toast made up, we then went to visit the DSL, while Ben sat to eat his food I explained to the DSL about what had happened, the incident was recorded onto CPOMS, the DSL had a chat with Ben," he told her that mommy didn't have any money that's why he was hungry and he had eaten some sandwiches and some cereal over the weekend." The DSL went to collect Ben's older brother so that she could speak to him "she told him that he wasn't in any trouble she needed a chat as she was worried about Ben, he told her that their dad had left home and that mom was finding it hard to get a job they couldn't pay any bills , so they didn't have much food and they couldn't use the washing machine very often as mom tried not to use it that much. Ben's brother admitted that he had confided in a friend, and they were bringing him some extra food in their lunch box and giving it to him to eat. The DSL rang MASH and early help for advice on how to deal with this concern and what could be done, and the interventions that could be put in place to support the children and mom. Mom was asked to come into school, as concerns has been raised and the school recognised that the family needed support.

All professionals working with children have a duty to and should take appropriate action to protect a child who they believe may become harmed, (Regional Child Protection Procedures for West Midlands (2024)

According to The Ann Craft trust, (2021) indicators of a change in demeanour or behaviour can suggest that there is a safeguarding concern, the signs that are indicated must be monitored and recorded as a child may be subjected to harm.

The Children's Society, (2024), states the number of children living in poverty in the UK is 4.3 million. Many families cannot afford school uniforms and PE Kits. This can have a serious impact on a child's mental health knowing that their family is struggling with money. They can be impacted by this if the school is unaware as they can be sent home or excluded from not having the right school wear, they may even become a victim to bullying. Schools must cost a priority when setting uniform policies, The school Uniform bill (2021), was passed in Parliament to make sure they are affordable.

The UNCRC article 24 states, that children have the right to an adequate standard of living, including access to good nutritious food and a safe warm environment.

B: Reporting and Referral

Everybody has a responsibility to safeguard children, when working in a school setting, practitioners are responsible for the safeguarding of all children in that school setting, not just the children that are in their classroom NSPCC, (2023). Practitioners should follow the safeguarding policies and procedures from their setting to ensure that every child regardless of their background or circumstance are equally protected from harm. When recording a concern, the concerns should be recorded onto CPOMS (Child Protection Online Monitoring System) used by schools for monitoring child protection. Safeguarding and pastoral and welfare issues. Practitioners should use CPOMS to record safeguarding, Attendance & Persistent Absence, Racial incidents, Referrals, child-on-child abuse, child protection, online safety & interventions, Using CPOMS provides clear, effective and secure record-keeping. This allows schools to identify trends and patterns of harm and abuse, allowing them to act at an earlier stage to better support vulnerable pupils, this system helps schools to record incidents of harm and abuse so that they can learn from past mistakes and prevent future occurrences. CPOMS sends messages to all members of staff that have been linked on the need to know about a concern, this allows practitioners to build a timeline so that they are able to see key details.

Recording data on CPOMS will assist in providing valuable information that will assist multi-agencies, such as MASH. (Multi-agency safeguarding Hub) Strong multi-agency and multi-disciplinary teams, working together and sharing vital information that identifies and responds to the needs of children and their families, all agencies involved in safeguarding and protecting children include the police, local authorities, health services, education providers and other third parties

To help provide the correct information practitioners should follow the 4 Rs – Recognise, Record, Report and Refer

Recognise –all staff recognise the potential signs of abuse, to respond appropriately to any concerns that arise to the relevant agency

Record – what you have seen

What happened? why did it happen? When did it happen? What was said?

Report- information recorded should be shared in a timely fashion

Refer- ensure the Event safeguarding officer is contacted, if there is immediate risk of harm, contact the police, or ring the Local Authority, do not delay.

When reporting and referring safeguarding concerns, procedure and ethical frameworks must be followed, when suspecting concerns, it is the practitioner's responsibility to report the concern. The principles of the children's Social Care national Framework requires that children's welfare is paramount, children's wishes, feelings are sought, heard and responded to, children's social care works in partnership with whole families, children are raised by their families, with their family networks or in a family environment, local authorities work together to effectively identify and meet the needs of children and their families, Local authorities consider the economic and social circumstance's impacting children and their families. The children's Social Care National Framework (2013) is the statutory guidance setting out the purpose of children's social care supporting children and families by protecting and intervening decisively when they are at risk of harm and to provide care to those that need it.

C: Setting Responsibilities

The educational setting should ensure a child centered approach; this should be supported by The Children Act (1989), and (as amended by Section 53 of the Children Act 2004). This Act requires that the local authorities give due regard to a child's wishes when determining what services to provide to the child under the section 17 of the children Act (1989), before making the decisions about what action to take to protect the child.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) recognises the rights for children to have their basic needs met

The setting should ensure interventions are put in place and the purpose of these interventions are to achieve the best possible outcome for the child concerned. The children Act (2004) for a child to be safe, healthy, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, achieve economic wellbeing. A child-centered approach is

fundamental to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of every child. All practitioners should follow the principles of the children Acts (1989 and 2004). Practitioners working with children should see and speak to the child, listen to what they say, observe their behaviour, take their views seriously, and work with them and their families. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is the international agreement protecting the rights of children that provides a child centered framework for the development of services to children. The United Nations of Human Rights (1948) states everybody has the right to adequate food and housing, clean water, health and education.

(GOV.UK) Many people on low incomes can receive cash benefits, universal credit as well as school free school meals and food vouchers. In 2021/22 there were 2.9 million children living in low-income households. Schools can support children by identifying the children and families, schools can offer support with uniform costs by offering a uniform grant and asking parents to apply for free school meals for eligible families, some schools will even have food banks that can help support some families. It is important for practitioners to identify the families that need support and referring them to Early Help (2018), they can help these families with support on finances and housing doing an Early Help assessment families can receive the support they need by being provided with a family plan.

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